

Rochester, City and Diocese of Rich Traditions

By DAVE WARNER

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Rochester, N.Y., is a city that prides herself on being different, though she often doesn't know why. You don't ask for hot dogs in Rochester. Here they simply are called "hots." Most of the rest of the nation pronounces the name Charlotte with the accent on the first syllable. Here, where Charlotte is a name for a section of the city, it is accented on the second syllable.

The same goes for Chili, pronounced everywhere else in the U.S. as "chilly." In Rochester, where Chili is a name for another section of the city, it is pronounced "Chye-lee." Even Rochester comes out of natives' mouths sounding more like "Raster." In Rochester, you'd better go along with these pronunciations, or you'll be the one who is considered different.

Rochester is a city sure of herself, proud of her history, with a crisp directness a Westerner might think a bit cold. She is a cliquish, clubby city. One of her own authors once called her "Smugtown, U.S.A." She is a city where entertainment promoters go about scratching their heads over why they can't make ends meet with an area population of nearly half a million from which to draw. Yet one of the favorite local diversions is complaining about the lack of places to go, things to do and see.

She owns some of the nation's most thriving and most varied industries, but applies her make-up so skillfully that her industry doesn't show.

She has experienced some of the most severe winters this side of Siberia. Ever watch one of those movie newsreels where the snow is piled over cars and mailboxes? Chances are that the camera shot the snow scene in Rochester, if not in neighboring Buffalo or Oswego.

Genesee Country

Rochester, the third largest city in New York state, with 318,611 population (about 40% of which is Catholic), is tucked away up in the northwestern corner of the state in one of the nation's most fertile agricultural regions. Through the center of the city flows the Genesee river for ten miles of its course.

The Genesee for years was almost the bloodstream of the city. Its falls provided the power that made the place a flour-milling center more than a century ago. The river turned the community into a boom town with picturesque, exciting characters. Although the downtown city since has closed over the Genesee, the stream remains one of the most important features. Running north and bridged 12 times, it forms the physical dividing line between West and East Sides of town, between the old Rochester and the new, and in some sense between the workers and owners.

The river touches almost all phases of city life. At its southern end it flows past the River campus of the University of Rochester. At the center of town the smokestacks of industry begin to rise. Farther north, the Genesee, cutting like a knife into deep-dish apple pie, sinks into a scenic gorge, the banks of which are clustered with houses and parks.

Hewn from Forest

In 1789, 45 years before Rochester became a city, a woodsman named Ebenezer (Indian) Allan cleared 110 acres of ground and built himself a couple of mills at the falls. When declining business and Genesee fever depleted the settlement, he left.

Fourteen years later, Col. Nathaniel Rochester, a veteran of the Revolutionary war, rid-

ing north from Maryland, spotted the river site, liked it, and bought up Allan's holdings. He gave his name to the community.

More than 100 years before Allan and the colonel got ideas about a community here, French Catholics, who visited and evangelized the Seneca and Cayuga Indians in the area which is now the Catholic Diocese of Rochester, did more to make known the hitherto unknown pathways of Eastern North America than all other groups of white men combined. Work the pioneer Catholic missionaries did among the Indians led the way of exploration and lit the torch of Christianity.

Champlain, the famous French explorer, had hoped to make a personal visit to this region, but work in Canada kept him too busy. He sent his agent, Etienne Brule, whose maps contributed to the first knowledge civilized men had about the Great Lakes.

Frontier Faith

In 1808, Pope Pius IX chose the vicar general of the 15-year-old Newark, N.J., diocese, Father Bernard J. McQuaid, to head the new Rochester diocese. He came to Rochester when it was still little more than a frontier town. The Catholic community was sharply divided by nationality lines and handicapped by bigotry. Bishop McQuaid found one Irish Catholic and five German Catholic parochial schools. Even the dead were divided in separate cemeteries.

To show that he intended to be spiritual father to all Catholics regardless of their national origin, he arranged two ceremonies, one in the obvious Irish stronghold of St. Patrick's church and a second immediately following in St. Joseph's church for Germans, on the day of his installation.

Rochester's first bishop won national recognition for his outstanding success in establishing "Christian free schools." Today the Rochester diocesan school system is still a model for the U.S. Today's accepted motto, "A Catholic child belongs in a Catholic school," was little known in 1808. Catholic schools were then few, and most of them required fees which prevented all but the rich from attending.

To bring the training of future priests under his direct supervision, Bishop McQuaid established St. Andrew's preparatory seminary in 1870, and in 1891 laid the first stone for St. Bernard's seminary. He had one condition for entrance to the seminary: "All the students are required to furnish their brains," he said.

The establishment of Holy Sepulchre, Rochester's huge Catholic cemetery, was still another fruit of the bishop's efforts. The cemetery was his shrewd way of ridding his diocese of any last traces of bitter nationalistic divisions.

The succeeding Rochester bishops took their cue from Bishop McQuaid. The 2nd one, Bishop Thomas F. Hickey, left monuments that will endure as long as Rochester exists: St. Aquinas Institute, Mercy High School, Nazareth Academy, and Nazareth College. He pioneered in the "released-time" program now established by law throughout New York State to provide religious instruction to Catholic pupils in public schools.

Bishop Hickey also counseled his brother, the late Jeremiah, founder of the nationally famous Hickey-Freeman Clothing Co., in setting up a management-employee plan which still serves as a model for the industry across the nation.

