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# Capital Cities: Planning, Politics, and Environmental Protest in Lansing, Michigan and Salt Lake City, Utah, 1920-1945

By

Ted D. Moore

A DISSERTATION

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**Abstract**

CAPITAL CITIES: PLANNING, POLITICS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTEST IN LANSING, MICHIGAN AND SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, 1920-1945

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This dissertation examines the efforts of reform groups, civic leaders, and city planners in Lansing, Michigan, and Salt Lake City, Utah, from 1920 to 1945 in their efforts to define and create urban spaces. The experiences in Lansing, Michigan and Salt Lake City, Utah demonstrates how, "the physical features and resources of urban sites (and regions) influence and are shaped by natural forces, growth, spatial change and development, and human action."

Americans' competing definitions about the meanings and values of "nature" and the purpose of cities are ultimately tied to differing ideas about American democracy. These debates have often been historically played out and the results manifest in urban settings, while the decisions made have had distinct ramifications on the shape and growth of cities as well as their political, socio/cultural, and economic structures. This on- going dialogue has, in turn, had a reciprocal effect on how people have chosen to reinterpret and relate to the "natural world."

This study illustrates the above ideas through the illumination of four major points. First, it seeks to incorporate notions of the environment and the ideas and efforts of women more centrally into the literature on urban history. Second, it demonstrates that the modern day environmental movement not only began, as early as the 1890s, but also continued through World War II. Third, it demonstrates that from the 1920s through the 1940s, embedded in this environmental movement was a critique of, and an attempt to

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alter America's economic and political systems along more democratic lines. Finally it argues that cities' neglect of serious urban environmental issues contributed to the accelerated rate of post-World War II suburbanization.

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**Table of Contents**

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## Introduction

### Nature, Capitalism, and Democracy

This dissertation examines the efforts of reform groups, civic leaders, and city planners in Lansing, Michigan, and Salt Lake City, Utah, from 1920 to 1945 in their efforts to define and create urban spaces. Most scholars who examine environmental history, do so with the belief that city and country, urbanscape and wilderness are separate issues and should be treated accordingly. This is done in part to set boundaries on what could easily become an unwieldy and amorphous subject. A few scholars, though, have taken issue with this arbitrary delineation and have called for those who research and write about the environment and the city to better integrate the two. This study attempts to do just that. The experiences in Lansing, Michigan and Salt Lake City, Utah demonstrates how, "the physical features and resources of urban sites (and regions) influence and are shaped by natural forces, growth, spatial change and development, and human action."[1]

Americans' competing definitions about the meanings and values of "nature" and the purpose of cities are ultimately tied to differing ideas about American democracy. These debates have often been historically played out and the results manifest in urban settings, while the decisions made have had distinct ramifications on the shape and growth of cities as well as their political, socio/cultural, and economic structures. This

[1] Martin Melosi, *Effluent America: Cities, Industry, Energy, and the Environment*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), 125-126.

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on- going dialogue has, in turn, had a reciprocal effect on how people have chosen to reinterpret and relate to the "natural world."[2]

This study illustrates the above ideas through the illumination of four major points. First, it seeks to incorporate notions of the environment and the ideas and efforts of women more centrally into the literature on urban history. Second, it demonstrates that the modern day environmental movement not only began, as David Stradling argues, as early as the 1890s, but also continued through World War II, thus providing an important transition between late 19th century conservationist ideas and contemporary environmental ideologies. As part of this link, activists capitalized on the earlier conservationist ethos of efficiency and the commodification of "nature out there" and incorporated those ideas into a more environmentally friendly philosophy to improve the built environment. I call this infusion of the "natural world" with the city "urban nature." Third, it demonstrates that from the 1920s through the 1940s, embedded in this environmental movement was a critique of, and an attempt to alter America's economic and political systems along more democratic lines. Finally it argues that cities' neglect of serious urban environmental issues contributed to the accelerated rate of post-World War II suburbanization.[3]

Each city has its own unique features, which is what makes urban history so interesting. Those differences can be explained through the examination of each locale's

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[2] Christine Meisner Rosen and Joel Tarr, "The Importance of an Urban Perspective in Environmental History," *Journal of Urban History* 20 (May 1994): 299-307.

[3] David Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressive: Environmentalists, Engineers, and Air Quality in America, 1881-1951*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 191. Stradling writes that Victorian-minded women held attitudes similar to post World War II environmentalists, but that as male professionals assumed the role of fighting air pollution, a more conservationist attitude and policies prevailed.

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physical setting, its access to natural resources, climate, etc. The demographics of a place, and the historical timing of each community's founding can also explain communal differences in terms of politics, economics, and a city's physical shape. Yet, urban/environmental history can also be used to simultaneously help explain commonalities over planning, settlement, and other development patterns through the careful study of peoples' attitudes about and the role of nature, the environment, and democracy within an urban context.

It is in this light that a comparative history can be so valuable. Lansing, Michigan and Salt Lake City, on the surface, are very different places, yet they also share many important similarities. Lansing came into existence by an act of the Michigan State Legislature as the result of an inability to decide on a state capital. From the beginning, the community had to deal with its geographic location. Much of the area was swampy and had to be drained. This problem, combined with the thick growth of vegetation, meant difficulty in building sufficient roads, which resulted in the new town's relative isolation for a time. Lansing did benefit from the founding of a land- grant college, Michigan Agricultural College, just a few miles away in the new settlement of East Lansing, and by the fact that the city's relative unimportance, despite being the capital, meant slow and easily sustainable growth in the beginning.

Salt Lake City was founded in the 1840s by Mormon pioneers fleeing repeated instances of religious persecution in places like New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. Under Brigham Young, they hoped to find a place of relative isolation where they could establish a base and build a "city on the hill" from which they could again share their beliefs with the rest of the world. Like Lansing, Salt Lake residents had to deal with a

challenging physical environment. Water had to be provided through extensive irrigation canals and, because the community was located in a valley surrounded by high mountains, frequent temperature inversions trapped smoke from wood-burning stoves creating air pollution.

People primarily from the American Northeast and England initially settled both cities. "Yankees" from Vermont, Connecticut, and New York traveled to Michigan in search of their own farmlands, while the Latter Day Saint Church was organized in New York State. Missionaries were sent to England in the early 1840s and converts began moving to Ohio and then Utah in large numbers. Lansing saw in- migration a little later, in the 1880s and '90s, by people from the surrounding countryside, England, and Canada. Both cities then, were composed of primarily white, Anglo- Saxon/American- Yankee stock.

Both cities, up until roughly 1890, based their economies primarily on agriculture, state government, and small-scale manufacturing, although Salt Lake did have the benefit of being more of a regional financial center, particularly due to the state's mineral industry. Salt Lake and Utah, though, tried for a time, to have an autonomous economic system based on communal cooperation and an eye towards a greater public good, while people in Lansing embraced the culture of the individualist, industrial/ capitalist system, but had to deal with people in outlying areas who clung to more traditional ideas for a time. By the early 1900s, both Lansing and Salt Lake were cities reliant upon industry, and the municipal leaders in both places saw their cities as machines of economic growth, and, as a result, would face challenges from individuals and groups who held competing definitions of democracy.

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**Progressivism in Brief**

As early as the 1870s, many reform-minded groups had attempted to deal with the negative physical effects of industrialization. One of the consistencies of the Progressive Era, however, is that reformers tried to use the Industrial Revolution's technological innovations, in conjunction with their own efforts, to improve their lives materially, aesthetically, and emotionally and to ensure better infrastructure systems for a greater number of urban dwellers. By so doing they created minimal expectations of comfort and health levels, or in other words, expectations that city governments should be responsible for the prosperity, health, and comfort of all its citizens, rather than cater to an elite few. Their goals, although mixed, usually focused on preserving and enhancing a material lifestyle that technology had introduced.

Yet after the First World War, the standard historiography suggests that the Progressive atmosphere and reform movements of the previous two decades were replaced by a more conservative, pro-business mentality and that the environmentalism of the previous decades was replaced with a philosophy of conservation.[4] It was not until after World War II, historians such as Samuel P. Hays argue, that "environmentalists . . . challenged the hegemony of scientific or technical expertise and . . . offered an alternative to traditional conceptions of efficiency, one that stressed a different method of accounting for resource use, pollution remediation, and the enjoyment of environmental

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[4] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 5, and Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 4-5, and Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), and Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

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Hays reasons that sometime after World War II, Americans began a search for environmental amenities in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities on a grander scale than previously in the nation's history in a desire for a higher quality of life, and it was this search that sparked the contemporary environmental movements. As expressed by David Schuyler,

> Hays believes that four distinct elements contributed to the emergence of environmentalism: a search for amenities, or what he terms an aesthetic response to the environment; concerns over health and well–being manifested in the impact of pollution and the fear of toxins released into the environment; an ecological perspective that sought a greater balance between natural and developed surroundings; and ecologically sound lifestyles that sought to reduce or minimize the human impact of the earth.[6]

Adam Rome, in a somewhat similar vein to Hays, believes that a post-war environmental movement sprung in part from issues related to suburban homebuilding. For example, builders began constructing homes in environmentally sensitive areas-- like steep hillsides, wetlands, and floodplains. As problems like soil erosion occurred as a result of these building practices, citizens became more involved in pressuring private builders and municipalities to begin considering and implementing more ecologically friendly methods to protect their communities. Additionally, these suburbs typically had few open spaces because builders argued that large yards would replace the parks. Many suburbanites became concerned over the loss of the countryside and began efforts to save "open space" in the 1950s. These activists helped force builders to meet new environmental obligations. This became a critical stage in the evolution of the modern

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[5] David Schuyler, "Environmental Politics and the Decline of the Progressive Synthesis," *Journal of Urban History* 20 (Feb. 1994): 283, as taken from Hays, *Beauty, Health and Permanence*, 362.
[6] Schuyler, "Environmental Politics," 280.

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environmental movement. Those who wanted to have parks and open space made three arguments as to why open spaces needed to be preserved: conservation (loss of farmland, flooding problems etc), amenities (aesthetics- people wanted to enjoy the beauty of nature on a daily basis), and outdoor recreation. Finally, many of the new communities were beyond the reach of sewer systems, and many homebuyers did not want higher taxes for municipal services, so they used septic tanks. Yet, homebuyers faced serious problems when those tanks failed within the first couple of years, creating health issues for themselves as well as others when the groundwater became polluted.[7]

Rome also argues that suburbanization meant the recognition over two decades, (between the 1950s and '60s), that problems once identified only with forests and farms also plagued the nation's metropolitan areas and that the loss of visible open spaces to suburbanites was more important than the loss of someplace like Echo Park. Therefore, the desire by Americans to preserve wilderness was "only the tip of an iceberg."[8] Yet, like Hays, Rome does not push his study far enough back in time, nor does he recognize the fact that many Americans worked for the incorporation of nature and better living conditions within their neighborhoods prior to the Second World War. These activists gained allies as more people achieved financial security and could better afford healthier and more beautiful surroundings after the war, but it is the strategies and reasons for that activism that link the two periods.

Environmental issues and an environmentalist attitude had not disappeared after the First World War. In cities like Lansing and Salt Lake, individuals and groups sought

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[7] Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xi, 3, 6, 89, 120, 122, 123, 126, 258.
[8] Ibid., 8.

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to perform all the environmental activities that occurred after World War II as explained by Hays and Rome. In Lansing, for example, Harland Bartholomew created a comprehensive urban plan that incorporated nature into the city with the hopes of fostering a greater democratic spirit within that locale. He paid particular attention to housing and neighborhoods with the goal of making them more livable, healthier, and places where families and individuals would want to stay. In addition, despite most historians' neglect of women's contributions to shaping the built environment, members of the Salt Lake City Women's Chamber of Commerce took it upon themselves to become technologically literate and force a serious political debate over how best to rid that city of its air pollution problems. Both Bartholomew and the Salt Lake Women's Chamber operated from a framework that saw nature as a valuable asset to the urban structure; thought nature could affect long-term economic, health, and moral improvements; and thus tried to more fully incorporate nature into urban communities. While Hays and Rome correctly note that people cared about nature and moved to the suburbs to be "closer to it on a daily basis," they fail to link those desires and the failed efforts in cities with the increased post-war suburbanization and the more wide- spread modern-day environmental movement.

**Identifying "Progressives"**

As the massive literature on the period demonstrates, pinpointing which groups were "Progressive" reformers and which were not is a difficult task. Most business people, politicians, citizens, and professionals alike all happily claimed a Progressive mantle. Reformers did disagree among themselves on how best to beautify their cities, make them healthier and safer places to live, and still maintain a sense of community and

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the material comfort to which they had grown accustomed. Additionally, beliefs in capitalism and free enterprise conflicted at times with desires to curtail factory emissions, clean up water supplies, and reorganize urban spaces. Because environmental issues often involved a reevaluation of the philosophy behind, and the structure of, the economic and political systems, disagreements arose over how much change should have been made, who would realistically have benefited the most, and who would have borne the greatest costs.[9]

What these reformers faced was the reality that most Americans commonly connected democracy and capitalism. As Daniel Rodgers demonstrates, between 1900 and the New Deal, reformers who hoped to democratize the American economy continually battled their own, as well as the nation's, conflicting values of individualism and a democratic collective good. Some groups interpreted democracy to mean limited government intervention in individuals' lives, particularly regarding economics, private property, and the use of natural resources. Most accepted the idea that free market capitalism and a democratic political system were synonymous. There were limits, therefore, on how much reform each group was willing to accept based on personal economic, political, and social interests.[10] Differences between reform groups often boiled down to differences in their notions of democracy. It is in this context that we can best understand debates over city planning, reform measures, and the role of nature in the

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[9] Stephen Skowronek, *Building A New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 42; Dawley, *Struggles for Justice*; Robert D. Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*; Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003).
[10] Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 173, 187, 195, 317.

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urban environment. Paying serious attention to the power and role of nature in shaping urban forms and the way Americans think about themselves, their economic system, and notions of democracy adds a needed dimension to our understanding of urban environmentalism.[11]

One group of early 20th century reformers were more concerned with social justice and held to the idea that democracy implied a certain degree of fairness and equality (at least for whites), and that the responsibility of governments on all levels should have been to work toward and safeguard those ends.[12] These reformers had also grown accustomed to the benefits derived from new technologies and believed that science could solve most of society's ills.

This social justice group pressed for changes in the ideology about the built environment (unlike other reformers who believed that large corporations were the key to communal and national improvements). The social justice reformers hoped to convince local policy makers to place more emphasis on city beautification and create more urban nature or green spaces. They believed that the physical environment reflected and influenced a commitment to political and economic opportunity, fairness, and greater personal control over the built environment.

Because urban beautification represented an outward expression--a physical manifestation--of personal and communal identity, the infusion of urban nature (that is, parks, tree-lined boulevards, large landscaped backyards, and an increased emphasis on

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[11] Maureen Flanagan, "Women in the City, Women of the City: Where do Women fit in Urban History?" *Journal of Urban History*, (March 1997), see also Maureen Flanagan, "The City Profitable, The City Livable: Environmental Policy, Gender, and Power in Chicago in the 1910s," *Journal of Urban History*, (Jan. 1996): 164, 167 and Maureen Flanagan, "Environmental Justice in the City: A Theme for Urban Environmental History," *Environmental History*, (April 2000): 160-161.
[12] Dawley, *Struggles for Justice*, 98-99.

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urban beauty in general) signified a tangible gauge not only of the literal health of a city's inhabitants, but also of its degree of political, economic, and social fairness. As Martin Melosi notes, these social justice reformers perceived the city as an organic entity that they could reshape. He writes, "It was the sense of group responsibility, a corporate view of society, a sense that urbanites had common problems to address, that reinforced an organic view of city life and was expressed in the battle against pollution."[13]

By contrast, pro-capitalist reformers tended to subscribe to social Darwinism, or the idea that certain types of people were solely qualified to govern while everyone else should happily follow along. Because of this elitist ideology, many pro-capitalist reformers, consciously or not, helped to successfully construct and fortify barriers to equal political and economic participation. They believed that a healthy democracy was best manifest through personal prosperity, and that the key to prosperity rested on encouraging businesses to thrive within carefully defined and very limited regulations. The reforms they wanted were thus designed to "preserve the industrial system that had so enriched their communities and themselves."[14]

Hays, Stradling, and others have shown that corporations and other elites successfully controlled environmental issues either as a means of protecting their self-interests or to centralize power in the hands of a "government which would be more consistent with the objectives inherent in those developments" of rationalizing and systematizing modern life.[15] As environmental issues became professionalized or

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[13] Martin Melosi, *Effluent America: Cities, Industry, Energy, and the Environment*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), 218-219.
[14] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 2-5. See also, Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 186-187, 195. Dawley, *Struggles for Justice*, 107.
[15] Schuyler, "Environmental Politics," 278-79.

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controlled by federal regulatory agencies (that were often run by heads of corporations), a philosophy of conservation underlay decision-making and policies.[16] By contrast, Hays does concede that, "individuals who first became involved with environmentalism through local issues tended to reject centralized decision-making and an emphasis on managerial or organizational values."[17] This observation by Hays suggests that there were groups that resented how environmental issues became embedded in the structure of the government and began to lodge protests in an effort to re-democratize environmental decisions.

One aspect of urban environmentalism that most of the literature misses, however, is the role of women. Maureen A. Flanagan has challenged urban historians to begin more fully incorporating the efforts of women into urban histories to "reveal how women helped shape the total urban experience."[18] By the 1880s, as a major part of the reform movements, women had begun to expand their accepted social roles as moral guardians of the home and of their families' health and stepped up their efforts to create healthier societies and cities. In the process, they hoped to increase their political and social power. During the Progressive Era, white, middle-class women played an important role in environmental reforms and continued to fight for reforms in the following decades. Yet until women were able to successfully politicize environmental issues and formulate an environmentalist mentality akin to the modern day movement, male politicians were able to ignore them.[19] By the turn of the century, however, as these issues became more politically important, men tended to commandeer women's influence and assume more

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[16] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 191 and Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*
[17] Schuyler, "Environmental Politics," 278-79, Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*
[18] Flanagan, "Women in the City, Women of the City," 251.
[19] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 104-105.

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These issues of power and control over women are just part of the dialogue concerning democracy. Male professionals' attempts to usurp these important issues point to efforts by the state to limit and control definitions of gender roles and democracy. Joan Wallach Scott argues that not only do authoritarian regimes (such as Nazi Germany) connect the domination of women as an "assertion of control or strength," but also 20th century democratic States have "constructed their political ideologies with gendered concepts and translated them into policy" too.[21] Despite this, women continued to spearhead debates over the physical structure of the urban environment and through those debates also gained a measure of control over the direction of the political and economic structures in their communities as well.

Some recent work investigating the connections between gender and environmentalism has found that many women reformers wanted to create an urban space where both the city's residents and its government could work for the betterment of all citizens rather than from the standpoint of making the city profitable for a few. In trying to clean up their cities, women were redefining the objectives of environmental policy away from movements centered on the idea of a "city profitable," (which was the primary goal of the "city functional" and "city beautiful" movements), and towards a "city livable." In the process of trying to remake a city's built environment, women reformers

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[20] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 5, 105; Angela Gugliotta, "Class, Gender, and Coal Smoke: Gender Ideology and Environmental Injustice in Pittsburgh, 1868-1914," *Journal of Urban History*, (January 1996): 165-193; Maureen A. Flanagan, "The City Profitable, The City Livable," *Journal of Urban History*, (January 1996): p. 164-180.

[21] Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in Joan Wallach Scott, ed., *Feminism and History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 172.

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attempted to broaden government and public responsibility for the city's welfare by reordering municipal power structures.[22]

Their actions thus represented a critique of the political and economic systems. Although they did not necessarily want to destroy or radically alter the political economy, they nonetheless transposed and transformed idealistic Jeffersonian beliefs--that America is a nation of boundless economic opportunity and that land ownership is the key to increased democratic participation and virtuous citizenship--into an urban environmental philosophy.

The goals of women's groups, though, were as mixed as those of reformers in general. Some women felt threatened by the cultural practices of immigrants and wanted to "Americanize" them. Others desired greater equality with men and used their accepted role as "municipal housekeepers" to widen their political power. Still, other women's groups genuinely cared about the health and welfare of all American citizens and used environmental activism to try to curtail what they perceived as both political and economic excesses and empower themselves in the process: either as moral guardians of the family and society, or as men's political and social equals. In so doing, they hoped to create a greater sense of fairness and democracy in the political and economic systems in the U.S., by altering these systems to better facilitate immigrants and the working classes in acquiring the adaptive tools necessary to allow them greater economic opportunity and

[22] Flanagan, "The City Profitable, The City Livable," 164-180; Angela Gugliotta, "How, When, and for Whom Was Smoke a Problem in Pittsburgh?" in *Devastation and Renewal: An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and Its Region*, Joel Tarr, ed. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003): 110-125; and James L. Longhurst, "Don't Hold Your Breath, Fight For It!' Women's Activism and Citizen Standing in Pittsburgh and the United States, 1965-1975" (Ph.D. Diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 2004).

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political independence, such as language and other job skills.[23]

Other studies have shown that when women either refocused their efforts on other reforms or were pushed out of their agenda-setting roles by professional male "experts," the reform movements tended to take on a more conservative tone. Between roughly 1910 and the late 1930s, engineers and municipal leaders emphasized increased efficiency and economy (as a reflection of a conservationist mentality), partially displacing the emphasis on health and beauty. As part of this movement, engineers shifted their focus to improving existing equipment rather than experimenting with cleaner fuels. It seems apparent though, that the ideas of turn-of-the-century women reformers continued to echo into the 1940s. New women's civic groups, professionals, and city boosters from the 1920s on adopted many of the goals these earlier women's reform groups had advocated.[24]

Most often, what women reformers wanted did not come to fruition in the short term, or in the form that they had hoped. This does not mean, however, that their efforts should be ignored or worse, dismissed. The fact is that they infused a new mentality into the political debate that forced politicians and industry to consider the value and role nature and an improved environment could and should play in the physical city. Historians need to take seriously the efforts and role that women have played in shaping urban environmental issues, in order to gain a more complete understanding of how and why American cities look and function the way they do.

**A Radical Middle- Class?**

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[23] Gugliotta, "Class, Gender, and Coal Smoke," 165-193; see also Harold L. Platt, "Jane Addams and the Ward Boss Revisited: Class, Politics, and Public Health in Chicago, 1890-1930," *Environmental History* 5 (April 200): 194-222.
[24] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 5, 105, 181; and Longhurst, "Don't Hold Your Breath."

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Were these reform efforts "radical?" The answer depends on one's perspective. On one hand, reformers wanted to place some reins on industry and were willing to challenge local political powers to do so. Michael McGerr argues that Progressives in general were radical, "in their conviction that other social classes must be transformed and in their boldness in going about the business of that transformation."[25] Robert D. Johnston also sees middle-class small business owners and well-paid blue-collar workers in Portland, Oregon, as radical elements in their efforts to balance individualism, profit, competition, "modernity," a "moral economy," and a "cooperative vision of community life."[26]

On the other hand, Alan Dawley believes that reformers' efforts to reconcile the contradictions between a liberal heritage and industrial capitalism came to a head during the New Deal, and if "there was a watchword covering the reforms of the time it was neither liberty nor equality, but security."[27] Other historians have also seen reformers' actions as conservative in that they looked to ideologies from the past and hoped to reshape them to fit a vastly different world in an effort to conserve traditional values, and/or retain their own social and economic positions of power.[28]

These competing interpretations point to the fact that white middle-class men and women reformers were not monolithic in their ideas about the urban environment. However, the urban environmental movement from the 1920s through the 1940s was an expression by a segment of society that was primarily middle-class. Robert Johnston

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[25]McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, xv.
[26] Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 11.
[27] Dawley, *Struggles for Justice*, 4. See also Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).
[28] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 14-15; Wiebe, *The Search for Order*.

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contends that middle class people in Portland, Oregon, attempted to align themselves with workers in order to "create a middle-class utopia that would, through a vigorous expansion of populist democracy, abolish most class distinctions, eliminate capitalist exploitation, bring women to full political power, allow ordinary families to make decisions about their lives in an age of expert control, overturn American imperialism, and even subvert racial privilege."[29] While Johnston looks more at issues such as the single tax and anti-vaccination movements, the same motives attributed to those in Portland can be found in the urban environmental protests that took place in Lansing and Salt Lake City between 1920 and 1945.

**Limits to Reform**

According to Stephen Skowronek, Progressive Era America's political structure inhibited the passage of most reform legislation and only a true revolution could have succeeded in changing politics. He contends that the virtue of the people was limited by institutionalized structural restraints. So, in the efforts to transform the state between 1900 and 1920, the state emerged with a powerful administrative arm, yet authoritative controls over this power were locked in a constitutional stalemate.[30] The ability of political parties and the courts to control the internal operations of the American government and to define the relations between state and society became obstacles to any new institutional developments.

In addition to the political and legal strictures, American reformers hoped for continual urban growth, and they recognized that heavy manufacturing was still the primary source of employment in the nation despite the fact that after World War I

[29] Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 16.
[30] Skowronek, *Building A New American State*, 16.

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America's economy was slowly becoming consumer-based.[31] Their challenge was to figure out how to curtail the political and economic dominance of the men who ran these companies and still maintain and improve the jobs and lives of the nation's blue-collar workers. At the same time, Americans faced an assault on all fronts to alter their overall mentality, including their spending habits, religious beliefs, and general outlook on life.

According to Richard H. Robbins, the culture of consumer capitalism that was created in this country between 1880 and 1930 was not an inevitable consequence of industrialization. He writes that industrialization created capitalists and laborers, but it was not until the end of the 19th century that the consumer was consciously created to "save industrial capitalism from its own efficiency." He points out that in these years a major transition took place in the United States in the rate and level of commodity consumption, due, among other reasons, to increased and more effective marketing and advertising, cooperative efforts of local, state and the federal government with private business, and the transformation of American spiritual and intellectual values that once emphasized frugality, thrift, and modesty, to those that "sanctioned periodic leisure, compulsive spending, and individual fulfillment."[32]

For example, the amount of money invested in advertising by all industries in 1880 was roughly $30 million. By 1910 oil, food, electricity, and rubber industries alone spent $600 million. Department stores developed new methods of displaying and promoting goods through sleeker packaging and better use of window display methods. The federal government also contributed to the rise of a consumer culture. In 1921,

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[31] Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 206.
[32] Richard H. Robbins, *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002), 4, 14-16, 18.

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under Herbert Hoover, the Department of Commerce began extensive research into the buying habits of Americans, cataloging where and when they purchased specific goods. They then made this information available to businesses. Ellis Hawley describes this governmental emphasis and its accompanying institutionalization at the federal level as part of the process of building an "associative state."[33]

This time period also witnessed the rise of "mind cure religions" that rejected ideas of sin and guilt. These new sects also maintained that a person could be healed simply with positive thoughts and happiness could be obtained through commodity consumption and focusing on the "self."[34] Thus when one considers issues of urban development, the environment, and reform, it is also necessary to place the issues within a cultural context of consumerism and to examine how decision makers of the time equated them with definitions of democracy.

Local political and business leaders also confronted these same contradictions. They too wanted cleaner and healthier cities and saw some economic advantages to livable city environments and recognized that improved infrastructures would facilitate a more cost effective flow of goods and services. In order to retain businesses and simultaneously appease the middle classes, cities were forced to confront basic service issues such as sewage treatment, clean water, paved streets, and garbage removal. They were also forced to confront the fact that a growing number of urban dwellers wanted more parks, recreational spaces, and in general, increased opportunities to interact with

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[33] Ibid., 16, 18. See also Ellis Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions, 1917-1933*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), see esp. chs. 5-6.

[34] Robbins, *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, 13-20. Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order*, see esp. chs. 5 and 6.

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nature. Some businesses agreed to slightly higher taxes to support services in order to attract a stable workforce, improve transportation, and increase business efficiency, and they were even willing to construct more urban nature so long as it could be profitably commodified. They saw the advantages of readily adopting progressive language and ideology to accomplish their economic goals. City leaders generally agreed, however, that reform measures could not be taken too far or businesses would leave for less constricting settings.[35]

Additionally, while most reformers looked for increased fairness in the system, many business leaders and municipal officials felt only limited reforms were necessary because they feared too much democracy would potentially challenge their control over the political system. They recognized that controlling the physical city also meant economic, political, and social control as well. By extension they worried that they would lose control over the direction of the city's economy and its cultural values if they allowed the populace to wholly dictate how urban spaces would be used. In essence, municipal decision makers believed that their vision of America was the only correct one. By the 1920s they could point to the fact that the United States was the leading industrial producer in the world and that American workers were better paid than their counterparts in Europe as a vindication of their ideals. They had all personally achieved material comfort and relative economic security and pointed to their economic standing as proof of their intellectual and moral superiority. They therefore interpreted any challenge to their philosophies as an affront to their definition of what it meant to be an American and to what had made America, themselves, and their families great. In short, they adhered to

[35] Melosi, *The Sanitary City*, 205-212.

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As part of their vision, municipal, state, and the federal governments also began to assume much of the responsibility to Americanize both the city and its inhabitants through policies that encouraged homeownership. The federal government under Hoover, first as the Head of the Department of Commerce and then as president, wanted the U.S. to be more unified and homogenized, particularly given the labor, ethnic and class strife that had taken place and were only exacerbated due to the nature of World War I. Through his department, Hoover tried to facilitate unity and homogenization by encouraging homeownership and more rational city planning in the hopes of successfully solidifying the connection between cleanliness, democracy, and capitalism with prosperity and Americanism. Urban planners and reformers at times played an important, if not always conscious, role in accomplishing the fusion of these ideas.[37]

With the Great Depression, the connections between democracy, capitalism, prosperity, and cleanliness came into question. As people struggled to survive in shantytowns or in the face of environmental disasters like the Dust Bowl, a growing number of Americans once again began to seriously question the nation's political and economic systems. The policies of the New Deal probably best reflect the contradictions and challenges inherent in a socio- political economic system that valued individualism and democracy. A prime example of this can be found in the motivations behind the Resettlement Administration and some of the other programs such as the CCC and the FERA. Under the Resettlement Administration, the federal government attempted to create farm colonies with "people's colleges" and "public affairs" classes that were

[36] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 4. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 454.
[37] Rome, *Bulldozer in the Countryside*, 24, 37.

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designed to foster more democracy and more cooperative views of the economic system. The same was done in attempts to build more economically democratic urban communities.[38]

These efforts, though, failed to escape the cultural baggage that weighed them down. In fact, much of the political effort behind the New Deal was also designed to shore up the traditionally held definitions of democracy and capitalism by protecting corporations and monopolies. At the same time, many of the conservation programs that the Roosevelt administration implemented involved placing people in nature as a way to both employ them and to give them a "wilderness" experience in the hopes that they would become more "virtuous" along the lines that Thomas Jefferson had advocated.[39] Roosevelt therefore believed that conserving "nature out there" would uplift people morally and simultaneously fortify economic individualism.[40]

In this vein, the federal government studied the impact of air pollution caused by coal in many of the major cities around the country, and made monies available for urban infrastructural improvements, such as sewer treatment plants, for the purpose of preserving the industrial order by curtailing, but not eliminating pollution sources. It should also not be too surprising that cities renewed their interest and efforts in environmental issues and urban nature despite facing serious financial challenges in other areas, and that visions of how to improve local environmental issues often differed from

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[38] Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 460-461.
[39] Dawley, *Struggles for Justice*, 4-5 and Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 269.
[40] Brinkley, *The End of Reform*; and Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Speech by Roosevelt, Lake Placid, New York, September 14, 1935," published in Carolyn Merchant ed., *Major Problems in American Environmental History* (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Co., 1993), 487-489.

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**Reform in Lansing and Salt Lake**

Christine Meisner Rosen and Joel Tarr, in an article in the *Journal of Urban History* in 1994, called upon urban historians to begin placing urban histories within an environmental context in order "to illuminate the impact of nature on the evolution of modern urban societies."[42] They offered that, "we must study how the market system, government institutions, politics, technology, and culture shaped the interactions of city dwellers with the natural environment."[43]

With these issues in mind, it is possible to move towards a better understanding of what various groups of urban residents believed they would lose and gain materially, politically, and socially through urban environmental reform initiatives. These issues have been explored at length in several excellent studies; however, most of these histories tend to ignore ideas about nature and the role of women in shaping the debates. Additionally, urban historians have tended to focus most of their attention on America's largest cities from 1880 to 1920, and from post-World War II to the present. They also tend to look primarily at the impact reformers had on the federal government in effecting change. Yet, mid-sized urban communities have historically housed the majority of the U.S. population and are generally considered to reflect the predominant "American values," and it is through local efforts by relatively unknown people that federal and state policies are molded into reality. Finally, it was during the overlooked 1920s and '30's that modern-day debates over urban environmental policies were shaped, and when the

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[41] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 159; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Speech by Roosevelt," in Merchant ed., *Major Problems*, 487-489. Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City*, 210-212.
[42] Rosen and Tarr, "The Importance of an Urban Perspective in Environmental History," 305.
[43] Ibid., 306.

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This dissertation, then, is an examination of the conflicting attitudes over pollution reform and competing ideas over how to deal with air and water pollution in two very different cities: Lansing, Michigan and Salt Lake City, Utah, from the 1920s to the 1940s. The groups in each city that I will investigate include the municipal governments and chambers of commerce; community activist groups like the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce, and individuals, such as Harland J. Bartholomew, who was a professional city planner hired by the city of Lansing. The responses of different groups of urban residents in each city reflect the ways in which competing ideas about economics, democracy, nature and the built environment influenced decision- making and development of urban environmental policy in both cities.

Environmental reform was not just an attack on poor air and water quality for the sake of better health. Some urban residents viewed it as a commentary on industrial capitalism and on the male-dominated, party-controlled, corporate-run political system that many citizens in the 1930s believed had failed dreadfully. The financial and social crisis of the Great Depression forced many Americans to rethink their ideas, at least temporarily. Local decision makers, realizing the challenges to their authority, hoped to soften the impact of industrialization, but at the same time continue to facilitate it and ignore most of its ill effects. Women reformers in Salt Lake City, who had felt mostly satisfied with their successes during the Progressive Era and who had been willing to allow government policies the time to take effect, became painfully aware of the weaknesses and failures of those policies in the early years of the Depression. They wanted to seize upon the opportunity for change and hoped to once again place greater

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emphasis on aesthetics, health, and urban nature as the primary means to community growth and prosperity. They also hoped to gain greater control over their personal lives by reshaping the political/economic order that had developed.

Members of the Women's Chamber of Commerce, along with likeminded reformers in other parts of the country, believed that by reprioritizing the local economy, the burdens and "blessings" of industrial capitalism would be more fairly distributed, and in the process, more people would become politically involved in shaping the structure of their communities. This would then broaden political debate and force municipal governments to reprioritize their definitions of the "public good" and how best to achieve it.

How to efficiently and cheaply improve urban environments became particularly important to communities that aspired to big city greatness, yet had grown at a slower rate and boomed later than had the major urban areas of the East and Midwest. These late-bloomers faced many of the same challenges as larger cities of trying to manage growth while providing basic amenities. Most of these cities, however, contained a much smaller percentage of ethnic diversity (except those in the South), so there was less chance that urban political machines could develop along ethnic lines. Also, these communities had the advantage of looking to the successes and failures of their larger counterparts while developing their own planning strategies. Citizens, professionals, and politicians alike battled over how best to preserve and improve the economic and political structures of their communities, all with an eye toward urban growth and, seemingly, widening political participation and economic prosperity.

For Lansing, the major struggle, on the surface, was over planning and how to deal with its wastewater and trash disposal. For Salt Lake, air pollution, caused by the use of cheap and plentiful coal and exacerbated by the city's geological setting, became the focal point of environmental campaigns. Policy makers and reformers in both cities hoped to encourage physical and economic growth, yet disagreed over the best path to take. Lansing chose to almost completely embrace the needs of industry with only cursory attention to urban nature, until groups outside the city stepped in and forced the issue with the help of the state government. Salt Lake officials faced greater civic activism and pressure, particularly from women, and therefore did a better job of creating a more livable city. However, outside interests would successfully pressure Salt Lake City and the State of Utah to limit the types of sweeping reforms that civic activists desired.

The regional, economic, and settlement pattern differences between Lansing and Salt Lake actually provide a good context for comparison. Lansing has historically relied heavily on auto manufacturing and its subsidiary industries for jobs and growth while Salt Lake has had a more diverse economy, but still relied on industry. Lansing was not the economically dominant city of its region, nor is it a place where people generally turn for cultural uplift. Salt Lake, on the other hand, has remained the center of economic and cultural activity for its region. Lansing is also located in a state that has an abundance of rainfall and greenery while Salt Lake is located in the second driest state in the Union (in terms of moisture). Salt Lake, founded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter- Day Saints has a heritage of communal cooperation, but at the same time its inhabitants bear the stigma of a group of followers who meekly submit to the dictates of their church

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leaders. One might assume then, that Lansing, with its high percentage of auto and other industrial workers, would be a hotbed of protest, while not much activity of the kind would take place in Salt Lake. Yet the opposite is true. Protests and debates in Salt Lake over environmental issues were fierce, while in Lansing they were quietly quelled (at least until 1934). Yet the responses to urban environmental problems in both cities were quite similar. Salt Lake, despite a more diverse economy and a heritage that preached equality and cooperation, and Lansing, despite its large number of factory workers, tended to adopt similar solutions to their problems. Both cities favored corporate individualism rather than a more democratized economy. These experiences point to the power that the broader American culture has in channeling change within a narrow range of possibilities.

The battles over urban nature up through World War II also help explain a number of different facets of mid-20th century urbanization in the U.S. This dissertation will demonstrate, first, how decision makers in both municipalities, with the occasional unwitting help of reformers and New Deal Policies, successfully fused the ideas of democracy, capitalism, and "nature" into a utilitarian whole, thus fully incorporating nature into the urban economic system. Second, the failure of most cities to follow professional city plans, and to listen to opposing voices urging them to create healthier and more aesthetically pleasing urban environments and true communities city-wide, accelerated the pace of post-World War II urban sprawl. The failure of cities to follow the suggestions of reformers helps explain in part, why, when the opportunity became available after World War II, most whites fled central cities (even in communities that

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**Note on Sources**

A brief explanation of the sources used is in order here. While the dissertation will give prominent attention to the efforts of women in Salt Lake, their voices are almost completely absent in Lansing. In fact, sources for Lansing as a whole are difficult to come by. Many of the documents for the city are housed, uncatalogued, in the basement of the city's main library, where the "archivist" is budgeted to work two hours every Friday evening at organizing the unlabeled boxes of information.

The city's newspaper, *The State Journal*, used to include a weekly women's or society page, but the material consisted primarily of information about weddings, social gatherings, recipes, and dates, times, and places of women's club meetings, but not much else. The Lansing Woman's Club, which has existed since 1874, has a few records remaining that discuss the fact that they engaged in intellectual discussions pertinent to national events of the times, like suffrage, the impact of industrialization on the nation, and U.S. imperialism, and it is clear that the club invited several guest speakers from the local college to speak on these subjects, yet there are few records of local community activism and their names and efforts remain mostly absent from the reform records. Perhaps part of the reason is that the club's members were married to Lansing's business elite, and the fact that the club deliberately kept its size small and exclusive. These

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women would have been careful not to jeopardize the city's peace and their own social positions and material comfort by inciting worker unrest. [44]

This elitist attitude is reflected in some of the reforms for which we have records. The clubwomen of Lansing did engage in activities such as collecting clothing for the poor, helping Lansing's female teachers gain some legitimacy in their profession through a more regularized pay-scale, and working with those same teachers to get the school board to enact educational reforms such as woodworking classes for boys and cooking and sewing for girls.[45]

The efforts by Lansing clubwomen to help professionalize women teachers reflected a desire to increase the role and legitimacy of women in society, but at the same time demonstrated an acceptance of limitations and traditional gender roles. For example, both the female teachers and their club allies were willing to accept much less pay for women instructors as compared to men who had less education and teaching experience. Their effort to create "industrial" classes for male and female students also reveals an elitist mentality. Perhaps another reason that women in Lansing are relatively invisible is that the city was a non-union town until 1937. Lansing was, for the most part, a non-ethnic, non-union, "American" city, which could also explain why working-class women may have been less willing to get involved in reform efforts.[46]

Lansing was also, and to an extent still is, a company town. Its heavy reliance on the auto industry meant that the financial well- being of most workers, most small

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[44] Isabel Findlay, "Fleeting Glimpses of Lansing's Westside Literary Club" (typed manuscript, 1953), 18; Bertha Gardner, "A History of the Lansing Woman's Club, 1874-1974" (typed manuscript, 1976).
[45] Gardner, "A History of the Lansing Woman's Club," and Traci Culcasi, "Women and Education in Lansing, Michigan, 1904-1925" (M.A. thesis, Michigan State University, Dept. of History, 1999).
[46] Culcasi, "Women and Education." See also chapter 2 of the dissertation, which discusses Lansing City efforts at Americanization, and reveals the demographics of the city.

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business owners, and most people in middle- management and the service sectors were, tied directly to the fortunes of these companies. The auto manufacturers successfully created company loyalty through various programs, and along with the city, helped create a city of homeowners whose abilities to pay their mortgages required continual employment. Too, a study done by a professional city planner beginning in the mid 1930s revealed that in 1930, less than 2,000 women worked in the manufacturing and mechanical industries and trades, and that of the more than 34,000 people noted in the study, women made up less than 8,500 jobs. The data is too inconclusive to draw any concrete conclusions, but it does suggest that perhaps, in conjunction with the large number of people who owned or were buying a home, that Lansing workers were generally paid a decent enough wage to quell any true protests by men or women, particularly given that the middle- class and wealthier women in the city seemed to have taken a paternalistic approach to reform issues for fear of jeopardizing their own positions because of their ties to the auto industry.[47]

By contrast, Salt Lake has an abundance of sources that are well catalogued in several places, including two universities, a state historical society archive, a city/county archive, a state archive, and an LDS Church archive. The challenge for Salt Lake in some instances has been trying to sift through the mounds of information to decide what is most pertinent.

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[47] Harland Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1938*, (St. Louis: Harland Bartholomew and Assoc., 1938), 15.

