Coordinating and Reception
Center to open downtown (See Page 3)

Mayor Henry Gillette Spelled Our Plans for Rochester Urban Renewal at conference on Housing; Present Progress Noted

Honor, Henry Gillette
Mayor of Rochester

The City of Rochester, New York, whose Mayor I am and for which I speak is a relatively late comer to urban renewal problems and urban renewal plans. Looking back over our history, it seems to me that we were both slow to realize the nature and size of the problem and slow to move toward a solution.

In saying this I do not mean to be critical of my fellow Rochesterians. Over the years there have been many forward-looking citizens who realized the need in Rochester for a program conceived in boldness and implemented with vision. In a sense, history has weighted the scales against change in Rochester. At the same time the dramatic suddenness with which our problems have grown has caught many of our people unaware.

Several times in our history Rochester has had to absorb sudden influxes of new residents. As long ago as before 1850 when the Erie Canal made Rochester a boom town, we faced this problem. As late as 1920, Rochester was absorbing another set of new residents. In both instances we were helped greatly by the stable growth pattern of Rochester business and industry. Given time, it was felt, the new residents would be made a part of the City's life. There seemed no special need to look out for their welfare, to provide housing or other help. And in fact the typical conservative response to new life by these people seemed to solve most of the problems of adjustment. I know because I come from one such a family.

Today we in Rochester are faced with a problem, similar to that we faced in the past, in appearances only. Consider these facts. In the past fifteen years, our non-white population has increased from a little over 5,000 to more than 20,000. It is still growing. The non-white population of Rochester is growing at a faster rate than that in any other City of New York State with the exception of New York.

Into a stable, older City with a bias in conservative approach to public problems, there has been thrust an entirely new problem, which in the opinion of our administration, demands new solutions. Perhaps because we are starting fresh to tackle this problem, we are not set in our ways. We see clearly that there is no simple solution to the double problem - the flight of many thousands of middle and high income families to the suburbs and the influx of many other thousands of persons, mostly with limited earning power while our population has declined and the need for expensive City services has grown by leaps and bounds. Also, there is the problem of poverty in the midst of plenty.

Rochester's approach to these problems has reflected its stable nature, its conservative orientation. It accepted the federal urban renewal program, if not reluctantly, then at least slowly. Although false starts were made on a renewal program as long ago as 1952, it was not until 1965 that the City began in earnest on a title I project, and for five years that was the City's only project.

Typical though Rochester was of American cities in some respects, it was atypical in others. In its first attempts at urban renewal, the City, unfortunately, was too timid. Its first, the Baden-Greenwood project, is still incomplete. Middle income housing occupies a portion of the project area, but the remainder still awaits buyers. Last year, a new administration, the first in 25 years, took control of City government. One of its goals, I am happy to say, is the successful completion of the project within the shortest possible time. This last year four streets were reconstructed together with new sewers, lighting, curbs and sidewalks; a new school is well under construction; a half million dollar playground was started and will be completed this year, all within this project area.

The present City administration has placed great faith in the federal urban renewal program. To carry out its plans for an expanded program, it was first necessary to reorganize the agencies involved in renewal. This has resulted in a new department of urban renewal and economic development under the control of a Deputy City Manager. The new administration also took steps to broaden the scope of a community renewal program which was underway. This program, through which the City hopes to identify its problem areas and housing needs and develop a long range program for their solution, is scheduled for completion next fall.

A proposed rehabilitation project was launched recently with a request to the Housing and Home Finance Agency for survey and planning funds. This project would cover what has been once the City's silk stocking neighborhood - an area of great memories and stature. Today, it is a rapidly deteriorating and overcrowded area showing many of the characteristics of the emerging slum. But we are convinced it doesn't have to remain that way. Many of the homes can be saved through wise rehabilitation and many structures with historical value can be preserved. With Federal and State aid this area can once more be a vital and thriving part of the City.

Aware of the needs of our low income families, our first concern was the development of a truly effective low-income housing plan; one suited both to our needs and to our potential. Rochester's one experiment with high-rise housing proved long before other communities discovered the fact, that this is not the answer. Fortunately we have in Rochester a group of citizens knowledgeable and civic-minded who are not afraid of work. Five of these outstanding men make up the Rochester Housing Authority. Drawing on the experience of the past, this Authority has proposed a plan to build up to 500 low income housing units at several selected sites in Rochester.

