

For most of the century following 1864, the *Sentinel's* history closely paralleled that of Montgomery County except for the County's spectacular growth of the last few decades. In 1962, when the present management took control, the *Sentinel* was still a fairly typical county weekly with a circulation of 8,500, but the County was no longer a pastoral countryside on the outskirts of Washington as it had been for so many years. The *Sentinel's* circulation since 1962 has tripled, to 27,000 this year, revealing how rapidly and effectively the present management and editorial policies have captured the momentum and imagination of Montgomery County and its rapid urban development.

In the two decades before the Kapiloffs and Mr. Farquhar revitalized the *Sentinel*, Montgomery County itself underwent a dramatic and dynamic change. The County's population doubled between 1940 and 1950, and doubled again between 1950 and 1960. Montgomery County, for years a somnambulant, rural political subdivision whose schools and streets were financed in part by the overflowing affluence of Baltimore City, suddenly became not only Maryland's wealthiest County but one of the wealthiest in the nation.

In two swift decades, the traditional character of a county evolved over two centuries underwent a dramatic transition to become the State's most sophisticated, urban-oriented, well-educated and affluent subdivision. The State found itself in the unique position of having to catch up with Montgomery County rather than pulling Montgomery along with the State.

But the pains of birth and growth are no less severe because the birth or growth is swift. Montgomery County has very real problems to meet, challenges to confront and adjustments to make because of—and not just in spite of—its unprecedented development.

You see it all about you. The County Council has, in recent weeks, taken action to establish a Commission to draft a new Charter replacing one now outdated for a population that has tripled since it was first drafted. The annual County budget has increased tenfold during that period and the character of the population has become urbanized.

A member of the County Council has requested that the 1964 General Development Plan adopted by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission be updated. Five years of study were invested in the plan which was based on the theory that Montgomery County was, and would essentially be, a bedroom suburb of Washington. Two years later this premise is no longer valid. Sixty percent of