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## Chapter 1

### Reconciling Nature, Capitalism, and Democracy in an Urban Space

The physical form and make-up of American cities are a direct reflection of its inhabitants' cultural values. As part of the urban design, professional planners, politicians, business leaders, and regular citizens have haggled over what they want the city to do for them economically, socially, and even spiritually. A key to understanding this conflict of design requires recognition of how different groups interpreted and valued the role that nature should play in the creation of the built environment. Americans have historically had a love-hate relationship with nature. On the one hand, many have feared the wilderness and considered it their duty as Christians and Americans to completely subjugate the earth. Conversely, the notion of unlimited land and its potential for economic gain was thought to contribute to democracy through increased economic opportunity, which translated for most into more personal freedom.[1]

In his study *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Roderick Nash shows that the Puritans had accepted a dichotomy between nature and a garden—between nature and reformed nature as it were. He writes that the Puritan belief that wilderness impeded the people's spiritual and temporal progress remained at the forefront of American attitudes until the middle of the 19th century. Puritans felt the Bible associated nature with immorality-- Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden into the wilderness as punishment for their disobedience. Like Adam and Eve, Americans needed to prove their worthiness by conquering the earth. Thus they longed to reduce and control nature and viewed this as a religious duty. This philosophy held that if one could subdue the land

[1] Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), esp. ch. 3.

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and prosper from it, this served as a witness to God of a willingness to be obedient and the subsequent prosperity was a sign from the heavens that deity had sanctioned those actions.[2]

Along these lines, Thomas Jefferson linked the preservation of managed nature, in the form of rural farms, to a more individualistic, virtuous and democratic citizenry. Others followed Jefferson's lead to consider careful management of forests, rivers, and other natural resources as essential to democracy. Instead of trying to conquer wilderness, this philosophy holds that nature has played a pivotal role in the formation of the national character by fostering individualism, and as such, the benefits derived from contact with it should be preserved and extended to every American.[3]

By the mid 19th century, then, Americans increasingly saw wilderness as a moral and cultural resource- a key factor that contributed to what made America different from Europe. Transcendentalists believed and wrote that nature represented a way of obtaining moral perfection, rather than seeing it as the moral vacuum that the Puritans feared. For example, Thoreau argued that the ideal man was one who could fuse the advantages gleaned from the best of nature (vitality, heroism, toughness, and an appreciation of God) with those of civilization (the necessary refinement to lift man above the "savages").[4] It is in this vein that Stanley K. Schultz argues that the 19th century gave rise to a new urban culture based on "the relationship between the physical

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[2] Ibid., xii and 15.
[3] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 67-68; Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1996), 176-177; Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*.
[4] Nash, 92-3.

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environment and bodily, mental, and moral health."[5] Richard White also notes that Americans were able to adapt moralistic views of nature with a burgeoning capitalist system. He points to Emerson's ability to reconcile nature and capitalism. "When humans acted on nature they did not defile it, they purified it. Capitalism could easily embrace an Emersonianism in which the machine put nature to work and reduced human labor."[6]

It is in this historical context that many of Frederick Jackson Turner's contemporaries interpreted his now infamous thesis as a warning that the closing of the frontier threatened the American character and way of life. Turner's proclamation seemed to threaten that the urban ills of industrialization would continue and possibly grow worse because America no longer had the west as an outlet for the discontent. Many believed that with land no longer available, America could not become the nation of yeomen farmers that Jefferson had envisioned. Without land ownership and a connection to wilderness, it would then be difficult to create a population of virtuous citizens who valued individualism and the political, economic, and personal traits that entailed.[7]

Samuel Hays uses this connection between nature, Americans' identity and the nation's political structure to explore the reasons behind America's Conservation Movement. He argues that the Conservation Movement of the early 20th century was "a scientific movement" motivated by an ethos of efficiency. Therefore, "it is from the vantage point of applied science, rather than of democratic protest, that one must

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[5] Stanley K. Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), xiv.
[6] Richard White, *The Organic Machine*, 35.
[7] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 86 and xii.

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understand the historic role of the conservation movement."[8] President Theodore Roosevelt was one who accepted this idea. Additionally, though, added to this expert driven ideology, Hays also argues that Roosevelt was deeply affected by the social unrest of the late 19th century. This led him to believe that America was becoming a fractured nation of interest groups and he searched for a way to create a "classless society, composed, not of organized social groups, but of individuals bound together by personal relationships."[9] Roosevelt believed that the desired moral qualities he hoped the government would foster could be found in the rural farming communities. Roosevelt, therefore, stressed the role of expert controlled conservation of resources as the means to ensuring full industrial employment, in helping create a patriotic sentiment that would unify local differences, and make the arid west a more appealing and livable place, thereby preserving a rural lifestyle and values.[10]

Not only did the perception exist that there was less "wilderness out there" to conquer, but there was also recognition that the consequences of the destruction of nature were becoming more noticeable in cities. Peter Gottlieb, in addition to Hays, attributes this recognized loss of nature and the hazards created by industrialization to igniting the Progressive Era environmental movements. That in turn gave rise to conservation and the creation of federal institutions like the national parks system and the Forest Service, which attempted to protect parts of the wilderness for various reasons.[11]

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[8] Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, 2.
[9] Ibid., 268.
[10] Ibid., 268-271. See also Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform, From Bryan to FDR*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), in which Hofstadter argues that because American democracy was formed on the farm and in small villages "the American was taught throughout the nineteenth and even in the twentieth century that rural life and farming as a vocation were something sacred," 7 and Chapter 1.
[11] Peter Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*, (Washington D.C.; Island Press, 1993), 7 and 11. Jefferson believed that a "virtuous citizenry" was an independent group of people who would act in the best interests of the whole. One of the requirements to

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By the early 1900s, Americans no longer feared nature or felt the necessity to conquer all of it. Instead, many, like ecologist and longtime Forest Service employee Aldo Leopold, began promoting new ideas about wilderness conservation. One way this was done was by connecting wilderness to recreation. Leopold saw both nature and recreation as necessary for developing and improving the character of individuals and the nation. As a result of his and others' efforts, including President Theodore Roosevelt, having a "wilderness experience" became more popular in the early 1900s.[12] Companies seized upon this trend and began to commodify wilderness tourism. They marketed these trips as a way of shaping both the individual and the nation's character.

Marguerite S. Shaffer, for example, notes the link between the emergence of the urban industrial nation state and the search for an American identity. She points out that transportation and communication networks that began to be built on a national scale allowed for tourism to emerge as a form of geographical consumption that centered on the sights of America.[13] This tourism was connected to the emergence of the United States as a corporate, urban industrial nation-state; just as a brand name good gave it a national market and culture, tourism helped give the nation "form and substance, identity and culture."[14] She shows that promoters of tourism in the early 1900s made it into a virtuous consumption that they believed could reconcile "nature, democracy, and liberty

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do that was land ownership so that a landlord for example could not exercise undue influence over another's political decisions. Jefferson also believed that manufacturing fostered extreme economic differences and that farmers, or those who labored with the earth, were the "chosen people of god." See for example Carolyn Merchant, Ed, "Thomas Jefferson on the Agrarian Ideal, 1787," in *Major Problems in American Environmental History*, (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Co, 1993), 141-42.

[12] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 183.

[13] Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 2-3. See also Nash, *Wilderness*, 183-86.

[14] Shaffer, *See America First*, 4.

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[1] Ibid., 5

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with the realities of an urban-industrial nation state, dependent on extraction, consumption, and hierarchy."[15]

Between 1880 and 1940, the tourism industry promoted travel as a ritual of American citizenship. Many groups defined tourism in national terms, offering secular elite pilgrimages to the public as if it were one's patriotic duty to consume sites like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Yosemite. By the 1920s promoting visits to America's national parks, combined with a belief in the need for recreational outlets, became an identified trend in local, state, and federal governments.[16] Government policies created an idealized American history with the aim towards transforming tourists into better Americans.[17] Through tourism, Americans reshaped and redefined the built and natural environments and therefore reshaped and redefined themselves.[18]

The idea of wilderness has also been historically viewed as an opportunity to create a level playing field. Yet it is also in this wilderness arena where a contestation between individualism (viewed by many to be a hallmark of American democracy) and working towards a communal good have clashed, and where this contestation of ideals has seemingly created a dialogue of compromise. For example, Carol Sheriff demonstrates how residents along the Erie Canal were told and believed in the increased democratic possibilities that the canal would help create due in part to increased economic opportunities for individuals and communities along the waterway. She goes on to show, however, that the canal in fact created more conflict and class divisions because fewer people in the area owned their own land or had less access to the

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[15] Ibid., 5-6.
[16] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 189-90.
[17] Shaffer, *See America First*, 4.
[18] Ibid., 5-6.

transportation network. Additionally, as the local economies were transformed, more wage laborers began to populate the area. Despite this, political leaders attempted to quell resident's fears by arguing that "the free- labor system, with its promise of upward mobility, could actually help to quell class conflict," by reasoning that "if protest and reform represented a growing dissatisfaction with affairs as they were, protest and reform also suggested that ordinary men and women still thought the world was theirs to shape."[19]

But history has shown that those in control at the municipal, state, and federal levels feared this type of democracy. They wanted a more docile and conformist population and as such they set out to control how Americans experienced both the "wilderness out there" and urban nature.[20] For example, Donald Worster writes of a union between engineers and federal policymakers to control water, and subsequently land-use and growth, as proof of the very undemocratic nature that exists in western states. His analysis is part of a body of literature that argues that efforts by officials at all levels of government were designed to control and shape democratic tendencies. The challenge of course, was how to foster a sense of economic individualism while at the same time curbing independent political thought. In this vein, political leaders attempted to commodify nature through the creation of national parks, and conscientious efforts were made to manipulate how people would experience those "natural" areas.[21]

However, when historians speak about the environmental movement and attitudes towards wilderness they most often mean places far removed from the urban setting. The

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[19] Sheriff, *The Artificial River*, 176.
[20] See for example Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995); Boyer, *Urban Masses*.
[21] Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire; Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

general assumption is that nature or wilderness is somehow more "natural" than the man-made urban environment. This idea has slowly begun to change thanks to a group of scholars that includes William Cronon and Richard White. They along with a few other historians have more recently argued that the entire earth has been influenced and altered through human interaction, and that the idea of wilderness (just like cities) is a cultural construct. As such, humans, their cultural ideas about nature, and cities themselves should be included as part of environmental history.[22]

And just as efforts were being directed towards the "wilderness out there," municipal leaders were making similar efforts to control how people would experience cities. They did this by trying to make urban nature focal points of tourism and recreation, or in other words, a consumable product, rather than as spaces for personal reflection, political debate, and public protest.[23]

**City Planning American Style**

Architects and designers played an integral role in how Americans thought about cities. Between 1880 and 1920 these professional planners set out to create physical environments that they believed would foster the necessary domestic atmosphere that would form and reflect a unique American character. As part of this goal, urban planners,

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[22] See for example William Cronon, *Natures Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 1991), and White, *The Organic Machine*. See also Flanagan, "Environmental Justice in the City," 159-164.

[23] There are several excellent studies that explore the connections between commercialized recreation, worker unrest, politics, and the physical construction of cities. See for example; Cathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusement: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1989); Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908- 1921*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1981); Gunther Barth, *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform.*.

politicians, and business leaders attempted to balance urban aesthetics with functionality. Historians have labeled these design movements that took place in these decades as the "city beautiful" and "city functional." William H. Wilson, for example, argues that the "city beautiful" movement was a political accommodation among several groups, but that the efforts of architects, city planners, and middle-class reformers to beautify cities along the lines of those in Western Europe, and thereby create an ideal urban space, failed to fully come to fruition for several reasons, including costs, and criticisms that little or no attention was paid to the practical aspects of conducting daily activities.[24]

The inspiration for more beautiful and organized cities in Europe, England, and America is due in large part to Baron Von Haussmann. He attempted to remake Paris into a living monument for Louis Napoleon while at the same time attempting to unify Parisians and the French people by manipulating how they would experience the built environment. His plans for Paris inspired British and German planners to rethink and remake their cities in a way that would reflect their nations' cultures and their governments' ideals.[25] As Daniel Rodgers demonstrates, the influence of Haussmann's plan for Paris differed from nation to nation depending on the socio/economic and political culture of the place. Berlin officials, steeped in a Prussian culture of an all-powerful, centralized state, borrowed its monumentality, while Britain focused on slums and sanitation, or in other words, slum demolitions at the city centers. "When Haussmann's Paris finally came to the United States and cut across the land-office grids," according to Rodgers, "it was to take on still different meanings."[26] For example, in

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[24] Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, and Flanagan, "The City Profitable, The City Livable," 164.
[25] David P. Jordan, *Transforming Paris, The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[26] Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 168.

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Chicago, which, next to New York, was the most commercial of American cities, Daniel Burnham wanted to remake the entire lakefront public space and "turn the eye from commerce to civics" in the hopes of spurring "a renaissance of public consciousness and public life." But such plans were only partially realized in the U.S. as planners ran into laws that favored the sanctity of property rights in a culture that valued individualism above all else, whereas in Britain and France, the state could more easily condemn, take control of, and resell properties in the name of the public good and civic unity.[27]

Despite the fact that Haussmann wanted to make Paris a much more efficiently run city as well as a work of art, many American planners and architects tended to misunderstand Haussmann's intentions, and they chose to focus more on aesthetics. Therefore, the "city functional" ideology in the United States was a direct response to the perceived flaws of the "city beautiful." As its name implies, municipal architects significantly scaled back many of the more elaborate beautification plans and searched for more practical ways of ordering cities that were in sync with the ever increasing emphasis on a consumer/capitalist culture in the U.S. As the literature on planning reveals, some of the professional planners did not abandon the ideas of beautification so much as adopt the perspective that order and functionality would produce their own beauty.[28]

**Bringing Nature to the City through the Suburb**

Catherine Beecher, who was one of the more influential early voices in shaping ideas about domesticity and by extension, according to Robert Fishman, urban planning,

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[27] Ibid., 171, 172-173.

[28] Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, R. Bruce Stephenson, *Visions of Eden: Environmentalism, Urban Planning, and City Building in St. Petersburg, Florida, 1900-1995*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997).

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believed that "the United States was the hope of the world, but that hope could only be realized through the beneficent influence of women" and "could only take place in the context of a truly spiritualized American home." Through the influence and work of writers like Beecher, the idea or purpose of the American home began to be transformed and viewed as a haven against the ills of industrialization. At the same time it became almost exclusively the woman's realm.[29]

Additionally, Americans began to associate their nationality with being middleclass, and to a large degree, being white. Owning a clean and orderly home with a well-manicured property also became part of the definition. Dirt, therefore slowly became a very un-American concept. This middle- class conception of dirt was used to differentiate between "races" of people. The majority of immigrants who began to flood into the country in greater numbers after the Civil War were poor, came from rural parts of Ireland, Eastern and Southern Europe, were poorly educated, and most were not accustomed to living in large cities. Most did not measure up to changing American standards of cleanliness and decorum. As a result, immigrants and large cities themselves came to be viewed generally as "dirty" and un-American in several ways.[30] In addition to being viewed as personally dirty due to their jobs and lack of clean running water, immigrants tended to live in rented and cramped housing conditions in rundown neighborhoods. Most lacked knowledge of English, and some held to different political and economic ideologies that more resembled socialism. Thus, immigrants were viewed as "polluters" of American culture and the physical environment. By extension, because

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[29] Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*, (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 123.
[30] Suellen Hoy, *Chasing Dirt: The American Pursuit of Cleanliness*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), and Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

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most immigrants have historically settled in large urban areas, cities themselves were considered polluted, not only for the grime, dirt, and smoke, but also for their demographics. Many of the rural native population characterized cities as dirty, immoral, dangerous, and foreign.[31]

Immigration, changing attitudes towards cleanliness, a renewed emphasis on women as the caretakers of the family and the home, and mass industrialization, and urbanization, combined to persuade many Americans that the home was the primary place, or haven, where the necessary middle- class virtues should be taught. In this context, along with assumptions about women's role as municipal housekeepers, ideas about the home as the best place to shape a unique and morally superior individual were extended to cities.[32]

Architects and developers who were influenced by these trends, attempted to combine the "cult of domesticity," the middle- class fear of the city, and the perceived benefits of nature in many of the earliest planned communities-- the upper middle- class suburbs. One of the first "garden suburbs" in this country was the product of developer Llewellyn S. Haskell and architect Alexander Jackson Davis. The two men created Llewellyn Park, New Jersey in 1857. In design, they borrowed from the English suburban model, but altered it to conform to American values and beliefs. For example, they attempted to blend the community into the surrounding landscape so as to accentuate the terrain, yet at the same time making the home the center of activity and learning within the community.[33]

From the early "garden suburbs" some designers attempted to import nature and

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 123.
[33] Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 125.

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its supposed benefits into the central city. Along these lines, Frederick Law Olmsted is probably the most influential figure in modern day city planning in the U.S. Believing in the value that nature had and needed to play in shaping the American character, he championed the fusion of wilderness and the built environment as the ultimate step of civilization. The parks he created are not just excellent examples of design and function, but his theories as to their importance influenced other urban designers to begin bringing more of the countryside to the city. He believed that although beneficial, the 19th century city created a "peculiarly hard sort of selfishness" that could lead to the degeneration of society. He thus emphasized the importance of city parks or "urban nature" to help combat the strains of the growing industrial, commercial culture. However, Olmsted gradually grew disillusioned with the effectiveness of parks and resigned himself to the idea that it was only in the suburb where civility could truly thrive. Nevertheless, he remained hopeful that one day nature's benefits would be available to everyone.[34]

Paul Boyer places Olmsted's motivations, and those of most urban planners who wanted to improve the environment, within a framework of moral and social control.[35] Boyer argues that progressive reformers latched on to the "positive-environmentalist initiatives of the 1890s" as a means to "a more subtle and complex process of influencing behavior and molding character through a transformed, consciously planned urban environment."[36] While it is true that planners like Olmsted hoped to transform "the masses," the question remains to what end. Boyer never successfully differentiates between the myriad motivations and definitions of democracy that reformers brought to the table. He sees them primarily wanting to create a citizenry that was committed to a

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[34] Ibid., 127-128.
[35] Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order*, 221, 269.
[36] Ibid., 221.

capitalist industrial order and who would follow the lead of their "social betters."

In their analysis of the design and use of New York's Central Park, however, Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar document the complexities of urban planning in the U.S. context. They show how Central Park between, 1870 and 1900, became a more democratic space, despite attempts by New York's wealthy to make it exclusively their own.[37] Rosenzweig and Blackmar demonstrate that the creators of Central Park, Calvert Vaux and Olmsted envisioned the park to "be a democratic institution by virtue of the mixing of classes within its boundaries." The two differed, however, on the definitions of that democracy. Vaux believed in a more participatory republicanism where "democratic citizens" should be "the makers of their own government and their own public art."[38] Olmstead, on the other hand, believed that "in an orderly democracy gentlemen must lead the way," and as such he felt it his duty to culturally uplift the poor.[39]

With these divergent motivations in mind, by the early 20th century, urban planners began to organize and in 1917 created a professional organization, the American City Planning Institute. Robert Fishman explains that two schools of thought emerged inside this group. The first group recognized that, "In effect the cities took on the responsibility for creating the infrastructure for the emerging industrial society." At the same time, they hoped to create physical environments that would continue to foster what they considered to be "civilized" communities.[40] Fishman notes that this group came to

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[37] Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), 8-9.
[38] Ibid., 136-137.
[39] Ibid., 138-139.
[40] Robert Fishman, *The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy*, (Washington: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 9.

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accept the idea that the downtown area would define the metropolis, regardless of how large its population might become. Additionally, these planners believed that an outer zone needed to be created and safeguarded "as a source of fresh air, fresh water, and open space for the metropolis, to establish parks and other recreational facilities there and to build the transit lines and parkways that would enable urbanites to experience unspoiled nature."[41]

The ideas of these "metropolitanists," as Fishman labels them, came into conflict with the second group of professional planers who believed that the crowded, industrial city was simply a passing phenomenon. This group, labeled the "regionalists," hoped to create urban spaces:

> That would consist primarily of New Towns located throughout the region and set in an open, green environment, each combining both work and residence. This true 'regional city' would occupy the 'middle ground' between the old, crowded cities and the old, isolated rural areas. This middle ground could combine all the economic benefits of living in a technologically advanced society with the human scale, local identity, and community of small-town America.[42]

In the first third of the 20th century, smaller American cities considered both philosophies. Jon Teaford, for example documents the growing trend of urbanites moving outside of cities before World War II, which gave credence to the ideas of these two schools of thought. Teaford shows that these primarily middle- class people wanted to maintain their comfortable life-styles, but still hoped to have more political say in their communities, and also wanted "to preserve the green open space and clear waters of the

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[41] Ibid., 14.

[42] Fishman, *American Planning Tradition,* 14. For various reasons, it is evident that the philosophy of the "regionalists" tended to win out after World War II, due to several factors, although their ideas about incorporating and preserving large natural tracts were largely ignored until very recently. See for example Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1991). See also Margaret Weir, "Planning Environmentalism, and Urban Poverty: The Political Failure of National Land-Use Planning Legislation, 1970-1975," 193-218, in Fishman, *American Planning Tradition.*

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rural past."[43] This trend highlights the compromises made by many planners to combine both sets of ideas. In an attempt to replicate the upper middle class suburbs, many professional planners continued to base their designs around the downtown area, while at the same time trying to create open, green spaces both in the central city and through a series of "natural" or "wilderness" areas that would form a ring around the city that would be easily accessible to all classes of people regardless of where they lived.

**Wilderness Conservation meets the City**

While professional planners attempted to blend nature and civility, another group that had formed by the end of the 19th century wanted to preserve America's "wilderness out there." As mentioned previously, conservationists, in an attempt to gain more control over the direction and use of the nation's natural resources, in the early 20th century proclaimed themselves the most qualified group to manage nature. In the process they solicited help from the federal government in the form of Theodore Roosevelt in an attempt to wrestle control of the nation's natural resources and lands from corporations. Their hopes were short lived as government regulatory agencies like the Forest Bureau and the Bureau of Reclamation had drifted from their original social vision to a role more supportive of private industry. The impetus of scientifically managing nature was geared more towards ensuring a long-term means of making money for a few, and less towards a concern for the general social benefits nature might provide. Government experts appropriated conservationists' emphasis on efficiency, natural resource management, and the application of science and applied it to industrial organization. [44]

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[43] Jon Teaford, *Post-Suburbia: Government and Politics in the Edge Cities*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 6.
[44] Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 26.

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A similar process took place regarding city planning. City boosters, municipal politicians, and reform minded citizens' groups appropriated the language and philosophies of professional urban planners and the conservationist movement and applied them to their urban reform efforts. Everyone framed the issues in terms of municipal growth, but adapted different strategies. Private reform groups tended to emphasize the needs of the larger community, and therefore favored the preservation and creation of more natural areas, not fewer. In the process, some of these groups, including the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce, straddled philosophies of conservation and of modern day environmentalism by simultaneously emphasizing economic advantages and aesthetics, health, and personal uplift that urban nature would provide, while municipal governments looked to cater to the needs of industry.[45]

Thus, earlier this century, most U.S. cities attempted to create a cleaner, healthier, and more aesthetically pleasing built environment in the belief that physical surroundings helped influence the character of individuals. As a result, during the debates over what American cities would look like and what they would do for people, basic amenities such as clean water, clean air, and efficient sanitation systems became important selling points, and expected amenities. Yet, civic activist groups and city boosters faced a dilemma. They believed nature to be an important element in creating the American character, yet at the same time, the American economy and the nation's military and economic power were still predominantly dependant upon factory production and the exploitation of natural resources. Many municipal leaders therefore attempted to retain the benefits

[45] Fishman, *The American Planning Tradition*; see also Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980*, (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995); Roger Biles, *Richard J. Daley: Politics, Race, and the Governing of Chicago*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1995).

derived from both the preservation of nature and the existent economic system. To do this, some sort of middle ground had to be created in order to make their communities better, healthier, more enjoyable, and safer places to live, while at the same time not destroying the primary means of jobs and wealth.

Harold Platt's look at Houston outlines part of the dilemma cities faced. He writes that because of a Progressive ideology, cities that wanted to grow no longer debated how to supply basic services, but had to focus on what kind of urban environment and, by extension, society they wanted to create. He identifies the development of two competing ideologies between 1890 and 1910. The first was the belief that service technologies and the municipal government should cater to the residents-- meaning the white homeowners. This would make Houston more attractive to newcomers and subsequently spur outside investment as smaller businesses relocated to the city. The second strategy that Houston officials weighed was the idea that service technologies should be used as vehicles of investment. In Houston this meant that basic amenities such as paved roads, sewer, and water service would be denied to certain outlying residential areas of the city in order to keep prices and taxes lower for the central business sector, thus attracting industry to the city. This second ideology meant privileging businesses over the majority of the city's residents.[46] By the early 1920s, most cities tended to adopt this second strategy, but reform groups continued to battle over many of these issues.[47]

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[46]Harold Platt, *City Building in the New South: The Growth of Public Services in Houston, Texas, 1830-1910*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), xiv, xix.
[47] Amy Bridges, *Morning Glories: Municipal Reform in the Southwest*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997);

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**Protests Against Municipal Government Structures**

As cities tended to favor industries over the needs and desires of individual homeowners, they also had to face the growing reality that more and more people were moving to suburbs and creating what historians have labeled, "edge cities," "technoburbs," "urban villages," or as Jon Teaford terms them, "post- suburbs." These communities, located in counties bordering large cities, began to grow prodigiously after 1920. The reasons people left cities for these outlying communities are varied. Most have argued that this migration was an anti- urban development because, in part, those who moved to them "sought to fashion an idealized village form of government, a small-scale, nonpartisan polity characterized by volunteerism, cooperation, and consensus," that they did not believe they could fashion in the existing political urban structures.[48]

Teaford points out that the middle- classes who fled cities in pre World War II America also longed for "green open space and clear waters," although his primary focus and emphasis is on the political desire by these suburbanites for lower taxes, smaller governments, and more democratic communities.[49] Despite these goals, however, it is clear that many of their actions were not so much the result of anti-urban sentiment as they were protests and frustration at what their cities had become. Their actions, therefore, were attempts to create modern communities along the lines of a Jeffersonian-type democracy. Becky Nicolaides' study of a working-class suburb in Los Angeles demonstrates this point. Many of the people who settled in South Gate, tended large gardens, owned poultry, and opposed expensive municipal improvements, yet they would

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[48] Teaford, *Post-Suburbia*, 15. See also, Sarah S. Elkind, "Building a Better Jungle, Anti-Urban Sentiment, Public works, and Political Reform in American Cities, 1880-1930," *Journal of Urban History*, 24 (Nov. 1997): 53-78.
[49] Teaford, *Post- Suburbia*, 6.

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make great efforts and spend much of their disposable income on various entertainments outside the community in Los Angeles.[50] If these suburbanites were anti-city, they could have moved to rural farms in Wyoming. The fact is they desired the amenities of modern urban life and the higher paying jobs that allowed them access to those amenities. What they didn't like was the perceived failure of city governments to give them the types of neighborhoods that better incorporated health, nature and communal bonds. Additionally, those who moved away from the big cities realized that their municipal governments favored industry over the individual, making it almost impossible to have any meaningful political voice.

With the crash of the stock market in October of 1929, urban environmental reformers were once again given the ammunition to try and rally those residents who had become disillusioned with some aspects of the political and economic systems and with the political leaders who had promised the nation greater prosperity. Reformers argued that changes needed to take place, that the political process needed more democracy, and that opportunities for upward mobility should be increased. These protest organizations turned to urban planning and environmental issues as their symbols of discontent. Because city beautification remained an outward expression-- a physical manifestation-- of personal and communal identity, urban nature would continue to play an important role in reformers' plans and be at the center of debates over the physical construction of cities.

Between roughly 1930 and the end of World War II, most municipal governments and business leaders continued to hold to their political and economic ideals despite the

[50] Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920—1965*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 88-91, 120-121.

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worsening economic crisis. Some leaders blamed individuals rather than the system while others pointed to minor flaws in the system, maintaining all the while that the basic philosophies behind the nation's economic and political structures were sound. Some tried to seize upon the obvious public discontent by appropriating the New Deal language of reform. In so doing, municipal officials were forced to revisit the city plans from the 1910s and '20s and the more egalitarian philosophies upon which those plans were based. They recognized the necessity of trying to replicate many of the amenities and characteristics that had been created by private planners and architects in America's suburbs and to bring more of those benefits to the middle, lower middle, and working classes. Additionally, urban governments were forced to reexamine their environmental policies.

**Post- War Urban Crisis**

These efforts though, were doomed to fail because most decision makers continued to adhere to a type of economic social Darwinism, which linked the idea of prosperity and greatness of the nation to the notion that corporations and business structures represented the pinnacle of political and economic evolution. According to their thinking, great amounts of wealth were signs of personal moral and intellectual superiority and Anglo-Saxon whiteness stood supreme on the ethnic/cultural scale. As a result, business was privileged over everything else, and efforts to force social conformity played heavily in the minds of urban policy makers regarding the physical construction of cities. So while city boosters continued to try and sell urban nature as tourism-- in the form of clean air, water, parks, and other open green spaces-- they simultaneously accommodated the demands of business and industry by keeping taxes and service fees

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low for that section of the population and only casually enforcing environmental regulations.

Ultimately, most cities failed to effectively incorporate nature into their cityscapes because they could not sufficiently balance desires for growth and profit with the amenities that their residents asked for and believed were essential to making their neighborhoods and their cities more livable. In other words, they failed to strike a compromised balance between a democracy based on individualism (that ironically favored business and corporations) with a democracy centered in civic unity and communalism (that privileged the individual over business wants).[51] These tensions as manifest in movements such as the city beautiful, city functional, and city livable, and among women's groups, professional planners, and municipal governments are evident in the experiences of cities like Lansing and Salt Lake City. From roughly 1920 to 1945, both cities juggled competing ideologies of how best to encourage growth and prosperity. Specific infrastructural improvements were in place that created at least minimal expectations of comfort. Yet, what was still contested terrain was who would bear the majority of the costs for municipal growth and prosperity and who would take the lead in pushing for reform. One startling consequence of these prewar failures was that, after the Second World War, when the opportunity presented itself, millions of white, middle-class workers across the country fled to suburban spaces in search of what they felt was the proper balance between a consumer capitalist culture and more control of their personal lives and physical spaces, as manifest through the tree lined streets and large, well-manicured yards of suburbia. Most Americans came to believe that the suburbs represented a healthful, liberating, and more equalitarian space than those created by

[51] Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 317.

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urban municipal leaders, or in other words a more proper balance between individualism and a communal good.[52]

In fact, as mentioned, Jon Teaford has documented the attempts of suburban communities to be more democratic. He shows how civic associations tried to foster greater community involvement through volunteer organizations. Additionally, politics could best be described in some of these communities as voluntaristic, consensual, non-partisan, and homogeneous. For example, a number of communities in DuPage County, Illinois adopted open caucuses, or town meetings, where candidates unassociated with either major political party were selected by the village for the various offices. These candidates then became the automatic victors in the elections. Teaford points out though, that despite the ideal, reality suggests that often times entrenched community leaders dominated these proceedings, producing "suburban oligarchies." "But the suburban dream exercised a powerful influence on those who migrated to the metropolitan fringe." It is also clear that some of the wealthier communities wanted to erect political and legal barriers in order to protect the homogeneity and economic standards of their neighborhoods.[53]

In addition to visions of more politically democratic communities, many historians have shown that a shift in government funding for infrastructural improvements to the West and the South allowed corporations based in the East and Midwest the ability to move production to more cost-effective locals as a major reason for population shifts. Additionally it has been shown that federal loan policies to homeowners and the practice of "redlining" and racism also played significant roles in

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[52] Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*, Teaford, *Post- Suburbia*, 6-8.
[53] Teaford, *Post-Suburbia*, 23-24.

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the deterioration of cities and in "white flight."[54] This does not explain, however, why places like Salt Lake experienced some of the same problems given its lack of minorities, relatively homogenous religious population, and the federal subsidies it has enjoyed. I will argue in the following chapters that the failure of municipal leaders to address residents' concerns over the livability of their environments also helped create a climate for suburban flight. A shift in federal funding to cities meant that cities did have a more difficult time funding services and making improvements after World War II. Yet choices cities made in the first three decades of the 20th century to privilege industry over the desires and concerns of many of their residents must be included as part of the cause.

[54] Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, eds., *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

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## Chapter 2

### Lansing: Planning "The Most Progressive City in the USA"

Lansing, Michigan was still a small place in 1890 with a population of a mere 12,202. The small city had no public sewer system or police department, and the 90 electric street- lights that dotted the community were shut-off at 10:00 PM. each night. It was the home of several industrial enterprises including Lansing Iron Works, two moderately sized manufacturers of farm implements, a number of small companies which built and repaired steam engines, and a large lumber industry that supplied companies throughout the region.[1] When the Olds Motor Vehicle Company was organized in 1897 the modern industrial life of Lansing was born. The city's population between 1900 and 1910 almost doubled from 16,485 to over 31,000, continuing its climb to 57,327 by 1920, and reaching 78,397 by 1930, when growth slowed during the Depression.[2]

By 1914 Lansing was a full-fledged factory town boasting 180 manufacturing companies with an average of 276 workers in each individually owned plant and 5564 employees in the corporate owned shops. The lure of jobs, however, did not appreciably alter Lansing's demographics as it had done to larger industrial cities like Chicago and Detroit. The native born white population was 67 percent in 1920, just slightly down from the previous decade and the number of African-Americans remained small, comprising only 1.3 percent of the population. The City's demographics during the 1920s were not altered too much either as census reports recorded that only 6630 foreign

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[1] Justin L. Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness: An Illustrated History of Greater Lansing*, (Lansing: Windsor Publications, 1981), 63-66.

[2] The state of Michigan's rate of population growth was only exceeded by California and Florida between 1920 and 1930. Lansing's rate of growth was 89.4% between 1900 and 1910, 83.6% between 1910-1920, and 36.8% from 1920-1930. The rate of growth for the state of Michigan during these time periods was: 16.1%, 30.5%, and 32%, and for the United States as a whole it was 21%, 14.9%, and 16.1%. See, Harland Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan: 1938* (St Louis: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1938),16.

born whites and slightly fewer than 1,400 African- Americans lived in the city. Additionally, of the new immigrants, over 50 percent hailed from Canada and England.[3]

Yet the relatively rapid growth of population and industry between 1900 and 1930, created other kinds of problems such as the typical infrastructural challenges associated with urbanization. The city needed a clean and reliable water supply to meet the needs of a growing population- raw sewage was still dumped in the Grand River. Streets had to be paved. Garbage collection and disposal methods were also chronically unsettled.

Because Lansing's industrialization and rapid growth occurred later than many larger Midwestern cities and during a time of widespread urban reforms, it had the opportunity to investigate and emulate or improve upon those cities' urban strategies. Communities in this part of the country potentially benefited from a culture of social reform as Jon Teaford writes, pointing out that people in the Midwest in general believed that democracy could work "by, of, and for the people," which is why Teaford also classifies these attempts at urban reforms, particularly from women, as legitimate efforts to increase the benefits of democracy rather than categorizing them merely as "municipal housekeeping."[4]

In concert with the reform atmosphere, America's industrial cities were enmeshed in a capitalist culture and Lansing's business and political leaders envisioned great

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[3] Compare these number with Detroit, which had about 120,000 African- Americans and 400,000 foreign born whites out of 1.5 million people and Chicago which had 800,000 foreign born whites and 233,000 African- Americans in a city of 3.3 million. Additionally, the majority of immigrants to Lansing were from Canada, England, and Germany. *Department of Commerce: Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce Statistical Abstract of the United States 1920*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921) and Untied States Bureau of the Census, *United States Census Book* 1910, 1920, and 1930, (Washington: Government Printing Office).

[4] Jon Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 112-113.

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[2] Ibid., 2.8.17, 40.

economic and political possibilities for the city. Even though it was the state capital, Lansing lacked any real political or economic clout, and the powers of the municipal government were outlined by the state. Yet, state laws also reflected this dual philosophy of reforms that would generate more democracy, and promote and protect business. For example, in 1912, Lansing adopted a city council form of government in compliance with state mandates. The council was made up of 16 representatives (two from each district) who served two- year terms, and a mayor who also was elected every two years. Each year the council would elect one of its members to preside over its meetings as president. The purpose of this "manager- council" system was to have a "business-oriented" and efficiently run city and municipal government. All resolutions had to pass with a majority vote, and all debates over new laws had to be done publicly. The council was responsible for the "health and comfort" of the city and was granted wide powers to deal with organizations and individuals who threatened either of those mandates. [5]

The mayor had to sit on every board and committee and attend all city council meetings, but was not allowed to vote unless the council was deadlocked. The mayor's power rested in his authority to oversee and enforce the city's laws and ordinances and act as a "watchdog" when it came to the city council members. The mayor also appointed and removed the heads of the various municipal departments such as parks, sewers, etc. His decisions in this regard were not absolute, however, as the city council could also remove appointed officials with a majority vote.[6]

The state allowed its cities to own and operate the public utilities and in fact stipulated that they could only lease or sell those rights to private companies with a three-

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[5] *Charter of the City of Lansing, Michigan*, 1925 (Amendments from the Charter passed 27 Aug. 1912), (Lansing: Franklin DeKleine Co., 1925), 2,8,17, 23, 108.
[6] Ibid., 2,8,17, 40.

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fifths vote in a general election. If the city wanted to make public improvements, it had to outline a detailed financial plan, present it to the residents for a vote, and it could not exceed the estimated construction costs by more than 10 percent. To pay for municipal projects, the city could borrow money against its own value and issue bonds as long as they did not exceed 5 percent interest.[7]

Yet despite desires for increased democracy, and state laws that attempted to restructure municipal governments, Lansing's political leaders did what larger cities had done in effectively limiting popular participation. The control of city governments was particularly evident when it came to economic issues. For example, David Beito points out that, despite debt limits placed on municipalities at the end of the 19th century, "municipal governments discovered and utilized a multitude of devices to hurdle or evade debt limits and thus spend in excess of their tax take. Local governments outdid each other in coming up with ingenious methods to escape debt limits. These included the creation of new taxing and assessment districts, the levy of special assessments, and the juggling of the value of the assessments themselves."[8] Municipal leaders justified this financial manipulation by arguing that improvements to the city would mean greater prosperity to homeowners in terms of higher property values.

As will be shown, Lansing's elected officials became adept at using special assessments and diverting funds earmarked for one project to another. Furthermore, decisions concerning the direction and type of infrastructure were often handed over to professional engineers and planners who were not elected to their positions. The city engineer for example, had the authority to propose what parts of the city merited sewer

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[7] Ibid, 129-131.
[8] David Beito, *Taxpayers in Revolt: Tax Resistance During the Great Depression*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 5.

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Despite some of the unforeseen results of Progressive reforms to limit urban political corruption, and the limitations placed on the city government from the state, Lansing's business and political leaders also faced pressures from within the city. Lansing's growth occurred in the decades of municipal reform, thus reformers' demands for more livable urban spaces forced them to figure out how to strike a balance between courting new industries in order to attract jobs and perpetuate urban growth, and achieving a certain "quality of life" standard for at least a portion of the city's residents. Lansing's mayors, City Council members, and its Chamber of Commerce also felt that they had to develop strategies that would retain workers and achieve a degree of social stability. Many experts at the time argued that the most prudent and efficient strategy to these ends would be through offering inexpensive city services and a cleaner urban environment to middle- class neighborhoods at the very minimum.[10]

Given the spectrum of motivations and ideas behind late 19th and early 20th century reform efforts as previously discussed, it is not too surprising that urban decision makers chose to utilize certain elements of progressivism in order to accomplish their own visions of America. Lansing's decision makers, for example, had observed the growth and associated problems in cities like Detroit and Chicago. They were convinced that moderate reforms would create an orderly and prosperous city where industry would thrive and the working classes would be pacified and content. They believed that an

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[9] *Charter of the City of Lansing, Michigan*, 2,8,17, 23, 108. See also Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland*, 121.
[10] Platt, *City Building in the New South*, xiv, xix.

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efficiently planned city that incorporated elements of "nature" would serve a dual purpose. A more attractive, cleaner, and healthier city would entice people to want to move to and live in Lansing. They also believed that it would Americanize newcomers, or in other words, serve as a means of social control, so as the city grew, the potential for violent confrontations between workers and management would be avoided.[11]

**Lansing City Planning**

Efforts to organize large-scale urban areas at the beginning of the twentieth century attempted to replicate the design and planning that had been going on in the United States since the mid 19th century in upscale suburbs and at some of the newly formed land grant universities such as the Michigan Agricultural College. Early on professional planners set out to create urban spaces they believed would foster the necessary domestic atmosphere to forming and perpetuating a unique American character. The canvas initially chosen by these professionals was the middle- class suburb. One of the first "garden suburbs" in this country was the product of developer Llewellyn S. Haskell and architect Alexander Jackson Davis. The two men created Llewellyn Park, New Jersey in 1857. In design, they borrowed from the English suburban model, but altered it to conform to American values and beliefs. For example, they attempted to blend the community into the surrounding landscape so as to accentuate the terrain, rather than make the homes the dominant geographic structures. At the same time, Haskell and Davis wanted to make the home the center of activity and learning

[11] Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America*; Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*; Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontiers: The Suburbanization of the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Joel Tarr and Gabriel DuPuy, eds., *Technology and the Rise of the Networked City in Europe and America*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

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within the community.[12]

The middle- class who fled to these suburban utopias did so for various reasons. Unlike in Europe, most "public" space in the United States by the mid 19th century was just that, very public. Parks and squares were shared equally by the "refined" and the "coarse." As a growing number of working class immigrants entered the cities and made public places their own, many in the middle-class retreated to spaces that they felt they could comfortably control such as private clubs, "public" rooms at hotels and ultimately the family parlor. Others left the cities because of the increased dirt, crime, and disease.[13]

Taking a cue from the early "garden suburbs," some designers attempted to import nature and its supposed benefits into the central city. In this regard, Frederick Law Olmsted championed the fusion of wilderness and the built environment as the ultimate step of civilization. The parks he created were not just excellent examples of design, function, and beauty, but his theories explaining their importance and the subsequent design trends they sparked of bringing the countryside to the city cannot be overlooked. He believed that the 19th century city created a "peculiarly hard sort of selfishness" that could lead to the degeneration of society. He thus emphasized the importance of city parks or "urban nature" to help combat the strains of the growing industrial, commercial culture. Olmsted, however, soon grew disillusioned with the effectiveness of parks and resigned himself to the idea that it was only in the suburb where civility could truly thrive and he hoped that one day its benefits would be available to everyone.[14]

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[12] Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 125.
[13] Bushman, *The Refinement of America*; Witold Rybczynski, *City Life; Urban Expectations in a New World*, (New York: Harpers Collins, 1995), 106-109.
[14] Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 127-128.