Bishop John Francis O'Hern, 3rd bishop, is best remembered for his kindness to the needy of the diocese during the years of the great depression. He also appointed chaplains to supervise Newman clubs at colleges and universities, formed the Nocturnal Adoration society, and coordinated many lay societies.

The late Edward Cardinal Mooney of Detroit had been an archbishop for six years when Pope Pius XI appointed him the 4th Bishop of Rochester. Four years is a brief span for a man to leave his mark, but the stamp of Archbishop Mooney is still apparent throughout the Rochester diocese. He never lost his missionary spirit; on one occasion he frankly told an interfaith gathering, "I would wish for nothing quite so much as that all Jews should be Christians, and that all Christians be Catholics."

Bishop Kearney

The present ordinary, Bishop James E. Kearney, has been a bishop 30 years, 25 of them in the Rochester diocese, and has watched churches change skylines in all directions. His years of service here have seen the diocese come of age.

The city buzzes with construction of Catholic projects. Bishop Kearney set a goal of \$4.1 million for two new high schools, one of which is named after him, the other after Cardinal Mooney. Rochester responded by going \$1.7 million over the top.

Under his guidance, McQuaid Jesuit High school for boys, St. Agnes High for girls, and St. John Fisher college were built. In addition, he spent \$225,000 on improvements for Nazareth College for Women.

The vigorous, 76-year-old churchman holds to schedules which often fatigue his priest-secretaries. A typical day may include a 100-mile trip to the far reaches of the diocese, celebration of a pontifical Mass and a sermon, a crowded afternoon of Confirmation ceremonies, and a tedious drive back to Rochester to attend a banquet.

Under his guidance, the diocesan weekly newspaper, the

Courier-Journal, has flourished. It is the largest weekly in New York State outside New York City.

In 1840 flour was big business in Rochester; her mills were grinding out 300,000 barrels a year, and she began calling herself the Flour City. Another ten years, however, and the Minnesota mills had stolen the play; the smart-Rochester money switched to nurseries, men's clothing, shoes, foods, instruments, and equipment. Rochester changed her sobriquet from Flour to Flower City.

Around mid-century, Rochester broke out in a rash of political and social consciousness. It was a station on the Underground Railroad, had a temperance Railroad, a haven for temperance adherents, abolitionists, suffragists, equal-righters, and Spiritualists. The Negro leader Frederick Douglas published his abolitionist newspaper, North Star, in Rochester before the Civil War.

Susan B. Anthony opened her battle for votes for women in Rochester in 1855, and in 1872 — still unfranchised — actually cast a ballot in an election and was fined \$100. Emma Goldman, the anarchist, grew to young womanhood in Rochester and hated every minute of it.

By 1890, Rochester was a wealthy city of 134,000 and still growing. Thousands of Germans, Italians, Canadians, and Jews had responded to her call for workers in new industries: skilled optical technicians, tailors, toolmakers, machine workers, gardeners. John Jacob Bausch and Henry Lomb had established their optical works in 1853. George B. Selden had designed and later patented the country's first automobile. Hiram Sibley had organized Western Union.

Industry and Culture

In 1880 a shy young book-keeper named George Eastman began experimenting with a photographic dry plate which was to make a permanent impact on the world and Rochester. His millions and his philanthropic ideals built the University School of Music and Theater, the city's dental clinic, the medical school.

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city, is being built on a three-level plan.

Sometime soon a Rochester shopper will drive downtown and into the parking garage. Whether it's snowing or raining, she will be able to leave her coat in the car, take an escalator to the surface, and have in front of her a covered temperature-controlled world designed for the pedestrian. Without going outside, she will have access to two department stores, two hotels (one of them perched on top of an 18-level office building), two banks, 30 shops, and a host of other service facilities.

The home and the club are the centers of Rochester social life, leaving visitors and the local racier set dismayed at the skimpy nighttime fare. It is a

city with some of the best manicured golf courses and parks seen anywhere, beautifully tree-lined streets even in the poorer sections, relatively low slum area, an increasing but not appalling crime ratio, a high percentage of well-cared-for old folks, tremendous recreational facilities for youngsters, cultural opportunities for adults.

Promise of great developments, including a new civic center, and deep concern for sound health in every respect (economic, physical, and spiritual) show Rochester as a city which is making its mark. For the person whose values are properly focused, Rochester is the kind of city George Eastman once predicted it would be: an ideal place in which to live and raise a family.

New Job Law Needed

Washington — (RNS) — A Catholic priest who is an expert in race relations urged Congress here to enact legislation to promote fair employment practices.

Father John P. Cronin, S.S., assistant director of the Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, made this plea while addressing a subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

He told the subcommittee that much chronic unemployment is rooted in job discrimination. He said the workers who never had the opportunity to develop skills because of their race now find themselves almost completely unwanted in most labor markets.

"This law is badly needed," Father Cronin asserted. While it is difficult to state which areas of racial justice should have highest priority, anyone familiar with the field would place job opportunity close to the top.



Select Class Ring
OFFICERS OF THE Junior Class, DeSales High School, Geneva are here selecting their class ring. Thomas McGlown, president, seated, with John Marino, Marilyn McGrath and Moxie Zeoli. Photo by P. B. Oakley.

Henrietta KC Sets Breakfast
Our Lady of the Genesee Jack Palvino, well known radio broadcaster for Station WBBF will be the guest speaker. The topic of his speech will be "Why a Catholic College?"

THE BREAKFAST will be held at 9:15 a.m. at the Tremholm Motor Lodge on West Henrietta Road.

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