The aim is to make these homes a part of the neighborhood in which they are located, so that their residents will blend in to the stores, and "shops and schools with a minimum disruption of neighborhood patterns. This plan requires major Federal assistance. The first steps have been taken and approval has been granted for a planning grant of $10,000. Steps have also been taken to aid the central business district. Following the national pattern, the downtown area has experienced a marked decline in business. For rent signs are appearing with increasing frequency along main and other downtown streets. To combat this, a broad range of public and private action was undertaken or are in the planning stage.

(Continued on page 2)
In the last year in our city, there has been an unusual increase in the public's awareness of blight and neighborhood deterioration. Rarely a week goes by without a newspaper story on the activities of a new neighborhood group, or one which has been dormant for many years and is stirring again with fresh blood and fresh ideas. These groups can be found everywhere. In good neighborhoods as well as in bad. Residents who have been oblivious to say changes for many years have awakened suddenly to find that their neighborhoods have a down at the heels look, and they're anxious to do something about it.

This phenomenon of neighborhood awareness is supposedly what everyone in the field of urban renewal wants. It supposedly means public support for the job of urban renewal easier. And it probably does. But it also raises problems. These groups want assistance in renewing their neighborhoods, they want a plan of action, they want to see something happen. And they want to see it now, not years from now.

For those groups which operate within the worst neighborhoods, those in which formal renewal treatment can be expected within a reasonable period of time, the answer is relatively simple. If not entirely satisfactory. These groups can be told at least in general terms what to expect. But what of all those other organizations which operate in neighborhoods which may be slightly run down or show the ravages of age but can't be classified as slums? What do we tell them when we complain about pockets of blight in their neighborhoods? What do we say when they ask us what we intend to do for them? These people enjoy their neighborhoods. They like the old streets and the familiar houses. They are anxious to do something but they need guidance. They need help. And they need it now. Can we say to them: "Don't worry about a thing. We have the results of a very expensive community renewal program study right here and it says: 'your neighborhoods should be ready for rehabilitation in exactly 14 years.'"

Now it's quite obvious that something must be done for these groups, and for their neighborhoods, long before any project can be started under the current renewal program. Some thing must be done to help them help themselves. We are trying to do just that in Rochester as best we can with the funds available. A new program with the Department of Urban Renewal will be created soon to act as a liaison with neighborhood groups. But this program will be one very small step in the right direction. Much more is needed. Another step in the right direction which can never be provided by renewal officials sitting in City Hall offices. They haven't the time and they're too far removed from the neighborhood level. The neighborhood offices would also have to include several conservation inspectors who could spend their full time on door to door inspections and counseling. The program might also include housing influences. This type of program would not involve lengthy structural surveys or detailed analysis programs. Elaborate and costly surveys would not have to be established. Its sole purpose would be to assist, guide, and foster voluntary citizen efforts within a neighborhood. This type of an approach to the whole process would not be feasible for every area. In many instances, neighborhood groups want assistance in renewing their neighborhoods. They have the desire and the willingness to do something, but they need help. Therefore it would not be economically wise to try such an approach in an area which might require extensive treatment within a few years. In such areas, only a hold the line code enforcement program is probably justified.

This type of program, however, can work in many neighborhoods. The answer to the question of an approach which would be economically feasible is the ones which would not be touched by the current renewal program for years but which are nevertheless sliding down the slope of urban deterioration. These areas can easily be identified through the community renewal program. Assistance for such voluntary conservation programs would most definitely cut out the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on planning or the millions of dollars spent on large-scale rehabilitation projects. But it would cost a smaller sum to establish a new program. (Continued on page 3)
OPERATION GRASS ROOTS '61, '62, '63

"Operation Grass Roots '61, '62, '63" - A prospectus of the proposed Monroe County Greater Coordinating Center

For the past two years, this plan has been in the meeting, talking and investigative stage. A series of meetings have been held with Gordon A. Howe, County Manager and other state, county and city leaders to determine the availability of funds. We discovered that there are no funds from any governmental agencies, nor have there been since the Lanham Act of World War II.