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Perhaps Olmsted's philosophies and efforts were meant to counter some of Alexis De Toqueville's earlier observations that Americans would "cultivate the arts that serve to render life easy in preference to those whose object is to adorn it. They will habitually prefer the useful to the beautiful, and they will require that the beautiful should be useful," and that "there is always a multitude of persons whose wants are above their means and who are very willing to take up with imperfect satisfaction rather than abandon the object of their desires altogether." These two statements deftly describe much of the rationale behind decisions made in Lansing and Salt Lake over their respective pollution problems in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s.[15]

As Lansing grew, its leaders opted for a more conservative, pro-industry policy that relegated beauty and health to the fringes, and only embraced it when its financial benefits were made obvious. While they would attempt to incorporate some ideas into the city's design that would help make Lansing a more livable city, officials, in their quest for immediate profits, leaned more towards policies they believed would make Lansing the most profitable, and in the process settled for "imperfect satisfaction."[16] Beginning as early as the 1880s, the city tried to provide basic services at a cheap price to attract new industries. Lansing owned its own water-works, and in 1892 purchased the privately owned Lansing Electric Light and made it a part of the Board of Water. During World War I, however, it became apparent that the city's bridges, sewers, and streets were in need of major repairs while events nationally after the war signaled to Lansing's leaders that the Progressive- Era expectations of a minimum living standard combined with nation-wide worker violence meant that the city had both a need and an opportunity

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[15] Alexis De Toqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 48-49. See also Rybczynski, *City Life*, 101.
[16] De Toqueville, *Democracy*, Vol. II, 49.

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to beautify the city and improve its environmental health in order to avoid potential social upheavals and at the same time truly transform the city into a place where both industry and people would want to live.[17] That year, the Lansing Chamber of Commerce adopted the slogan "Lansing- the most progressive city in the U.S.A" and city leaders embarked on a new city planning program that borrowed and transformed the language and ideas of progressives and molded them to fit the interests of business and industry. [18]

In almost every decision taken on environmental issues, Lansing's leaders incorporated the economic utilitarian value of beauty that was pushed by the conservationist movement into the definitions and meanings associated with nature and democracy at the time-- that is nature was good for character building, Americanization, and could increase the democratic spirit, and that an efficient city would mean greater prosperity for everyone through increased commercial transactions and higher property values. Thus they attempted, as many in the U.S. did, to fuse the ideas of democracy and a democratic spirit with industrial capitalism and call them the same thing while commodifying nature in the process. They believed that nature's primary value should be economic and that a democratic citizenry would be valuable only if it adhered to the consumer ethos. City leaders felt that they could both attract industries and native-born workers, and at the same time make the city livable enough to retain and pacify a population of consumers. To do this however, they placed greater emphasis on industry and thus, when conflicts arose between creating a more healthful, and aesthetic place and commerce, they were more willing to accede to industries' demands.

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[17] Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 64,66, 89.
[18] "The City at a Turn of Ways," *Lansing State Journal*, 1 January 1921, 1, and *Lansing, Michigan; A Progressive American City*, published by the Lansing Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the city, (Lansing: Dick Short and Co., 1926), 2, Lansing City Library Archives.

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This commercial spirit was evident by the end of the 19th century. In 1893, a collection of businessmen formed the Lansing Improvement Association, which was the forerunner to the Chamber of Commerce, and proceeded to send out more than 4,000 letters to companies in and around Michigan in the hopes of luring them to the city. As a result of their successes, new factories were being constructed, real estate values were up, and people had jobs. Despite some of the problems that occasion rapid growth, Lansing's political and economic leaders were optimistic. For them, industrial and commercial growth became synonymous with definitions of progress, reform, and increased democracy. They confidently believed that they could simultaneously stimulate growth and create an inviting community in which to live with all the modern technological amenities.[19]

Nowhere were these attitudes better reflected than at the nearby state agricultural college, where efficiency, progress, and the fusion of nature and machine best describe the beliefs of engineers and university officials. One of the primary reasons for funding land grant universities was to develop and use science in practical ways that could best take advantage of America's Industrial Revolution. Simultaneously, the planners and officials at the school have historically attempted to foster a "natural" or "park-like" atmosphere and look on the campus. Their reasons for doing so have changed over time, yet many of the school's planners have historically worked under the belief that the campus is like a city in miniature. They have therefore attempted to create their definition of an idealized urban space in the hope that it would serve as a model to the

[19] Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 66.

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rest of the state as to how "nature" and technology could be more compatible in making the built environment more uplifting, livable, functional, and profitable.[20]

As Richard White points out,

> In thinking of themselves both as children of nature (nature's nation) and as children of the machine (masters of American know-how) Americans were Emersonians. Emerson reconciled nature with the busy, manipulative world of American capitalism. He reconciled utilitarianism with idealism; he reconciled the practical and the spiritual. When humans acted on nature they did not defile it, they purified it. Emerson could simultaneously rejoice in the ability of the machine to subjugate and control nature and in the spiritual truth and inspiration nature provided.[21]

When Michigan Agricultural College was founded, most of the people in the state were farmers, and most of them believed that their children would become farmers. At the same time, Americans were also beginning to place more confidence in the abilities of science and technology. Thus the Michigan State Agricultural Society, which was founded in 1849, began a campaign to convince the state of the necessity for a college that could teach and train people to scientifically manage their farms. For this reason it was thought that a large amount of land was needed to create not just a "traditional" campus, but also one with enough space to conduct scientific agricultural experiments.[22]

From its founding, the campus was designed to have a natural yet idyllic appearance. The hill at what was the center of the campus, where the Beaumont Bell Tower now stands, was chosen as a building site, not just because of its elevation and centrality, but also because there was a clearing in that area with scattered oak trees that

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[20] *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1920, 59th Annual Report*, (East Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford State Printers, 1920), 185, Michigan State University Archives.
[21] Richard White, *The Organic Machine*, 35.
[22] Madison Kuhn, *Michigan State: The First Hundred Years*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1955), 10.

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gave it a manicured look. Many early visitors to the campus commented on its pleasant appearance and described it as "one large park."[23]

As the nation became more mechanized by the end of the 19th century, instructors searched for ways to best incorporate the rapidly changing sciences and technologies into their curriculums. Administrators and professors alike felt that one important element that was needed to accomplish this was a more powerful and reliable means of energy on the campus. In 1884 William K. Kedzie, professor of chemistry and agriculture, utilized an Olds engine to turn a dynamo which began furnishing electricity to the chemistry lab. This act by Kedzie was the first in a series that set a pattern for the university of supplying its own power.[24]

In 1894 the college built its first large-scale boiler house that began furnishing heat and electricity to the entire campus. This facility was deliberately constructed at the center of the campus, next to all the other academic buildings. It quickly became obsolete, however, due to the rapid growth of the school, so a larger power plant was built in 1921 on the same spot as the original structure. The new building, which came to be known as the North Power plant continued operation until 1966 when it was finally torn down to make way for the new administration building on the main campus circle.[25]

University officials believed that the institution should serve as an example to the rest of the state of how scientific planning and management could create an idealized living space and they saw themselves as the ones who were best qualified to bring this

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[23] Kuhn, *Michigan State*, 12; and Samuel W. Durant, *Histories of Ingham and Eaton Counties, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Their Prominent Men and Pioneers*, (Philadelphia: E.W. Ensign and Co, 1880), 79-80, Michigan State University Archives.
[24] Kuhn, 191.
[25] W.J. Beal, *History of the Michigan Agricultural College*, (East Lansing: Michigan Agricultural College, 1915), 100; and "Power Boost Near for MSU," *Lansing State Journal*, 19 July 1966.

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vision to fruition. Thus the decision to build a power plant in the middle of their idyllic park-like setting was not viewed as an incompatible relationship. The location of the power plant can partially be explained through expediency-- it was close to the rest of the buildings and school officials and engineers wanted to provide both heating and electricity as efficiently as possible. Additionally, it rested next to the Red Cedar River, an important water supply. The location of the North Plant was also a symbolic expression by engineers and University officials of the central importance that technology played in the school's curriculum and the role they believed it should play in American society and culture. It also represented a belief in the compatibility and fusion of nature and the machine. The architecture of the North Plant for example was designed in such a way as to blend in with the rest of the buildings and the "natural" surroundings in that it was constructed with the same red brick as the other buildings, and it was landscape similarly with trees, ivy, hedges, and grass.[26]

As mentioned the State Agricultural Society believed that science and agricultural practices needed to be fused into one discipline, thus the school emphasized a curriculum heavily weighted to these two disciplines rather than traditional subjects like Greek and Latin. They believed that a scientific-agricultural education would make farmers more intelligent, responsible, prosperous, happy, and therefore better citizens. The founders of the school thus subscribed to the idea that the fusion of technology and nature could both inspire and improve Americans' lives and characters. As an example of this, the school's Department of Horticulture routinely offered summer classes to Lansing and East Lansing residents on scientific fruit growing practices. The school also attempted to

[26] "Campus Development Plan," (Michigan State University: Division of Campus Planning and Maintenance, October 1966), Michigan State University Archives.

follow economic trends as the Dean of Horticulture noted in 1920 that floriculture had become more economically important to the state and that "courses, greenhouses, and a new building should be constructed to help that industry grow."[27]

The role of the college's extension services was also focused on transforming the mentality of the state's people into a more modern, scientific, and even urban outlook. Along these lines the school offered courses to the state's population through extension services. The Home Economics division traveled extensively throughout the state offering classes on nutrition, household management, and conducting sanitary milk campaigns. In 1919 alone over 26,000 people attended these classes while women in several of the towns organized their own community campaigns to get schools to serve milk to children twice a day as a result of the extension's efforts. The Home Economics Division as well as the M.A.C.'s experiment station also combined forces with the Michigan Milk Producers Association, several Wayne County creameries, the Detroit Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Detroit Federation of Labor to exam and improve sanitation, production, marketing, and distribution practices for that industry. It also worked with homebuilders and the construction trades in building several model homes with all the modern conveniences in both urban and rural settings, and then inviting the public to several open houses to witness demonstrations. As a result of this program, several merchants reported that they were having difficulty keeping some of the less expensive labor saving devices in stock.[28]

The agricultural college, the city of Lansing, and many of the local industries also shared technological information and often cooperated on several projects. For example,

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[27] Kuhn, *Michigan State*, 30, *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1913*, 47, and *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1920*, 44.
[28] *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1920*, 185, 541, 192.

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the Duplex Truck, REO Motor, and Olds Motor Companies routinely donated vehicles to the Mechanical Engineering Department for classes, and recruited a number of the college's graduates. The Mechanical Engineering Department also ran several tests and experiments for Lansing's Board of Water and Light, including having seniors monitor and test boilers at the city's Moores' Park power plant and run tests to assure the accuracy of utility meters.[29]

The school and its professors also assisted the city and the state regarding road construction. In the second decade of the 1900s, several state boosters, seeing the economic possibilities connected to the automobile in terms of shipping and tourism, brought together engineers, local, county, and state officials to form the Michigan Good Roads Association. In 1923 the campus hosted a convention sponsored by this group which was an organization funded and staffed jointly by state agencies and private individuals. The college was chosen as the host thanks in large part to J. Edward Roe, who was a trustee from Lansing, serving on the board. Robert Shaw, head of the Engineering Department, "had personally taken a great interest in the coming convention, which is deemed by the college authorities to be of exceptional importance and of educational value to the student body of the college, especially to engineering and agricultural students." In addition, the Lansing Chamber of Commerce also assisted in the arrangements. Several M.A.C. professors and two students presented papers during the three- day event and the engineering department made its labs and classrooms

[29] *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1920*, 64; *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1922*, 68-69; *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1924*, 75, and *Michigan Board of Agriculture, 1925*, 66.

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available to the convention goers and conducted demonstrations of the work it was doing in conjunction with state efforts to better Michigan's roads.[30]

There is also a connection between Lansing, private businesses and the college's engineers concerning scientific management when it came to water. One of the primary concerns in Lansing in the first third of the 20th century was over the future availability and healthfulness of its water supply. This issue is somewhat ironic given the relatively abundant annual rainfall and the fact that two rivers run through Lansing. The city however relied upon deep wells as its main source of water for drinking and bathing because the rivers were already too polluted for human consumption by 1900. The city was fortunate that the porous rock deposits upon which the community rested acted as a built-in filtration system, thus ensuring the groundwater to be relatively clean and healthy. In 1908, however, contaminated water at one of the substations caused a cholera epidemic. Apparently one of the casings had begun to leak allowing sewage from one of the nearby trunk sewer lines to seep in. This problem was seemingly corrected, only to reappear in 1919 when sewage overflowed into the city's water system after heavy rains resulting in the illness of hundreds. The city's schools and factories were closed for several days and people were warned to boil their water for fear of typhoid.[31] Also, with Lansing growing as rapidly as it was, the water supply was believed to be close to its maximum output and the forced closing of one of the city's main wells due to the earlier

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[30] "Plans for Big Roads Convention at East Lansing, Nov. 6,7, and 8," *Michigan Roads and Pavements*, (Sept. 20, 1923): 4. "College Committee Co-Operating in Road Convention Plans," *Michigan Roads and Pavements*, (Sept. 27, 1923): 5, and "Accomplishments of Good Roads Association," *Michigan Roads and Pavements*, (Nov. 8, 1923): 1.
[31] Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 90.

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epidemic signaled potential water shortages and a need to expand and improve the system.[32]

The city had a few options regarding how it could increase the water supply. By 1900 about 1,100 of 1,500 communities with a population over 3,000 had a sewage system of some type. From the last two decades of the 19th century and at least through the first decade of the 20th, sanitary engineers had generally operated under the assumption that untreated sewage could be safely disposed of into nearby waterways. Most believed that streams would purify themselves through dilution, negating any need for expensive treatment plants. Debates within the engineering profession and with public health officials did exist though. As the field continued to develop and as a greater knowledge and understanding concerning the origins of disease improved, some argued that water needed to be treated at the source. By 1920 approximately 20 percent of America's urban population had treated sewage and by 1929 there were 37 sewer treatment plants in Michigan.[33]

The national attitudes of sanitary engineers were reflected in the opinions of both the engineers at the College and Lansing itself. The Grand River runs through the town, but raw sewage was being dumped in it with the assumption that the streams would purify themselves through dilution. Engineers also pointed to the natural filtration system that existed in the Lansing area. As the city continued to grow, though, concerns

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[32] H.B. Huntley and J.O. Gower, "The Water Supply System of Lansing, Michigan," (BS thesis, Michigan Agricultural College, 1924), (no page numbers); R.L. Tellman, "The Feasibility of Increasing the Water Supply of Lansing, Michigan," (BS thesis, Michigan Agricultural College, 1926), 16; H.I. Duthies and H.S. Peterson, "An Investigation of the Lansing Water Supply," (BS thesis, Michigan Agricultural College, 1911), 12-13. All these studies credit Hoad, Decker, Shoecraft, and Drury Engineering of Ann Arbor with helping them in these studies. Hoad, Decker, etc. was hired by the city of Lansing to work with the city engineer, a Mr. Pollock, and to make a survey and design a wastewater system for the city.

[33] Melosi, *The Sanitary City*, 172-173. See also, "Introductory speech to 2nd annual meeting of Michigan Sewage Works Association", 24 January 1929, Records of the Michigan Sewage Works Association, 1925-1940, State Archives of Michigan.

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[35] Ibid.

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arose over the availability of a clean and cheap source of water. If the city wanted or needed to use the Grand River in the future, it would have had to construct both sewage and water treatment plants. The estimated cost to construct the sewage plant alone was $530,000, plus approximately $90,000 a year to run and maintain it.[34] The pervasive thought among many of the engineers in the city and at the Agricultural College was that Lansing was too small to warrant the expense of a sewage treatment plant at that time. They believed that if Lansing began approaching the size of Toledo or Detroit, then the cost of a treatment plant would be both needed and justified. In the interim, they proposed digging deeper wells as a reasonable short-term solution.[35]

Thus, to many of Lansing's engineers and city officials, the economic costs of building a treatment plant in the 1910s and early '20s exceeded the benefits. Because Lansing had the advantage of a relatively clean and cheap ground-water supply and a relatively small population, the city's use of the Grand River as a natural sewer seemed to be a convenient and cheap alternative. These same engineers recommended that the city invest in higher capacity pumps that could simultaneously reach deeper into the earth and produce more water. It was believed, too, that drilling deeper wells gave the added benefit of reducing the risk of contamination to the water supply.[36]

Martin Melosi also points out that just as an understanding of sanitary practices slowly evolved, so did knowledge of the repercussions of underground sewer

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[34]Huntley and Gower, "The Water Supply System of Lansing, Michigan."
[35]Ibid.
[36] Huntley and Gower, "The Water Supply System of Lansing, Michigan," Tellman, "The Feasibility of Increasing the Water Supply of Lansing, Michigan," Duthies and Peterson, "An Investigation of the Lansing Water Supply." See also, *Official Proceedings of the City Council, City of Lansing*, 4 June 1926 and 9 August 1926, (Lansing: Franklin Dekleine Co.), 1927. Letter from D.C. Hoad, Ann Arbor, to Colonel Edward D. Rich, Director, Bureau of Engineering, State Health Department, 6 January 1927, State of Michigan Archives, City of Lansing Documents Collection.

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construction. As municipalities and states began litigation against each other, primarily after 1920, over the health of streams, cities were forced to reconsider their wastewater systems. This tended to heighten the debate in municipalities over how best to deal with sewage, using either filtration or treatment. The increased understanding of the inner-connectedness of communities within the region also played an important role in states assuming greater regulatory powers over municipal sanitation issues.[37]

In the second decade of the 20th century, though, Lansing was still relatively free from state oversight and it opted for the cheapest alternative. The city dug six deep wells in 1911, added a pumping substation in 1914 which included an electric deep-well pump, constructed a 3 million gallon reservoir in 1917, and added six new pumping stations beginning in 1923. The city chose not to inform the public of the option to build any sort of treatment plant at that time. Instead they told Lansing residents that deeper wells and pumping stations were the cheapest and most efficient way to go.[38]

The City Council seemed to follow the advice of its engineering department regarding cost analysis and construction of the sewers and waterlines. According to the city charter, public improvements such as sewer extensions or street paving had to be studied by the engineering department to determine costs etc. and then the engineer's recommendations would be voted on by the council. It is not until 1926 that Mayor Alfred Doughty emphasized to the City Council that "definite steps need to be taken toward elimination of river pollution," and that a filtration system needed to be studied and built. Despite the warning from the mayor, D.C. Hoad from the engineering firm of Hoad and Decker which advised the city on many issues and held several contracts to

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[37] Melosi, *The Sanitary City*, 173-174.
[38] Huntley and Gower, "The Water Supply System of Lansing, Michigan."

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build sewer extensions and do other work, in 1927 continued to insist that as long as safe well-water existed, the lakes and rivers would not be needed for consumption and therefore, cleaning up those bodies of water would be a waste of time and money. The city chose to accept this opinion and, as a result, Lansing would eventually face litigation from other downstream communities that bore the brunt of Lansing's decision to pollute the Grand River, as well as pressure from the state to build a treatment plant.[39]

Though building a treatment plant was a low priority for the city in the 1910s and '20s, how to provide sewer service remained a chronic problem. Lansing's steady growth challenged the city's financial resources in a never- ending battle to keep pace. Between1910 and 1940 newer sections of the city were constantly without water, sewer, or both. A large part of the problem stemmed from the fact that new subdivisions and, occasionally, factories, were built before these services had been extended to them. Such rapid growth of the city also belied the desires of some reformers who wanted controlled and planned growth. But limiting growth ran counter to the prevailing ideology among municipal leaders throughout the country that constant expansion was the lifeblood of a city and its economy.[40]

The pro-growth, capitalist mentality of Lansing's leaders shaped the way they viewed the city and how they believed it could be improved during the 1920s—including those related to urban nature, parks, homeownership, and the general organization of the city. For example, Mayor Alfred Doughty and the city councilmen felt that the main park, Potter, had become overcrowded, so in 1920 they added three new parks to their

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[39] *Official Proceedings of the City Council, City of Lansing*, 4 June 1926 and 9 August 1926. D.C. Hoad, Ann Arbor, to Colonel Edward D. Rich, Director, Bureau of Engineering, State Health Department, 6 January 1927, State of Michigan Archives, City of Lansing Documents Collection.

[40] Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850-1930*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993 rpt.).

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system thanks in part to a generous land donation from a local resident, J. Henry Moores. They also determined that it was important to have a park on the east side along Michigan Avenue due to the fact that many visitors passed through the city using that street. They reasoned that having a park in the area would serve as a positive reflection on the city with the added benefit of providing additional space for public recreation. In 1923 Lansing spent almost $118,000, or 7.9 percent of its municipal revenues on the "promotion of cleanliness and sanitation."[41] According to the 1930 census, Lansing continued to appropriate a fair amount of money on such services. It spent about $128,500 on recreation with a little over $75,000 going towards parks and tree plantings. Golf courses counted as parks and the city constructed two public golf courses during the 1920s to complement a private course that had been built in 1919.[42] Additionally, Lansing was spending about 45 cents per capita on "conservation of health" programs and a $1.51 per capita on sanitation and or the promotion of cleanliness. These figures are about in the middle of what some other comparably sized cities such as Sioux City, Iowa and Tulsa, Oklahoma spent.[43]

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[41] Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population of Over 30,000, 1923*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925); *Official Proceedings of the City Council, City of Lansing*, 25 January 1926; "New Parks Are Added To City," *Lansing State Journal,* 1 Jan. 1921, 10

[42] The amount of money Lansing spent on recreation, parks and tree plantings compared favorably to similar sized and larger cities. For Example, Salt Lake spent $255,019 on recreation with $166,246 of that money going towards parks and trees. Flint, an even larger city, spent $144,660 on recreation with only $69,681 dollars going towards parks and trees. Of course these statistics do not account for the degree of improvements already made in other cities, or the extent of those municipalities' infrastructures. *Official Proceedings of the City Council, City of Lansing*, 25 January 1926. See also U.S. Department of Commerce- Bureau of the Census, *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population Over 30,000: 1930*, (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1932); see also, "New Parks Are Added To City," *Lansing State Journal,* 1 Jan. 1921, 10; Art McCafferty, "Michigan Golf History 1911-1920," and "A History of Michigan Golf: 1921-1930" in *Michigan Golfer Magazine* (June 1999), and (July 1999), at www.webgolfer.com/june99/history.html and www.webgolfer.com/july99/history.html.

[43] Lansing ranked #111 in population, Tulsa was #58, Des Moines #56, St Joseph, Missouri #107, Sioux City #110, Pawtucket, Rhode Island #111, Flint, Michigan #51, and Salt Lake City #57. Sioux City spent .39 cents per capita on "conservation of health" and $2.20 per capita on "sanitation and or the promotion of cleanliness," while St. Joseph spent .48 cents on "conservation of health," but only .36 cents on "sanitation

It also decided to strengthen laws associated with food sanitation. In 1873 the state created a board of health in response to the professionalization of the medical profession and the call by doctors for improved hygienic and sanitary conditions throughout the state. The mission of the department was to educate the public on proper cleanliness habits and to secure better sewage and water systems for Michigan's cities. This group of reformers tied their proposals to economics that were centered on growth by arguing that poor hygienic and sanitary conditions in the state resulted in deaths and illnesses to workers, which equated to slower production rates for industry, and also discouraged new people from moving to the state. Beginning in 1885, the board began a campaign to encouraged cities to conduct sanitary surveys and inspections of the municipalities' water and food. The State Board of Health urged newspapers and private organizations to assist in educating the rest of the public in this process. One positive result was that in 1903, under pressure from women reformers, the state passed a law regulating meat and dairy processing plants. In this context, Lansing decided in 1921 to strengthen already existing state laws by requiring food inspectors to perform their inspections more frequently and the city forced all food handlers to undergo training for proper and safe handling techniques.[44]

City and commercial leaders also began to place greater emphasis on home ownership. As part of a public relations campaign and in conjunction with the municipal government, the board of realtors and the construction trades embarked on a series of

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or promotion of cleanliness." Flint spent .70 cents per capita on "conservation of health and $2.60 per capita on "sanitation and or promotion of cleanliness" and Salt Lake spent .51 cents per capita on "conservation of health and $1.15 per capita on "sanitation and or promotion of cleanliness." U.S. Department of Commerce- Bureau of the Census, *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population Over 30,000: 1930*, (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1932).

[44]"City Health Guard Firm," *Lansing State Journal*, 1 Jan. 1921, 33. See, Earle E. Kleinschmidt, "The Sanitary Reform Movement in Michigan," *Michigan History Magazine*, (summer 1942): 373-401. Keasha Palmer, "Women Who Made a Difference," *Michigan History Magazine*, (March/April 2000): 47-53.

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seminars that encouraged workers to begin saving to purchase a new home. The lectures also focused on educating the public on how to make the city cleaner and more appealing to potential residents, and boosting the local economy. Eric Monkkonen argues that municipalities were motivated by two connected reasons to encourage home ownership. The first had to do with creating a positive environment for the individual and the family, while the second emphasized communal ties. Monkkonen points out that influential government officials like Herbert Hoover stressed the importance of homeownership because, "control of home quality was thought to have great promise for improving a people."[45] Since Americans have historically enjoyed easier access to property than most modern societies, particularly through homeownership, Americans have "great passion and self- interest to local politics through the tax on real property," which results in greater ties to the community according to Monkkonen.[46]

Indeed, attitudes equating the sanctity of homeownership in the United States with Americanism originated in the early 1800s as a defense against immorality and the societal changes that began taking place due to industrialization. In 1853 Reverend William G. Eliot Jr.'s declaration is indicative of such attitudes in America about the importance of the home. He stated, "The foundation of our free institutions is in our love, as a people, of our homes. The strength of our country is found, not in the declaration that all men are free and equal, but in the quiet influence of the fireside, the bonds which unite together in the family circle. The corner-stone of our republic is the hearth-stone."[47] Catherine Beecher, who has been credited as one of the important early

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[45] Eric Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns, 1780-1980*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 187.
[46] Ibid., 186-187.
[47] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 48.

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voices in shaping American urban planning, expressed similar sentiments. She believed that "the United States was the hope of the world, but that hope could only be realized through the beneficent influence of women," and "could only take place in the context of a truly spiritualized American home." In other words, through the influence of writers like Beecher, attempts were made to transform the American home into a haven against the ills of industrialization and at the same time to define it as the exclusive domain of a mother's influence, where women could "integrate personal and national goals." This combination meant that the home would be considered the primary place where the necessary middle-class virtues would be taught to create what people believed would be a unique and morally superior nation. Yet, it was argued, this vision could be accomplished only if the home was clean, healthy and safe.[48]

Beecher's pronouncements also reveal an attempt to enlarge the value and sphere of women and women's work. Factories began to depersonalize the workforce, the home, and the traditional family hierarchy. Women, who had been given the role as caretakers of morality and teachers of democratic principles, found themselves less available to teach their children as they were forced into factory work. Beecher called upon society and women to reassert themselves not just for the sake of their own families in the home, but to be more publicly involved for the improvement of society as a whole.[49]

Beecher's message was an elaborated view of earlier Americans such as Thomas Jefferson who had made a connection between homeownership, democracy and morality over fifty years earlier. Jefferson argued that the independent landowner was necessary

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[48] Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 123. See also Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), xii-xiii.
[49] Sklar, *Catharine Beecher*, xiii.

to the maintenance of a virtuous and democratic nation. Jefferson of course was referring to the maintenance of a population of small farmers. Nevertheless his ideas can be refashioned with a more modern application to explain the psyche of the urban, American homeowner. Historically, city planners, politicians, community reformers, and historians have connected Jefferson's ideas to the urban setting. They have equated Homeownership with an independent citizenry that has a vested interest in the well-being of its community. Robert Macieski has shown in his study of Bridgeport, Connecticut that reformers, business, and political leaders joined forces in an attempt to provide more, and better organized housing to the growing number of ethnic workers in that city due to the demands of World War I. Worker strikes and protests, which were bolstered by support from immigrant neighborhoods, prompted concern and action. Those who pushed for better housing did so as part of a larger plan of reorganizing the built environment with the belief that a better urban structure would solve most of the perceived labor and cultural problems.[50]

Further, Thomas Sugrue demonstrates that during and after World War II in Detroit homeownership was as much an identity as a financial investment for recent immigrants. Many East European immigrants and their children regarded the home as the repository of family values and the center of community life. Homeownership represented financial success and evidence that these newcomers had become truly American. Additionally, a well kept home and yard served as tangible evidence of hard-work, upward mobility, and middle-class values. Becky Nicolaides also argues that home ownership among working-class suburbanites in post- World War II Los Angeles

[50] Robert Macieski, "The Home of the Workingman is the Balance Wheel of Democracy; Housing Reform in Wartime Bridgeport," *Journal of Urban History*, (Sept. 2000): 720, 723.

represented "a distinct basis of identity for laboring-class residents that set them apart from other suburban interest groups," and that they "sought to protect the security they had achieved through owning a home."[51]

As Kenneth Jackson also points out, business and political leaders wanted citizens to own their homes because they believed that workers would be much more reluctant to strike for fear of losing their jobs. Companies such as the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Provident Institution for Savings routinely scoffed at the potential for work stoppages, reasoning that their employees, "own their homes, and therefore, cannot afford to strike."[52]

Finally, land and home ownership have also meant the possibility of greater economic gain. In fact much of the history of the settlement of the United States has been fueled by land speculation and the city became the penultimate arena for such an endeavor. As Robert Fishman writes and as William Cronon documents, "The American city was always a kind of double speculation-- the effort to lure a critical mass of capital and skills to a speculative urban center in order to open up the surrounding territory for speculative sale as farmland." By having more people own their own homes, the fortunes of the factory and the city become tied to those of the working- class homeowner in terms of stable jobs and rising home values. This fact helped municipal elites across the nation limit democratic participation. Urban elites also used this as leverage to discourage the creation of too comprehensive and wide-scale improvements that were suggested by professional urban planners and other reformers by arguing that to effect too many changes would require proportionately raising property taxes over and above the value of

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[51] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 213, and Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven*, 148.
[52] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 51.

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homes.[53] To this end, residents in a working- class suburb of Los Angeles concurred. They often voted against municipal improvements for fear that increased taxes would threaten their precarious hold on homeownership. This working-class group saw homeownership, as well as the ability to grow crops and raise chickens on their property as a means of economic self-protection and a modicum of economic control against a cash economy and industrial capitalism.[54]

It would appear that the ideas of Lansing officials paralleled the philosophies of others around the country concerning the importance of and reasons for creating housing opportunities. In 1918 Lansing hosted its first annual "Own-A-Home" exposition to help people develop financial strategies to buy their own houses. World War I had brought several people to the city creating even more pressure on an already tight market. In 1920 the R.E. Olds Company announced that it was going to need 2000 new workers, and the Durant Motor Works also began construction on a new factory. To help try and ease the problems of growth, each summer the city began holding weekly seminars throughout the city in churches, private homes, and in municipal buildings to instruct people on ways to save for their own homes. In 1921 the city adopted the slogan "Out of the Jungle, Into

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[53] Robert Fishman, ed., *The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy*, (Washington D.C.; The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 3-4. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great* West, (New York: W.W. Norton Co, 1992). As evidence of city governments' limiting democratic participation, in Los Angeles for example, the city government and the Chamber of Commerce commissioned the planning firms of the Olmsted Brothers and of Harland Bartholomew to create a comprehensive city plan for that community. After three years of work and over $80,000 spent, the plan was quietly shelved. The same thing happened in Lansing. They hired Bartholomew in 1920. His plan was not published in the papers, nor was there any public hearings as to his findings. (The newspaper is not indexed, but I searched several issues of the paper on the key dates key dates surrounding important announcements and did not find anything). However, unlike in L.A., the state insisted on retaining Bartholomew in 1938 and having the city incorporate some of his ideas into the capital building plan. Lansing also neglected to inform its citizens of the possibility of building an incinerator plant as a means to get rid of its garbage. Instead it continued to use a pig farm as will be explained in the next chapter. See Harland Bartholomew, *The Lansing City Plan; A Comprehensive City Plan Report for Lansing, Michigan*, (St. Louis: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1922 and 1938). See also Hise and Deverell, *Eden By Design*.

[54] Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven*, 137-138.

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the Homes" as its motto for that years exposition. The speakers discussed such issues as "A home is more than a house, it makes you part of the community," and "Don't wonder how your neighbor was able to buy a home--start saving now and get one." The comments from a member of the local realty board best capture the motivations and spirit behind these week- long drives, "Right now, I contend, there is nowhere a more important patriotic service than home building."[55]

In conjunction with the city's efforts to promote homeownership, the *State Journal* devoted a page each Saturday to different aspects of home buying in addition to the daily ads that publicized homes for sale. The section, entitled "Home Building is in the Minds of All the People" generally highlighted new types of construction techniques, news of new housing tracts being built, and articles discussing housing issues in other cities. Homes in Lansing generally cost between two and five thousand dollars depending on size, amenities, and location. Many of the newer homes that had 6 rooms, gas, water, sewer, and electric lights went for $4500 to $5000 and required $500 down and monthly payments of $50- a sum not totally out of reach of Lansing factory workers if they scrimped and saved.[56] By the 1920s, many working class people were able to move out of their cottages into these nicer bungalows due to changes in construction designs, cheaper materials, higher wages and steadier employment compared to previous decades of the industrial era. "Housing, like cars were mass marketed, and represented a confluence, the joining together of a pervasive and disseminating middle-class culture

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[55] "Own- a- Home Day Is Busy," *State Journal*, 20 Jan. 1921, 2, and *Lansing City Directory*, vol. xxii, (Chilson, McKinley and Co., 1922); Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 89; "Out of Jungle Into the Homes," *State Journal*, 13 Aug. 1921, 9.

[56] "Own a Home," *State Journal*, 20 Oct. 1920, 16-17; "Finish Half Big Building Program," *State Journal*, 6 Aug. 1921, 11. Prices and amenities of homes come from looking at the ads in the paper.

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th a very large and improving low-end market."[57]

Lansing's efforts to help residents purchase their own homes with the idea of nnecting their fortunes to industry and the larger community seemed to work for a ne. For example the city saw no major strikes up through 1932 and the newspaper and e Chamber of Commerce used this as a selling point to lure new businesses. The city's forts in conjunction with private organizations also effectively helped integrate some inorities into the community. Lansing had no "Chinatowns," "Greektowns," or "Black ettoes." Immigrants were scattered throughout the city. Most African- Americans ed in racially mixed neighborhoods before the 1940s and '50s despite a few deed strictions that were in place at the beginning of the century. A report in the newspaper ted that of the 1100 people attending the free public evening schools, 10 percent were migrants. H.B McKale, who was in charge of the school commented that he was nxious to establish schools in shops and factories throughout the city. Experience ows that the largest number can be reached in this way, for the reason that the migrant feels the strongest tie to the place where he is gainfully employed." He also inted out that classes for immigrants had been held at the REO plant for some time and at they had "done a good job." He finished by expressing his belief that, "if instruction English and citizenship were carried on in all shops of the city, Lansing would soon ve no foreign populations except as new people came in."[58] A study solicited by nsing and done just a few years later by a professor from the college confirmed that the y's joint efforts at Americanizing the population were going well. He noted that: ocal educational, civic, and religious institutions have co-operated in a hearty manner

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Joseph Bigott, *From Cottage to Bungalow: Houses and the Working Class in Metropolitan Chicago, 69-1929*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 9-10.
'Immigration Spurt Being Shown Here," *State Journal*, 23 Oct. 1920, 2.

to assist in assimilating the newcomer. Industrial organizations... are always eager to play their part in the community Americanization program."[59]

The city's efforts to encourage homeownership played an important role in its Americanization process and also helped the majority of residents purchase their own homes. Lansing's homeownership rates increased from roughly 48.5 percent in 1916 to a little over 59 percent by the end of 1926 in a city where 56 percent of the workforce labored in factories. Census figures indicate that home ownership was fairly steady statewide. In 1930 58.1 percent of residents in Ingham County (home of Lansing) owned their own homes. Statewide, 58.3 percent of Michigan residents either owned their homes outright or were paying a mortgage compared to 47.8 percent nationwide. By 1940, even with the Depression, a little over 50 percent of Lansing's residents still owned their homes while that percentage was 56.6 percent for the "Lansing district" and still much higher than the national average of 43.6 percent.[60] It is interesting to note though, that the Lansing Chamber of Commerce reported in 1926 that the bucolic town of East Lansing had become "a preferred suburb of Lansing businessmen" with "not a single factory within its confines—and not one is desired." It would seem then, that Lansing's

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[59] This is not to suggest in any way that African-Americans were treated as equals in the city. Merely that there were conscious attempts to disperse minorities throughout the city and at least physically integrate them into neighborhoods as part of a concerted "Americanization" program. Allen Bennett Forsberg, "A City of Progressive Industry, Satisfied Workers, and Financial Soundness," excerpt found in *State Journal*, 1 January 1927, 8-9. See also Douglas K. Meyer, "The Changing Negro Residential Patterns in Lansing, Michigan, 1850-1969," (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1970), 94, 98.

[60] Forsberg, "A City of Progressive Industry, Satisfied Workers, and Financial Soundness," insert in the *State Journal*, 1 January 1927, 19. 1930 Census Book and 1940 Census Book, from the 1930 census, Michigan had 488,754 dwellings that were owned outright or mortgaged compared to 349,054 rented units. These figures reflect 1920 statistics. From the census of 1940 Ingham County's population was 130,616, up from 116,587 in 1930. The 58.1% homeownership rate reflects figures from 1930. The percent urban of Ingham County fell between 1930 and 1940 from 73% to 67%. Lansing Chamber of Commerce, *Lansing, Michigan: A Progressive American City*, (Lansing: Dick Short and Co., 1926). Of the 22,471 homes in Lansing that were occupied in 1940, 11,422, or just over half were owner occupied. Also 71% of homes in Lansing by 1941 were single- family detached buildings. See *16th Census of the United States: 1940, Housing Vol. II*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943).

financially better off had no problems helping the working classes physically link their status as homeowners and their precarious positions in the lower-middle classes to the factories and smokestacks they could see outside their windows on a daily basis while simultaneously shielding that connection from their families who lived in healthier and more pleasant surroundings.[61]

Municipalities and states were not the only ones promoting home ownership as well as more rational, planned, land-use patterns. Well before the Great Depression and the New Deal, the federal government had created incentives to turn America into a nation of homeowners. During World War I government housing planners attempted to create neighborhoods and communities that would foster a more cohesive and democratic society. In order to accomplish this, planners included parks, central squares, and recreation fields where people could meet and socialize. In addition, planners frequently called for community buildings of some sort. Gail Radford insists that while planners subscribed to "the molding power of architecture," they were not trying to "control" or manipulate, they were simply promoting a non-class-specific local community life.[62] Along these lines, Herbert Hoover, as the Secretary of Commerce, had created the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act in 1926. Every state adopted one form or another of the Zoning Act, which was designed in part to protect homeowners from the incursions of industry. The State of Michigan, along with half of the 48 states, also immediately accepted another federal government regulation, the Standard City Planning Enabling Act in 1928, which provided for each municipality within a state to create a city plan commission that would have power to adopt a master city plan and act as an advisory

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[61] Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 94.
[62] Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 38, 42.

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committee to various city government departments on matters affecting the physical growth of the municipality.[63]

Cities needed to create more livable spaces and pay attention to issues like housing, planning, and zoning because an increasing number of middle- class Americans were migrating to the suburbs in the first three decades of the 20th century, taking with them an important tax base and leaving cities with the option of levying higher taxes on business and industry and on the working-classes, or developing strategies so that people would want to stay in the city. Jon Teaford points out, for example, that Oakland County, Michigan, which is approximately sixty miles north of Lansing and just west of Detroit, saw its population more than double from 90,050 to 211,251 between 1920 and 1930, without having a true "city." Teaford speculates that this prewar suburbanization was the result of an anti-urban sentiment. He believes that many desired to live in a rural setting characterized by "the small, the intimate, and the homogeneous—characteristics...associated with village life." Additionally, Teaford writes that those who moved forty-five minutes outside of cities, "sought to preserve the green open space and clear waters of the rural past and longed nostalgically for the fields and forests that had first drawn them from the city." As part of their idyllic visions, these people valued small government and relied on volunteerism and "governmental intimacy," characteristics not associated with large cities.[64]

Perhaps, as a response to the growing suburban pressures and a fear that the working classes could potentially move into East Lansing, and certainly as a result of the

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[63] *Official Proceedings of the City Council, City of Lansing*, 24 Aug. 1937. See also "Standard City Planning Enabling Act," at www.plcd.com/landuse/SCPEA and "Discriminatory Acts of Zoning," at www.ennen.edu/pubne/geo/book/e233.discinn.num.
[64] Teaford, *Post- Suburbia*, 5-7.

need for more and better housing, haphazard growth, and poor city services, Lansing, in 1920, decided to create its own city planning commission. In 1916, as further evidence of the link between the influence of the Michigan Agricultural College and Lansing, Professor Edward Lindemann proposed a series of inner and outer boulevards for the city with parks and "beauty spots" on the periphery. Using Lindemann's ideas as a guide, Lansing city leaders came to believe that they needed a comprehensive plan to better guide the city's growth. In 1920, Mayor Benjamin Kyes appointed a city plan commission, which eventually hired Harland J. Bartholomew, a prominent urban planner from St Louis, to give the city a comprehensive map to both beautify and economize its urban space.[65] Mayor Kyes headed the committee and was given authority from the city council to appoint seven other members to the board including future mayor Alfred Doughty along with one woman, Martha S. Barber. Lansing's decision followed on the heels of other Midwestern municipalities such as Cleveland, St. Louis, Chicago, and Indianapolis, which had attempted to create long-term plans that would yield more organized urban spaces. Cleveland for example, inspired by the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, was one of the first municipalities to develop such a comprehensive plan in 1903. The stated goal for Cleveland planners was to promote increased harmony among the city's white inhabitants and to give them a feeling that they were participating in and were an integral part of the success of the city. The center- piece of their vision was a civic center, which, they believed, would offer greater public space and a public forum for all citizens. Other Midwestern cities such as St. Louis, Chicago, Columbus, and Indianapolis were quick to emulate Cleveland's example.[66]

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[65] Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 90.
[66] Harland Bartholomew, *The Lansing City Plan; A Comprehensive City Plan Report for Lansing,*

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Lansing, then, hoped to keep pace with its larger neighbors and create the foundations for a great city by hiring one of the nation's preeminent urban planners. While city planning in 1920 was still a relatively new profession, Harland Bartholomew had gotten in on the ground floor. In 1912 at the age of 23 he worked on Newark, New Jersey's first city plan. St. Louis hired him in 1916 as their planning engineer, where he worked full and part time until 1950. In addition to his job with the city he began his own consulting firm. Between 1920 and 1926 Bartholomew authored twenty city plans, more than anyone else in his field. When Lansing hired him he was on his way to establishing himself as one of the most well regarded and sought after city planners in the nation.[67]

Bartholomew had been influenced by the ideas of earlier suburban designers and landscape architects. Most late 19th century American cities were characterized by the grid pattern. The grid was associated with orderliness and prosperity, particularly in newer, frontier communities. However, architects such as Olmsted and H.W.S. Cleveland criticized the grid because they felt that it was unattractive, contributed to overcrowded tenements, and was overly conducive to disease. In response to the perceived design flaws of the central city, designers of the suburbs chose their inspirations from European cities such as Paris and Berlin. Around the beginning of the 20th century, tastes shifted and most planners received their inspiration and modeled their designs based on English cities. Wide, tree lined boulevards and winding roads were created as extensions of park systems while houses were set back from the streets on

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*Michigan*, (St. Louis: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1922), 3. Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland*, 139-140.

[67]Norman J. Johnston, "Harland J. Bartholomew: Precedent for the Profession," in *The American Planner; Biographies and Recollections*, Donald A. Krueckeberg, ed. (Methuen: New York, 1983), 280-83.

winding lanes to symbolize the "pastoral and bucolic pace of the home rather than the busy and efficient system of the office or factory."[68]

The city plan that Bartholomew gave to Lansing in 1922 clearly tried to balance the philosophies generated through suburban design with the realities of the industrial city. In other words, Bartholomew's plans consolidated utilitarian ideas as reflected in the conservationist movement with an environmentalist ethos. He believed that urban nature had utilitarian value in terms of recreational outlets, but at the same time, he abhorred urban sprawl and the destruction of nature because he believed that nature also provided intangible benefits such as moral and intellectual uplift.

Bartholomew valued the fusion of functionality, aesthetics, and order as part of his guiding ideology of trying to make urban spaces tools to enhance the democratic spirit. He argued that, "To make Lansing a better city to live in is to make it a better city to work in." From this premise he wrote that defects in the physical city would thwart the progress of improving living conditions and by extension, the character of Lansing's residents.[69]

Bartholomew seemed to believe in, and value, the American character-building advantages of aesthetics over function, and he accepted that nature, or green spaces would have a positive effect upon people and should be prominent in any built environment. He equated open spaces with greater democracy and social activism, yet he was also a man of science and pragmatism and thus recognized the necessity of creating a very functional place where goods and people could easily flow. Bartholomew attempted to reconcile what was believed to be two opposing viewpoints. He did so by focusing his

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[68] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 73-76.
[69] Bartholomew, *The Lansing City Plan, 1922*, 13.

planned improvements on better transportation routes, more green spaces, and additional open spaces where people could gather to discuss their views, meet socially, and simply relax and enjoy nature. In essence, he wanted the city's residents to feel connected and a part of a more organic city that would be enmeshed with the surrounding countryside.

When Bartholomew presented the results of his two- year study to the city council and the city planning commission, the report was less than kind in its overall assessment. He wrote that Lansing was "quite devoid of interest and charm, overhead utilities and billboards intrude upon the eye," and that "as a capital it is distinctly disappointing."[70] Bartholomew's study began by focusing on practical matters such as a detailed and comprehensive strategy for the expansion and widening of Lansing's streets. He stressed through streets both north/south and east/west along with a circumferential loop on the outskirts of the city to allow for easy access both in and out of the downtown area. The plan also offered suggestions to eliminate several grade crossings and to consolidate the three train passenger stations into one central and efficient grand edifice.[71]

Despite such functional elements, the majority of Bartholomew's plan focused on Lansing's overall aesthetics. Though his street plan privileged traffic routes to the commercial center, these same roads were also tied to a series of green spaces or "nature" parks that would surround the city. He wanted these spaces to include the "native" flora and fauna in order to give them as much of a "natural" wilderness appearance as possible. He envisioned the peripheral ring of parks as serving two purposes. First, he believed that they would act as a control against urban sprawl, and second, that the green spaces would serve as a refuge or place of inspiration and relaxation for Lansing's working

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[70]Ibid.,. 49.
[71]Ibid., 34-36, 54.

population. He believed that it was one of the primary responsibilities of cities to provide adequate recreational space for the community's children. In this regard he wrote that, "Provision of facilities for public recreation is an obligation of the modern city. There is a certain minimum of space which should be set aside for the recreation of small children, for whom play is the first form of education; for adolescent youth, for whom out-of-door sports and games are vital necessities."[72]

Bartholomew's emphasis on the value of urban nature and on the important connection between the individual, recreation, and the proximity of the home to "natural" areas is even more pronounced in his subsequent plan for Los Angeles. He wrote:

> But in great urban areas bitter experience proves that, without adequate parks, the bulk of the people are progressively cut off from many kinds of recreation of the utmost importance to their health, happiness, and moral welfare. Today, almost everybody can, and frequently does without hesitation, get into a car and go five or ten miles through uninteresting streets to get to what he considers a really pleasant route of pleasure travel, perhaps in a park or public forest, but more likely just a region that isn't yet all built up. But the majority, when they get out of town, want to drive fifty or a hundred miles in pleasant surroundings, coming home by a different route. Considering the numbers of people of the Los Angeles Region who, under increasing difficulties, seek the kind of recreation to be obtained from trips into these wild districts, and considering the price per trip that people show themselves willing to pay for this recreation in terms of automobile mileage alone, it is clear that there is very large and strong demand for such recreation. To people of today, how great would be the value of a home only a few miles from a parkway of ample road capacity and agreeable scenery, where one might drive through a chain of similar parkways to distant parts and enjoy the open country of Southern California! Contrast this with the far inferior worth of a home shut off from any considerable area of open land by twenty to fifty miles of practically uninterrupted cities and suburbs. Many miles of once pleasant, tree-bordered rural roads are annually added to the already tremendous total of unsightly commercialized streets. Is this good business? It is through increasing lengths of such treeless streets that both citizens and visitors will be forced to travel in search of pleasure—unless the evil results of present highway construction are somehow counteracted and future improvements consider the

[72]Ibid. 27, 36.

good of the whole community.[73]

Just as he would propose more scenic drives in L.A., Bartholomew had suggested similar strategies for Lansing. To combat the downtown traffic problems and the drab surroundings, he called for the construction of several wide streets, public plazas, squares, monuments and parks throughout the city and that prominent intersections should be reserved for many of these features. He also designed the streets to connect to the outer parks so that they would not only funnel all of the traffic towards the city center, but so that the main thoroughfares would also serve as "pleasure" drives after a hard day of work. Bartholomew is also quick to explain that these "pleasure drives" are not the same as boulevards. "In order to provide for travel amid pleasant surroundings, parkways necessarily should be elongated real parks. Except that they include roadways for automobile travel, they have almost nothing in common with 'boulevards' as that term is generally used in America." These features, though, were not solely for functionality and beautification. He saw these two aspects as a means to creating a greater democratic spirit within the city.[74]

Bartholomew not only planned for parks on the periphery, he also called for more open spaces in the form of parks, recreational areas, and schools to be built citywide. He organized these open spaces or "breathing spaces" as he called them, to be equally distributed throughout the city with parks and playgrounds situated within a half- mile of every residential neighborhood so that children would be within relatively close walking

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[73] Olmsted Brothers and Bartholomew and Associates, *Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region*, (published by the authors, 1930), 3, 11, 13, 14, and 114-115. Republished in Hise and Deverell, *Eden by Design*.
[74] Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1922*, 36. See also Olmsted Brothers and Bartholomew, *Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches*, 13.

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distance and the open spaces could serve as primary gathering points for the surrounding neighborhoods. He additionally wanted to guard against the parks becoming too crowded, which is one reason why he proposed to build so many. Finally, he suggested several other open areas such as squares, small parks, and plazas in the downtown area to "soften and modify the every-day outlook of people who live in the thickly built-up sections" and to add character and dignity to the city.[75]

Bartholomew believed that in addition to the personal inspiration people would derive from these public spaces, they would also develop a greater "social spirit." For example, in his report he referred several times to the parks and squares as "social centers...in which community spirit may find expression under public auspices." He argued that these "social centers," which also included a civic center and neighborhood community buildings, were necessary to encourage greater community spirit and civic participation. He emphasized that the parks and other open areas were not merely "utopian fancies" but would serve to improve the living conditions for everyone in the city.[76]

Bartholomew's concerns over creating a city that emphasized the good of the whole community over the desires of the few are laced throughout his report. His worries stemmed from his observations that Lansing's residents seemed to lack any real public interest in the city. He criticized Lansingites for accepting a "heritage of commonplaceness which has never been overcome," and called upon all its citizens to "forsake the petty trifling details of growth" and to "begin viewing the city as a whole."[77]

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[75]Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1922*, 27.
[76]Ibid. 27-28.
[77]Ibid. 37 and 48. In his plan for Los Angeles, Bartholomew writes: "those of lower incomes generally live in small-lot, single-family home districts, and have more children and less leisure time in which to go

Bartholomew concluded that this predominant attitude in the city derived from the competing agendas of the city. He criticized the city for privileging industry to the detriment of everything and everyone else. He wrote that "mere multiplication of factories and warehouses will not create a perfect city," and "If Lansing wishes to rise above the character which its industries are likely to impress upon it, it will have to exercise a far greater interest in things that appeal to the eye. The effect of industrial growth is almost universally ugliness, lack of character, monotony, and an oppressive uninspiring scene."[78]

In his assessment of the impact that Lansing's policies were having on the general moral and character of Lansing's workers he wrote that the labor supply was "becoming a problem." He had observed that many of the workers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their living and working conditions and he believed that the poor physical appearance of the city contributed to these attitudes. He concluded that, "to make Lansing a better city to live in is to make it a better city to work in." In this regard, Bartholomew advocated that the city begin steps to improve the physical surroundings of the entire city to offset what he saw as a depressing and demeaning environment through the incorporation of urban nature, more open spaces, greater attention to housing and neighborhoods, and a more orderly, better planned urbanscape. He believed that a better physical environment would then inspire an increased democratic spirit, which in turn would inspire the working population to believe that they could have a voice, not just in

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to distant parks and recreational areas. These families comprise 65 per cent of the population, and they should be given first consideration, not only for their own good but for the welfare of the community." In Olmsted Brothers and Bartholomew, *Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches*, 22.

[78]Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1922*, 48, 50.

the direction of their neighborhoods and city, but ultimately regarding their lives.[79]

Bartholomew also spent a great deal of space in his report criticizing the way the city had utilized its two rivers. To this end he wrote that,

> There was no generous provision of open spaces for state buildings, no placing of streets for impressiveness, no reservations of native woodland, and no appreciation whatever of the value of the river and riversides as public property. As a consequence of this unfortunate lack of vision Lansing is now a most ordinary city. It is less dignified, less impressive, and less attractive than many of its neighbors...The abuse of the river in the central section where it is most frequently seen is commonly lamented...Property owners on Michigan Avenue and near the capitol have had no appreciation whatever of the value of an impressive view.

To combat the abuses of the rivers he emphasized his belief that the river and riverfront properties should be protected because they "belonged to the people" and that the best way to maintain the rivers was through public ownership of the land on either sides of the riverbanks along with a program that encouraged and gave incentives to private homeowners along the river banks to keep their properties maintained at a certain level of beauty and cleanliness. He also suggested that the city create a series of parks that ran along the rivers so that everyone could enjoy them.[80]

Although critical of the city's emphasis on industry and commerce, Bartholomew was also pragmatic enough to understand that these institutions and the attitudes about them were deeply imbedded within the culture of not just Lansingites, but within Americans themselves, and that industry was the life-blood of most American cities. Thus he realized that his critiques of the capitalist culture needed to be tempered and paired with an argument that would sell his plan through the language of compromise, persuasion, and an appeal to peoples' pocket books. As part of this strategy,

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[79] Ibid.,13.
[80] Ibid., 49-51.

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[11]Ibid., 14.

Bartholomew saw zoning as a key ingredient to creating a more livable, ordered city. He observed that, "In its present state Lansing is a strange mixture of factories, stores and homes with certain individual units of each type preempting space properly belonging to another use. Conflict of interests has resulted and incidentally property values have suffered unnecessary derangement." He then pointed out that zoning laws would stabilize property values because they would add an aspect of predictability to the urban environment. In this vein, Lansing officials could then sell the cost of the plan to residents by pointing out that their neighborhoods would be protected from the intrusion of industry, which would cause a rise in property values, thus compensating for the cost of the urban make- over.[81]

In assessing Bartholomew's plan, it is clear that he envisioned a public city that was aesthetically pleasing, yet orderly and functional enough to appease proponents of industry and commerce. His equation however, unquestionably favored nature and aesthetics over industry, although it is laced with a utilitarian conservationist ideology too. In its essence, his plan attempted to give Lansing a vision of how it could both grow through courting more industry and commerce, and create an urban space where people would not only want to live, but stay for the long term. Bartholomew's penchant for beauty, order, and greater social democracy represented an ideological fusion of the "City Beautiful" and "City Functional" movements into a more democratic "City Livable."

Bartholomew clearly believed in the potential transformative powers of nature. He took the design and planning ideas that were being used throughout the nation in the middle-class suburbs, and fitted them to the central city. He was not motivated solely by

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[81]Ibid., 14.

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a desire to "Americanize" the working classes in order to control them. Nor was he attempting to simply create more livable spaces. Bartholomew recognized that he would have to play politics with his employers at times, telling them what they wanted to hear and occasionally playing on their fears of potential workers' revolution to sell his ideas. (Remember what happened in 1919 nationwide, just one year before Bartholomew was commissioned). Bartholomew wanted to instill a greater democratic spirit in the entire population of Lansing and he believed that classical architecture, a reordering of space, and the incorporation of urban nature were key. He and other similar- minded urban planners, like the Olmsteds, attempted to give the American public and specifically the working class a scaled-down version of the middle- class, garden suburban communities in the central city. However, their efforts met with only partial success. As a result, once World War II ended and cheap suburban homes were available for a broader section of the public, Americans would flee the cities in droves. Part of the reason has to do with racial prejudices, but part of the explanation has to do with the fact that city centers failed to give people what they wanted: cleanliness, space, a feeling of security, adequate green spaces, and a sense of personal control and autonomy.[82]

Some historians have an unfavorable view of city planners in general and of Bartholomew in particular. Eric Sandweiss for example, argues that Bartholomew's city plan for St. Louis was simply a tool to legitimize the interests of capital in that city. While city leaders, including those in Lansing did attempt this, it points more to their political skills of transforming Bartholomew's ideas to fit their own goals and visions than to Bartholomew's plans themselves. Bartholomew, then, like reformers before and after him, inadvertently contributed to the idea that democracy and capitalism were one

[82] Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland*, 210. See also, Teaford, *Post-Suburbia*, particularly chapters 2 and 3.

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and the same and that the preservation of nature and the creation of beauty were only valuable if they produced profit.

Christine Boyer in *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* uses a postmodern analysis to argue that city planning was a "disciplinary mechanism...regulating urban development," and that planners helped transform the nineteenth-century city from a disordered place with a humane scale into an ordered yet impersonal and alienating environment.[83] Another historian has credited Bartholomew's success to an ability to sell his profession as a "scientific procedure for managing a city's complex urban infrastructure with machinelike efficiency." This is in part true, Bartholomew did recognize that given the commercial urban climate, compromise and an appeal to efficiency were necessary. His plan for Lansing and that for Los Angeles, however, clearly reveal a desire to give people physical surroundings, which he believed would uplift and inspire.[84]

John L. Thomas and Robert Fishman assess Bartholomew somewhat differently. They suggest that he belonged to a group of professional planners who subscribed to what Fishman calls "the Metropolitan Tradition." These professionals attempted to make regional plans that encompassed more than a single suburb, or even a single city. They were more interested in preventing urban sprawl with an eye towards preserving "natural" areas outside of cities. Additionally, they were less interested in the

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[83]Eric Sandweiss, "Fenced-Off Corners and Wider Settings," in *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 22, 77; Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

[84]Curiously, R. Bruce Stephenson shows that Bartholomew's firm was commissioned to do a city plan for St. Petersburg, Florida that seems to be slightly contradictory to his motivations and design plans for Lansing and L.A. Perhaps he was not involved personally in the St. Petersburg plan. See R. Bruce Stephenson, *Visions of Eden: Environmentalism, Urban Planning, and city Building in St. Petersburg, Florida, 1900-1995*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997), 112. See also Hise and Deverell, *Eden By Design*.

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commercial aspects of the city and Americanization of immigrants and more focused on assimilation. As Fishman explains:

> For assimilation meant not the stripping of one's former identity but the gradual self-creation within the metropolis. It meant learning the skills for productive employment, but also learning to choose among the many different identities that the metropolis offered. Assimilation meant attaining the freedom of the city. Thus the "human ecology" of the metropolis functions as a great machine not so much for the accumulation of wealth as for the growing assimilation of its population.[85]

Bartholomew's plan presented Lansing with a reasonable and thoroughly comprehensive strategy that it could use to plan and direct its future growth. Despite having commissioned Bartholomew's services, this very comprehensiveness caused Lansing's elites, led by the members of the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce, initially to reject most of his suggestions because he gave them more than they really wanted. Subsequently, city councils and mayors, under the influence of the Chamber of Commerce, opted to keep some of Bartholomew's ideas and his plan was implemented on a piece- meal basis for future improvements. Lansing's leaders chose to accede to the needs of industry and business, however, whenever conflicts of interest occurred between the needs of industry and concerns over fostering urban nature. Such decisions are a commentary on Lansing's definition and vision of American society and democracy, rather than an indictment of the goals of city planners and reformers such as Bartholomew, who was invited into, and forced to work within, an existing culture. By the 1920s businessmen had become as adept urban reformers as were engineers, women's clubs, and other community activist groups who had functioned earlier as municipal reformers. Although Lansing's businessmen were interested in creating a more livable

[85]Robert Fishman, ed. *The American Planning Tradition, Culture and Policy*, (Baltimore; The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 72-73. See also chapter 2, John L. Thomas, "Holding the Middle Ground."

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city, those ends were pursued only if they proved to be cost effective. If better housing meant a more reliable, conservative, and stable workforce, then better housing would be pursued to a point. If parks and more open spaces meant more people wanting to stay in the city, or at least come and visit downtown, then some improvements would be made, but those parks would come in the form of controlled recreational outlets such as golf courses. But, if expensive water and sewage systems could be avoided—even if they would have guaranteed better services and a healthier city—they chose the cheaper alternatives.

Moreover, the city's decision makers told residents that the costs of beautifying urban spaces to the degrees that many wanted meant disproportionately higher property taxes compared to the potential rise in personal property values. They also feared having to place a larger burden on corporations, encouraging them to relocate to other municipalities. Additionally, it was difficult to sell the idea of urban nature and to justify additional expenditures to residents when it was believed that they could easily experience the benefits of wilderness with a short drive out of town. Michigan is blessed with an abundance of trees, rivers, and other "natural" beauties. Urban nature, therefore, became a valuable tool to municipal leaders only as it could be incorporated into the economic system.

Lansing city officials were also concerned that too much of a "democratic spirit" in the city could prove destructive to the local power structures if it could not be harnessed and controlled. They therefore successfully convinced working class homeowners that their economic well-being was connected to the fortunes of industry, and that they had a mutual interest in keeping tax rates proportionately lower than

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property values. The strategy worked temporarily but the city would face other challenges as the 1930s approached.

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## Chapter 3

## Lansing: City Profitable

Some advocates of urban nature believed that a softened city environment would help "Americanize" the working population. Others were motivated by genuine social justice and ethical considerations, while still others accepted some open spaces and public recreational outlets as a means to averting public unrest and as an inexpensive tool to create additional economic growth. The type of workforce most city leaders wanted to foster was a loyal, hardworking, and docile population that would act in a homogenously predictable manner and be willing to defer to their "social betters" in political and economic issues. During the 1920s, it was the agenda of this final group that seemed to be winning the day in many parts of the industrial world.

Vanessa Schwartz, for example, explains that the attempts to manipulate and mold urban residents had been going on in Paris since at least the 1870s. There, city officials were able to use the print-media, wax museums, morgues, and the "O-rama" craze in combination with the physical changes to the city conducted by Haussmann to help turn Parisian mobs into crowds that participated in urban life as unified and momentarily socially equal spectators and voyeurs of the misfortunes of others, rather than as violent masses bent on overthrowing the government. The result, according to Schwartz, aided in the process of Parisians gleaning a self-identity as citizens of the city rather than as disparate groups divided along economic lines. Similar processes were taking place in America. Kathy Peiss' study of working- class women in New York, for example, offers a partial explanation as to why working- class activism diminished in the 1920s and why social reformers, in general, tended to become less radical in their actions.

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Although Peiss focuses more on gender issues and does not draw a direct link, her study demonstrates how the popularization and commercialization of recreational outlets in American culture served to better homogenize divergent working- class immigrant groups, and divert their time and attention away from more important issues such as working conditions. [1]

Simultaneously, the construction of urban nature also played an important role in shaping how people would experience and interpret the city and their lives. According to Richard White, people know nature through work. In the *Organic Machine* he contends that the boundaries between nature and humans have been blurred, often making the "natural unnatural." As an example of this he points out the degree of effort and human manipulation that goes into the salmon farms, (man-made and controlled and therefore by the strictest definition, something very unnatural), where most of the fish are now raised along the Columbia River. Very few "wild" salmon actually navigate the waters of that river anymore, yet all "Salmon symbolize nature in the Pacific Northwest" to this day.[2] Not only can people understand nature through work, they can also experience it through recreation. The "natural" places people want to preserve and the reasons for that preservation are formed by how they interact with nature.

Lansing city officials wanted to control how people experienced the city and "urban nature," hoping that residents would relate to the city through economics and recreation rather than as a means to independent thought and increased, meaningful political and communal participation. Similar goals can be found in cities like Flint. In 1911 Flint socialists successfully convinced the working population that the lack of and

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[1] Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture In Fin-De-Siecle Paris*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1998. Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*.
[2] White, *The Organic Machine*, 90-91.

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poor quality of city services such as sewer and water and the lack of quality housing and inadequate health care resulted from the weak leadership of the business community. As a result, the socialists briefly took over the city government, only to lose it in the next election due to a coalition of democratic and republican party businessmen who successfully undercut the socialist platform of municipal improvements and social reforms. Prosperity on a wider scale was the key for the established political elites to regain and maintain control. "The aristocracy of labor- the skilled workers who were more conservative and better paid, impeded the development of a unified working class consciousness." Their material well- being served as a model of success for other workers and they actively supported the conservative leaders. Additionally, the failure of socialism made it possible to create an industrial community in which there was simply no place for any expression of working-class consciousness and independence, which, "allowed businessmen to control civic affairs, establishing a social hierarchy in which every new resident deferred to the wisdom and power of the automotive elite."[3]

Lansing officials hoped to create the same type of deference that existed in Flint. In addition to their homeowner drives, Lansing leaders attempted to commercialize leisure by offering the city's residents recreational diversions in the form of parks, playing fields, and movie theaters. As outlets for recreation became more commercialized and homogenized to fit middle- class definitions of what it meant to be American, people became less involved in neighborhood and communal activities of the

[3] Ronald Edsforth, *Class Conflict and Cultural Consensus: The Making of a Mass Consumer Society in Flint, Michigan*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 56-57, 60, 69,72, 87.

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type described by Roy Rosenzweig in *Eight Hours for What We Will.*[4] Rosenzweig shows how the upper and middle- classes in Worchester, Massachusetts deliberately set about to transform communal forms of recreation such as neighborhood and church activities, drinking, and holidays into commercialized, homogenizing events. In commenting on playgrounds, Rosenzweig writes: "Environmentalist social reformers at the turn of the century saw play facilities as part of the social environment that could be reconstructed as a means of reshaping social behavior. They believed that the correct management of the juvenile life cycle and the proper provision of play facilities would socialize children into the roles, behaviors, and values expected of modern urbanites."[5]

Although more recent work temporizes such categorical statements about the construction of amusement parks, corporate takeovers of local saloons, municipal supervision at playgrounds, and movie theaters as only about social manipulation, and, even Rosenzweig concedes that the working and immigrant classes also played a key role in how recreational spaces were defined, the net effect in U.S. cities does suggest that ethnic divisions broke down. Moreover, there were ongoing civil efforts on the part of big corporations to "Americanize" their workers.[6]

In looking at the automobile industry, Stephen Meyer points out that the efforts to placate autoworkers were grounded in more than simply humanitarian motivations. Auto moguls like Henry Ford believed that helping employees create a good home life was key to creating a more reliable and productive workforce. To this end Ford created a Sociology Department whose responsibility was to investigate the personal lives of every

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[4] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), and Sarah Jo Peterson, "Voting for Play: the Democratic Potential of Democratic Playgrounds," *JGAPE* 3 (April 2004): 145-175.
[5] Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, 143.
[6] Ibid. 220-221.

employee and judge if they were "worthy" of the Five dollar a day profit sharing plan. If they were not, then the department would attempt to encourage belligerent workers to conform to lifestyles the Ford Company deemed more "American." Meyers, in speaking of this Americanization program observes: "The issue was not simply different national or ethnic cultures, but also preindustrial and industrial cultures, and even class cultures. Americanization was an important movement for the adjustment of immigrant workers to a new industrial environment and to American urban and industrial society, not just to American society in the abstract."[7]

In Lansing, auto manufacturers followed the lead set by Ford and began to construct recreation centers and form various sports leagues. The Olds Company for example built its workers a clubhouse that served among other things, as a bowling alley, cafeteria, cinema, and ballroom. This helped the company enjoy a lower rate of worker turnover. These activities also effectively stole time away from those who chose to participate, serving as a diversion from many of the serious municipal issues in the town, and further creating a sense of fellowship among groups of workers who participated as teammates, and a sense of loyalty to the company.[8] The commercialization of leisure activities, as Peiss, Rosenzweig, and Meyer have noted, further gave the working classes a sense or feeling that they were at least culturally becoming, if not already, a part of the middle- class.[9]

Thus, at the same time that Lansing billed itself as the most progressive in the nation, and embarked upon the infrastructural improvements described in the previous chapter, these types of reform efforts allowed municipal leaders to manipulate reform

[7] Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day*, 150.
[8] "Workers For REO Remember Firm Fondly," *Lansing State Journal*, 21 January 2004.
[9] Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*; Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We* Will; Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day.*

language and rationale and appeal to the materialistic desires of the general population in order to pursue a pro-industry agenda for the city. That is, instead of creating more open spaces to foster increased citizen participation, as had been advocated earlier in the century, Lansing officials had before them other examples from which to work to reduce the political involvement of the public by making them passive spectators or consumers of urban images and sensations through the commodification of nature in the city, rather than active participants in the construction of their communities.[10] To this end was the decision by the city to build two new public golf courses, rather than set aside and create the amount of park acreage or the neighborhood community centers that Bartholomew suggested in the 1920s. The latter would have been non- revenue generating green spaces, but would have allowed people to decide how they wished to experience "nature." The city chose to add green spaces to the urbanscape but with the goal of selling nature as a utilitarian recreational outlet and at the same time controlling how that space would be used. By so doing, Lansing officials were able to better impose their definitions of nature, economics, politics, democracy, and in short- Americanism on the general public.[11]

These types of decisions offered an illusion that the aesthetics of the city and well- being of the general public were a top priority. The truth, however, is that the water remained polluted and the city's garbage disposal problems went unresolved. The public

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[10] Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*, p. 11-112, 118, 122, 133, and 139. See also Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities;* Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*; and Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: the Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era*, (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998).

[11] Lansing had four golf courses by 1943, three of them public. The state built 89 courses in the 1920s and had over a thousand by 1930. Also it is estimated that the number of golfers in the U.S. increased from about 5,000 in 1905 to roughly 3 million by 1915. This leads one to believe that the "average" man began to participate; McCafferty, "A History of Michigan Golf, 1921-1930," and "Part 2, Michigan Golfing History, 1911-1920," at www.webgolfer.com/june99/history.html and www.webgolfer.com/july99/history.html.

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golf courses offered the working and middle classes the opportunity to ignore or even be oblivious to more pressing problems, while simultaneously allowing them to emulate those of the higher classes. Additionally, homeownership offered the hope of some economic independence and social equality. Lansing leaders, thus pursued strategies similar to those examined by historians of leisure mentioned previously, strategies that would help mask the city's economic inequalities that resulted from the industrial capitalist system through means that gave the illusion of equality. They hoped that this strategy would help subdue some of the potential frustrations and discord in the working classes.

The rhetoric in the 1920s to create a more livable and democratic city was thus tempered by other trends. The pro-business and materialistic consumer atmosphere that characterized the 1920s for a large segment of the American public would ultimately win the day as many Lansing residents and the city's leaders alike lapsed into apathy over real municipal reforms and focused their attention primarily on personal material gains while ignoring the real costs of urban growth. Commenting on the general attitudes that seemed to dominate people's views, Bartholomew had complained that most of Lansing's residents lacked any genuine interest in civic refinement and that they, along with many of the merchants, had little desire in improving the appearance of the urban structure. If this assessment is accurate then it is even more understandable why decision makers felt less pressure to alter their belief that the best way for Lansing to grow and the best path toward individual enrichment lie primarily through industry.[12]

Because many leaders in the community chose to accept the pervasive ideology that the way towards greatness for the city rested in its ability to attract industries in large

[12] Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1922*, 48, 51-52.

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numbers and in the idea of growth, Lansing officials focused their efforts on giving residents a portion of what they wanted in the short-term; that is, cheap power and water and economic opportunities in the form of jobs and inexpensive homes. They did this in three ways: they hid the real costs of economic industrial growth by diverting part of the environmental burden to others downstream and outside the city limits-- to people city leaders did not depend for electoral support; quietly placing the burden of infrastructural improvements primarily on homeowners; and attempting to encourage and facilitate increased homeownership among the working classes.[13] This last was important because they believed that people would tend to take better care of their property because they would be concerned with protecting the value of their investment. City officials hoped that this would lead to residents voluntarily beautifying the city-- one house lot at a time. Also, by offering homeowners the infrastructural advantages of industrialization, people were given the "promise of modern urban living," which translated into a more comfortable lifestyle that mimicked the middle-classes.[14]

Lansing's political and business elite pursued their strategy through a local, regional, and national publicity campaign to sell the city. For example, in 1921 an article in the pro-business and Republican Party newspaper, the *State Journal*, boasted that Lansing was finally "leaving behind its past as a small city." It stated that, "Behind her lie days of struggle from which she has emerged triumphant and taken her place among the survivors of the fittest few." This front-page article asserted the belief that Lansing would become one of the greatest cities in the country and concluded that the best means to accomplish "greatness" was to continue to base growth on economic and industrial

[13] See the 1940 U.S. Census in which 58 percent of the county's residents lived in owner occupied homes.
[14] Robert Fishman, ed, *The American Planning Tradition*, 11.

interests.[15]

For Lansing's politicians, prioritizing industry meant, however, that they needed to convince city residents, particularly the homeowners, that they had their well- being at heart. Mayor Alfred S. Doughty, for example, was very aware of paying lip service to Lansing's homeowners. In a public address in January of 1926 he attempted to persuade the City Council to begin writing a zoning law that Bartholomew had recommended four years earlier. Doughty reminded them that the first priority of the municipal government was to "enhance the pleasure and privileges of the homeowners." He went on to say that public improvements such as paved streets and sewers "enhanced the value and protected and secured the investments of homes." In his speech, Doughty freely borrowed the language and rational found in Bartholomew's city plan of 1922 by equating zoning laws and the overall health and utility of the city with a stable and content population. He interpreted this to mean industry and jobs lead to home-ownership, a stable population, and ultimately to increased business for local merchants.[16]

In addition to the city newspaper, and the mayor, the Chamber of Commerce also employed the rhetoric of reform. For instance in 1926 it published and nationally distributed a short book entitled, *Lansing Michigan; A City of Stable Industry, Satisfied Workers, and Civic Soundness*, in which it proclaimed Lansing to be above all else a city of homeowners which, it argued, was "proof number one" of the city's priorities and prosperity. The short book further boasted that Lansing had never attempted to recruit new industries into the city, nor compete for numerical superiority because it did not need

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[15]"The City At A Turn Of Ways," *State Journal*, 1 Jan. 1921, 1.
[16]*Official Proceedings of the City Council, City of Lansing* (Lansing, Michigan), 11 January 1926, see Mayor's message to the council. Lansing did pass a zoning law in 1927, although it was criticized for its limited scope, see Bartholomew's *City Plan*, 1938, p. 2.

to. In fact it claimed that large influxes of people invited too many problems such as labor unrest and public utility nightmares. Lansing instead, had made the prosperity of its citizens its most important aim and that is how it measured its success as a community. It went on to boast that as a consequence of these policies a spirit of enterprise had been fostered and that all of its business establishments had sprung from the ingenuity and efforts of the native population.[17]

The false claims in the publication poorly masked the real intent of the propaganda in attempting to attract people and additional industry to the city. It did this by trying to demonstrate that Lansing had many basic and desirable amenities such as paved streets, several railway depots, cheap electricity and water, low corporate taxes, and a hard- working, responsible, home- owning population.[18] The publication also reveals that the city was interested in attracting primarily native-born, white, Protestants because it believed that they would be less likely to agitate for major changes within the social, cultural, and political structures.[19]

The fact that the mayor and the Chamber of Commerce used the same language as Bartholomew, but employed it towards a different vision is not too surprising. The Chamber and the municipal government had an ongoing history of cooperation that was only strengthened as the 1920s came to a close. For example, in 1930 Alton J. Hager whose term as president of the Chamber had just expired received a letter from Mayor Troyer extending his appreciation and friendship. The letter mentions that the mayor enjoyed working closely with Hager on many important issues. In a return letter, Hager

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[17]Lansing Chamber of Commerce, *Lansing, Michigan; A City of Stable Industry, Satisfied Workers, and Civic Soundness*, (Lansing: Dick Short and Co, 1926), 5, Lansing Public Library Archives (uncatalogued).
[18]Ibid., 15.
[19]Ibid., 15.

wrote, speaking of the relationship between the Chamber and the city: "I trust this may continue in the same way for the good of all concerned."[20]

The Chamber continually volunteered information to the mayor and City Council with detailed employment and economic statistics and as a result, it in turn was often asked to conduct various studies for the city. Thus, the mayor and Council members relied on the Chamber for information and appointed members of that organization to key investigatory bodies such as the City Planning Commission. In 1936 the relationship between the two was so close that Mayor Max Templeton invited the Chamber to have a representative attend every council meeting and act as an unofficial member "for the common good of the city."[21]

The close relationship between the city, the Chamber, and the local paper was also very evident. The Chamber was often lauded in *The State Journal*. One article called it a "virile giant," and "the defender of the city's welfare." To the *Journal*, the city's future was tied almost exclusively to its success of attracting new industries. The newspaper praised the Chamber in its attempts at "extending one velvet gloved hand to the incoming, honest, and enterprising business, while the other hand, adorned with brass knuckles, is ever raised against any organization or individual having at heart the injury of the people."[22]

As proof of the Chamber's ability to filter out undesirable companies, the article

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[20]Mayor Laird J. Troyer, Lansing, to A.J. Hager, President- Lansing Chamber of Commerce, 5 February 1930, and A.J. Hager, President- Lansing Chamber of Commerce, to Mayor Laird J. Troyer, Lansing, 8 February 1930. City of Lansing Documents Collection, State Archives of Michigan in the Michigan Historical Center, Lansing. Hereafter cited as CLDC.

[21]Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, to C.W. Otto, Detroit, 21 February 1936; also F. A. Hutty, "July Business Barometer, Industrial Commission of the Lansing Chamber of Commerce" for the Lansing City Council, 8 August 1930. CLDC, State Archives.

[22]"Chamber of Commerce Gain," *State Journal*, 1 January 1921, 1.

claims that city employer- employee relations were so good that no major labor problems had ever occurred in the city and because of this it claimed that several companies chose to relocate to Lansing. Although the *Journal* acknowledged that the Chamber was a powerful and influential organization, it tried to deflect any criticism by claiming that despite this power, the Chamber had no enemies because it was so concerned for the general welfare of the entire city and personally investigated every company that wished to move to the city in order to assure that no fraud would take place.[23]

Despite the rhetoric from the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce, the reality of which segment of society actually bore the heaviest burden of taxation and the subsequent tensions it created is revealed in the Chamber's efforts to lure new industries to the city. The Bantam Ball Bearing Company from Bantam, Connecticut began receiving bids from cities throughout the Midwest as it contemplated relocating closer to the heart of the nation's auto manufacturing district. The Lansing Chamber of Commerce had representatives visit Bantam, and believing that the company was financially stable, promised the company that the city would provide a plant site and a private side railroad track without cost to the ball bearing works. The Lansing banks also agreed to extend a $20,000 line of credit to cover the transition period, advance $10,000 to cover moving expenses of machinery, etc., to be paid back in 5 years, and advance $2500 to cover moving expenses of families of ten key men, also to be paid back in five years. Despite this generous offer, Bantam decided to move to South Bend, Indiana because that city offered to give Bantam $12,500 as an outright bonus, in addition to matching Lansing's

[23]"Chamber of Commerce Gain," *State Journal*, 1 January 1921, 1.

other offers.[24]

The Chamber courted ten major companies in 1928, in addition to Bantam and while the perks offered to the other companies were not as generous, they were all still presented with lucrative reasons for relocating. The story of the Burton Dixie Corporation is another case in point. In November of 1928 Lansing city officials and Burton Dixie struck a deal to secure that company's relocation to the city. With the help of the Chamber of Commerce, the mayor and the city engineer assured both Burton Dixie and the head of the Chamber's industrial committee that, among other tax benefits, if the company moved to Lansing, utilities such as water and sewer would already be constructed and available for immediate hook-up. The city also agreed, as had been its custom, to have the abutting property homeowners subsidize the cost for the construction of these services through higher utility rates, whereby, after the initial outlay had been recovered, the Board of Water and Light would then reimburse the city for the initial outlay.[25]

When the factory was completed in 1929, however, the sewer and water systems were not quite finished and the city assessed Burton Dixie a $210 sewer extension fee to which the company took exception. F.A. Hutty, who was the head of the Industrial Commission for the Lansing Chamber of Commerce, wrote Mayor Laird Troyer complaining on behalf of Burton Dixie. He informed the Mayor that according to an agreement between his office and the company, the city was responsible for putting in the sewer and water, and the cost was to be paid "in the regular way, that is by the abutting

[24] Letter from Lansing Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Commission to W.S. Rogers, President, Bantam Ball Bearing Company, 26 Jan. 1928 and Letter from W.S. Rogers to Lansing Chamber of Commerce, 3 February 1928, in Collection of the Lansing Chamber of Commerce, State Archives.
[25] F.A. Hutty, Lansing Chamber of Commerce- Industrial Commission to Mayor Laird J. Troyer, Lansing, 17 April 1930 and Mayor Laird Troyer to F.A. Hutty, 25 Nov. 1929. CLDC, State Archives

property owners." Not only was Hutty upset that Burton Dixie would have to pay for the extension, it rankled him that the service had not been completed before the company began construction on their factory. Mayor Troyer replied to Hutty that there was nothing the city could do at that point because it was now under the jurisdiction of the Board of Electric Light and Water. He reminded Hutty that the city would occasionally pay for the water extensions, and then the board of Electric Light and Water would temporarily charge homeowners a higher rate, and then pay the city the excess so that it could recoup its initial investment. The concern of the city at the time of Hutty's letter was that if the fee were waived then it would have had to absorb the cost because many of the property owners had become delinquent in their taxes due to the Depression. So not only could homeowners not pay their own fees, they could not even begin to subsidize new industries.[26]

Hutty did not let the matter rest however, as he visited the office of Max Templeton, city councilman in charge of the sewer committee. Templeton informed him that there was nothing he could do, so with few options, Hutty wrote to the mayor again reminding him that Burton Dixie had invested $200,000 in its factory, and that the crux of his complaint was not about the amount of the assessment, but the principle of the issue. He finished his letter by reminding the mayor that "You know and I know that there are ways and means of taking care of a matter of this kind if the will to do so is present." Mayor Troyer ended the issue though, with a short, terse response stating that

[26]Mayor Laird J. Troyer, Lansing, to F.A. Hutty, Lansing Chamber of Commerce- Industrial Commission, 25 Nov. 1929; Mayor Laird J. Troyer, Lansing, to F.A. Hutty, Lansing Chamber of Commerce, 8 May 1930, and F.A. Hutty, Lansing Chamber of Commerce-Industrial Commission, to Mayor Laird J. Troyer, Lansing, 17 April 1930. CLDC, State Archives.

the city would not absorb the assessment, and that the matter was closed.[27]

This incident gives several insights into the workings of the municipal government. First, it is clear that city officials were willing to allow existing property homeowners to subsidize infrastructure improvements for new industries. Throughout the early decades of the 1900s the city, in most cases, waived service fees to industries as a means of luring new businesses to the city. A two hundred dollar service fee divided among several homeowners over a year would not be too noticeable nor a major financial burden. In fact, the city publicly defended the practice of charging homeowners higher electricity rates in 1921 as it attempted to have a $1.65 million bond passed in order to build a new power plant. It argued that the administrative charges alone, such as bookkeeping, billing, meter reading, and office expenses cost more for 5000 small consumers than for one large customer, in addition to the cost for equipment. The spokesperson for the city then admitted that the industrial sector would have two direct power lines built to it, but that if it wasn't for industry, the people would somehow pay even more for the services. The article finishes by stating that, "the records of the plants are an open book in the office at the city hall. But all the people cannot come there to look into them, so how are the people to be informed of the facts unless through authorized publicity? The electric plants are theirs and they are entitled to know all about them."[28]

Another important point revealed by the Burton Dixie controversy, is that the municipal government had saddled itself with an ideology of fiscal conservatism that was only exacerbated with the collapse of the stock market. Troyer, as well as the rest of the

[27] Hutty to Mayor, 17 April1930, and Mayor to Hutty, 8 May 1930. CLDC, State Archives.
[28] "Explain Rate, Lansing Power," *State Journal*, 25 Aug. 1921, 1.

city council, was concerned how the economic downturn would affect him politically and he did not want to inflame voters' wrath. With the economy in decline, Mayor Troyer was also unwilling to allow the city to neither absorb the sewer fee nor increase the burden on the voting base of property owners. Additionally, since the factory was already built, he obviously believed he had some leverage over the Burton Dixie Company.