The Citizens Coordinating Committee believes that this plan is not especially a master plan. However, this plan DOES recognize the source of the disease, diagnose the symptoms, regretfully, that as the thermometer rises, the condition will erode with even greater speed and violence than previously.

This position is endorsed by the signatures of some 3,200 citizens at the grass roots level, representative of the city and county as a whole.

Enclosed herewith is an organizational chart which we feel is self-explanatory as to the details of the plan. We have also enclosed a map of the areas in which migratory workers are found, since it is from this source that comes the peoples with - and for - whom this plan is projected.

The Coordinating Center would be the focal point from which these activities would be direct and through which affiliations with the various city and county and state agencies would be contacted. We feel it is imperative that the newcomer to the area should be met with concrete plans for his well-being in the areas of (1) Housing, (2) Employment and (3) Religious Affiliation. Orientation should be started immediately, acquainting them with all the facilities at their disposal.

Because Rochester is a city of highly specialized skills and a lack of heavy industry, and because the average new arrival possesses few of the necessary skills, he becomes a "marginal" worker (which is to say that he works about 7 months of the year and draws unemployment insurance the remaining 5). He must, therefore, be oriented at once to this society before he becomes involved with the law, a burden on the welfare, or falls prey to the "easy money" merchants.

We do not advocate running the city with the "easy money," but the "easy money" merchants, as mobile equipment, to go along with the movies, proper refitment to Rochester community life.

We do not advocate running them away. The Citizens Coordinating Committee of Rochester and Monroe County plans to open the Coordinating Center within the month, in downtown Rochester.

MAYOR SPEAKS AT NATIONAL HOUSING CONFERENCE

(Mayor speaks at page 2)

A few cities have attempted a program of this type, but most cities, and Rochester is included, can ill afford to embark on such an ambitious undertaking alone.

What we believe is needed desperately is Federal assistance for neighborhood conservation programs. A relatively modest sum for each non-profit project aid now could save a substantial public expenditure in years to come.

There is no doubt in my mind that the urban problems of today will be with us for many years to come. There will be a continuing need for large-scale Federal and State urban renewal aid not only through the 1960's but the 1970's as well. Such aid must be channeled into middle and low income housing, into community facilities and improvements of all types.

People in the know, people on the go, enjoy the Geneseesecret!

(Continued from page 2)

1. That the Rochester Chamber of Commerce consult with the Retail Merchants Association, representing the stores in the downtown area, to insure that the Negro be allocated 8% of all employment. This applies as well to the Hudson Avenue Business Association, the Joseph Avenue Business Association. We feel that some sort of plan also should be put into force amongst the unorganized business in the Southwest area of the city.

2. If some attention were given to "upgrading" the Negro employees already holding positions in stores, banks, etc., this would allow more room for employment of other Negroes in the vacated positions.

Our program of entertainment in the form of movies using on of the city's discarded ambulances as mobile equipment. To go along with the movies, community life.

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CONCERT PRESENTED AT CALEDONIA

The Rev. Marvin Chandler was the featured artist at the concert which he gave, Sunday, May 26, at 4 p.m. at the Caledonia High School under the sponsorship of the Second Baptist Church of Mumford.

The Rev. Mr. Chandler is well qualified as organist, pianist, and vocalist. A number of years ago he organized the Chandler Trio with his twin sister, Marsha, and Ernest Norris. He chose his younger sister, Marlene, when Norris was called to the service.

The trio appeared on Arthur Godfrey’s Talent Scouts program and traveled extensively in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. He had his own television program, singing hymns and religious songs on the broadcast.

After completing four years at the Indiana University and graduating with a major in social service, he felt the call to the ministry in 1947, and became assistant pastor at the Second Baptist Church of Bloomington under the guidance of the Rev. M. M. Porter. He became full time pastor after the Rev. Mr. Porter’s death in 1953 and continued to fill the pulpit another year. While still assistant pastor, he attended Franklin College for the school year in 1949-50. Previously he had attended the Chicago Baptist Institute.

Since September 1, 1959, the Rev. Mr. Chandler has been serving as pastor of the Second Baptist Church of LeRoy. For the past year he has been executive secretary of the Geneseo Council of Churches. Following graduation from the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in May, he will become associate executive director in the field of general education and will join the Rev. Richard N. Hughes, executive director, and the Rev. Harold L. Clark, an associate executive director. His appointment by the council is part of a long range program including separation of responsibility of week-day religious education from general education.