Troyer's concerns are not without merit. Available records show that tax delinquency was already a problem by 1930. In that year 407 businesses and shops were grossly behind in their tax commitments. A study conducted by the Chamber of Commerce in that year revealed that the number of unemployed was 14,943 out of a total workforce of roughly 34,000. These figures were almost double the number of unemployed one year earlier and are almost the identical number of workers who had been employed in manufacturing and mechanical industries in 1930.[29]

It is also important to note that Michigan cities had the power to tax and set tax rates on property owners. In 1923, Lansing derived 46.6 percent of its municipal revenue from direct property taxes or $35.11 of the annual $75.27 that each homeowner had to pay on average for the municipal government to meet the majority of its expenses. By 1930 this percentage had dropped slightly to 44.7 percent.[30] It is revealing to note, though, that between 1923 and 1930 the amount of revenue Lansing received from all taxes increased from 4.8 million dollars to 7.5 million even though the population only

[29] Nellie Tallmadge, City Treasurer, Lansing to Mayor Troyer and members of the Ways and Means Committee, no date, and July Business Barometer, prepared by F.A. Hutty, Lansing Chamber of Commerce, 8 Aug. 1930. CLDC, State Archives. See also *15th Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Vol. IV*, (Washington: U.S Government Printing Office, 1932).

[30] *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population of Over 30,000, 1923*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), and *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population of Over 30,000, 1930*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932).

increased by 21,000 from roughly 57,000 to 78,000. While an increased population partially accounts for some of the money, the city simply raised its utility rates and gained additional monies from special assessment taxes rather than increase property taxes. It seems though, that the additional revenues from the city did not proportionally go towards improving the basic infrastructure. In 1923 the city spent $14,404 on the sewers and $80,066 on other refuse collection and disposal. In 1930 it spent $14,347 on the sewers and only $53,307 on other refuse collection and disposal despite the fact that, as mentioned, parts of the city remained chronically underserved into the 1960s. Interestingly though, its street cleaning budget went up slightly from $21,000 to $36,000 and, the amount of money the city spent on parks (including golf courses) and tree plantings rose from $43,405 to $75,444.[31]

In 1923, it cost Lansing $90.51 per capita to run the government, while its revenues averaged $75.27. Its per capita debt was $68.30. By 1930 the per capita debt had dropped to $55.83, suggesting that the city decided to invest more money in paying down its municipal bonds. These figures also suggest that Lansing continued to invest in "visible" improvements such as clean streets, tree plantings, and well-maintained parks, and golf courses. These types of urban nature exemplify how the city expropriated the meanings behind wilderness. Trees, clean streets, and organized recreation, as mentioned previously, were believed to be ways of controlling the meanings of nature and the supposed social behavior associated there from. The city's choices in how it invested in nature reflected the values of local politicians and their definitions regarding the

[31] In 1923 Lansing received $1.9 million from its public service enterprises, or the municipally owned utilities and $253,597 from special assessments. In 1930 the city earned $3,351,346 from direct property taxes, $3,299,000 from the utilities, and a little over $600,000 from special assessments, *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population Over 30,000, 1923* and *1930.*

relationship between nature, Americanism, democracy, and economics. These choices were simultaneously embedded in the psyche of the public.[32]

It is easy to understand why the municipal government focused on visible or cosmetic improvements. Unlike many cities along the east coast where most people paid rent and did not see a direct link between higher taxes and increased rent, Lansing needed to give its residents some visible evidence that the city was working for its residents. Lansing also made sure to provide basic services such as sewer, trash pick-up, and street cleaning to its "well established" neighborhoods. These services are key elements to the success of any city government in that they function as daily reminders to residents (even if false) that the municipal government is running things efficiently and competently. When the water stops running, or the garbage is not picked up or if the lights no longer go on at the flip of a switch, then homeowners are provided with tangible daily evidence that their elected representatives are not doing their jobs and need to be replaced.

A good example of municipalities seeming to fail in their basic responsibilities happened during the early years of the Depression in cities like Chicago, Detroit, and New York. Decade- long increases in property taxes and arbitrary means of assessing the value of those taxes, coupled with an economic downturn and financial mismanagement on the part of those cities, prompted residents to organize tax protests. Thousands of Americans in large numbers simply refused to continue funding municipal governments they considered wasteful, corrupt, and incompetent.[33]

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[32] It is interesting to note that it cost Salt Lake only $43.89 per capita to run its government in 1923 compared to the $90.51 in Lansing, *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population Over 30,000, 1923.*
[33] David Beito, *Taxpayers in Revolt.* Ester R. Fuchs, *Mayors and Money: Fiscal Policy in New York and Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), see ch. 3.

Lansing, though, was fortunate in that it did not have to default on any of its loans. The city also held an advantage over many other cities in that it owned the utilities, making it easier to "hide" taxes through rate hikes, yet still keeping rates lower than in cities where private companies ran utilities for high profits. The municipally owned utility services allowed the city to earn additional income that affected all the city's residents, not just property owners. This in effect, helped spread the costs of the government across the entire population a little more equally, although the city's residents subsidized the larger companies.

As the city juggled its finances and debated who should shoulder the costs and how best to disguise them, the problem of trash removal emerged as a serious municipal issue. Until the mid 1930s, Lansing used a piggery to dispose of its garbage. The use of pigs to dispose of garbage in American cities was not unique, but its practice came into question as early as the 1890s when studies revealed that rates of trichinosis in garbage fed hogs rose by 14 percent and that the mortality from hog cholera also increased. This, in part, helped spark demands for reforms into healthier and more technologically progressive disposal methods such as incineration and reduction plants. World War I halted some of these measures and with the increased emphasis on food conservation and federal restrictions on the types of garbage that could be thrown away, the U.S. food administration conducted a propaganda campaign that encouraged municipalities to feed their garbage to pigs and attempted to mollify concerns over its healthfulness. The Great Depression and World War II saw the practice increase again. Despite scientific evidence showing its dangers, 27 percent of 247 U.S. cities with populations over 25,000 engaged in the practice and 66 percent of cities in Michigan still used piggeries as late as

1947.[34]

Initially, the city disposed of its organic garbage at pig farms located around the city or at car lots. The smell and the flies, however, prompted increased complaints from neighbors. As the protests mounted, the city faced a lawsuit from a William Gingrich, whose home was near one of the sites where the hogs were kept. The city worried that if the lawsuit succeeded others would follow. In response, the city first constructed a new farm on the outskirts of the town that was modeled after the scientific piggery at the agricultural college. The city's eight-acre site had a "dormitory" to house the pigs in the winter. It also had an enclosed "dining room" with a raised platform with a "gutter" running down the middle. By placing the garbage inside, the pigs could root through what they wanted, with the rest going down the gutter and washing into drains that lead to the river. The superintendent of the new piggery claimed that the new farm was so clean that it was similar to a "White City" and that the technology resulted in "an almost total absence of the offensive odor usually connected with the raising of a vast number of hogs...Were it not that the hogs were in sight, a visitor would have had great difficulty knowing he was on a pig farm" this despite over 1000 hogs being on the farm. The problem with the old farm was that garbage was dumped in a field, then the new refuse dumped over the old. When it rained a foul odor enveloped the neighborhood and several inches of old garbage encrusted the soil.[35]

This pristine state did not last long, and amid new complaints and threats of legal action, the city decided to move its operations well outside of town and contracted the

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[34] Melosi, *The Sanitary City*, 180, 203, 273. See also, "Garbage Collection Practices in Michigan Municipalities," (Ann Arbor: Michigan Municipal League Headquarters, 1947), 4.
[35] *Michigan Board of Agriculture 52nd Annual Report, 1913*, (Lansing: Wyncoop, Hallenbeck Crawford Co., 1914), 42, and "Model City Piggery Refuting Claims of Men who Protested Establishment," *State Journal*, 10 Aug. 1921, 1.

disposal of its refuse to a private pig farm. The city collected the garbage, brought it to a collection point, and transferred it to two farmers who then took the garbage to their pig farm and used it to feed their swine. The farmers, Oscar S. Rice, who was related to A.B. Rice, a Lansing City Councilman, and Claude Plant, paid the city a thousand dollars a year for the rights to dispose of the refuse. They then made their money from the sale of the pigs.[36]

The city also agreed to supply the two farmers with can washing and sterilization equipment with the agreement that Rice and Plant would be responsible for the maintenance of the machinery and for returning the cans at the end of each day. This agreement was revised the following year so that the city took over control of the can washing equipment and the responsibility of washing the cans. The following year again the contract was revised so that the city assumed even more responsibility in the process by hauling the garbage to the farm, while Rice and Plant had to keep the access road paved. In each revision, Rice and Plant continued to pay the thousand dollar fee, yet enjoyed fewer responsibilities (and personal cost) in the process[37]

By 1931, however, the Depression had taken its toll on Rice and Plant. The two men had borrowed heavily to purchase needed additional hogs and were almost four thousand dollars in debt. Additionally, the price for hogs had dropped to less than seven cents per pound, adding to their economic woes. This forced Rice and Plant to negotiate a final contract with the city whereby Lansing paid the balance of the loan and held title on the pigs. Rice and Plant simply ran the piggery until they could pay back the city. The story of the piggery does not end here, however, as the City Council pushed Mayor

[36] *Digest of Contracts Entered Into by City of Lansing In Relation to the Portland Piggery*, 1931, CLDC, State Archives, and Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 90.
[37] Ibid.

Gray to appoint a special three-man committee to investigate "discrepancies" that existed at the Portland farm. This prompted councilman A.B. Rice to resign "in the interest of the city."[38]

Between the time that Lansing essentially took possession of the piggery in 1931 and closed it in 1934, it solicited ideas and bids to dispose of the garbage by other means. It received several solicitations and bids from companies based in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan that offered solutions to the city's refuse problems. One company proposed to build and operate an incinerator plant for ten years at which time it would deed the plant to the city. One of the major costs in garbage removal was the destruction and maintenance of the cans, so under this proposal, the "housewife" would bear the increased burden to wrap the garbage in newspapers, assuring that the cans would be "sanitary and clean." A second letter from the same company reiterated the same request and then proposed that the citizens could pay for the cans themselves, thereby encouraging them to take better care of the equipment, thus relieving the city of a major financial burden.[39]

Another company asked the city for permission to negotiate directly with Lansing's citizens to dispose of their garbage. It justified this approach by arguing that the tax burden for individuals would be reduced, the cost to the city would be void, and individuals who could not afford the service would be free to dispose of the garbage on their own. Other Michigan cities such as Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, and Jackson used this

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[38] *Digest of Contracts Entered Into by City of Lansing In Relation to the Portland Piggery*, 19 Feb. 1931. CLDC, State Archives. See also, Letter from City Council to Mayor Gray, (no date), and Letter from A.B. Rice to Mayor Gray and City Council, 14 January 1932. CLDC, State Archives.

[39] Letter from John Amejoynt (?), General Manager of the Terminal Service Company of Cincinnati, Ohio to Mayor Peter Gray, Lansing, Michigan, 3 Dec. 1931. Also, Letter from John Amejoynt (?), to Mayor Peter Gray, 9 April 1932. CLDC, State Archives.

arrangement.[40]

Lansing Officials rejected this idea given the challenges they faced with residents burning their garbage in their own homes and in vacant lots. Despite protests by some health officials, the city permitted the practice of allowing people to burn their garbage in their homes in 1932. It justified this decision because many residents at that time could no longer afford to pay the dollar rental fee for garbage cans and many had resorted to burning their garbage in vacant lots, and even placing it in rabbit hutches and chicken coops. City Health officials felt it would be less of a risk to both person and property if citizens could be permitted to burn the garbage in their homes during the winter. The decision was further justified by a report that found half of the people in a three- block survey did not have garbage cans and were burning their trash outside.[41]

The city rejected the options of building an incinerator plant and having Lansingites individually negotiate with a private company. Another possibility was constructing a waste reduction plant. Waste reduction involved processing the organic materials to extract the greases and other compounds and then selling them to make glycerin, stock foods, fertilizers, and even perfumes. The companies trying to persuade the city to build such a plant argued that there was no good return on an investment in an incinerator plant that would continue to produce smoke and a foul odor. Since the piggery was increasingly unfeasible, the reduction method was the best option because it was modern, scientific, and economically viable. These companies offered the additional incentive that the federal government favored reduction and therefore would be more

[40] Letter from A.N. Sheffield, Queen Insurance Co. of America, Battle Creek, MI to Mayor Peter Gray, Lansing, MI, 28 Dec. 1932. CLDC, State Archives.
[41] "To Permit Burning Garbage in Homes," *Lansing State Journal*, 22 Nov. 1932 and Letter from Dr. S.R. Hill to Mayor Gray, 28 Nov. 1932. CLDC, State Archives.

willing to offer aide to build a reduction plant.[42]

Despite the solicitations and the declining fiscal profits from the pig farm, Mayor Max Templeton continued to believe that the use of hogs was the best way to go. He contended that many public health departments endorsed this method. This despite, as mentioned earlier, studies done in the 1890s which had already linked the feeding of garbage to higher rates of trichinosis, and further studies done in the 1930s that confirmed the dangers. Templeton also pointed out that officials from several other cities came to Lansing to study this method and left with a favorable impression as further justification for his policy decision. While there is no evidence of outside visits, city officials did receive inquiries from other municipalities as to how the city handled its garbage problems. A representative from San Diego, California thought Lansing was using an incinerator plant and wanted to know about the cost etc. Fort Wayne, Indiana inquired as to how Lansing dealt with its garbage, and a committee from Stockton, California had dispersed a nation-wide survey to investigate how other cities were dealing with their garbage.[43]

By 1934 the farm was losing too much money for the city to continue running it because the price of hogs had progressively dropped since 1929. The city sold all the pigs and again began to contract the garbage removal to private farmers. One such contract made with an agricultural coop stipulated that while the company could have a

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[42] Letter from J.F. Williams, Morrison Systems to Mayor Peter Gray, Lansing, MI, 31 Aug. 1933. See also Letter from C.T. Cury, American Reduction Corporation, Chicago, Illinois to Mayor Peter Gray, Lansing, MI, 1 June 1933. CLDC, State Archives.

[43] Letter from John M. Princell, San Diego, CA to Lansing City Mayor's Office, 26 Sept. 1933. Letter from J.A. Curtin, Dept. of Public Safety, Fort Wayne, IN, to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, MI, 10 July 1933. Letter from Henry Ward, Stockton, CA to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, MI, 31 Oct. 1933. Letter from Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, MI to J.A. Curtin, Fort Wayne, IN, 13 July 1933. CLDC, State Archives. See also Melosi, *The Sanitary City*, 180, 203, 273.

piggery, it was responsible for dealing with any subsequent protests.[44]

Lansing's attempts to absolve itself of any responsibility, by sending the garbage into the countryside and to shield its residents from the consequences of their practices, did not resolve the refuse problems, it only transferred the burden to other groups of people. Residents subject to the growing stench pressured their local officials into action. For example, Frank Mc Crumb who was the Eagle Township health officer wrote to complain that not only was the smell from one of the farms a "nuisance," but that the piggery was so close to the river that it created serious health risks.[45]

In response to the complaints, the city sent an engineer to investigate the problem. The engineer wrote back to McCrumb to report his findings. "After leaving your house I went to the O'Connor farm to make an inspection of garbage feeding. It was not necessary for me to see the complaining neighbors because the stench was sufficient on the public highway running past the farm house to make it evident that a public nuisance is being created." He then suggested that the farmer move the pigs to a part of his land that was surrounded by trees in the hopes that the smell would be dispersed.[46]

Despite O'Connor complying with the request, the smell remained so pervasive that the city decided to no longer send its garbage to Eagle Township, but it eyed yet another farm that potentially created even greater health risks. The city had planned on taking the garbage to a farm that bordered the Red Cedar River just above the city of East

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[44] *Digest of Contracts Entered Into by City of Lansing In Relation to the Portland Piggery.* Agreement between Lansing and Community Cooperative Ind, Inc., May 1934. CLDC, State Archives. Melosi points out that droughts in 1934 and 1936 reduced corn crops and increased the price of pigs, which would explain why farmers would take the risk of purchasing the hogs from the city. Melosi, *The Sanitary City*, 273.
[45] Letter from Edward D. Rich, director of Michigan Department of Health in Lansing to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, May 25, 1934. CLDC, State Archives.
[46] Letter from Edward D. Rich, Director of Michigan Department of Health, Lansing, to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, MI, 25 May 1934 and Letter from Edward D. Rich to Frank McCrumb, Eagle Township, 1 June 1934. CLDC, State Archives.

Lansing. In order for this to work, though, the farm would have had to purchase several hundred more pigs to consume the waste. The head of the state stream control division expressed concerns at the ability of the Cedar to handle the additional sewage that would be created from the enlarged pig population so the city opted for another locale.[47]

Lansing's garbage removal issues highlight several points. In one sense, its publicity campaign in billing itself as the "most progressive city" in the country had been paying off. Evidence of this are the numerous letters of inquiry from other cities that believed that Lansing was successfully dealing with its growth despite the Depression. The tussle the city had with its garbage removal problem also indicates that it believed it only had three options: reduction, incineration, or pigs. All three methods created additional, unique problems for which the city did not feel it could financially address at the time, yet garbage disposal represented a pressing need. So instead of attempting to find long- term solutions, city officials chose to pass them on to others, thereby shielding Lansing residents from any daily reminders of the consequences of their lifestyles. Eventually, the city opted for a different approach to its refuse problem after World War II called the "grinding method." Garbage was taken to a grinding station next to the new sewer treatment plant, where it was ground, washed, and then placed in the digestion tanks of the sewer plant, where a sludge was created and then used as fertilizer for nearby farms. This method was expensive, though, and the city only serviced 22 percent of its population in this way.[48]

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[47] Letter from Edward D. Rich, Lansing City Bureau of Engineering to Frank McCRumb, Eagle Township, 1 June, 1934; Letter from Milton P. Adams, Executive Secretary and Engineer of Michigan State Stream Control Commission to Community Cooperative Industries Inc., Lansing, 6 August 1934; Letter from Emmet McCrumb, Eagle Township, to the City of Lansing, 16 June, 1934 and Letter from Mayor Max Templeton to Frank McCrumb 25 June, 1934. CLDC, State Archives.
[48] "Garbage Collection Practices in Michigan Municipalities," 5, 9.

## How to Fund a Sewer Treatment Plant

Lansing's refuse issues also highlight the pressures and constraints the city faced from surrounding townships and the State. State efforts to better manage Michigan's scenery were part of a broader national movement towards conservation and the recognition that tourism could become an important economic industry. By the end of the 19th century hunters and fishermen attempted to gain more control over the direction and use of the nation's natural resources. These conservationists proclaimed themselves the most qualified to manage nature and justified this with the position that good economic policy required a willingness to incorporate principles of conservation-- efficiency, wise use, and better management-- into how the urban and industrial order operated.[49]

This national push for wise-use had already been incorporated into Michigan state policies by the 1920s thanks to reform efforts beginning in the 1870s. In 1873, Michigan doctors, as part of their efforts to legitimize their profession, helped establish the State Board of Health. They believed that improved hygienic and sanitary conditions were connected to the economic health of the state. They argued that the illnesses and deaths associated with poor sanitation cost businesses and discouraged additional people from moving to the state. Through the board of health these doctors began a series of sanitation conventions in 1880 that were bent on instructing communities on how to build

[49] Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 39. Gottlieb writes that this strategy or philosophy of applying wilderness policies to the entire urban economic structure did not occur until after World War II. This study, though, suggests that Americans were already pushing this idea by the 1920s.

better sewage and water supply systems.[50]

In 1921, attempts to improve and protect the health of Michigan's citizens were extended to the "natural" environment with the creation of the Department of Conservation. In that year as part of the Progressive ideology of government efficiency, the state combined the Public Domain Commission, the Departments of Fish and Forests, Geological Survey, and the Park Commission into a single Department of Conservation. The three reasons why the state began to give conservation of its natural resources higher priority were: concern with the health of its citizens, the health of fish and wildlife, and recognition of the growing economic impact of increased tourism to state wilderness areas.[51]

In 1927 in a speech to a conservation club at an Arbor Day banquet, state Senator Seymour H. Person outlined the state's fusion of conservation and tourism into a compatible agenda. In addition to health issues he pointed out that hundreds of hunters and fishers had lobbied the state to improve the environment and preserve the state's wildlife. Person then noted that the draw of "hunters, fishers, and those who loved nature was steadily increasing and becoming a valuable economic resource to the state."[52]

As part of this commercialization of nature, the state began a publicity campaign to lure tourists from the rest of the nation. In early 1927 it appropriated $400,000 to a group consisting of the Michigan Real Estate Association, The Michigan Tourist and Resort Bureau, the State Publicity Bureau and the State Conservation Department to formulate an ad campaign promoting the environmental virtues of Michigan to potential

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[50] Earle E. Kleinschmidt, "The Sanitary Reform Movement in Michigan," *Michigan History Magazine*, XXVI (Summer 1942): 373-401.
[51] "Conservation Gains In State," *State Journal*, 1 January 1927, 14.
[52] "Stress Importance of Conservation At Arbor Day Banquet of Hoo Hoo," *State Journal*, 7 May 1927, 7.

tourists, hunters, fishermen and residents.[53]

Yet, even before the state officially began funding a tourism campaign, efforts to increase accessibility to the state's natural areas had been going on, thanks to the efforts of the Good Roads Association and the state Roads and Pavements Department. These two groups helped publicize and highlight the potential economic importance of camping and tourism in the state. In one article they estimated that, "approximately a thousand cars carrying camping equipment were daily passing through Detroit on their way to one of the 300 free camping sites in the state." The article laments though, that many of the sites are "merely adjuncts to stores, gasoline stations or even alleged soft drink parlors, and lack both attractiveness and equipment." It finishes by warning that "The camping tourist is worth cultivating. Michigan can improve her position as a tourist state by taking better care of him."[54]

Adding weight to the state's desires to connect tourism with conservation was the state's concern with general health issues. In 1925 the legislature gave enforcement power to the Department of Conservation and the Department of Health to file injunctions and levy fines against river and stream polluters. The Conservation department considered water pollution as the "most complex" of all the problems it faced. State experts understood that much of the pollution running into the rivers and streams was derived from the manufacturing sector. They also recognized that these same industries were competing with companies in neighboring states and other parts of the nation where strict environmental laws were absent. They were caught between potentially placing Michigan manufacturing at a disadvantage and with the potential

[53] "Draft Bill To Advertise State," *State Journal*, 4 January 1927, 8; "Stress Importance of Conservation At Arbor Day Banquet of Hoo Hoo," *State Journal*, 7 May 1927, 7.
[54] "Tourists Need More Free Camps," *Michigan Roads and Pavements*, (6 Sept. 1923): 8.

serious health risk to humans as a result of the pollution. The state's solution was to negotiate what it perceived to be a reasonable compromise that would hold Michigan industries in the state, attract new companies, and maintain at least minimal health standards and protect the environment to encourage more tourism through its decisions to force its municipalities to construct sewer treatment plants to protect the rivers, wildlife, and people's health and build better roads that would facilitate both the easier movement of goods to markets and tourists to campsites. The decision to protect the state's water, though, shifted much of the costs associated with water pollution to homeowners, effectively deflecting most of the financial burden off of industry. The state also believed that this would help to partially improve the health of rivers and streams, thus assuring revenue from tourism.[55]

In this vein then, Lansing, was increasingly forced by outside pressures to deal with water pollution issues. A study published in 1923 pertaining to Lansing's past policies and future plans of how best to handle its growing wastewater problems concluded that the water from the Grand and Red Cedar Rivers was already too contaminated to be healthy and that the city's plan to build just one treatment plant would not be sufficient. It also questioned the wisdom in creating a dual sewer system whereby the "sanitary" sewage would still be dumped directly in the river while the unsanitary sewage would first be processed at a disposal plant.[56]

These findings, in concert with the state- wide conservation movement, prompted 343 residents of Grand Ledge, a small community just northwest of Lansing, to petition the State Department of Public Health to file suit in 1924 against all the upriver cities

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[55] "Conservation Gains In State," *State Journal*, 1 January 1927, 14.
[56] R.K. Philips, "A Study of the Sewer System of Lansing," (B.S. Thesis, Michigan Agricultural College, 1923), 59, 61, 65. This was study supervised by Hoad and Decker Engineering of Ann Arbor.

along the Grand River to force them to construct sewage treatment plants. This citizens' group was concerned about the environmental impact that years of pollution had caused to the fish and other wildlife along the river, not to mention the health risks to humans, especially children. Many farmers whose land abutted the river permitted their milk cows to drink from it and then they would either take the milk to local pasteurizing plants or they would sell the milk directly to local residents. This problem was only exacerbated during the Depression when many more of these same farmers opted to skip the pasteurization process and sold their milk along the roadside.[57]

In 1926, in response to the suit and the unwillingness of Lansing and other municipalities to implement measures to correct the problem, the State Department of Health organized a hearing to which it invited all the polluting cities to attend, present plans, and form committees to determine how best to finance the construction and installation of sewage treatment works in their municipalities. Lansing for its part presented a plan that had actually been drawn up in 1921. This plan called for securing land and constructing a treatment plant using both budget appropriations and a bond. The 1921 plan was never seriously considered, however, and city officials, though, were unwilling to set a specific time frame toward the implementation of this plan in 1926. Instead, they hoped that the mere existence of a plan would allow them to delay any formal construction because they did not believe that their city could afford to build a treatment plant even though the local economy was strong.[58]

Lansing's delaying tactics resulted, in 1927, in state- initiated proceedings to bring a suit against the city to force it to begin water pollution control efforts. City

[57]"Hearing: State Stream Control Commission and the City of Lansing," Lansing Michigan: Typewritten, 23 March 1936. CLDC, State Archives.
[58]Ibid.

officials, in an effort to avoid the litigation, caved in and formulated a timetable and a specific strategy to pay for and construct a comprehensive sewer system and a sewer treatment plant. The plan called for the construction of three interceptors in 1928, '29, and '30, and the joining and extension of these to a 60" interceptor, which would lead to a piece of property the city owned along the river where it would build the treatment plant. Officials estimated that the entire project would cost $1.8 million and to be finished by 1934.[59]

Lansing's proposal however, did not include any details as to how it would finance the public works so the state was skeptical of the city's sincerity and it pushed for assurances that a reasonable amount of construction would be done each year. According to state law, Lansing had some flexibility for providing and financing public services. Michigan cities could own and operate garbage collection services, reduction plants, and other public utilities. The municipality was also given the responsibility for paving the streets and all other infrastructure improvements and could lease or even sell these services to outside contractors with a three-fifths majority vote in a general election. In fact, Lansing did own the board of water and light, which meant that it took sole responsibility for water, sewer and electricity, and it owned an asphalt plant to pave its roads.[60]

On the other hand, state law also placed certain restraints on its cities. Municipalities could only borrow money against their assessed value. Bonds could only be offered at a rate of five percent and bond revenues could be used only for the stated

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[59]Letter from Lansing Committee on Sewers and Drains, to Wilbur M. Brucker, Attorney General of the State of Michigan, Lansing, 18 May 1928. CLDC, State Archives. It is important to note here that Bartholomew suggested that the city secure as much property along the river banks as possible for the purpose of constructing one continuous park connected by pedestrian paths.

[60]*Charter of the City of Lansing, Michigan* (Ray, 1925), Section 339, 130.

purpose of issuance. Therefore, when the city wanted to construct, purchase, or lease a new utility it had to supply the estimated and final cost to the voters for approval and the cost of the project could not exceed more than ten per cent of the initial estimate. As mentioned, though, cities could and often got around the bond issues through special assessments.[61]

To counter state concerns about the sewer project, Lansing city officials offered that they were retiring several bond debts each year, thus freeing up additional money, and they pointed out that they already had $150,000 in a sewer fund that was earmarked to pay for the sewer extensions. They also claimed that they were planning on issuing a bond to pay for the treatment plant. The city's negotiations succeeded in allaying state concerns and the suit was dropped. Lansing then began work on the first phase of the plan, which was to be paid for from a general sewer fund. In April of 1929 the city held a $200,000 bond referendum that was passed by the necessary three-fifths majority vote in a general election to help pay for the sewer treatment plant.[62]

That year, Lansing began construction on extending its sewer system. Its efforts were going so well that by April of 1930 it was ahead of schedule. Mayor Troyer and the City Council were so pleased and confident that everything would be built before 1934 that the mayor wrote to the State Secretary of Stream Pollution asking for permission to divert $30,000 dollars away from the sewer budget for that year and use it for other municipal improvements. He justified this request by claiming that the city had already

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[61]Ibid., Sec. 340, 131.

[62]"Commission for the Control of Stream Pollution," Lansing, Michigan: Typewritten, 27 April 1928; Lansing Committee on Sewers and Drains to Brucker 18 May 1928; Mayor Laird Troyer, Lansing, to Walter Sperry, State Secretary of Stream Pollution Commission, Lansing, 8 April 1930, and Alderman Max Templeton, "City Bond Declaration," Lansing, Michigan: (no date), Typewritten. CLDC, State Archives.

saved $40,000 to date.[63]

Troyer's optimism, though, was a bit premature. That same year, the Depression began to seriously affect the city financially. The mayor and the City Council then began to illegally divert money away from the construction of the sewer treatment plant and towards other, more visible, infrastructure projects despite assurances to the public that the money was going to the plant. The city also applied for federal money to be used in more visible improvements. In 1931 for example, the city received a $300,000 grant from the PWA under the Hoover administration. This money went towards street paving, construction of a small dam, and rebuilding the Michigan Avenue Bridge.[64]

The impact of the Depression on Lansing residents and the city's economy congealed the city government's priorities. City welfare relief was costing the municipality roughly $10,000 dollars per week and the city was rapidly running out of funds so it turned to the federal government with the hopes of securing financing for public works projects as a means to getting people back to work and off the dole. City leaders saw government aid as an opportunity to supply jobs for its unemployed and to fulfill its legal commitments to the state. Therefore, as early as 1932, the city began investigating how to secure federal loans to finish building its sewer system and a treatment plant.[65]

Lansing's sewer treatment plant had been a low priority for city officials before the state forced them to begin working on it, and with the Depression, they once again had an excuse to temporarily ignore the negative affects of their decisions. City officials

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[63]Mayor Laird Troyer, Lansing, to Walter Sperry, State Secretary of Stream Pollution Commission, Lansing, 8 April 1930, CLDC State Archives.
[64]"Hearing: Stream Control Commission," 23 March 1936; See also Mayor Max Templeton's message to the City Council (no date), CLDC State Archives.
[65] Mayor Peter Gray to Lansing City Council, 26 Sept. 1932. CLDC, State Archives.

however, were not the only ones who valued the more visible infrastructure improvements. In August of 1933 the city had been granted a $271,000 federal loan to finance a water softening plant, and to pay for more sewer and water extensions. In order to qualify for the grant, though, Lansing had to furnish matching funds, which it proposed to do through the issuance of a bond. The city's residents, particularly those who lived in the north-east portion of the city, rejected such a project because many of them still did not have basic sewer or water service and saw the plant as frivolous. With the failed bond, the city decided to reapply for the funds and to use them for the necessary sewage and water extensions.[66]

The fiscally conservative attitude that seemed to pervade the city was very much a product of the close relationship between Lansing's industry and its municipal government, and possibly a result of taxpayer protests. David Beito points out that between 1920 and 1929, the percent of national income that went to local taxes rose from 3.3 percent in 1920 to 5.4 percent by 1929 while the federal percentage dropped from 7.9 percent to 4.2 percent.[67] These figures are bolstered when one considers the rate of per capita debt for Michigan residents in the early decades of the 1900s. In 1912 Michigan residents living in incorporated communities were responsible for $25.05 of municipal debt, while in 1922 that sum was $83.59.[68] The fact that Michigan residents state taxes were increasing are further evidenced by an article in the local paper lamenting the state

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[66]Letter from Oscar L. Chapman, Assistant of the Department of the Interior to Mayor Max Templeton, 28 Oct. 1933. Letter from Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing to M.E. Cooley, State Engineer, Federal Emergency Relief Administration Public Works, Detroit, 27 Dec. 1933. Telegram from Mayor Max Templeton to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 24 October 1933. Letter from Lansing Board of Water and Electric Light Commissioners to G.W. McCordice, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, 16 Oct. 1933. CLDC, State Archives.
[67]Beito, *Taxpayers in Revolt*, 1.
[68] Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Wealth, Public Debt, and Taxation: 1922*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924).

government's rapid growth. In 1920 43 state agencies asked that their budgets be doubled over the next two years from an aggregate of $4.4 million to $8.3 million. The state also had 50 other agencies that had not yet turned in their budget requests. In 1920 taxpayers had contributed $17.3 million to run the 93 state agencies and it was feared that that figure would rise to over $30 million by 1922.[69] While the state's economy continued to grow during the '20s, most real estate owners ignored the tax increases. But the economic downturn prompted many individuals throughout the nation to organize taxpayers' leagues which refused to pay their property taxes, challenged the system in court, and in seven states, including Michigan, helped pass constitutional initiatives that limited the maximum general property tax.[70]

Many Americans were frustrated by what they saw as government largess and they framed the issue in terms of government's proper role in society. "Most tax resisters looked with skepticism on government's expansion beyond providing courts, police, and national defense. They feared that, unless limited in its power to tax, government would become the protector of entrenched special interest, retard economic recovery, and sap individual autonomy." In places like Chicago, organized tax protests forced the Illinois judiciary to announce a two-year moratorium on property taxes for that city while the issue played itself out in the courts. It was with events and an atmosphere like this that the Lansing government was forced to at least consider what kinds of spending projects it would pursue.[71]

Mayor Max Templeton in an address to the City Council exemplified the cautious attitude when he boasted that: "1935 had been the best year for the City since the onset of

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[69] "Ask 100 PCT. Budget Jump," *State Journal*, 19 Oct. 1920, 1.
[70] Beito, *Taxpayers in Revolt*, 14.
[71] Ibid. xiv, 60-80.

the Depression." Lansing was able to reduce its outstanding bond debt from 4.7 to 3.4 million dollars. At the same time the Michigan Avenue Bridge had been rebuilt, over fourteen miles of roads had been paved, Comstock Park had been acquired and two miles of sewers had been constructed. Additionally three major buildings had been constructed, the Capitol National Bank tower in 1931, the Bank of Lansing building in 1932 and a new federal post office in 1933. Employment in 1935 was up from its trough of 1932 by almost triple and Oldsmobile in 1935 saw record production.[72]

Templeton explained his fiscal thinking when he stated that; "The real way to tax reduction without impairing progress is to continue the policy of extinguishing the City's debt." Templeton may have believed that his fiscal conservancy would play to the majority in Lansing. It is difficult to tell, though, how many of the city's residents thought along the same lines, but there is historical credence to protests over smaller and limited government spending at the local level.[73]

Lansing's experience has similarities with Pittsburgh as Joel Tarr has shown. When the city of Pittsburgh faced pressure to build a treatment plant in the 1910s, sanitary engineers balked, claiming that it would "cause the city to exceed its indebtedness level" and all "for the purpose of protecting water supplies of other cities." They therefore concluded that, "no radical change in the method of sewerage or of sewage disposal as now practiced by the city of Pittsburgh is necessary or desirable."[74] Tarr notes that Pittsburgh did not begin treating its raw sewage until 1959 despite pressure from the state health department, which tried to take a more regional and

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[72] Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*, 99 and 101.
[73] "Mayor Max Templeton's Message to the City Council," Lansing, Michigan: (No Date), Typewritten. CLDC, State Archives.
[74] Joel A. Tarr, "The Metabolism of the Industrial City, The Case of Pittsburgh," *Journal of Urban History*, 28 (July 2002): 520.

comprehensive view of the issue by trying to get all the communities along the river systems to treat their waste. Unlike in Michigan, though, the health department lacked the political backing to enforce its will. Tarr also points out the philosophical and intellectual battle waged between health officials, who believed in a more cooperative and long- term approach to the problem versus the localist one adopted by the engineers who considered their expertise and knowledge superior to other experts. It also reinforces the idea that sanitary engineers worked to serve the immediate economic and industrial needs of the city.[75]

To this end, the attitude of Harry Conrad, who owned a large construction company, was a key member of the Chamber of Commerce, a close and influential friend to several of the city's mayors, and a member of the City Plan Commission is apt. Regarding a treatment plant, he wrote to Mayor Gray expressing his belief that it would be "a waste of money for the city to build a sewage treatment plant," because, "Nature heretofore has clarified and purified our sewerage by the simple processes of dilution and oxygenation."[76] Conrad saw solutions to the city's problems in almost pure economic terms. As another example, in 1937 concerns arose over parking issues. Bartholomew, whom the city had hired once again, wanted the city to build parking spaces along the streets, but Conrad worried that the cost would be too much so he suggested that the city construct a wall along the river so that the sloping banks could be built up level and parking spaces created along the river throughout the entire length of the business district. He did not believe that "this would detract from the beauty of the river and it would be

[75] Ibid., 523.
[76] Harry Conrad, Lansing, to Mayor Peter Gray, 1 Jan. 1932, CLDC, State Archives.

cheap and effective."[77]

In this atmosphere, Lansing might never have built a sewer treatment plant if the state had not stepped in once again. In March of 1936 the State Stream Control Commission summoned Mayor Templeton and the City Council to a meeting to discuss the city's lack of progress on the treatment plant. The Stream Commission was miffed that since 1927, Lansing had spent more than $1.8 million on public works and $725,000 on extending the sewer system and building intercepting sewers and a pumping plant but some of the city's residents still did not have basic sewer service, and construction on the treatment plant had not begun.[78]

Another aspect that bewildered the state representatives was that given Lansing's relatively good financial situation it still needed $800,000 to complete the sewer project while other cities along the Grand River who were struggling economically had completed or nearly completed their systems and treatment plants. Grand Rapids' plant was in operation, Jackson's began operating in November of 1936, and Grand Haven had begun construction on its plant. What made the situation even more egregious to the state was that in 1934 Mayor Templeton and Alderman Peck had assured the Commission that the sewage treatment plant was its first priority as it came out of the Depression, yet the city had used all its funds towards other municipal improvements.[79]

Lansing's city officials, despite laws prohibiting the practice, had diverted bond revenues earmarked for the sewer project to other public works that both enhanced the efficiency of the city, such as paved roads and bridges, and addressed residents' immediate concerns and demands for clean water and refuse removal. Lansing also

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[77] Harry Conrad, Lansing, to Mayor Max Templeton, 21 June 1937, CLDC, State Archives.
[78] "Hearing: Stream Control Commission," 23 March 1936, p. 2-3. CLDC, State Archives.
[79] Ibid., 2-3, 4.

continued to court businesses to the city during the Depression and thus looked for ways to keep taxes low while still offering them needed infrastructural amenities. Thanks to the Grand River, the city could easily ignore the health problems that their wastewater practices were causing to people and communities downstream.[80]

As the state hearing concerning Lansing's failure to construct a sewer treatment plant began, one of the first questions the Commission asked Mayor Templeton was if the city had appealed to the federal government for emergency financing. Templeton replied that, "they had just recently done so." When M.D. Van Wagoner of the Commission then asked why the city had waited so long to request the federal aid Templeton justified his actions stating that Detroit had applied about the same time and that Lansing was told that the needs of other communities were more pressing. He then added that the federal agency assured him that Lansing "would be taken care of."[81]

To this response Milton Adams from the Commission pointed out that Detroit had applied for aid a year earlier than Lansing and that in 1933 the state passed a bond act that allowed cities to issue revenue bonds without submitting them for the approval of voters. The bond was to serve as a lien on the revenue that was going to be collected for sewage disposal service, and thus was not a direct obligation to the city, or a municipal debt. The PWA offered to buy the bonds at four percent interest and at an even lower rate if the bonds were sold to private investors rather than to the federal government.[82]

Templeton claimed that the city had already investigated this avenue in 1933 and had rejected the federal loan because it did not see the logic in paying four percent

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[80]Ibid., 2-3.
[81]Ibid., 8.
[82]Ibid., 8.

interest to the government. Instead he wanted to borrow against the $700,000 the city was owed in delinquent taxes. He thought that the city could do this with a private lender and only pay two percent interest.[83]

The mayor, when asked what he would do if the loan was not approved, replied that he "had not thought that far ahead." It was then suggested that he issue the revenue bonds without telling the voters, but Templeton declined this offer because he "knew that the voters were against it" and he "would not do it unless he was forced to."[84]

The Stream Commission next proposed issuing a deadline to the city to force it to begin construction of the treatment plant, but the mayor countered that if that happened then their requests to secure a federal loan would be jeopardized. Commissioner Van Wagoner responded that he did not understand how an order by the commission would cause the federal government to dismiss Lansing's request. Van Wagoner felt that an order by the commission would force an emergency situation, which was the purpose of PWA funds.[85]

Templeton then requested that the commission hold off for sixty days to see if the loan would be approved. Van Wagoner replied by asking if Templeton had plans to fund the plant in any other manner. Templeton replied in the negative and after some more discussion the commission reluctantly acceded to give the city sixty additional days. Van Wagoner, though, stipulated that he wanted the city engineer to accompany him to Washington to see if they could push the city's loan request along.[86]

The meeting did not end, however, before one final exchange between the

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[83]Ibid., 9.
[84]Ibid., 10.
[85]Ibid., 7.
[86]Ibid., 11.

commission and the mayor. Commissioner Adams complained that, "The thing that gets me is that the city has raised more than enough revenue to complete this work, but it goes to other things." The mayor then asked if the city should abandon all of its "other city operations and put sewage disposal ahead of it?" To which Adams replied that, "These gentlemen's agreements haven't been carried through." This final statement referred to the state agreeing to drop its suit in 1927 and allowing Lansing to begin diverting funds in 1930 from the project because it was ahead of schedule in the construction process.[87]

The federal loan application Lansing applied for in 1935 was ultimately rejected but Templeton was able to delay state litigation long enough to apply for other federal assistance. In 1936 Lansing applied for a $405,000 loan that was approved in June. Unfortunately, the city was not allotted the money immediately due to the fact that the WPC-FEA lacked funds at the time.[88]

I.D. Brent, who was the official from the WPC-FEA, recommended to the mayor that if the city could obtain fifty-five percent of its cost from selling the bonds to a non-government agency that the money would be forthcoming more quickly because grants took priority over loans. Almost immediately the city changed its request and applied for a grant. On November 18, 1936 Lansing finally received word that a federal grant was available for it to begin construction of a sewage treatment plant. On 24 July 1938, the city of Lansing, eighteen years after it first drew up plans, began plant operations thanks to a generous grant from the federal government and constant pressure from state

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[87] Ibid., 12.

[88] I.D. Brent, Federal Emergency Act-Works Progress Administration, Detroit, to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, 17 June 1936; G.E. Ramsey, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Detroit, to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, 27 June 1936; Lansing City Comptroller's Office, Lansing, to I.D. Brent, Detroit, 17 July 1936; I.D. Brent, Detroit, to Mayor Templeton, Lansing, 15 Aug. 1936; Leana B.Graham, Executive Assistant of Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Washington DC, to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, 18 November 1936. CLDC, State Archives.

agencies, surrounding communities, and local groups.[89]

**Bartholomew Revisited**

In 1931 the state of Michigan passed a Standard City Planning Enabling Act akin to a federal act created by the Department of Commerce under Herbert Hoover. Among other provisions, the federal enabling act called upon every community to create a master plan that included, "adequate provision for light and air, the promotion of the healthful and convenient distribution of population, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public requirements." The act was written with the expectation that communities were going to grow and it was also an attempt to channel that growth in logical and predictable ways.[90]

The Michigan act authorized and empowered, but did not require, each municipality to create a city planning commission which would have power to create a master city plan and act as an advisory council to the various city government departments on matters affecting the physical growth and improvements of the city. A nine-member board was to be chosen from the public by the mayor and it was intended that the general public have access to its members so that they could voice their opinions, objections, and approvals. These commissions had very little legislative authority and the plans they proposed were not meant to be so rigid that any deviations would be unacceptable, yet not so flexible that haphazard building would continue. However, once the Planning Commission adopted a master plan, it would have to be followed, pending a

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[89] I.D. Brent, Detroit, to Mayor Templeton, Lansing, 15 Aug. 1936; Leana B.Graham, Executive Assistant of Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Washington DC, to Mayor Max Templeton, Lansing, 18 November 1936. CLDC, State Archives.

[90] Standard City Planning Enabling Act, www.stlouis.missouri.org/government/docs/1947plan/carryingout.html. This citation outlines generally the Standard City Planning Enabling Act created by the federal government, and then discusses how it was used in St. Louis.

two-thirds overrule vote by the City Council. Also, once the local government accepted a plan or portion thereof, no buildings, parks, etc. could be constructed without every minute detail first being laid out to the commission. In short the provisions of the city plans and the role of the commissions were akin to neighborhood associations and the subsequent deed restrictions, but were applied to an entire community rather than to small neighborhoods.[91]

The alternative to such a policy would be for cities to create and pass an official plan that encompassed the entire city through an ordinance and majority vote. In such cities where this was attempted, every particular had to be spelled out and the plan could not be altered or amended without passage of new ordinances from additional elections. In such cities the effectiveness of carrying out their plans were greatly mired in legislative gridlock.[92]

Michigan, in addition to the City Planning Enabling Act, also passed a Capitol Planning Commission Act with the purpose of planning and coordinating the state building program with the Lansing City Plan. Lansing thus had to reorganize its planning commission in order to better coordinate city and state expectations and needs.

Lansing did initiate its own Planning Commission in 1931 at the same time that it was trying to address issues created by the Depression and avoiding or masking its responsibilities regarding refuse disposal. As other cities had looked to Lansing for information and ideas on how best to deal with problems associated with urban growth, Lansing now petitioned other communities. For example, the city requested information from other places in Michigan such as Grand Rapids in order to gain a better

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[91] Lansing City Council, Minutes to Meeting, 24 August 1937. See also State of Michigan City Planning Act (public act no. 285), 1931 in Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1938*, 91-92.
[92] Ibid.

understanding of how their planning commissions were organized. Lansing then reorganized its commission so that by 1937 the mayor, a member from the city council, and six other citizens chosen by the mayor and approved by the council comprised the Planning Commission. This, though, was in violation of the spirit of the Michigan City Plan Act of 1931, which stipulated that the mayor was to choose nine citizens who were not already serving on the City Commission.[93]

The previous year, with federal and state dollars available, the city had invited Harland Bartholomew back with the hopes of securing his services for a new urban plan. At the first meeting Bartholomew suggested that Lansing needed a more scientific zoning plan that would resemble the land use formula followed by other cities that relegated forty percent of their land to residential, thirty-three to streets, eleven to industrial, seven and a half to institutional and public buildings, six percent to parks, and two and a half percent for commercial use.[94] A few days later, the Commission requested to the city that Bartholomew should be rehired to "study" Lansing once again and present a new comprehensive urban plan. Approval for this had to also be coordinated with the state, but once this was secured Bartholomew began once again to evaluate the needs of the city. In the spring of 1937 he presented his ideas to the state for a capitol area that included a civic center, museum, and other buildings that state officials almost

[93] Grand Rapids had a nine- member board with five members appointed form the general public by the city council and the other four members coming from city departments such as the Director of Public Service, Public Welfare, the City Engineer, and the Superintendent of Parks. The five citizens served for five years without compensation. The five men on Grand Rapids' board were a banker, building contractor, realtor, architect, and a retired manufacturer. See, letter from Mayor Peter Gray, Lansing to City Planning Commission, Grand Rapids, 30 April 1931; and Letter from Hazel Owen Reed, Grand Rapids to Mayor Peter Gray, Lansing, 1 May 1931. CLDC, State Archives. See also State of Michigan City Planning Act, 1931 (public act no. 285), in Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan,* 1938, 91-92.

[94] Minutes of the Lansing City Planning Commission, 18 January 1936. See also State of Michigan City Planning Act, 1931 (public act no. 285), in Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan,* 1938, 91-92.

unanimously accepted.[95]

Bartholomew's second plan contained much of what he had suggested previously in 1922. His emphasis on creating greater democratic space continued, only in this second plan he put more focus on residential areas. As a letter of introduction in the second plan Bartholomew stated that his objective was "to provide for the most satisfactory living and working conditions for all citizens," and he encouraged Lansing residents to be involved and understand the plan because, "A well informed group of citizens will be the strongest bulwark against thoughtless or unwise planning of public improvements."[96]

On the basis of the 1922 plan, Lansing had created 300 acres of new parks (although this included two golf courses), planted 11,000 trees, made some minor improvements to the river banks, added two new school sites and made a few improvements to some of the subdivisions. The city had also adopted a zoning ordinance in 1927, although modifications had been made contrary to Bartholomew's suggestions, which created "some undesirable results." Still, Bartholomew was generally pleased, rationalizing that this was still better than having no zoning at all and concluding that zoning had generally stabilized property values, provided some orderliness, and contributed to an improved health and welfare of Lansing's citizens. He did point out however, that the adopted changes had only primarily benefited a small number of individuals.[97]

Bartholomew now paid greater attention to the needs of private homeowners in

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[95] Minutes of the Lansing City Planning Commission, 21 January 1936 and 30 December 1936, and 19 March 1937.
[96] Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1938*, 7.
[97] Ibid, 13.

this second plan. He was critical of the private covenants and deed restrictions in some of the subdivisions, claiming that they were not always geared towards the general needs and welfare of the entire city, and he encouraged the city to better regulate these measures as a means towards better protecting the general public welfare. He also continued to push for more neighborhood parks and recreational outlets. He believed that "Local parks and schools should be the focal point of a well organized and active community life," and that recreational areas would not only reduce juvenile delinquency and provide "free air and free space" to children but "do much toward unifying neighborhood life."[98]

As in his first plan, Bartholomew urged the city to create neighborhood parks within a half a mile from every resident and to construct a series of large, connected outlying parks to control sprawl and to serve as a retreat from the "noisy and monotonous" portions of the city. Bartholomew also suggested that the planning commission have some control over future subdivisions so that they could be fused with the greater whole. He warned that unless the planning commission received greater authority to see his plan to fruition, it would fall waste to "uninformed officials."[99]

Bartholomew wanted each park to be at least 20 acres in size and he wanted to create a promenade and narrow park running the length of the Grand River on both of its banks. He now recommended that the city purchase as much river front property that it could, as he had suggested in his first plan, but that it had failed to do. He also suggested creating tree-lined strips or walkways in every neighborhood between the roads and the

[98] Ibid., 45, 46, 61 and 63.
[99] Ibid., 63 and 85.

homes to shield residents from the traffic noise.[100] In addition, Bartholomew recommended that the city incorporate already existing school playgrounds into his maze of parks. He proposed that for every five acres devoted to a school, three should be set aside for "play spaces." He also recommended that every neighborhood have a building for its indoor social and recreational activities, "informal plantings and open spaces as well as facilities for active sports." Through incorporating the 22 elementary, 3 junior and 2 senior high schools' grounds into the park system he felt the city could save some money by not having to duplicate play equipment. He also hoped that the park system would materially assist the city in securing a logical land use policy, or in other words that city officials would make development decisions based upon or in relation to the park system rather than for strict economic reasons.[101]

One of the reasons Bartholomew emphasized more parks and outdoor recreational space in his second plan was due to the small residential lots and the compactness of the city. In walking around many of the older neighborhoods, one is struck by the fact that moderately sized homes are fitted to lots barely large enough to contain them, resulting in small yards—too small in fact for children to play on. Bartholomew also presciently noted that excessive congestion would "tend to destroy the residential character and would result in the residents moving to new and more spacious areas." He also warned that future population growth would occur beyond the city limits and that "the majority of the growth would be occupied by single-family dwellings if the city did not address these

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[100] Ibid., 10, 15, 16.
[101] Amendments to 1938 Report Upon the Comprehensive City Plan, Lansing, Michigan, As Adopted by the Lansing City Plan Commission, 29 Dec. 1942, 5, 7, CLDC, State Archives, and Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1938*, 61, 63.

issues."[102]

The city planning commission eventually adopted Bartholomew's plan at the end of 1942 as a guide to its future. Some of what Bartholomew suggested was later carried out, such as the river promenade in the 1990s and some of the open spaces in the downtown area were built, as well as some of the parks. But the city continued to try and juggle these suggestions with pro-business policies, neglecting many of the neighborhoods. A contemporary example of this is the recent completion and beginning operations of the new General Motors assembly plant. Under its current design, it is the largest single source of volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the Lansing area. The reason for this is that it was not forced to install the cost effective pollution control technologies mandated under the federal clean air act. The director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Qualities, Russ Harding, approved the plant despite knowing about the plant's flaws, and despite the numerous complaints from residents in the Westside neighborhoods who have complained about emissions and odors emanating from the soon to be closed Verlinden Plant that is just three miles from this new factory. The city, for its part, is completely enthusiastic and supportive of the plant despite the air quality issue. Former Lansing Mayor David Hollister reasoned that the economic impact of General Motors on the Lansing area far outweighed any environmental concerns.[103]

Lansing's inability to address the concerns of its residents, though, has had an impact on the city's growth. Between 1940 and 1960 the population grew from almost

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[102] Bartholomew, *Lansing City Plan, 1938*, 50.

[103] Gregory Button, "Ecology Center and MEC Appeal G.M. Lansing Plant Permit," The Ecology Center, Ann Arbor, MI, 30 Oct. 2001, www.great-lakes.net/lists/enviro-mich/2001-10/msg00209.html, and "Come Clean, GM," *State Journal*, 17 January 2004. See also open Letter from Mayor David Hollister to the city of Lansing, 16 May 2001, as part of the city's "Lansing Works! Keep GM!," publicity campaign run by Kolt and Serkaian Communications, Lansing, Michigan, www.koltandserkaian.com/campaigns/lanswrks2.htm.

83,500 to over 108,000, yet this is the direct result of the fact that the city annexed its neighbors four times between 1949 and 1957. These annexations occurred primarily in anticipation of a potential slowdown in the local economy after World War II. Yet, despite the fact that Lansing was on a sound financial footing and could have implemented all of what Bartholomew envisioned, the city continued to ignore the wants and needs of its citizens until the early 1980s when suburban malls and more appealing environs like East Lansing and Okemos began siphoning away more and more people. By the early '80s Lansing renewed its efforts to beautify itself, yet just as in the past, most of the focus centered on the downtown district.[104]

The city, though, has not learned its lesson. At a recent "state of the city" address, given at the new GM plant, Lansing's current Mayor, Tony Benavides, continued to echo policies of the past. He stated that: "To make Lansing the first choice for business, we will continue to strengthen our relationship with General Motors and all businesses by vigorously pursing new investment opportunities...I will ask leaders of several Lansing businesses—large and small—to meet with me once a month to strengthen Lansing's outreach to businesses...I will make it easier for businesses to do business in Lansing."[105]

Statistics suggest that this pro-business agenda has not worked. According to the 1940 census, the population of Ingham County was 130, 616 while Lansing itself comprised over half of the county's population with roughly 83,500 residents. Since then, the population of Ingham County in the year 2000 reached 279,320 people while Lansing's population was less than half of the total with only 119,128. Also in 2000, almost 17 percent of the city's population lived below the poverty level as compared with

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[104] Kestenbaum, *Out of a Wilderness*," 118.
[105] "Text of Benavides State of the City Speech," *Lansing State Journal*, 27 January 2004.

8.3 percent for the county as a whole while the median household income in Lansing was also almost $6,000 below the county average. Additionally, up through 2002, Lansing had not constructed a subdivision of private homes in 40 years. It is no surprise, then, that the population continued to move further away from the central city after the war to subdivisions and suburbs that at least cosmetically addressed some of what people wanted.[106]

In looking at the urban environmentalism of Lansing between 1920 and the end of World War II, the negative results of the city's choice to emphasize pro-industry policies continue to be apparent. Lansing's attempts to control and manipulate the shape of the physical city by redefining urban nature and hoping to Americanize the working classes along middle- class definitions that included an emphasis on thrift, efficiency, orderliness, and homogenization seemed to have backfired. The city, led by the mayor, city commission, chamber of commerce, and the local paper, built and controlled recreational outlets and promoted and facilitated homeownership under the guise of personal and collective economic enrichment. At the same time, these policies conflicted with attitudes from the Progressive Era concerning urban nature that emphasized the power of clean water, clean air, and green spaces as a means to democratize and "Americanize" the working classes through moral uplift and increased political participation in the physical construction of neighborhoods and public places. As urban residents came to expect basic standards of cleanliness, and to equate them with

[106] U.S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census: *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population Over 30,000, 1940* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1942), J. Allen Beegle and Widick Schroeder, "Social Organization in the North Lansing Fringe," MSU Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Sept, 1955; 2000 Census @www.4reference.net/encyclopedias/wikipedia/Michigan.html; and "Text of Benavides State of the City Speech," *Lansing State Journal*, 27 January 2004. In this speech Mayor Benavides announced that a new subdivision of private homes is being constructed and he points out that it is the first in 40 years.

prosperity and hence, democracy, and Americanism, many concluded that the cities they lived in fell short of these evolving expectations.

The choice by Lansing to make economic growth its priority was not unique, as urban historians of big cities have shown us. Nor was the fact that even during the Depression, the city could not simply ignore environmental issues and their potential impact on both the health and well- being of the residents, and of the city itself. The Progressive Era legacy ideas about urban nature were strong and pushed up against the philosophy of seeing cities only as economic growth machines. Yet, the crucial points are in how Lansing chose to privilege industry over general health and the future consequences. When cities like Lansing chose to ignore the desires and needs to protect homeowners' space, those residents began to leave the city in droves for the greener spaces of the suburbs where they perceived they could recreate the pristine "nature" they lacked inside cities and have a political voice and some control over the construction of their private and public spaces.

## Chapter 4:

## Smoke on the Horizon in Salt Lake City

In Lansing in the 1920s and 1930s, environmental issues were often evaded due in part to the city's geographic location-- the abundant and accessible rivers, farms, and trees—that allowed it to displace its environmental problems, at least for a time, outside its boundaries. Yet, state agencies, rural communities, homeowners, nearby cities, easy access to markets, and the makeup of the population forced Lansing to grapple with these problems. For Salt Lake City, Utah, circumstances were different. The closest "major" city was far away in Denver, and unlike Lansing, Salt Lake was the dominant economic and cultural center in the region. But, its location also meant that environmental problems would be manifest more prominently. Salt Lake is located in a mountain valley. In the winter it experiences temperature inversions that trap the air forming a ceiling of pollution. The state of Utah also has an abundance of bituminous coal that is relatively inexpensive, making it the fuel of choice for most residents.

From the time Anglo pioneers began to settle in the Salt Lake Valley, its residents had to contend with increasing amounts of air pollution caused by this combination of mountain valley location, temperature inversions, and the increased reliance upon the cheap and widely available bituminous coal. Between 1890 and 1919, as was the case for many cities dependent on coal for fuel, Salt Lake attempted at least six plans to control the burning of soft coal within the city, but each met with limited success.[1] As the city grew, so too did the air pollution problem. This in turn precipitated mounting pressure

[1] Walter E. Pittman, Jr., "The Smoke Abatement Campaign in Salt Lake City, 1890-1925," Locus 2 (Fall 1989): 73.

from groups of residents with competing agendas for reform. With mounting popular pressure to curb smoke pollution, the city government felt compelled to redouble its efforts and find a solution.[2]

Added to this problem was the fact that up until statehood in 1896, Utah had two economies and social systems. The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints or the Mormons generally held to a small-scale, communally based economy that was centered on "irrigated agriculture, village industry, and occasional organized efforts to take advantage of fortuitous windfalls." Small mining communities and companies controlled the other system with the railroads linking this group to the outside world. After statehood, the two slowly became entangled which precipitated the commercialization of farming, the control of mining by eastern corporations, increased commercial and financial investment from outside sources, and the loss of local control and independence from national and world markets.[3]

The "Americanization" of Utah's and Salt Lake's economy also introduced Mormons to the possibilities of greater physical growth for the state and personal economic enrichment. Similar to Lansing, Salt Lake officials by the 1920s hoped for physical and economic growth, at the same time recognizing the necessity and the challenges of trying to balance that economic growth with creating a healthy and beautiful place for their citizens. In the first 15 years of the 20th century, Salt Lake adopted many of the guiding principals of the City Beautiful Movement, but relied primarily on community cooperation to achieve its goals. The questions city leaders framed for themselves, as in Lansing, were quite simple: "What is the best path to growth

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[2] Ibid., 75.
[3] Leonard J. Arrington and Thomas G. Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth: Utah's Economy from Statehood to the Great Depression*, (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), x.

and prosperity? How could the city, or should it, emphasize industrialization while simultaneously taking advantage of its locale as a city surrounded by open, scenic space? If it emphasized industrialization, would it risk losing control of the city to outside influences? Should the city develop a growth strategy based almost exclusively on urban nature and tourism?" If they chose to emphasize nature, they would face questions such as "why spend so much money, and 'waste' a valuable resource--land-- when there were plenty of natural areas that could be reached just 40 minutes away?" City leaders also faced growing political, economic, and social pressures from outside the state to continue the process of "self Americanization." The failure of the strategy of volunteerism combined with pressures to modernize the city and the economy, in part, led to a hybrid policy that incorporated ideas from both the City Beautiful and the City Practical movements.[4]

Perhaps Sylvester Q. Cannon should be credited with integrating a conservation and aesthetics ethos into Salt Lake at the local and state government levels. Cannon was a native of the city who had earned an engineering degree from M.I.T., worked briefly as a mining engineer, then as a hydrolic and irrigation engineer before being hired by the city to serve eventually as the city engineer from 1913-1925. Cannon has been described as a pragmatic, utilitarian conservationist who wanted to make Utah's cities into "a fit place for Gods' people by working to remake their home towns into beautiful and functional urban places."[5] Cannon worked at preserving the "nature out there," or in other words protecting the canyons and wilderness areas that surrounded Salt Lake, while at the same time searching for ways to encourage municipal and industrial growth. His

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[4] Thomas G. Alexander, "Sylvester Q. Cannon and the Revival of Environmental Consciousness in the Mormon Community," *Environmental History* 3 (Oct. 1998): 495.
[5] Ibid., 491.

ideas mirrored those of the times that framed the issues in terms of a "city profitable" more than from the standpoint of health, aesthetics, and livability. In other words he saw the potential economic value of some of Utah's wilderness areas and Salt Lake's scenic surroundings, and used this as his emphasis for conservation and preservation.[6]

With Cannon helping to set the tone, Salt Lake's decisions became more acute by 1920, given the changing attitudes in the United States concerning smoke and coal. As David Stradling points out, most Americans in urban settings, and particularly those of the middle classes, had accepted smoke as a necessary evil towards obtaining prosperity and progress. Middle- class reformers, though, by the end of the 19th century began to embark upon campaigns that stressed the opposite. "The primary goal of antismoke activists, then, was to convince coal-reliant Americans that smoke was uncivilized and unprogressive, just the opposite of what many had come to believe." Added to this though, as mentioned, Utah and Salt Lake were relative newcomers to America's economic system and faced pressures to continue to integrate into the broader nation.[7]

J. Leo Fairbanks of the Salt Lake City Planning Board, in 1920, articulated the contemporary philosophical and practical challenges that cities faced. According to Fairbanks, the city wanted to do "nothing that is bad or likely to undermine our chances for making ours the most lovely city in America."[8] "With the pressing demands for industrial plants," he continued, "we must be able to say to the employer of labor that his investment will be secure in certain localities with no fear of injunctions or depreciation

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[6] Ibid., 500.
[7] David Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives: Environmentalists, Engineers, and Air Quality in America, 1881-1951* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 16.
[8] *Municipal Record*, January 1920, published by Authority of the City Commissioners, (Salt Lake: Western Printing Co.), January 1920, 4, Salt Lake City/County Building Archives hereafter referred to as SLCCBA.

of property values and that he may have every facility his plant demands by way of transportation, housing facilities, etc."[9]

But the city could not afford just to pay attention to business interests. Like Lansing officials, Fairbanks emphasized the need to build housing. "With the great demand for homes, we must provide proper housing conditions to make the second requirement of a great city measure up to the highest standard. Slum conditions must be avoided and happy housing conditions provided to minister to the health and comfort of the people." Finally he asserted that, "While they are available without a great expenditure of money, we must provide play fields, parks, and recreation grounds to supply the third requirement of a great city."[10] As in Lansing then, Salt Lake City sought a strategy to create a beautiful and prosperous city. They settled on a three-pronged program: encourage and protect industry through an appropriate infrastructure and minimal regulation of industry to encourage new investment; provide more jobs that would then make homes for its citizens more affordable; and construct recreational facilities that would both beautify the city and keep people out of trouble.

This idea about how to create a "great" city, however, was challenged even by some elements in the municipal government. An article in the city's monthly publication the *Municipal Record* called attention to the smoke problem, claiming that:

> The past winter has brought more forcibly to our attention than at any other time the need of some solution of the smoke nuisance. If each householder would ad (sic) the extra cost of laundry bills to the price he pays each winter for fuel, the amount would easily maintain municipal plants, and he would be saved the excessive cost of frequently cleaning walls, depreciation of draperies, etc, care of his own furnace as well as poor health conditions.[11]

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 5.
[11] *Municipal Record*, March 1920, published by Authority of the City Commissioners, (Salt Lake: Western Printing Co.) March 1920, 6, SLCCBA.

The report also warned that:

> If this condition were the unescapable (sic) penalty of growth in population and industry discussion of it would be useless and harmful and we would be compelled to look to our material gains for compensation for our losses in beauty and comfort. We should have to reconcile ourselves to the annual migration of the well-to-do to the Pacific coast; to the defacement of our buildings, the ruin of delicate fabrics and the carbonizing of our lungs on an ever growing scale.[12]

Thus it is clear that some Salt Lake residents linked air pollution to poor health conditions, increased housework, the economic costs associated with the deterioration of personal property, higher fuel costs, and the flight of the wealthy. Yet, municipal officials insisted that these environmental costs could be avoided while simultaneously pursuing pro-growth policies that encouraged and emphasized industrialization.

Air pollution was not the only issue that the city was addressing. In 1911 the state legislature, in an effort to remove party politics from the equation, stipulated that all cities in Utah with populations over 30,000 would have a mayor and four commissioners which would replace the alderman form of government. Salt Lake's municipal government structure was changed to a city commission form of government in 1912. Each of the five members was assigned or voluntarily chose to head a city department. As head of the department of parks and recreation, for example, that commissioner would then oversee a staff of professionals and make decisions concerning personnel and budget appropriations. Custom within the Salt Lake government eventually allowed each commissioner almost virtual autonomy in the decision- making process for his department. Prior to the change in government structure, the city had three elected councilman from each of five wards. An article published by the municipal government

[12] Ibid., 3.

in 1923 claimed that under the old system, the city was poorly serviced with incomplete sewer systems, had few paved roads, and only $23,000 in the sinking fund to pay off the more than $4 million of debt. It went on to boast that in only ten years under the new structure, $922,000 of bonds had been redeemed, the city's infrastructure had been vastly improved, and the public debt had only risen $2 million.[13]

With a supposedly more responsive government, by 1919, city and business leaders realized that the public was growing weary of the failed smoke abatement programs and that the air pollution problems hindered municipal growth. In that year, the city, the University of Utah, and the U.S. Bureau of Mines combined forces to begin a comprehensive, year- long study that attempted to discover how best to scientifically resolve the city's smoke problems. Osborn Monnett from the Bureau of Mines, who had been working in St. Louis and Chicago, and Herman H. Green from the city commission headed the smoke investigation committee. Professional engineers who specialized in smoke abatement, like Monnett, traveled throughout the country often doing work both for the federal government and private industry.[14] The city's decision then, to solicit the help of engineering professionals followed national trends in the smoke abatement movement that had "evolved from an interest-group-dominated political effort [in the late 1800s], into an expert-controlled scientific endeavor" by the 1910s.[15] Most engineers of smoke control by 1920 believed that smoke could be curtailed using technologies that focused on improving equipment and better training of the men who maintained the boilers. City leaders, by assuming control of the air pollution debate, and implementing

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[13] Richard D. Poll, et al, *Utah's History*, (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1989), 552-553. See also, *Municipal Record*, January 1923, 18-19, SLCCBA.
[14] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 86-87.
[15] Ibid., 155.

the mantra of scientific experts, felt that they could deflect criticism from themselves and continue pursuing the same policies. It is therefore not too surprising that when the 188 page report was published it concluded that the major causes for the city's air pollution rested with its geographic setting and the inferior heating equipment and coal-firing methods of the public rather than from the source of the pollution, the coal.[16]

The report determined that large heating and industrial plants produced almost 45 percent of the air pollution while locomotives accounted for 18 percent, residences 22, small heating plants 9, and miscellaneous heating plants a little over 6 percent of the smoke overall. However during the winter the contribution of resident smoke increased to twenty-seven percent and in the summer the industrial sector accounted for over 52 percent of the pollution.[17]

> It is interesting to note," says Mr. Monnett, "the process of smoke formation over the city and to draw conclusions which will aid in attacking the problem. About 6 o'clock in the morning, while it is yet dark, a smoke cloud will be seen forming over the business portion of the city. This will be observed from the fact that lights beyond this section will be obscured, as it is yet too dark to see the smoke itself. In ten minutes this cloud has increased in size and density until the more prominent lights in the downtown section have been obscured, while the lights in the outlying section are perfectly visible for miles. By 6:20 the cloud has entirely covered the downtown section of the city and reached to a considerable elevation, becoming visible as daylight approaches. By 6:30 the city is thoroughly covered with the dense permanent smoke cloud, formed in a half hour by the large smokers down town, which cloud remains over the city until the air currents in the afternoon cause it to be dissipated."[18]

Even though the gross consumption of coal and smoke produced in Salt Lake was low compared to other cities, the mean tonnage of soot fall per capita exceeded that of Leeds, London, Glasgow, Hamburg, and Pittsburgh. The smoke density at times was so

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[16] *Municipal Record*, October 1920, 3, SLCCBA. See also Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 86-87.
[17] *Municipal Record*, October 1920, 1 and 5, SLCCBA.
[18] Ibid., 3.

thick that one observer remarked that the "city is often hidden in a pall of fog and smoke so dense that it is impossible to distinguish objects at 100 yards distance."[19]

While the study suggested that Utah coal had low sulphur content and was superior to that mined in most other western states, it had a high percentage of volatile matter that produced more smoke too. And, as Joel Tarr notes, "The primary air quality concern of cities before World War II was smoke pollution, which consisted primarily of particles generated by the burning of fossil fuels, especially bituminous coal. These particles blocked the sunlight, irritated the lungs, discolored clothing and other materials including building facades, and threatened public health."[20] Professional engineers believed that the problem could be eliminated with better equipment, more responsible and informed methods of firing, and increased municipal supervision towards the operation of the heating plants. The belief in the abilities of technology and expert supervision to eliminate the air pollution problem prompted the authors of the report to conclude that, "There is nothing in connection with either the service or conditions surrounding Salt Lake City which would make it impossible or difficult to obtain smokeless results."[21]

The report suggested that the city focus its efforts in a couple of areas. First, that new mechanical equipment should be installed in all residential homes and that a processed or smokeless briquette be made available so that residents did not have to familiarize themselves with the new equipment. The authors of the study believed that the railroads would voluntarily install the necessary equipment because not only would it

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[19] Ibid., 5.
[20] Joel Tarr, "The Metabolism of the Industrial City, The Case of Pittsburgh," *Journal of Urban History* 28 (July 2002): 523.
[21] *Municipal Record*, October 1920, 3-4.

save them money through improved efficiency, but other cities had already passed laws mandating such improvements. The biggest emphasis was to reduce the amount of smoke each morning in the business section through vigilant monitoring and education on how to properly fire furnaces.[22]

Even though the conclusions of the study placed the blame for the air pollution on citizens' carelessness as well as outdated technology, several citizen groups expressed their support of the Monnett Plan, as it came to be called, including the Salt Lake Commercial Club, the Advertising Club, the Salt Lake Real Estate board, the Utah Manufacturers Association, and the City Federation of Women's Clubs. These as well as a number of other groups began petitioning the city government to adopt the plan as well as hire an engineer from the Bureau of Mines to act as the city's chief smoke inspector.[23]

The blame placed by professional engineers on homeowners for the source of the smoke pall was similar to the experience in Pittsburgh. In that city during the 1920s and '30s, smoke experts believed that industries had made sufficient technological advances that resulted in cleaner burning furnaces, but domestic furnaces produced much more smoke due to improper firing, outdated equipment, and the use of poorer quality coal. Pittsburgh officials, however, hesitated regulating domestic furnaces for political and administrative reasons. Politically, smoke was still equated with prosperity, and the lack of smoke pouring from the smokestacks of Pittsburgh's industries during the Depression reminded folks of the large percentages of unemployment and poverty. Administratively,

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[22] Ibid., 6-8.
[23] City Commission Records, petition from City Federation of Women's Clubs to Salt Lake City Commission, 22 Sept. 1920, 673, Petition # 856; petition from the Salt Lake Commercial Club, 22 Sept. 1920, 673, #857; and 8 Nov. 1920, 772, petitions #s 967, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 986, SLCCBA.

Pittsburgh officials felt they would need hundreds of smoke inspectors to adequately police the roughly 141,000 dwellings that used coal.[24]

David Stradling concludes in his study of smoke pollution in the U.S., that engineers dominated the post- World War I discussion of smoke abatement in Salt Lake as well as across the nation. He also concludes that the engineers who studied Salt Lake emphasized that cleaning Salt Lake's skies "was a 'long-time effort' requiring a 'willingness to wait for results," and that "Salt Lake residents proved more than willing to wait," whereby "the valley's air quality continued to deteriorate until atrocious conditions in the 1940s sparked a new wave of activity."[25] While professional engineers, business, and political leaders did attempt to control and direct the debates along more manageable lines that were favorable to themselves, various groups of Salt Lake residents also succeeded periodically in infusing their own ideas into the debates. They were not willing to wait forever and some succeeded in applying pressure during the 1920s, '30s, and '40s which forced city officials to take actions they would not have otherwise considered.

As a result of protests from local business and civic groups, in January 1921 the city began its smoke reduction campaign. It adhered to some of the suggestions from the Monnett Plan. For example, the city created a smoke abatement department with two engineers and several inspectors charged with roaming the streets to monitor smoke production from residential chimneys. Additionally, an observation tower was constructed atop the Walker Bank Building allowing an observer to phone in smoke violations in the downtown district every morning when the smoke was at its worst. An

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[24] Tarr, "The Metabolism of the Industrial City," 524-525.
[25] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 155.

inspector was then dispatched to the offending site where he would take note of the problems and offer training and issue warnings. Along this vein, city engineers also undertook the daunting task of inspecting and cataloging the boilers of some five hundred businesses and manufacturing plants that were in need of repair or replacement. Citizen involvement was high too, as a committee of some 175 volunteer citizens was created to aid in the observation process. The enforcement of the new codes mirrored the philosophies of Monnett in that they were based primarily on persuasion, publicity, and education rather than prosecution, although the city did levy some fines and arrests in extreme cases of chronic abuse.[26]

The city's Chief Smoke Inspector, H.W. Clark, initially reported widespread enthusiasm and cooperation for the smoke abatement plan from all sectors of the city. By March of the first year, Clark claimed that of the twenty-five worst industrial offenders, ten plants were "entirely clean" and of the 76 worst offenders, 43 had been "cleaned up" sufficiently to be in compliance with the new smoke codes. The smoke abatement office had also received several calls from residents asking for engineers to come to their homes to better instruct them on how to properly fire and maintain their furnaces.[27]

Clark did acknowledge, however, that some resistance and problems still existed. At a few places inspectors had made recommendations for certain changes to heating plants which were followed, but yielded little or no improvements. As a result, when inspectors returned and proposed additional alterations, those companies were unwilling

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[26] *Municipal Record*, October 1920, 7-8.

[27] Report by the department of smoke inspection- H.W. Clark, in City Commission Report, March 1921, 7. Smoke output was measured by the number of minutes of heavy smoke production in an hour. The Ringleman Density Chart gauged the density of the smoke, which was a card with four distinct shades on it. Whichever shade matched the smoke would then determine density. Pittman, "Smoke Campaign," 75. See also Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressive*, 103.

to spend more money without guarantees that things would improve. Additionally, the railroads, despite promises to the contrary, had also failed to upgrade their equipment and firing methods. Inspectors also complained that the greatest problems came from apartment houses and smaller commercial plants because of the constant changing of firemen and their absolute inefficiency due to a lack of proper training. Inspectors felt that the city needed an ordinance or statutory provision compelling men employed to fire furnaces to pass an examination and show they were qualified. To this end Clark complained that, "We have discovered drug fiends and other incompetent persons employed to take care of furnaces in apartment houses, and in some cases, have found one man who attends furnaces in four or five different buildings."[28]

Despite these challenges it appeared that the program was producing positive results as evidenced from studies of the first three months of 1921. The winter of 1919-20 saw 140 days in "light" smoke, with 48 days of "dense" smoke. By comparison, the 1920-21 winter had 135 days of light smoke and only 23 days of heavy smoke. These advances were made even though the winter of 1919-20 was warmer, and an estimated 38 percent more coal was consumed that second winter. The smoke department estimated that the overall output of smoke had been reduced by 46 percent. They credited supervision and education of boiler plant operations in the central business district as the primary reason for the drastic success. They also estimated that even residences reduced their smoke output by 16 percent.[29]

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[28]Report by the department of smoke inspection- H.W. Clark, in City commission Report, March 1921, 6-7 and City Commission Records, 10 August 1920, 571 #98, report from A.H. Crabbe, Commissioner of Parks and Public Property, SLCCBA.
[29] Report to City Commission from Smoke Department, Nov. 1921, 5-6, SLCCBA.

Besides the various local interest groups, Salt Lake's smoke abatement program was also being closely monitored by officials in Washington D.C. Federal officials, in conjunction with their involvement with municipalities regarding city planning and zoning, were keenly interested in pollution. The U.S. Department of Commerce petitioned Salt Lake for information regarding the progress of its abatement program. The department believed that the recommendations given to the city in 1920 would create positive results and it was looking for feedback so that it could then implement similar programs in other cities across the nation.[30]

In 1924 the city engineer proclaimed that thanks to smoke abatement efforts, air pollution in the downtown section had been reduced by 93 percent since the program began in 1921. He claimed that it was now smoke from the residential areas and the railroads that were intruding upon the commercial and manufacturing sectors. He then recommended that if the city wanted to finish the job, it needed to appropriate more funds and concentrate its efforts on these problem areas.[31]

The City, however, chose to go in another direction. By 1923, money for the smoke abatement plan was gradually being reduced. The City Commission also decided to fold the department of smoke inspection into the department of engineering in 1924 with the hopes of making the department more efficient and to save even more money. Efforts in the residential areas waned until they disappeared altogether after 1925 despite reports from the city engineer that along with the railroads, private homes now constituted the bulk of the air pollution. The reduction in the smoke budget and its merger with city engineering was partly in response to protests and political pressure

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[30]D.A. Lyon, U.S. Department of Commerce to Salt Lake City Commission, 24 Nov. 1925, Petition #1070. City Commission Records, SLCCBA.
[31] City Commission Records, 10 July 1924, 406 #120, SLCCBA.

from local businesses, manufacturing plants, and the railroads over fines and arrests for smoke violations. It also resulted from a belief that technology, rather than changed behaviors and attitudes would solve the city's air pollution problems. The slightly improved air quality between 1921 and 1924 convinced city officials that the need for vigilance was no longer justified and that somehow the smoke pall would not become more severe even though the city continued to grow and attract more industry as well as people.[32]

Opposition to the city's smoke abatement plan had also come from the Utah Tax Payers Association. Salt Lake residents were forced to pay city and county taxes in addition to property taxes. The city funded most of its improvements through bonds, although the smoke department, as well as the largest portion of taxes paid by residents—65 percent--, came from property taxes. Between 1912 and 1921 the gross debt per capita for Salt Lake County had grown from $57.04 to $101.22, which helps explain the opposition.[33]

In 1921 the city spent almost thirteen thousand dollars on smoke reduction, but began reducing that figure every year thereafter. By comparison, Salt Lake had spent far more than other communities of larger size. For example Cleveland allocated a little more than five thousand dollars in 1923 while Grand Rapids, Michigan with a population similar to that of Salt Lake paid out $2,100 in 1924, and Denver in 1926, appropriated only $1,800 to fight smoke. All three cities had air pollution problems, with Denver's

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[32] City Commission Records, petitions from The Building Owners and Managers Association, 16 Jan. 1922, 42, petition #33; Report by T.T. Burton, Commissioner of Streets and Public Improvements, 11 Oct. 1922, 599, #110; Report from Dr. M.R. Stewart, Commissioner of Parks and Public Property, 15 May 1922, 305, #77, SLCCBA.

[33] *Wealth, Public Debt, and Taxation: 1922*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924); *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population of Over 30,000: 1923*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), 194.

situation being almost analogous in terms of geographic setting and the type of coal used.[34]

Historian Walter E. Pittman blames the replacement of reform minded Progressivism with economically based boosterism in Salt Lake City as the primary reason for Salt Lake abandoning further reforms and the subsequent return of the smoke problem. There is some evidence to support this theory. The city had been pursuing an aggressive campaign that encouraged increased tourism and the relocation of industries and people to the state. This strategy, however, occurred simultaneously with the smoke abatement plan and with an attempt to link Utah's and Salt Lake's "natural" or wilderness advantages with economic prosperity. Thus, while some city policies became much more pro-industry, they were accompanied by efforts to cleanse and beautify the city with an injection of what many would label the creation of more urban nature.[35]

**Selling the "Natural" West**

Perhaps the origins of the state's and Salt Lake's efforts to reconcile these two somewhat contradictory agendas lies somewhere in the "See America First" campaigns of the early 20th century. In 1906, western boosters, with economic motivations, attempted to commodify "wilderness out there" through the promotion of tourism to the nation's western national parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite. Fisher Sanford Harris, a Salt Lake resident and onetime secretary of the Salt Lake City Commercial Club, is credited with organizing this "See America First" campaign. This group, eventually headed by governors and other business leaders in the Rocky Mountain

[34] City Commission Records, report of the City Recorder to the Commission, 18 Jan. 1926, 31, #2 and *Municipal* Record, Jan. 1923, report from the City Commission, 13, 18, SLCCBA.
[35] Pittman, "The Smoke Abatement Campaign."

Region, argued that the Western frontier and wilderness were responsible for creating the true American identity. As such, they believed that it was important to preserve western wilderness, control how tourists experienced it, and at the same time, promote urbanization and industrialization in the already settled portions of their states. This dual approach would ensure the perpetuation of what they believed to be the important ingredients in shaping and preserving a true American democratic character, while still allowing for economic progress in their own cities.[36]

Tourism movements like the "See America First" campaign catered primarily to the wealthy and the middle-classes who could afford the train fare and price of lodging at many of these sites. Yet, those who really "needed" to be Americanized, at least in the eyes of the promoters, continued to slave away in the urban factories. The attempts to nationalize and even "democratize" tourism occurred simultaneously with the efforts of several groups at the local and federal levels who had begun to use their resources on a nationwide scale, in an attempt to bring more of the wilderness to the urban masses. The confluence of these two movements helps explain, in part, the dual and contradictory philosophies of many cities that tried simultaneously to beautify and promote industrialization.[37]

Building from the "See America First" campaign, Salt Lake City leaders continued their attempts to attract people and businesses through a national ad campaign that promoted both the natural beauties of the city and surrounding areas, and the ease and economic benefits of running a business in the state. For example, in 1930 the Chamber of Commerce prepared a publication designed to explain to the people of Salt

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[36] Shaffer, *See American First*, 27, 37-38.
[37] Ibid., 39, 92.