The Chandlers were married in 1956 and have three daughters, Suzanne, Jolene, and Faith.

PARENTS URGED TO STRESS HIGHWAY SAFETY

Albany -- Motor Vehicle Commissioner William S. Holts today called upon parents of high school pupils throughout the State to help curb the rash of auto accidents which usually mar the last few weeks of the school year.

"From time calls for heightened emphasis in the young folks," the Commissioner said, "and while we can excuse them for their inattention at the close of school, we could never excuse ourselves, if through our lack of control, we allowed them to cause disaster on the highway."

Junior operators are not allowed to drive at night for these dances and parties, he pointed out, unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian. And, he added, it would be a good idea for them to accompany teens-agers who hold regular licenses also for the chances

Some people think that one boss is too many. We at the Rochester Gas & Electric have over 200,000 bosses and we love‘em! Who are they? Why, they’re you, and you... and you! Yes, we take orders 24 hours a day, every day, from the more than 200,000 customers that we serve. With that many bosses we don’t dare fall down on our job! We must give them what they want when they want it... and they certainly want what they want... They want Service with a capital "S"! We try to keep a few jumps ahead of them so that we will be ready for any extra emergency demands. That’s essential. With 200,000 bosses we’ve got to be on the ball. So all we can say is: "Thanks for your demands, thanks for your constructive criticism, thanks for everything! We won’t let you down!"

—Service is our business.
Negro Contributions
Given Recognition

Negro contributions to American and Rochester history were singled out for recognition last night during a special exhibit opening at the Museum of Arts and Sciences.

Involved was the extensive display of memorabilia from the lives of famous Rochester Negroes, developed in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, and in conjunction with the Negro Emancipation Centennial Authority and its local committees.

The life of Rochester resident Frederick Douglass, renowned Negro abolitionist, orator and journalist, is graphically depicted in many of his documents, pictures and publications.

The exhibits of last night's program was a dramatic sketch by Miss Virginia Ferris of the University of Rochester, and contemporary figures, native born singer William C. Warfield and entertainer Cab Calloway were involved.

We have started a public fund to receive contributions towards the purchase of such a center. We believe this to be of the greatest importance and seek the help of the entire community towards the immediate implementation of these pilot projects. Many of the solutions that are now desperate need of must of necessity, evolve from the the need to help those people to help themselves. We are the time to act - Tomorrow may be too late.
HUMAN RELATIONS RE-EXAMINED

When an organization decides to examine itself honestly, knowing that by doing so it risks kicking itself in its pants, it deserves some sort of reward for unique public service. There has never been an overwhelming trend among public service organizations to do that sort of thing...some of them, if they looked hard enough at themselves, might find out that there was no need for their existence.

Thus the community will want to acknowledge with gratitude the decision of the embattled but hard-working Monroe County Human Relations Commission to set aside a full day in the near future and examine itself, its goals, its record and its methods.

"Whitewash!" some cynics are apt to grumble. But it's no such thing. Consider some of the suggested areas for discussion, now being circulated among commission members by Alan J. Underberg, chairman of the steering committee, who has been working out this soul-searching idea with the commission chairman, Kenneth M. Storandt, and Director Lotus Carson:

"Have we made any significant contribution to improving human relations in Monroe County?"

"What have been our weak points?...our strong points?"

"Would it have made any significant difference to the community if we had not been in existence?"

"Should we be set up differently so as to act officially more quickly when tensions are rising?"

The suggested questions go on, four pages of them, all sharply disturbing questions. What is wrong with liaison with the white community? Where is the leadership in the Negro community? Are the commissioners really finding time to stay close to their various areas of interest?

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This is self-examination with a scalpel, a microscope and a bludgeon. It reinforces our publicly expressed conviction that the Monroe County Human Relations Commission is sincere in its desire to do a job; that it deserves much more community support than it has had; and that it should be backed before any competing organizations are formed in careless haste.

(Editor's Note: WE ARE NOT sure of the meaning of this Editorial. Perhaps time will tell.)

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