Lake the strategies and rational for the city's national publicity campaign. It believed that most people in the Midwest and the East skipped over the region and headed straight to the West Coast. The Chamber, therefore, wanted to present Salt Lake as an ideal stop-over point on the way to the coast, as well as to portray the city as the perfect place to live and do business. That year the Chamber spent over sixty-two thousand dollars on 103 feature articles, news stories, and photographs that were published in other cities' newspapers and in national publications. It placed 2.2 million brochures in *Colliers Magazine*, 1.2 million in *National Geographic*, and another 300,000 in Time. The brochures in *Colliers*, and *National Geographic* played up Salt Lake's proximity to national parks and its surrounding natural beauty. The advertisements in *Time* emphasized Utah's inexpensive and abundant natural resources, its infrastructure, and its location as the business center of the intermountain west and gateway to the coast. The Chamber claimed that as a result of its efforts the number of visitors to the state's national parks had increased 63 percent between 1929 and 1930 alone.[38]

Another pamphlet, "Salt Lake City: The Center of Scenic America," highlighted "urban nature" in and around the city such as its parks and plazas, and then connected these places to the adjacent canyons, and the surrounding mountain ranges that are just a short drive up the canyons. The final few lines of the advertisement highlight how nature and city were linked:

> Proud of her schools is Salt Lake City- her churches, her theaters, her libraries, her monumental strides in civic progress. Join the ranks of an industrious, happy

[38] Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, "Selling Salt Lake and Utah to the Nation," (published by the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, 1930), Utah State Historical Society Archives hereafter referred to as USHSA.

citizenry. Come-lay hold of the inexhaustible elements of wealth, fill your lungs with the mountain air and grab the hand of cooperative friendliness![39]

In other pamphlets released around the same time, however, the emphasis was on the ease and convenience of doing business within the city and the important economic role mining had played in the growth of the state. One brochure highlighted the advanced infrastructure of Salt Lake, and the number of railways that used the city as a hub or gateway to California and the east. It also pointed out the value and potential future value of several minerals mined in the state and offered an invitation to industries to relocate and begin reaping the economic benefits of doing business in the city and the state. A second pamphlet highlighted the tax advantages to industries and the lower wage scales, and then claimed that 47 percent of the homes were owner-occupied, suggesting a stable and responsible workforce.[40]

Still, another publication attempted to link Salt Lake's urban nature with its dependence upon the mining industry. It offered large, professional photographs of several parks and plazas around the city along with photos of some of the more expensive homes and tree-lined residential boulevards. The advertisement was quick to point out that the wealth in the city was intimately connected to the success of the state's mineral industry. In so doing, this brochure served as both an invitation to outsiders and as a

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[39] "Salt Lake City: The Center of Scenic America" issued by the Salt Lake Commercial Club and the Chamber of Commerce, (Salt Lake: F.W. Gardiner Co. Press). (Issued sometime in the 1920s judging from the photos- make of the automobiles etc., no date is given though), USHSA.

[40] "Salt Lake City, Surrounded by Industrial Opportunities," issued by the Salt Lake Commercial Club and the Chamber of Commerce, (Salt Lake: Seagull Press, 1922); "Utah's Mineral Wealth," issued by the Salt Lake Commercial Club and the Chamber of Commerce, (Salt Lake: Deseret News Press, 1921); and "Salt Lake City and Utah, Manufacturing and Distributing Center of the Intermountain West," issued by the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, 1927, USHSA.

subtle warning and reminder to the state's residents to continue to support the legislative measures and economic strategies that favored the mineral industry.[41]

Salt Lake, like Lansing, therefore, pursued urban growth through the active recruitment of business and industry and the simultaneous attempt to create a more livable and environmentally clean urban space through stricter zoning regulations and by trying to partially incorporate the city into the natural landscape. But, the records suggest too that Salt Lake's citizens were more involved in shaping political issues and debates and in volunteer community activism than Lansing's citizens. Lansing's population was more tied to auto manufacturing and all the subsidiary companies that depended upon that industry. Because of this, and the high percentage of homeowners, the workers had a greater vested interest in protecting their manufacturing sectors. Most Salt Lakers did not as yet have as deep a commitment or connection to the Utah coal industry, despite claims to the contrary.

This is not to suggest that people in Salt Lake were immune to the pro-business and consumer culture of the 1920s, or that people in Lansing were slaves to it either. If that were the case then Lansing would have made little or no attempts at even considering environmental urban reforms, while Salt Lake would have immediately abandoned the use of coal. In fact, Salt Lake still depended on some industrial manufacturing and the coal industry to provide it with an inexpensive energy source. Thus even though an important part of the culture of the dominant group-- the Latter Day Saint Church-- has historically emphasized serving others within the community and teaching that humans should be environmentally responsible caretakers rather than usurpers of the land, other

[41] "Salt Lake City: Famed for its Beauty and Individuality," printed by the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, 1931, USHSA.

economic and political factors have come into play.[42] The coal industry represented a powerful lobbying group in both city and state politics and successfully scared many residents into believing that their personal economic success was tied to the health of that industry.

Nevertheless, as news that the City Council was contemplating eliminating all funding for the smoke campaign became more public, local organizations such as the Salt Lake Round Table, Rotary, and Ladies Literary Clubs all urged the city government to set aside the estimated $16,000 needed to continue the fight against smoke. The petition from the Salt Lake Round Table best sums up the reasoning of many of these organizations. It linked smoke damage to economic loss of personal property, health issues, and a deterrent to new residents moving to the city. These groups believed that the smoke abatement program was of "prime importance in the life of this city."[43]

Despite these petitions the City Council chose not to appropriate any funds towards smoke abatement in 1926, looking instead for a middle ground on the issue. Rather than trying to eliminate all the smoke, they hoped that the progress made in the previous years would be maintained so that they would not discourage other industries from locating to the city and at the same time allowing the city to save money. However, one bad winter dashed their hopes sufficiently to prompt them to resume at least token efforts at abatement. In the fall of 1927 at the urging of the city engineer, H.C. Jensen, the Engineering Council of Utah, and the Smokeless City Committee of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Commission appropriated $3,500 towards smoke elimination

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[42] Alexander, "Sylvester Q. Cannon," 488-490.
[43] City Commission Records, 22 November 1926, Petition #994, from Salt Lake City Rotary Club to City Council; 22 November 1926 and 14 Dec. 1926, Petition #992, from Salt Lake City Rotary Club; 23 November 1926 and 14 Dec. 1926, Petition #996, from Ladies Literary Club; 23 May 1927, Petition #387, from Lewis C. Karrick, SLCCBA.

in the residential districts. Jensen estimated that 75 percent of the smoke was now coming from private homes and suggested that perhaps the solution to the problem awaited the introduction of a smokeless fuel.[44]

As local citizens realized that the City Commission was going to continue to curtail funding of the smoke abatement plan, they attempted to continue the fight. Left, for the most part, to fend for themselves, the city's residents organized their own campaign in 1928 based on the principles of the 1921 smoke plan. This time, though, University of Utah professors and students voluntarily performed the inspections. This effort to curtail smoke pollution, however, did not go well and the smoke problem continued to increase. This prompted most Salt Lake residents by the end of 1929 to conclude that the city's smoke abatement campaign and the volunteer efforts of the citizens were both failures.[45]

At the close of 1929, the city again resumed responsibility for alleviating the air pollution problems, although the campaign remained grossly under- funded. Harry C. Jensen, the city engineer, was delegated as the "smoke chaser" along with engineering supervisors, paving inspectors, and other city employees who had minimal work in the winter. Jensen divided the smoke abatement program into three periods. The first phase, January to 15 March, targeted instructing private residences on the proper methods of firing their furnaces. The city employed thirteen men to perform this task. Then, from 15 March to 1 October, one inspector and the city's Assistant Engineer devoted their time to inspecting new heating plant installations and counseling industrial smoke violators on

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[44] City Commission Records, report from H.C. Jensen, City Engineer, 1 Sept. 1927, 449, #86; Decision by the City Commission, 22 Sept. 1927, 486, #149; Petition from the Sanitary Engineering Council of Utah, 27 Sept, 1927, #751.
[45] Pittman, "Smoke Campaign," p. 77.

how best to bring their equipment into compliance with city ordinances. The final period, from 15 October to 31 December, involved two inspectors and one tower observer. They were responsible for ticketing smoke violators. Because of a lack of funding, the inspectors concentrated their efforts on the commercial or downtown areas. The fact that they wanted to keep the commercial district cleaner, pointed to the city's priorities and motivations for smoke control.[46]

At any rate, Jensen credited the new smoke abatement program for raising the awareness and consciousness of Salt Lake City's residents (forgetting that similar programs in the early 1920s had already accomplished this), offering that several homeowners had installed gas-fired furnaces and mechanical stokers during the summer. He also optimistically pointed to the fact that the engineering department had installed ten devices throughout the city that measured the soiling properties of smoke, dust, and other particles floating in the air, and that these devices would aid in a more professional and scientific analysis of where the major offenders were located and thus where best to concentrate efforts. The smoke campaign also slightly moved from a philosophy of simple education to mild enforcement. This is evidenced during the winter of 1929/ 1930, when the city issued 263 letters of violation and made 2,562 phone calls telling people to shut down their furnaces for a brief period of time.[47]

In the renewed abatement campaign, the city engineering department continued to receive help from an undeterred portion of the public. For example, the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce aided the inspectors during the winter, providing an airplane in the mornings to help determine the origin and movement of smoke. These combined

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[46] Salt Lake City Engineering Department Annual Report, 1930, 37 (Harry C. Jensen City Engineer), Brigham Young University Special Collections.
[47] Ibid., 37.

efforts let Jensen to proudly declare in 1930 that the city programs were having "very good results" toward smoke abatement.[48]

However, not everyone agreed with Jensen's optimistic assessment. Austen Gudmundsen from the U.S. Bureau of Mines declared at the end of 1930 that, "Salt Lake still has a serious smoke problem...and permanent relief w[ill] depend upon complete elimination of residence smoke, for so long as any appreciable amount of smoke is made in the residence section, a smoke cloud will be formed." He also went on to complain that:

> On reviewing the situation we are astonished to find no authentic record of a major smoke-abatement campaign that has succeeded in eliminating the smoke nuisance in spite of the fact that the problem has been with us since the use of bituminous coal began. We might ask where the trouble lies; is the problem impossible of solution? We cannot blame the average citizen for harboring this thought as a conviction. He has been urged for so long but sees so little evidence of progress.[49]

Despite the laudatory marks that Jensen gave to his department, several glaring problems existed. From January to March, while the three inspectors were busy instructing residents on how to properly fire their furnaces, no one remained to monitor industrial smoke output, or to enforce smoke ordinances. Jensen cannot be completely blamed, however, because his department did not receive adequate funds to hire enough inspectors. While the city had been vigilant in the early part of the 1920s, Salt Lake City spent less money in 1930 per capita on sanitation and the promotion of city cleanliness

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[48] Ibid., 37.
[49] Letter from Mrs. Gerald Lund to the Salt Lake City Commission, 10 June 1937, quoting from Austen Gudmundsen, "Nine Years of Smoke-Abatement Work at Salt Lake City," 2-3, USHSA.

than all but four other cities with populations between one hundred and three hundred thousand.[50]

Annual reports from the city engineer combined with petitions to the City Council clearly show that attitudes towards smoke abatement had shifted somewhat. In the early 1920s much of the discussion had centered on the health and economic costs to the average citizen. By the early 1930s the majority of the rhetoric portrayed smoke as more of a nuisance than anything else. Perhaps the economic boom of the 1920s lulled policy makers into believing that their efforts to reduce some of the smoke were good enough, and that the need to create more urban nature had little or no bearing on the economic prosperity of the city. Perhaps, too, the opinion of Austen Gudmundsen is apt when he suggested that the general citizenry had begun to lose hope and patience with the entire program, resulting in greater apathy.

Scott Hamilton Dewey has suggested that before World War II, there were three types of "smoke fighters" in American cities. Local business leaders who were more concerned with the immediate economic implications of pollution and the negative effects it would have on urban growth; engineers who believed smoke was a technical matter best left to the experts; and citizen activists who worried more about the negative health effects. Dewey has also argued that citizen groups were more concerned with blaming and punishing industries and spent little time acknowledging that private homes were also a significant source of pollution, and that Salt Lake had converted to natural gas in the 1930s, rendering void its air pollution problems. While it is clear that Salt Lake followed all three patterns to a degree, citizen groups, by the mid- 1930s were very

[50] Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population of Over 30,000, (Washington D.C; Government Printing Office, 1930), 392.

focused on reducing the pollution from private homes in addition to that of industry as will be shown in the next two chapters. Nevertheless, Salt Lake's chief engineer did see himself as the expert and he placed a great deal of faith in existing technologies.[51]

Jensen, for example, urged the City Commission to revamp some of the smoke abatement laws by requiring more efficient and larger furnaces in new buildings and requiring old furnaces to be replaced with new ones when they were in need of serious repair. Jensen cited several incidences where builders had installed furnaces that were too small to properly heat homes and other buildings, thus encouraging operators to "force" their furnaces, resulting in more smoke.[52]

While Jensen and other groups relied on using conventional technology to alleviate the smoke problems, others pushed for more innovative and what they believed to be permanent long-term solutions. From the time of the Monnett Plan, other suggestions had been bantered about including the possibility of processing the coal; that is taking out all of the oils and tars, to create a "smokeless" briquette. The city and the state received petitions from several groups and individuals suggesting the city erect a small commercial scale pilot plant to assess the practicality of selling processed coal and to encourage local and state authorities to begin petitioning the federal government to secure the necessary funds to see the project to fruition. The University of Utah along with funding from a few prominent businessmen also decided to seriously research the viability of a commercial coal processing plant.[53]

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[51] Scott Hamilton Dewey, *Don't Breathe the Air: Air Pollution and U.S. Environmental Politics, 1945-1970* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2000), 24-25.
[52] Report to the City Commission from Jensen, City Engineer, 29 August 1931; Petition from Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce to City Commission, 187, 15 March 1932 and 5 April, 1932, 234, City Commission Records, SLCCBA.
[53] Petition from L.C. Karrick to City Commission, 31 Dec. 1931, 791 and 30 June 1932, 416, #350; Petition from the National Development Association, 20 Dec. 1932, 746, #648, SLCCBA.

Jensen's proposals, given the alternative for processed fuel, had the support of several groups including professional engineering organizations, the Smokeless City Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, the Utah Gas and Coke Company, and the coal mining interests. The coal companies were concerned that momentum in the state was gathering which would require legislation that would force all coal burned in the state to be treated or processed. Many coal companies feared that this would price their product out of the market and encourage more people to convert to natural gas.[54]

The coal companies' concerns were not without some merit. The state legislature began to consider the impact of air pollution and contemplated penning much stricter air quality laws. In 1933 for example, House Bill Number 83 would have exempted from taxes gasoline manufactured or distilled from Utah coals and oil shales. As a side benefit the processed coal could then be burned in residential homes helping to reduce the smoke problem. The proposal was more economically motivated in that it intended to help develop Utah's natural resources and encourage the creation of new industries with the resultant cleaner burning fuel as a side benefit. The "Committee of the Women Legislators," which consisted of the seven women in the state legislature at that time, met with the governor to convince him to back the bill. The governor ultimately vetoed the act because he felt processed coal would be too expensive for most residents and therefore detrimental to Utah's already financially troubled coal industry.[55]

The city was also reluctant to assume any responsibility for funding a coal treatment plant despite requests for it to either use municipal funds to subsidize a pilot

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[54] Report to the City Commission from Jensen, City Engineer, 29 August 1931; Petition from Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce to City Commission, 187, 15 March 1932 and 5 April, 1932, 234, SLCCBA.
[55] Letter reporting the efforts of the Utah State Legislature regarding coal processing, Anonymous, probably written in 1936 or 1937, Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce Collection, USHSA.

plant or to seek financial aid from the federal government. Many felt that municipalities should not compete with private industries in such matters. City officials were, however, comfortable in soliciting more money from Washington to hire additional smoke inspectors and to have the federal government subsidize newer combustion equipment. The majority in the City Council did not want to overstep their bounds despite the unusual and even desperate economic circumstances of the Depression. Some in the council conceded that processed coal could harm the state's coal industry, creating even more unemployment, while others believed that municipalities should not compete with the private sector to supply power. To many, this smacked of socialism and communism and was therefore unacceptable.[56]

By the end of 1934 Salt Lake had not solved its air pollution problems and the evidence suggests that very little improvement had been made between the implementation of the Monnett Plan and the amendments to the city's smoke ordinance in 1934. Part of the problem rested in the unwillingness of the city to sufficiently punish offenders. The 1934 ordinance attempted in theory to resolve those problems by first declaring that a violation now constituted dense smoke (still based on the Ringleman Chart) of more than a minute in every hour, even when firing, while the old ordinance allowed for six minutes and made exceptions for firing. The new ordinance also stressed fines for second time offenders along with the threat of closure if improvements were not made within a specified time period.[57]

**Conclusion**

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[56] Chamber of Commerce to City Commission, 17 May 1934, 286, #197 and 9 March 1934, 147, #50; Consumers Welfare League to the City Commission, 11 September 1934, 500, #419; Mr. Lee to City Commission, 6 November 1934, 597, #147, SLCCBA.

[57] *Revised Ordinances, Salt Lake City Utah, 1934*, published by the authority of the Board of Commissioners of Salt Lake City, Utah, (Salt Lake: Arrow Press, 1934), 638-639, SLCCBA.

City officials and private citizens struggled to strike a balance between a more livable city with cleaner air, while still retaining what most saw as the primary sources of the city's prosperity-- coal and industry. As mentioned earlier, the idea of tolerance based on economic necessity was a common policy in most American cities during this time period. Smoke was still held by many to be a sign of economic progress and prosperity, and eliminating it meant doing away with factories, jobs, and people. Some people, therefore, understandably viewed smoke as merely an unpleasant side effect of modern life. Curtailing it might make cities more pleasant places to live, but eliminating it meant the end of a city itself in the minds of many Americans.

During the 1930s some residents had individually begun a conversion from coal to natural gas, and by the end of the decade approximately half of all residents used the cleaner fuel, but despite this transition, the skies remained murky. City leaders did ponder what would happen if Salt Lake converted completely to natural gas, but many believed it risked sending most of those who worked in the state's coal industry into unemployment, and would deprive the state of much needed revenues from workers' income taxes and from the coal companies themselves. The local and national economic conditions made it difficult to contemplate any major alterations to the local economy. City leaders therefore opted for a more conservative approach of loose enforcement of already weak air pollution laws. [58]

In this regard, it is important not to underestimate the impact of the Great Depression concerning people's attitudes about the environment. By 1932 Utah's unemployment rate was 36 percent. Of the 651 manufacturing plants in the state in 1929,

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[58] Dewey, *Don't Breathe the Air*, 27. See also Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce to Mayor Erwin and the Salt Lake City Commission, 10 June 1937, WCCF, USHSA.

only 440 remained by 1932. The Depression hit Utah harder than most states, in part because east coast based national corporations, like mining companies and railroads, created and controlled Utah's industrial development. The state's economic fortunes were largely dependent on decisions made elsewhere, and profits began to leave the state in larger amounts after 1929.[59]

It is therefore telling that air pollution remained an important issue in local and state politics, particularly among those who recognized the economic value of both Utah's scenic wilderness and the potential of urban nature in Salt Lake. The task, then, for municipal officials, engineers, and volunteer activist groups was to devise "a strategy to change individual behavior in regard to fuel use in the name of the collective social goal of clean air."[60]

In 1932, Utah citizens who hoped for economic and political change believed that they had a glimmer of hope when the Democratic Party, which had never previously fared well in the state, won all of the state offices, most of the legislative races, and all of the congressional seats. Despite its success at the polls, though, a rift occurred in the party between conservative and progressive factions, which argued over whether the New Deal was too conservative or too liberal. Utah Republicans criticized the New Deal in general, arguing that it and F.D.R. were threats to the nation's constitution, democracy, and capitalism. They were able to successfully unite with conservative Democrats to

[59] John Kearns, "Utah Electoral Politics, 1932-1938," (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Utah, 1972), 15-16, 154, 178.
[60] Tarr, "The Metabolism of the Industrial City," 524.

thwart many reform measures in the state, replicating the type of alliance at play at the national level in Roosevelt's second term.[61]

Additionally, the progressive Democratic faction charged that the party itself was controlled by eastern concerns, labeling it an unwanted political machine that did not have the interests of the people of Utah as its first priority. As a result, in 1936 the progressive wing of the party challenged their own incumbent governor, Henry H. Blood, whom they deemed too conservative, unwilling to fully support the New Deal, and a tool of eastern business interests. The progressive candidate, Herbert Maw, narrowly lost, and the party was split irreparably.[62]

In the face of the severe economic downturn of the Great Depression and the increasing political fragmentation of Utah's Democratic party, it is easy to understand why some of the reform groups in Salt Lake that had once believed true changes could be effected in 1932 had become disillusioned, frustrated, and opposed to compromise by 1936. Environmental issues once again became a symbol of the political and economic inequities inherent in the structure and culture of the state. This would prompt a renewed and vigorous campaign in the mid-1930s and '40s to democratize those systems and return some of the political and economic decision making back to Utah residents through environmental issues.

In the 1920s, it had been safe to say that Salt Lake's engineers and citizens groups were more concerned about health issues than most business and municipal leaders, while still caring about the city's economic well being. Such groups are best classified as

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[61] Kearns, "Utah Electoral Politics, 1932-1938," 15-16, 154, 178. [It also important to note that of the 60 seats in the State House, the Democrats controlled 56 in 1936, but the 4 Republicans were from Salt Lake County.]
[62] Ibid., 178

conservationists. As smoke issues continued to plague the city into the 1930s, though, new groups formed that wanted to prioritize the "natural" urban environment by democratizing the local economy and better equalizing the burdens and costs of pollution. The Women's Chamber of Commerce, for example, hoped to make the local government more responsive to the needs of all of Salt Lake's citizenry, and to correct the balance of how economic policies favored "foreign" owned companies. At the same time, it presented alternative solutions that considered health, aesthetics, and greater livability for the city's residents. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, in 1936 the organization took the lead in battling smoke and placing the issue front and center in local and state politics.

## Chapter 5

## "MILITANT WOMANHOOD EMBARKS UPON A MODERN CRUSADE"

Women in Salt Lake City bore some of the greatest burdens from smoke pollution. Not only did they have to breathe the foul air like everyone else, as homemakers they faced the added burden and responsibility of cleaning the family clothing and scrubbing the walls. Additionally, women, as caretakers of the family's health, understood, and were reminded daily of, the health risks involved with the poor air quality. Many of the women who fought the city's air pollution also inherited a legacy from the Latter Day Saint Church of communal responsibility. Through its women's organization, the Relief Society, many women of the LDS faith learned and sharpened important leadership and organizational skills and many lived in a culture where community involvement, compassion, and service were emphasized. It is not too surprising then that they spearheaded some of the reform efforts against smoke pollution in the mid 1930s up to America's involvement in World War II.

Urban and Environmental historians have tended to ignore the role that women have played in influencing and shaping the physical, economic, and political make-up of cities. David Stradling for example suggests that between 1926 and the 1940s, Salt Lake did almost nothing to try and curb its smoke problems. While Stradling begins his study crediting middle-class women for formulating an environmental philosophy as early as the 1890s, they tend to disappear into the shadows of his study and give way to professional engineers as the antismoke crusade began to emphasize conservation in the 1910s, and finally focused on fuel purification in the 1930s. Likewise, Scott Dewey

believes that by 1938, Salt Lake's natural gas connections were the primary reason that Salt Lake's soot fall was reduced by 75 percent over the next two decades without acknowledging efforts by the city's residents, and particularly the women, who pushed for cleaner air.[1]

A few historians though, have attempted to place women at the center of urban environmental reform, and have done so by pushing beyond the notion that those efforts simply constituted a "domestication of politics." Maureen Flanagan demonstrates that women were more interested in creating an urban space where both the city's residents and its government could work for the betterment of all its citizens rather than from the standpoint of making the city profitable for a few. In trying to clean up the city, women were redefining the objectives of environmental policy away from the idea of a "city profitable" and towards a "city livable." Women reformers, in essence, attempted to broaden the governmental and public responsibility for the city's welfare through a reordering of municipal power structures.[2] Angela Gugliotta shows that middle- class women in Pittsburgh, allied with working- class male industrial workers, reshaped arguments in that city to demonstrate how the burdens of smoke pollution were unequally distributed. This despite Pittsburgh's transition to natural gas between 1884 and 1892, which temporarily eliminated two-thirds of the city's dependence on coal.[3]

The connection by Gugliotta of the working and middle classes in Pittsburgh

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[1] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 5, 155. Stradling continues to acknowledge that women continued to be involved in local antismoke campaigns; however, he believes that professional engineers controlled the dialogue and direction of those campaigns; See also, Dewey, *Don't Breathe the Air*, 27.
[2] Maureen A. Flanagan, "The City Profitable, The City Livable," *Journal of Urban History*, (January 1996): 164-180, and Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 196-197, 201.
[3] Angela Gugliotta, "Class, Gender, and Coal Smoke: Gender Ideology and Environmental Injustice in Pittsburgh, 1868-1914," *Environmental History* (April 2000): 166-67; Longhurst, "Don't Hold Your Breath."

lends credence to the challenge put forth by Robert Johnston that historians need to rethink the middle classes and their relationships to capitalism. Johnston argues that the middling classes in Portland were concerned with more than becoming wealthy capitalists themselves. While they did work to protect the preservation of small business, home ownership, family life, and fair taxes, they "imagined a middle-class democracy" where "workers were at the center of their construction of the middle class, and the working class and the middle class would meld into the people." At the center of this vision was a "republican political economy" that "promised to break up the monopolies that had supposedly come to control public lands, transportation, communication, and most critically, money. Antimonopoly action would bring decentralized markets, with small firms in control of production. A republican middle class thus became the locus of resistance to corporate capitalism, and perhaps, even to 'capitalism' itself."[4] Johnston's analysis that many in the "solid middle- class," or those who owned small businesses, also worked to create a different version of capitalism than merely accumulating wealth for the sake of accumulating more wealth, can be applied to the actions and motivations of the middle class women who organized themselves to fight the smoke pollution in Salt Lake. Although the women's organization in Salt Lake was comprised primarily of what most historians would label the "solid middle class," or even social elites, they wanted their efforts to benefit all classes of people, particularly those in the city who suffered the most from the air pollution, women, the working classes and the poor. Their actions can best be described as a political and economic protest against industrial corporate capitalism. This women's group was not anti free market, but they did want a moral economy whereby everyone would benefit more equally and have increased personal

[4] Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 16-17 and 75.

control over their lives, the local economy, and the built environment. They also hoped that Salt Lake's residents would have a more meaningful voice in the political system.

In February of 1936, Cornelia S. Lund, who was a member of the State Legislature, announced in an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* intentions to organize a community activist group she called the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce. The new organization's primary goal was to make Salt Lake "A smokeless city, healthful, clear, prosperous, and beautiful." This declaration broke with previous ideas in the city of merely curtailing or greatly reducing smoke pollution and called for its complete elimination. This philosophy was also more akin to an environmental philosophy that stressed aesthetics and health and was a departure from the conservationist philosophy that Stradling and others believe predominated in the U.S. from the 1910s through World War II. Stradling writes that a conservationist strategy displaced the environmental philosophies of Victorian women reformers, due to a middle class faith in "science, technology, expertise, and economic progress" that shifted the antismoke campaign towards an increased emphasis on "efficiency and economy by decreasing the waste associated with smoke."[5]

When the women's organization in Salt Lake was officially organized two weeks after Lund's public announcement in space provided by the Hotel Utah, initial enthusiasm was so great that there were almost two thousand dues paying members. The leaders of the Women's Chamber of Commerce-- Lund, Alice Merrill Horne, Emma Lucy Gates Bowen, and the other officers-- had already been active in several other women's clubs including the Soroptomists Club, the Utah Art Institute, and the LDS

[5] "S.L. Women Act to Fight City's Smoke Menace," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 February 1936, 26. See also Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 5.

Relief Society. They were able to use those connections as an effective recruiting tool and were also successful at joining the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs in 1941, thus gaining the support of almost ten thousand members state- wide.[6]

The preamble to the group's constitution declared that the Women's Chamber's goal was complete elimination of smoke. According to Lund, elimination was the key to "insure health and happiness not just for the present, but for posterity," and that it would "stabilize labor and manufacturing, [and] advance the financial security of the home," and make "Salt Lake the main artery of Western tourist travel, improve the culture of the city through art, music, and cultural education, and stop the migration of people to other cities."[7] This statement echoes much of the rational previously used by other groups and city officials in the 1920s and '30s. The Women's Chamber, however, was less willing to compromise between smoke elimination and economic prosperity. From their records, it is clear that the women believed it was possible to accomplish both; yet, they placed greater faith in the value of health and aesthetics as a tool for individual and community uplift. They subscribed to the idea that increased contact with nature, a clean environment, and good health were essential ingredients to help improve the moral and character attributes of both individuals and society as a whole. They did, however, equate in part, the moral health of the nation with its economic prosperity. They therefore felt that virtues such as hard work, thrift, and temperance could be fostered through a more uplifting environment that would then ultimately lead to the improved material well- being of all Salt Lakers.[8]

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[6] Cornelia S. Lund in her yearly President's Report to the Salt Lake City Women's Chamber of Commerce, given 1 March 1937 at the Hotel Utah, 2, WCCF, USHSA.
[7] Preamble to the Constitution of the Women's Chamber of Commerce, 2 March 1936, WCCF, USHSA.
[8] Ibid.

Economic considerations by the Women's Chamber were also important if it hoped to be taken seriously because by 1935 almost 46,000 people were unemployed state- wide and 25 percent of the state's inhabitants received public assistance. As a result of the high unemployment, over 60,000 Utahans went to California and other places in search of work. Given the poor financial condition of the state, it makes sense that the Chamber would emphasize economics as the ends, but with the environment as the means to lasting reforms. Ultimately, the group would decide to pressure the city into building a low-temperature coal processing plant that it believed would produce a relatively inexpensive smokeless fuel that people from all economic levels could afford. It also emphasized that the plant should exclusively use Utah's coals thus aiding that struggling industry. It further believed that if Salt Lake's air was successfully cleaned, then the processed coal could also be marketed throughout the nation, again providing a further boon to the state's coal industry.[9]

The Women's Chamber believed that a big key to the success of their objectives was to create a market for the by-products of the processed coal or char. Coal processing involved removing the oils and tars from the coal, thus creating a briquette that burned more cleanly and efficiently. The oil and tar by-products could be made into gasoline and other products, but the challenge was to market those by-products at a competitive price. It was the profit from the by-products that would essentially subsidize the char so that it could be sold at or even slightly less than the price of lump or slack coal.[10]

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[9] Richard D. Poll et al., *Utah's History* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1989), 487-88. See also James L. Clayton, "An Unhallowed Gathering: The Impact of Defense Spending on Utah's Population Growth, 1940-1964," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 34 (Fall 1966): 235-37. Women's Chamber of Commerce, Constitution, Article 2 Section 2, WCCF, USHSA.

[10] Mrs. Anthony C. Lund, "Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce," *Utah Magazine* 2 (February 1936): 20.

Lund pointed to the necessity of selling char at a competitive price because approximately thirteen thousand homes, or roughly one-third of all Salt Lake residences were not equipped, or could not afford to be equipped, with mechanical firing devices or gas furnaces. It was those economically disadvantaged families that the Women's Chamber initially targeted by attempting to make available an affordable yet non-polluting fuel. Thus the Women's Chamber was concerned not only with the health and aesthetic quality of Salt Lake, but it realized that complete elimination of smoke was only feasible if a reasonable and sound economic alternative could be found. The Chamber surmised that a coal processing plant met the necessary foil.[11]

Despite this economic emphasis, the Women's Chamber clearly wanted smoke elimination as the ultimate goal, due in large part to health and aesthetic reasons. Its rhetoric is akin to arguments made decades earlier in New York state to preserve the Adirondacks. As that state lost its wilderness to westward expansion, the Adirondacks became the symbol of all the good qualities one could glean from contact with nature and a rallying point of several disparate groups to preserve its beauty. In the 1870s and 1880s, despite arguments that the area needed to be preserved for its recreational benefits and as a purveyor of moral uplift, economic reasons won the day. Those who pushed for its preservation argued that it needed to be protected because "Without a steady, constant supply of water from these steams of the wilderness our canals would be dry, and a great portion of the grain and other produce of the western part of the Sate would be unable to find cheap transportation to the markets of the Hudson river valley." Yet by the 1890s, in addition to the economic reasons, non-utilitarian values for preserving the area also entered into the argument, thus signifying a transition in the political debate and in the

[11] Ibid.

multiple and competing values that the idea of nature held in the American psyche.[12] The Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce used a similar tactic in trying to persuade voters and city officials to clean up that city's air. They hoped to combine economic, utilitarian arguments with other concerns in an attempt to refocus the public debate away from the idea of prosperity achieved only through growth and industry, towards the possibility of prosperity being achieved through quality of life issues.

The Women's Chamber also invested a great deal of time and effort into understanding the scientific and technological aspects of smoke pollution and how to reduce it. Because of this, the organization represented a unique organization among women's civic groups of the 1930s and a departure from traditional civic activities ascribed to women such as that of "municipal housekeepers." Martin V. Melosi notes that sometime before World War I, two distinctive groups emerged in relation to refuse reform. The first group, made up of city engineers, was concerned primarily with the technical and organizational aspects of pollution reform. The second group, consisting mainly of civic organizations, was motivated by aesthetic concerns. In 1936, the Salt Lake City Women's Chamber fused these two ideologies.[13] The activities and experience of the Women's Chamber, as noted earlier, also challenge theories that activist groups simply blamed industry while ignoring the pollution from private homes.[14] The Women's Chamber recognized that even with natural gas, several thousand households were too impoverished to convert their homes over, and they also recognized the added financial burden to these families in terms of increased health risks and destruction to

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[12] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 116-121.
[13] Martin V. Melosi, *Garbage in the Cities: Refuse, Reform, and the Environment, 1880-1980*, (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1981), 104.
[14] Dewey, *Don't Breath the Air*, 24-32.

personal property because of the coal smoke. In addition to finding an alternative energy source, the Chamber was also in favor of education, in addition to fines and other forms of punishment. This group, then, represented a true ideological transition between conservation and modern day environmentalism. In other words it understood that factories and coal were essential for the daily well- being of the community, but it also believed that the balance between nature and economics was grossly out of kilter and needed to be realigned more on the side of nature. Just as protests in Portland, Oregon represented a critique of the economic system and an attempt at preserving a "republican political economy" through labor/small business relations, the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce attempted to offer a similar critique of the economic-political culture through reshaping the city's environment and its environmental policies rather than directly confronting labor-management relations or the economic control that national corporations held over the city. By so doing, it believed that Utah residents could regain more personal economic and political autonomy.[15]

From the first Mormon women's organization-- the Relief Society of the Latter Day Saint Church, which was founded in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1842-- women have historically been publicly active in the state of Utah. In addition to the church sponsored organization, LDS women, along with their non-member friends started private clubs, and in 1893, representatives from six clubs combined forces to organize the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs in Salt Lake. The original by-laws stated that their

[15] Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 75.

purpose was to "promote such measures as shall best advance the educational, industrial and social interests of the State."[16]

Among its many endeavors, the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs worked for a tax that enabled high schools to be built throughout the state, a school lunch program, and a traveling library. They pushed for an eight- hour workday, a minimum wage, a Juvenile court system, playgrounds, and the planting of 300,000 trees in Utah. Under Mrs. Charles Howard McMahon, who served as the president from 1909- 1912, they united with the LDS Women's Relief Society and the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Society, the Utah Congress of Mothers, Utah State Council of Women, American Women's League, WCTU, and the Young Women's Christian Association- roughly 50,000 women in all, to get bills passed regulating a 9 hour work day for women, a Child labor law, and an improved Juvenile court system.[17]

In the 1920s the organization worked on conservation issues. For example it conducted a statewide educational campaign on the importance of the conservation of natural resources, forestry and natural scenery and urged that classes of the same be taught in schools. As part of the organization's emphasis on beautification, it linked municipal clean-up weeks to home beautification and Americanization. In 1928 the women convinced the city to buy a parcel of land known as Lindsay Gardens, along with several thousand surrounding acres and turn it into a park.[18]

Given this culture of women's activism, it is not too surprising that the goals and actions of the Women's Chamber were being pushed by women who were themselves

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[16] Mrs. Ernest C. Knudsen, compiler, "History of Utah Federation of Women's Clubs, 1893-1952" (compiled in 1952, unpublished), 8, USHSA.
[17] Ibid., 10-11, 27.
[18] Ibid., no page number.

pushing at the boundaries of women's acceptable public roles. Lund, for example, was a Representative in the Utah State Legislature from 1933 through 1934, and won a seat in the state Senate from 1937 through 1939. She also served as the Salt Lake County Recorder from 1939 to 1947. Among her many activities, she was a member of the Utah Stake Relief Society Board, which was a position of administrative power within the Latter Day Saint Church. She also served as the chairman of the state Red Cross during World War I.[19] Lund's involvement in the state legislature and as county recorder made her privy to many important issues and information concerning coal companies operating in Utah. For example she understood the process of offering tax breaks as incentives to lure new companies into the state, and perhaps most importantly, she possessed knowledge of how to deal with male politicians. Her husband, Anthony, was also a person of potential influence in the state. He was at one time the head of the Brigham Young Academy's (later Brigham Young University) department of music beginning in 1897. In 1916 he became the ninth director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and finally an apostle for the Latter-day Saint Church before his death in 1935.[20]

Another important early member of the Women's Chamber was its Executive Secretary, Alice Merrill Horne. Like Lund, Horne was intensely involved in many civic activities throughout her life. She was a member of the Latter Day Saint Relief Society General Board from 1902 to 1916. While on the board she was placed in charge of the public health and art committees. As chair of the health committee, she initiated legislation that created a series of sanitary milk stations in Salt Lake, which required milk to be inspected to insure its safety. (Horne had a child who had died after drinking some

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[19] *Deseret News*, 27 June 1959, B-1 and B-4.
[20] Kate B. Carter, comp., *Our Pioneer Heritage* Vol. 4 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1961), 160-161.

contaminated milk). In addition, she helped to organize a program that provided milk to children of underprivileged families. Horne had also served in the Utah Legislature from 1898 to 1902. As a Representative, she established the Utah Art Institute, introduced a scholarship bill for Utah students, and had chaired the University of Utah land site committee, which secured one hundred and twenty acres for the institution.[21]

When the goals of the Women's Chamber of Commerce were publicized it began to receive many letters of support that expressed relief and gratitude that someone was going to make a serious effort to end the smoke problem. Margaret R. Salmon of Coalville, Utah, wrote that the coal from her area had been tested to determine the feasibility of manufacturing a smokeless fuel, but due to the lack of support and money the project never developed. Another letter by J. F. Garland claimed that he had been studying the smoke problem for a long time, and that he resolved some ways to greatly reduce the smoke cloud. He also claimed that he had met with strong opposition from both the city's smoke abatement department and many businessmen. He offered to share his findings with the Chamber.[22] Richard R. Lyman, one of the chief Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints wrote to express his appreciation for the women's efforts and their "persistence to resolve a major city problem." He said, "men may fail but women never," as he proclaimed his confidence that if the Women's Chamber persisted, it would be successful in "making the city beautiful all year round, as it is in the summer when the wind blows and the sun shines."[23] Even the newspapers applauded the announcement of the new civic organization. One article claimed that

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[21] *Alice Merrill Horne—Heritage Halls Biographical Sketches*, ca. 1954, TMs, 2-3. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter –Day Saints Archives, Salt Lake City.
[22] Margaret R. Salmon to Cornelia Lund, 20 February 1936, and J.F. Garland of 338 Stanton Avenue, Salt Lake to Cornelia Lund, 24 February 1936, WCCF, USHSA.
[23] Richard R Lyman to Lund, 27 February 1936, WCCF, USHSA.

atmospheric smoke was "essentially a woman's concern" because "smoke adds greatly to her housekeeping problems." It goes on to quote a study which claimed that smoke damage to homes, and the cost for cleaning supplies for the average residence was from fifteen to twenty-five dollars a year, or 2.8 million dollars for the entire city.[24]

The newspaper article and the letter from Richard Lyman reinforced the typical attitude of the day concerning women's municipal responsibilities and the belief that they were more virtuous than men, ideas that many historians often simply adopt.[25] But the Women's Chamber used those perceptions to its advantage, as women had done in the earlier municipal housekeeping movement. In fact, part of the strategy of the Women's Chamber was to court the average middle-class housewife by using popular rhetoric of the time as a means to expand its power base and gain support from the more conservative sections of society. It attempted to do this by capitalizing on the availability of mass media and the increasing impact that advertising was having on the American public through such devices as the radio and flyers. In one ad the Chamber proclaimed:

> Mrs. Salt Laker! This is your opportunity! Help us to bring sunshine back to Salt Lake City with "Char-lite." The Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce is a non-assessable [non-profit] federated organization with a positive method to relieve Salt Lake City from smoke and with two major objectives: the first, --to make our city healthful, smokeless, prosperous, and beautiful; the second, --to make our city the main artery of American Western Tourist Travel.[26]

The advertisement was a call to action, but the language was the common rhetoric of the day. It appealed to housewives and their role as the "guardians of aesthetics" and the health of the family, while at the same time placing the burden of responsibility upon

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[24] This newspaper article is in the WCCF with no date. It could be from either the *Salt Lake Tribune* or the *Deseret News*.
[25] For a critique of this idea, see for example, Maureen Flanagan, "Women in the City, Women of the City," *Journal of Urban History* (March 1997), and Flanagan, "The City Profitable, the City Livable," *Journal of Urban History* (Jan 1996).
[26] Manuscript for a radio commercial, no date, from WCCF, USHSA.

them as the primary household consumer to change their habits, and asking them to take a greater leadership role in cleaning up the city.

Another leaflet re-emphasized these ideas, but added specifics:

> Coal burned in the raw stage in Salt Lake is causing great losses to property and furnishings estimated at more than $10,000 a day. It is also a wasteful practice to permit the by-products to go up in smoke. We have more than 13,000 homes in Salt Lake City that will never be made smokeless except through the use of a solid, smokeless fuel. Smoke causes three-fourths of our sunshine to be cut off weeks at a time and statistics show deaths caused by lowered vitality have been increased 60% within the last two decades.[27]

This leaflet made it clear that the Women's Chamber was appealing to the accepted role that society had given to middle class housewives as the guardians of their families' health, but that the women were intent upon expanding those responsibilities to include economic concerns, and asserting that many of the environmental problems could be solved through technological knowledge of the issues and solutions. Finally, the flyer played upon the contemporary business culture that emphasized efficiency and thrift.

As the Women's Chamber gained momentum and community support, Lund explained how and why she believed the Chamber's strategies were so effective:

> Being thoroughly converted to the fact that the efforts of the Smoke Abatement Committee of Salt Lake City were centered in "talk rather than doing" and that certain blocking interests have retarded this work for many years, the committee decided to make an educational project of this worthy cause. In trying to convert people to our belief that smoke can be eliminated from our many cities, much effort has been given in lectures...to convert them to the possibilities of the building of a great industry for manufacture and labor. The response was wonderful, every mother and homemaker became especially interested because of its nearness to her by its destructive elements, and more than anyone, she becomes the most effected, by reason of health, labor, and impoverishment.[28]

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[27] Leaflet printed for the Women's Chamber of Commerce, 25 February 1938, WCCF, USHSA.
[28] President's report, WCCF, 1 March 1937, 1. USHSA.

The Women's Chamber also used the *Utah Magazine* to publicize their cause. The first article to appear in the magazine, written by Lund, began, "Militant womanhood embarks upon a modern crusade." The article then states, in much the same language as the other ads, the need for housewives and all citizens of Salt Lake to support smoke elimination efforts.[29]

Though the Women's Chamber appealed to the middle class using rather traditional rhetoric, it also showed a glimpse of its "militant womanhood." On 19 March 1936, just seventeen days after it officially organized, it petitioned and received permission from the Salt Lake City Council for a permit that allowed it to demonstrate smokeless fuel on the city streets. The Women's Chamber wanted to build fires in general use stoves in three different locations on Salt Lake's streets where they would publicize smokeless coal on four consecutive Saturdays. The fuel they would burn was a solid "smokeless" coal that was developed by a former University of Utah engineer, L. C. Karrick. Axelrod's Furniture, South East Furniture, and Z.C.M.I., a local department store, not only provided the stoves but the manpower to haul them to and from the locations. The consensus among the Chamber's members was that the smoke problem had existed for so long that most people had come to accept it as a part of life. The publicity stunt aimed at calling attention to the pollution problem and showing residents that there were viable solutions.[30]

With the publicity campaign well under way, the Women's Chamber began its attack on the municipal politicians. It petitioned the city government on several

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[29] Mrs. Anthony C. Lund, "Salt lake Women's Chamber of Commerce," *Utah Magazine* 2 (February 1936): 20.
[30] City Commission Minutes Book, 19 March 1936, 173, petition 180, Utah State Archives, hereafter known as USA.

occasions to pass an ordinance that would ban the burning of all forms of coal except that which would burn without creating any smoke and to have the law put into effect by September of 1939. It hoped that with enough pressure and public attention, city leaders and residents would then make a conscientious and sustained effort to eliminate the smoke. Mayor E. B. Erwin suggested that the petitions be referred to the Zoning Commission for further study, and then have the Commission report back.[31]

Seven months later the Zoning Commission finally reported on the results of its study. Harry L. Finch and Alex Buchanan, Jr., reported that they interviewed several prominent citizens "who had given the matter considerable thought over a period of years." Most of those interviewed had scientific and other advanced educational backgrounds, and were all male. To the surprise of the city commission though, the report concluded that the majority "were fully convinced that the most feasible way of combating the smoke nuisance was by and through the use of smokeless fuels, a product which, in their opinion, had long since passed the experimental stage."[32]

The only major concern expressed in the report was the higher cost of processed coal to consumers, but most of the engineers felt that something could be done in that regard. The study then criticized the city stating, "The situation presents a condition which few cities would tolerate any great length of time. Indeed, it seems almost incredible that Salt Lake, with its boasted natural resources and advantages, has so long permitted itself to be lulled to sleep with the idea that sooner or later this matter would

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[31] City Commission Minutes Book, 28 April 1936, 266, petition 280, USA.
[32] City Commission Minutes Book, 8 December 1936, 719; and Report by Harry L. Finch and Alex Buchanan, Jr. of the City Zoning Commission, to the Salt Lake City Commission, 8 December, 1936, USA.

take care of itself. In the opinion of the Zoning Commission the time has come to take definite and decisive action."[33]

The report concluded by recommending that the city adopt the proposed ordinance prohibiting the use of any non-smokeless fuel by September of 1939 and that it also begin preparing its residents for the transition. Some in the City Commission were taken off-guard by the stinging criticism and the conclusion that it should adopt an ordinance that would prohibit the use of traditional coal. As a delaying tactic and in an attempt to possibly shirk responsibility, it decided to have the Law Department review the legalities of such a measure.[34]

It did not take long before they had an answer. On 6 January 1937 the City Attorney's Office returned with its conclusions. "It is our opinion that until smokeless fuel is manufactured commercially at a price that is not unreasonable to the public, the Board of Commissioners of Salt Lake City has not the power to declare by ordinance that the burning of coal is a nuisance." It further justified this stance by arguing that previous methods of garbage removal, such as burning rubbish, were not considered a nuisance because there simply was not a better disposal method, but "when better means were created no one would tolerate the former practices." The members of the City Commission gladly accepted the advice from the attorneys despite the fact that other cities including New York, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh had passed similar ordinances outlawing the burning of bituminous coal several years earlier and that experiments on processed coal had proved feasible. Also, at the same time that Salt Lake pondered air

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

pollution controls, St. Louis embarked upon its own smokeless crusade that was spearheaded in part by its mayor, Bernard Dickmann.[35]

The position of the City Commission became clearer after this recommendation was received. The Commission did nothing to challenge the report, nor did it initiate an investigation into the feasibility of processing coal and selling it at a competitive price with lump coal, either through private, municipal, or state control. It thus dismissed any proposals to ban the use of any type of coal. The Commission's decision was formed in part due to a great deal of lobbying from the Utah Coal Operators and city councils in towns such as Price, which relied upon the coal industry for survival, not to pass the ordinance. The Price City Council, using strong language, objected to any laws that would, in its opinion, be detrimental to the Utah coal industry, and to any coal-producing towns, like itself.[36]

Mining interests in combination with the official Chamber of Commerce also conducted a publicity campaign of their own to stem the growing tide in favor of reforms. They published a pamphlet entitled "What Mining Means to Utah" in an attempt to link the mineral industry to the livelihood of the state's farmers and the economic well being of Salt Lake. It claimed that mining provided one-third of the state's jobs and that if the mining industry was diminished, "the agricultural industry would "lose its closest and best market." It also claimed that the taxes and fees paid to the state by mining

[35] City Commission Minutes Book, 6 January 1937, 8, Report from the City Attorney's Office, USA. See also, Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 163-64.
[36] Salt Lake City Commission Minutes Book, 7 January 1937, 10, and 19 January 1937, 36, USA.

companies, in addition to the revenues generated through the sale of minerals, was one of the primary reasons why Salt Lake had grown and prospered.[37]

Although Salt Lake's air pollution problems potentially affected people throughout the state, it was the Salt Lake residents who bore the most direct consequences from the smoke. Nevertheless, pressure from individuals and organizations not located in the city helped prevent Salt Lake from sufficiently cleaning up its air. As mentioned, in a similar situation in St. Louis at the exact same time, Mayor Bernard Dickmann set about the task of improving that city's air quality. The St. Louis Chamber of Commerce along with the Women's Organization for Smoke Abatement had been trying to educate the public in that city since 1923 with limited success. In late 1936, Dickmann hired Osborn Monnett—who had headed the earlier Salt Lake smoke investigation-- to study the situation. Monnett's conclusion that large-scale coal consumers should only use mechanical stokers was put into law. One important change, however, was made which stipulated that all soft coals used in the city had to first be "washed" or purified. The passage of this ordinance was vigorously, but unsuccessfully challenged in the print media and in the courts by businesses and the coal companies located just over the Illinois border. Because the city government held firm in enforcing the policy, the thick smoke in the city had been reduced by over 83 percent in the winter of 1940-41 compared to the previous winter.[38]

Pressure from the coal companies in Utah came in large part because of the lagging profits and shrinking share of the energy market. The retail price for a ton of

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[37] "What Mining Means to Utah," published by the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, 1936, 5-6 and 21, and "Utah: America's Great Mining and Smelting Center," published by the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, 1928, 3, USHSA.
[38] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 163-167.

furnace coal in Utah in 1920 was $18 but it dropped to $8.43 by 1930, and by 1939 was only $7.37. (To run a range, water heater and refrigerator on natural gas for a month in Salt Lake cost $4.86.) The state's coal production had peaked between 1916 and 1920 at 4,693 (thousands of tons) and hit a low of 2,846 between 1931 and 1935. There was a slight production increase in 1936 and again in '37, only to drop in '38 and then begin a steady rise thanks in large part to World War II.[39]

It is therefore understandable why a portion of the coal industry was afraid of the proposed ordinance. It worried that if it had to begin processing coal, the cost would be so prohibitive that more people would turn to other forms of fuel. The way the situation stood, people in the low-income brackets, many of who rented homes, were dependent upon cheap coal, and coal producers feared that a disruption of the status quo could have cost them a significant amount of business. Of the approximately 700,000 tons of coal that Salt Lake City consumed annually, almost 300,000 tons was used in residences and because most of this coal was sold in lump form, this portion of the market was the most profitable.[40]

When Lund found out about the organized resistance to the coal purification plan she attempted to assuage the fears of the coal industry and the city governments that were most affected. In a letter to the Price City Council for example she emphasized that the Women's Chamber of Commerce was striving to increase the use of Utah coal and only eliminate the waste. She contended that anyone associated with the coal industry in any

[39] U.S. Department of Commerce- Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract 1940.
[40] Mrs. Anthony C. Lund to the Salt Lake City Commission, 10 June 1937, 4, WCCF, USHSA.

way would only profit by building a processing plant and that this was the best long- term solution.[41]

Lund's lobbying efforts proved somewhat persuasive. She successfully convinced Salt Lake's mayor, E.B. Erwin to climb on board, which widened the growing rift between him and the other Commission members. Mayor Erwin and the City Commission were already divided on several issues, including the Commission's organization. Because of this fissure, and Erwin being implicated in a vice conspiracy scandal along with the chief of police, he would eventually resign in 1938.[42]

Lund also received support from the local real estate association and the *Salt Lake Tribune*. The newspaper complained that Salt Lake residents spent more money on cleaning and lost more in real estate values than the coal companies made selling the coal. "Salt Lake real estate owners have no ill will toward the Carbon County... but thousands of Salt Lake people would be happier if less carbon from Carbon County were shipped to Salt Lake." The article ended with a plea to the coal companies to process the coal before it was transported to the city and warned that when the price of unprocessed coal again began to rise, that residents would turn to natural gas and heating oil.[43]

Despite the opposition on several fronts, and the fact that the Women's Chamber was still a long ways from achieving its goals, it had learned much in its first year of existence as to how opposition groups were framing the issues, and where its plan of attack should be focused. It was also successful in again pushing the smoke abatement issue to the forefront of municipal and even state politics and in rallying much needed

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[41] Mrs. Anthony C. Lund to Price City Commission, 14 January 1937, WCCF, USHSA.
[42] County Commission Minutes Book, 7 February 1938, 91, USA and "Mayoral History Awaits Corradini Chapter," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 Nov. 1991, 1A.
[43] County Commission Minutes Book, 7 February 1938, 91, USA and *Salt Lake Tribune*, 13 January 1937, 17. "Mayoral History Awaits Corradini Chapter," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 Nov. 1991, 1A.

support from the Mayor, the city zoning commission, one of the city's major newspapers, the Salt Lake Real Estate Commission, several engineers, and some of the public. It had understood the necessity of protecting and enhancing Utah's coal industry in the name of jobs. It also understood the competition that industry faced from alternative fuel sources such as natural gas. It had therefore spent most of its first year trying to allay fears, educate the public, and change attitudes about the long-term economic value of adopting a more environmentally responsible policy. The Women's Chamber would spend the next two and a half years searching for a company to conduct a commercial test of Utah coal and securing the necessary funds for construction of a commercial processing plant while continuing to exert political pressure on the city government. It believed that coal processing plants were the key to satisfying the fears of their opponents and to creating a more healthful, livable, and economically prosperous city.

**A Search to Purify Coal**

At the beginning of 1937, the Women's Chamber, despite the initial defeat at the hands of the City Commission, chose to ignore its rulings and immediately began petitioning the city and state governments for money to construct a municipal processing plant. Not only did the Women's Chamber emphasize the projected economic benefits derived from the curtailment in property damage, cleaning costs, and health issues, but it also made an appeal in democratic terms. It argued that women would support a processing plant "if homemakers could be assured there would be no recurrence of the present smoke damage," and that it would "be a benefit to everyone, and not just a favored few."[44]

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[44] Women's Chamber of Commerce to Salt Lake City Mayor and the City Commission, 28 April 1937, WCCF, USHSA.

As mentioned earlier, the Women's Chamber was not the first organization to suggest the use of processed coal. The idea was introduced in 1921 in the Monnett Plan. The University of Utah, funded by both the state and the federal government, had begun serious experiments into how best to process Utah's coal by the early 1930s. The Smoke Abatement Committee of the Chamber of Commerce also contemplated funding its own experiments and solicited the city government to subsidize tests and, as noted previously, L.C. Karrick, an engineer with the Bureau of Mines and former student and professor at the University of Utah, had developed his own coal processing methods. Karrick as well as the others, however, further hindered any real progress towards a smokeless fuel by pressuring local and state officials into exclusively using a Utah- based company. Many people, including Karrick, also lobbied vigilantly so that their methods of coal processing would be singularly adopted, making the winner potentially very wealthy.[45]

The science of transforming coal into a smokeless charcoal had existed since the late 1800s. The challenge in the 1930s was to process the coal on a large commercial scale, which was far more difficult than laboratory experiments. Scientists found that when coal was heated, it released a gas, part of which was condensative, or in other words turned to liquid, and part of which was not. Heat was required to release the gas, and when the coal reached a certain temperature, the coal itself would provide the heat necessary for it to burn and to release the gas, as long as an adequate supply of air was maintained. In a boiler furnace, though, the gas was only partially burned, resulting in black smoke and water vapor that prevented the proper transmission of heat from the fire

[45] Chamber of Commerce to the City Commission, 17 May 1934, #197. The Chamber of Commerce also wanted the city to use F.E.R.A. funds, however the city commission felt they could not legally assist or use federal funds for this purpose. Welfare League to the City Commission 11 September 1934, #419; L.C. Karrick to the City Commission, 23 December 1936, #885 and 24 December 1936, #887.

to the boiler tubes and plates. The result was that water vapor from the coal formed, and it absorbed the sulphur dioxide, entrapping the free carbon, creating soot fall.[46]

Much of the sulphur dioxide came from the partially spent oils and tars contained within the coal. Engineers had wrestled with the challenge of removing the oils and tars from bituminous coal since the early twentieth century. In fact, a report issued in 1937 estimated the cost of research on coal processing to date at fifty million dollars. Entrepreneurs originally envisioned processing the coal solely for the oil, which they hoped could be converted into motor fuel. The two countries that had invested the most money into coal processing were England and Germany. Both nations attempted to better utilize coal through low-temperature carbonization. This process was essentially a distillation of the volatile matter within the coal. Thus gas, liquor, and tar were separated from the original coal. The gas could then be scrubbed, the tar water dehydrated, and the distillation of the tar used to produce gasoline, kerosene, light oil, diesel fuel, paraffins, and phenols.[47]

Low-Temperature Carbonization of coal was developed primarily in England. The need for a solid smokeless fuel that could be used in the home without any modifications to the home furnace, or grate was the goal. English engineers initially wrestled with the challenge of delivering the coke, or char without it turning to powder. The product was brittle, making it difficult to transport to domestic markets. Faced with this initial failure, engineers then proposed to use processed coal strictly in power stations built next to the processing plants. This idea came from the success in Germany with a

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[46] Charles Turner, "Cheap Power from Coal Distillation," *Scottish Electrical Engineer* (January 1934), 1281.

[47] Report given by H.O. Cowles at a meeting of the Utah Section of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, 22 March 1937, 2, 4, USHSA.

similar plan. But the demand in England for a clean fuel that could be used in the home prompted engineers to successfully experiment with German lignite.[48]

The favorable results gleaned in England led those engineers to deduce that non-coking coals were best suited to Low-Temperature Carbonization. H. O. Cowles, an authority on the subject determined at a meeting of engineers in Salt Lake, that Utah coals were very similar to German lignite and therefore were ideal for coal processing. According to his report, the cost of processing and burning coal would be about $ 10.10 per ton. This price was about two and a half dollars higher than a ton of normal lump coal. He stated that the retail price of any alternative coal product needed to be competitive with regular coal "because the type of patronage for the product must come from those not economically situated to install proper combustion equipment." Thus the key was using the by- products to a maximum efficiency in order to subsidize the processing costs.[49]

While Cowles was enthusiastic about the future possibilities of coal processing in England, Germany had taken the studies from an experimental to a working scale. By 1937 the Germans had more than thirty Geisan ovens that had a daily processing capacity of one hundred and fifty tons of coal each. Germany also had several other Lurgi ovens under construction that, when finished, would each process six hundred tons of coal daily.[50]

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[48] H.W. Cowles, *Progress in Low- Temperature Carbonization Engineering*, 13 November 1936, 1, USHSA.

[49] Report by H.O. Cowles at a meeting of the Utah Section of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, 22 March 1937, 2. Cowles derived this price based on the cost of a low-temperature carbonization plant operating at a one hundred ton a day capacity for 300 days at $1,250 per ton of coal per year, Cowles, 10-11.

[50] Cowles, *Progress in Low- Temperature* Carbonization, 2, quoting a paper read by Ing F. A. Oetken at the Verein Deutscher Engineer in Darmstedt, Germany in 1936. See also Robert Taylor, "Ranked With Atom

The Germans dealt primarily with non-coking materials like brown coal, which was high in water content, low in calorific value, and therefore lacked coking problems. Germany also focused its coal processing on oil extraction and refining so as to become less dependent on imported oil. By 1939, it was estimated that Germany was producing thirty million gallons of synthetic fuel a year or 72,000 barrels a day. By 1944 it is estimated that 57 percent of Germany's oil supply was derived from synthetic fuel.[51]

Cowles's report was illuminating to the Women's Chamber because it had never pursued the idea of using a foreign company to build a processing plant, either due to political expediency, or perhaps more likely, because it was hoping to encourage more small-scale local economic growth. The Chamber had initially only wanted a Utah company to both build and run the proposed plant, which is why L. C. Karrick's process originally attracted the Chamber's interest. Karrick was an important early technical advisor to the Women's Chamber, supplying articles and answering questions and he was also an important figure in Utah in coal research. As a faculty member at the University of Utah he had been in charge of a study conducted jointly by the Utah Research Foundation, a research group made up of engineers and scientists from the University of Utah and Utah State University. Karrick developed twenty-five patents pertaining to coal processing and oil-refining and as mentioned lobbied city and state officials to persuade them to adopt his methods to process coal.[52]

After much research and debate, however, the Women's Chamber ultimately voted against using Karrick's methods. It simply determined that his process was not the

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Smashing," 3 April- this newspaper article has no reference to the year or the specific paper, it is in the Alice Merrill Horne Papers, private collection.

[51] Ibid.; see also Jeremy Rifkin, *The Hydrogen Economy; The Creation of the Worldwide Energy Web and the Redistribution of Power on Earth* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2002), 74-75.

[52] L.C. Karrick to Utah Governor Herbert Maw, 21 February 1941, WCCF, USHSA.

most feasible. The members of the organization spent a great deal of time reading papers and educating themselves about the technical and scientific aspects of coal processing, which placed them in a position whereby they could more independently evaluate what they felt would work best. With this knowledge, not only were they less reliant upon the expertise of male engineers in understanding the technical issues, but also as mothers and housewives, they had a better understanding of the breadth of the problems the air pollution was causing.[53]

With enthusiasm for Karrick's process waning the Chamber chose to investigate another Utah based company before it committed itself to looking outside the state. The Utah based Colene Company's process appeared promising so the Chamber set up a committee called the Business Board of Nine headed by Mrs. Richard Kletting, Mrs. Ernest Urian, and Mrs. G. W. Teudt to investigate its potential. The Board met with and was assisted by some engineers, lawyers, and businessmen, but after several months the committee concluded that the royalties asked for by the Colene Company were too high, and the financial stability of the company was very questionable so the decision was made to look elsewhere.[54]

By the middle of 1937 it became apparent to the Women's Chamber that, despite its goal of using a Utah company, none was at the stage of commercial application sufficiently to make processed coal inexpensive enough to realistically compete with untreated coal. The organization then began to lean heavily in favor of the American Lurgi Corporation because that company had been successfully processing coal in

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[53] For additional studies that show other women's groups conducting their own research on various urban issues including air pollution see for example Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts*, 85.
[54] Report of the Business Board of Nine to the Women's Chamber of Commerce, 7 December 1936, WCCF, USHSA.

Germany for several years. It had also developed economical methods of converting the oils and tars into usable by-products.[55]

Lund, along with the organization's head of finances, E. R. Simons, and some of the other members on the governing board, had discussed the economic realities and potential political costs of going with a non-Utah based processing company and had decided to place the matter for a vote as early as May of 1937. They decided, though, to "withhold this process until after the leglislative (sic) session and also until our new officers were installed" because of the problems of "unity and harmony" over the subject.[56]

The issues of "unity and harmony" referred to by Simons became clear after the decision was announced to consider seeking a non- Utah firm. Early in January of 1938 the Chamber held a special meeting to replace twelve members of the board of governors who had resigned over the matter. The twelve women who resigned were those who had opposed the idea of sending a commercial test to a non-Utah company. Among those who left the organization was Judge Reba Bosone, the first female judge in Utah and the first Utah Congresswoman, Mrs. E.G. Forbes, who was the second Vice- president, and Alice Merrill- Horne. Bosone and Forbes eventually joined the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, a group funded by the state to research the coal processing problem, while Horne devoted more of her time to the Smokeless Fuel Federation of Utah. This organization founded in 1936, mirrored the goals and motivations of the Women's Chamber, but relied more on the engineering advice and expertise of Salt Lake engineers and scientists. In this vein it looked to men like Karrick and his patents as the

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[55] Women's Chamber of commerce Presidential Report, 6 March 1939, 3, WCCF, USHSA.
[56] Report of the Finance Committee of the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce, May 1937, WCCF, USHSA.

means to coal processing.[57] In fact, all twelve dissenters continued their crusade against smoke in one of the two new organizations. Their goals remained similar to the Women's Chamber- the elimination of smoke, but they insisted on strictly soliciting Utah companies to process the coal and refine the by-products. The Utah Conservation organization tended to side more with mining companies, in that they deferred to expert scientific opinion that was based on efficiency and corporate economic prosperity, although the Salt Lake chapter of the Foundation leaned more towards the views of The Women's Chamber, and often pressed for more immediate smoke elimination.[58]

It is also interesting to note that Horne's idea was that fuel conservation should bring more economic and political fairness to the state, but she believed that the mining interests had effectively asserted their influence and control over both. A letter from Horne to Utah's Governor, Herbert Maw succinctly highlights her stance against the control of eastern-based companies over the state's economy:

> We your petitioners... declare that Utah's vast coal deposits shall never be surrendered to the Exploiter! And may we further voice our conviction that any coal processing plant financed by outside interests is sure to result in continued exorbitant prices of coal by-products. On the other hand, Utah owned Smokeless Fuels (sic) Plants will act as a boon to our hard- pressed people because they will bring cheap gasoline and cheap motor oil for the relief of the farmers who live on mortgaged farms, while with cheap abundant coal by-products the hum of industry, which has long been silenced, will again be heard in the land.[59]

Horne went so far as to investigate and push for state owned coal mines and citizen owned cooperative mines. For example she solicited information concerning the

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[57] *Salt Lake City Commission Book 1938*, 6 January 1938, USA; Women's Chamber of Commerce President's Report, 7 March 1938, 2, WCCF, USHSA. See also "Has Science Solved the Smoke Nuisance Problem?" published by the Smokeless Fuel Federation of Utah, 1936, USHSA.
[58] President's Report, 1 March 1937, 2, WCCF, USHSA. See also *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 March 1941, 21, editorial.
[59] Alice Merrill Horne to Governor Herbert B. Maw, 19 April 1941, Harriet H. Arrington private collection.

Grass Creek Fuel Cooperative which was a mine located in Grass Creek, Utah that was once owned by the LDS Church and now came under the control of several men who had formerly worked in the mine. The cooperative also owned a coal yard in Salt Lake and claimed that its coal could be efficiently processed using L.C. Karrick's methods.[60] Horne's ideas resemble those examined by Robert Johnston in his description of a "moral capitalism" wherein small-scale industries and skilled workers are the basis for "a classless version of capitalism where most are at once workers and owners of capital."[61]

Bosone, Forbes, and several scientists from the University of Utah, including J. L. Gibson, Niels C. Christensen, Joseph Merrill, and Murray Sullivan, for their part, began lobbying the state legislature to create a task force that would do what Salt Lake would not, investigate a feasible plan to both eliminate smoke pollution and to do so in a manner that would make Utah's coal more marketable to the rest of the nation. Those involved in pushing for state funding consisted primarily of university professors and engineers. They realized that smoke was not simply a local problem, but one that concerned the general welfare of every citizen and community dependent upon the coal industry in the state. This group wanted to focus on how to most efficiently use Utah's coal while at the same time providing for the best social good for everyone concerned.[62]

The direct result of their efforts was Senate Bill Number 170 that created and called for the organization of the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation. The bill asked for $25,000 to pay the salaries of the people conducting experiments and

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[60] Wilford Owen Woodruff, State Self-Help Cooperative Board, to Alice Merrill- Horne, 12 May 1936, Harriet H. Arrington private collection.
[61] Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 266-267.
[62] Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, *Low Temperature Carbonization of Utah Coals*, a report of the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation to the Governor and State Legislature, May 1939, 1-2, Brigham Young University Special Collections.

examining the literature on the subject. It also requested an additional $75,000 to be used in constructing a large-scale plant in which to conduct commercial tests of Utah coal. Lund, still the Women's Chamber's President, helped steer the bill out of committee and place it before the entire Senate for a vote. She was able to get a partial bill passed that appropriated $25,000 dollars for the creation of the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, but the money for the processing plant was cut. Lund's efforts point to her willingness to see some sort of progress made in the direction of smoke control, even though she did not fully agree with the Conservation Foundation's philosophies.[63]

The Conservation Foundation's Articles of Incorporation stated that the purpose of the organization was to publicize to Utah's citizens the nature, value, and status of the state's natural and human resources. The Foundation's task then, was to formulate the best methods of conserving and utilizing those resources. This group had become convinced that there was no hope of solving the smoke problem through private enterprise or through political leadership. Its members believed that the problem could be solved only by direct citizen action. They realized that the problem was part of a larger issue involving the general welfare of citizens and communities dependent upon the coal industry, and included the problem of finding the most efficient and socially useful methods of utilizing the state's coal resources. They concluded that the basic problem of social and economic welfare in the state could be solved only through wise conservation and scientific utilization of the state's natural resources. They did not want to wait for action from outside capital or groups only interested in the exploitation of the state's resources and people for "private profit or through political activities," and they felt that it was a job for scientific experts. The group, therefore, drew up by-laws for a

[63] Ibid., x.

scientific, non-political (non- partisan), non-profit organization open to all Utah citizens. They felt that their objectives would be accomplished through investigating and developing patents for coal processing. The Foundation also determined that it would award grants and fellowships to Utah's engineers and scientists, and encourage scientific inquiry through the purchasing of patents that had already been developed.[64]

The requirements of those allowed to participate in the Foundation were indicative of the ongoing disagreements about how best to control smoke, and who should do it. Only Utah citizens who had been residents in the state for at least five years could join and no one "of any foreign, [non-Utah] corporation owned or controlled by any foreign [non-Utah] corporation..., the majority of whose stock is owned or controlled by persons other than citizens of the state of Utah," could join the Foundation. The only exception was through a two-thirds vote of all the trustees. The original mission and basic philosophy of this organization, however, became lost as the state legislature placed its own stamp on the group, creating internal ideological contradictions and discord. The founders of the organization originally wanted to develop industries that would give Utahans more economic control over energy sources in terms of processing, refining, and marketing the coal and its by-products. Yet, the Foundation was forced by the state to investigate how best to protect and improve the financial situation of the non-Utah owned coal companies. The final report acknowledged the "vital role" that coal companies played in the economic condition of the state and admitted that it hoped the findings would help the industry to "take the offensive," and "prove beneficial to the Utah coal industry and induce them to further research and development." The reality too, is that the Foundation was primarily concerned with improving the state's economy first, while

[64] *Ibid., ix, 2-4.*

it saw improved air quality as an added benefit to creating new jobs and protecting Utah's mineral industry. It is also interesting to note how grants and other funding were awarded. The state decided that only those scientists who worked for the Foundation and agreed with its goals would be the sole recipients of research money. This signaled a conflict of interest that also points to the economic basis of much of the decision-making on smoke abatement and the control of the organization by "outside" interests. Most of the members on the board of the Conservation Foundation came from or had very close ties to the engineers and companies that would potentially benefit the most financially.[65]

Once in place, the Foundation worked through local chapters located in every county under the supervision of the Board of Trustees. These local chapters were responsible for collecting information pertaining to the natural resources in their respective counties and compiling and assessing economic data. There was also an attempt to involve local residents in the process by allowing them to become members of the Foundation for a dollar.[66] The Research Foundation also had the backing of portions of the coal industry, which offered to share information. Between 1924 and 1939 it was estimated that the bituminous coal industry had lost approximately four hundred million dollars nationwide. Many mining executives attributed this loss to high wage- scales, excessive transportation costs, and competition from other fuels. A few mining executives hoped that the Foundation's free research would offer tangible solutions to their shrinking share of the energy market.[67]

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[65] Ibid.,xxxvii, 4.
[66] Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, "Utah Conservation and Research Foundation: Facts Every Utah Citizen Should Know," printed by the Research Foundation, no date given, USHSA.
[67] Ibid., xxxvii and xxxviii.

Despite the original, and broader goals envisioned by its founders, the Foundation was strictly an economic venture. It believed that the main reason for processing Utah's coal was to make it burn longer with the same or higher heat value, and to create a market for synthetic fuel, all in the name of profits for the state and its industries. Conserving Utah's natural resources as a means to improving Utah's economy was the primary aim of the organization.[68] These actions are very much in accord with those described by Samuel P. Hays. He points out that the conservation movement of the early twentieth century consisted of a cross section of leaders in science, technology, and politics that wanted to bring about the more efficient development of physical resources. Conservation motivated technical and political leaders and worked its way down to the average citizen.[69] David Stradling concurs that, "In the 1910s, the lay reformers who had defined the problem left finding the solution in the hands of engineering experts. In doing so they also largely allowed the environmentalist antismoke movement to develop into a conservationist effort concerned with efficiency and economy."[70] This process was a bit reversed in Utah although it does resemble how the Research Foundation operated. The Women's Chamber, on the other hand, appears similar to Hays' definition of post-World War II environmental organizations. Although it did involve engineers and politicians, it emphasized "public values that stressed the quality of the human experience." It also began in the middle levels of society and worked its way out. As Hays has put it:

> The early conservation movement generated the first stages in shaping a "commons," a public domain of public ownership for the public use...This sense of jointly held resources became extended in the later years [post World War II]

[68] Ibid., 3.
[69] Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 13.
[70] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 191.

> to the concept of air, land, and water as an environment...Their significance as common resources shifted from a primary focus on commodities to amenities that could enhance quality of life.[71]

However they may have differed over the means, the goal of increasing the quality of life was sufficiently shared by the Chamber and the Research Foundation that the latter's goal of producing a smokeless fuel coincided with the efforts of the Women's Chamber, so the two groups happily endorsed one another to a point. That different organizations with separate agendas would join together was not uncommon, especially when the issue concerned the environment. In 1908, the Sierra Club, at that time a recreational organization, had teamed-up with John Muir, a noted preservationist, to try to prevent the building of a dam at Hetch-Hetchy, California. The two groups were motivated by different ideologies, yet this issue forced them to unite to pursue their separate goals.[72]

In addition to trying to work with the Research Foundation, the Women's Chamber began exploring the idea of combining its efforts with other civic organizations. In May of 1937 Mrs. E. R. Simons, head of the organization's finance committee, was invited to speak to the Chamber of Commerce Smoke Abatement Committee. She gave a brief speech on the necessity of smokeless fuel as the answer to Salt Lake's smoke problems and explained that she had recently been in contact with two representatives of the American Lurgi Corporation. She reported that the Lurgi Company had been successfully operating several commercial coal processing plants in Frankfurt, Germany and averaged converting approximately twenty thousand tons of coal a day into char or a

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[71] Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 13 and 22.
[72] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 168.

smokeless fuel.[73] Simons' report was only casually received for the most part, except for one member, Murray Sullivan, who was also a member of the Conservation and Research Foundation and an engineer at the University of Utah. He approached Simons about the women's efforts because he had been investigating coal processing for about twenty years. Sullivan offered his assistance to Simons, and for the next three months helped contact three more processing companies.[74]

The male Chamber of Commerce, while interested and involved in smoke abatement, had an alternative view of the air pollution problem. As mentioned earlier, the Chamber had provided an airplane in order to assist the city in its smoke program during the mid-1920s. In the fall of 1936 the Smokeless City Commission of the Men's Chamber advocated that the city begin spending more money on its smoke abatement programs as a result of its own studies. It reported for example that only $6,230 dollars had been appropriated by the city in 1935 toward the smoke problem, which paid for two inspectors who only focused on smoke abatement three or four months out of the year. This figure was significantly less than the $10,695 dollars earmarked in 1931. The report recommended that the city create a permanent Smoke Prevention Department with several trained engineers who could work twelve months out of the year specifically on smoke abatement.[75]

The Chamber of Commerce, however, believed that education, not coal processing was the key to improved air quality. For example it opposed the petition of the Women's Chamber to have the city ban all non- processed coals. It also suggested

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[73] Women's Chamber of Commerce Finance Committee Report, May 1937, WCCF, USHSA.
[74] Women's Chamber of Commerce Finance Committee Report, March 1937 to March 1938,1, WCCF, USHSA.
[75] Arthur McFarland, Chairman, Smokeless City Committee, Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, Report to the City Commission, 21 October 1936, 1-3, USHSA.

that the City Commission appropriate thirty thousand dollars, or nearly five times the amount of 1935, to the new smoke department for 1937 with the money to be used for hiring ten to twelve additional full- time smoke inspectors. The Chamber offered to assist the city by serving as advisors to the new department, keeping the public interested and involved, working with industries to develop their own smoke prevention campaigns, and investigating coal processing methods. It also encouraged the City Commission to seek federal funds under the WPA to build a "smoke laboratory" and a combustion and display plant for the purpose of educating the public on how to correctly operate home heating plants. It reasoned that its smoke abatement plans would, in addition to further educating the general public, provide work for the "needy" citizens of the city by allowing them to work in the experimental plant, thus removing people from the welfare roles. It is clear that the Men's Chamber settled for a "half-way" approach, unwilling to commit limited resources to an alternative technology that could have made a serious impact on the air pollution problem because they believed that processed coal would potentially do further financial harm to the coal industry.[76]

The city leaders, for their part, shared this mentality. The city commission had already initiated plans to train ten new engineers as smoke inspectors and it agreed to pursue the Chamber's idea of creating an educational laboratory. The city determined that it would need to raise almost eleven thousand dollars, and the federal government

[76] Chamber of Commerce, Smokeless City Committee, to City Commission, 24 November 1936 #786, and Petition #100, 1 June 1937, page 360, SLCCBA.

would then provide the remaining twenty thousand. William Butler, the new chief smoke inspector was authorized to head the project.[77]

The Women's Chamber was disappointed and upset at the decision of the city to pour more money into what had been up to this point, a failing strategy. Despite the willingness of the city to spend some money to try and improve the smoke situation, the Chamber felt that this plan mirrored those of the past and would not be successful. Lund was invited by the City Commission the following day to explain her organization's opposition. She blasted the commission and argued, "in addition to the enormous loss of money suffered by each resident due to cleaning costs, our smoke veil is dangerous to the health of our children and mars the beauty of our city." She went on to say that "Generations have fought the smoke nuisance under the false assumption that smoke from soft coal might be eliminated by regulation and ordinance."[78]

After reiterating her case for processed coal, Lund lambasted the Commission for what she perceived to be its short- sightedness. She then recounted the history of smoke abatement programs dating back to 1890 and suggested that they had failed because city and other interests had lacked any real will to make difficult decisions. She finally pointed out that despite the installation of more than eleven thousand water and steam heating plants in private homes, which could eventually be converted to natural gas, "eleven thousand unconvertible heating stoves still existed in the city."[79]

Mrs. E. G. Forbes of the Research Foundation sided with Lund. She asked the commission to give the Foundation seven thousand dollars to build a coal processing

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[77] Salt Lake City Commission Minutes Book, 8 December 1936, 715, USA; "City's Smoke Fight Opposed," *Deseret News*, 8 June 1937, 3; Women's Chamber of Commerce President's Report, 7 March 1937, WCCF, USHSA.
[78] "Smoke Costs $3,600,000, is Assertion," *Deseret News*, 9 June 1937, 9.
[79] Lund to City Commission, 10 June 1937, 2, WCCF, USHSA.

demonstration plant instead of wasting the money on "frivolous projects." The City Commission was not swayed by the two women's arguments, however. Commissioner John B. Matheson then invited the Women's Chamber to demonstrate smokeless fuel to the public when the building was finished. To that, Lund predicted that the building "would only educate the public on how to buy expensive equipment." Nevertheless, she agreed to participate, if only to gain another public forum where smokeless fuel could be equally endorsed. [80]

Lund and the Women's Chamber had, in fact, successfully introduced a solution once deemed unrealistic, and presented it in such a way so that it seemed very plausible. In so doing, they challenged the status quo and forced people to re-examine the basis for their opinions. Opposition to the new plan received validation when the WPA expressed its disapproval of the smoke abatement project the following month.[81] Additionally, by October, the Men's Chamber once again invited their counterparts to discuss smokeless fuels and possibly coordinate some of their efforts. After a two hour meeting where both groups agreed that the smoke problem was detrimental to the health of both residents and the city, the Men's Chamber surprisingly agreed to consider steps to raise funds to pay for a commercial test of Utah's coal and to meet again the following week.[82]

On 22 October the two groups again met seemingly to further discuss plans to raise money for a commercial test. After the suggestion was made to invite the Research Foundation to the meetings, so that the three organizations could more effectively share information and possibly coordinate their efforts, William Butler from the city engineer's

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[80] Lund to City Commission, 10 June 1937, 2 WCCF, USHSA, and Utah Public Works Administration to the City Commission, 8 July 1937, 454, #469, SLCCBA.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Women's Chamber of Commerce President's Report, 7 March 1938, 3 WCCF, USHSA.

department then spoke. Rather than attempt any cooperation, he demanded that the Women's Chamber withdraw its protest to the City Commission concerning the coal burning education plant and the city's previous attempts to educate the public and regulate Salt Lake's industries. Mrs. E.R. Simons responded that the request would have to be brought before the Board of Governors before that decision could be made. Butler then asked to be excused and promptly left the room. Arthur McFarland, who worked for the Union Pacific as an engineer and had also been invited by the Chamber of Commerce, then repeated Butler's demands.[83]

It is unclear whether these two men were asked by some faction from the Chamber of Commerce who resented or opposed the ideas and influence of the Women's Chamber, to deliberately provoke or create divisions between the two groups. Nevertheless, the meetings official report shows that the incident sparked a great deal of debate until some order was restored in the meeting. The two sides eventually agreed that very little adjustment was needed to make stokers and processed coal compatible and that the next step should be a commercial test on a sufficient amount of coal to judge the feasibility of building a processing plant in Salt Lake.[84]

On 27 November members of the Women's Chamber, Men's Chamber, and the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation finally met. Lund asked the Research Foundation to support a commercial test of Utah coal "in the very near future," rather than the Foundation continuing laboratory experimentation. She then stated: "Let's make co-operation our objective, our shield of protection...In the early years of this state much was accomplished through cooperation...We have seen the accomplishments of this

[83] Ibid., 1-4.
[84] Ibid., 4.

people who lived before us with not only the elements of winds and man but also savagery to brave."[85]

J.L. Gibson, Dean of the engineering department at the University of Utah and head of the Research Foundation's constituency replied that the Foundation was still working on experiments and that it needed to have a little more time before it could consider a commercial test. He emphasized that he, personally would be in favor of a commercial test, but he could not as yet speak for the Foundation. Murray Sullivan, also an engineer for the Foundation, seconded Gibson's request for more time. Sullivan added that he felt a commercial test at that point would be an ill-advised short cut to the problem. Joseph Merrill then offered to personally contribute money and time towards a commercial test as soon as a specific method was chosen. The meeting adjourned with all sides agreeing that a smokeless fuel was the best solution to Salt Lake's smoke problem and that the Women's Chamber would continue to investigate processing companies while the Research Foundation would continue research and experimentation.[86]

The major disagreement between the sides revolved around whether or not a Utah based company should be hired to do the processing. The Utah Research Foundation, whose board was comprised of university engineers, scientists, and other prominent Utahans, believed very strongly that all the investment capital necessary to build a plant should stay in the state while the Women's Chamber had reluctantly concluded that the most economically viable and immediate process available was by a company from outside the state. This split in philosophies between the two groups divided state policy

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85 Ibid., 4-5.
86 Ibid., 5-7.

makers, ultimately creating a political stalemate in the House and the Senate, which mirrored the division within the Democratic Party as mentioned in the previous chapter.

The decision by the Women's Chamber to seek out the best possible company and processing methods regardless of its origins was a difficult decision that, in some ways, ran counter to its desires to make Salt Lake's and the state's economies more independent from national corporations. The decision also would prove to be an important strategic and political mistake. Yet given the Women's Chamber's goals and the reality that no economically feasible process existed within the state, many in the organization probably reasoned that at least the coal would be from Utah, and they also believed that a deal could be struck whereby locally owned companies could assume the responsibility for processing the coal by-products. This would create employment and in the case of the mining companies, potentially increase the numbers of workers in that industry. Plus, from the records, members of the organization became convinced that the only way the city was going to have clean air, was with a processing plant. They believed that clean air and a greater emphasis on protecting the environment was the key to eventually accomplishing their other goals such as long- term economic growth and greater political and economic autonomy for Salt Lake and Utah residents.

In addition to dealing with the issue at the state level, the Women's Chamber continued to pressure the local government. It petitioned the City Commission for $1,500 to finance sending a hundred tons of coal to a processing plant in Germany. The petition also demanded that the city immediately begin constructing a plant pending a positive outcome of the tests. Just a few days later, the women received word that their request had been denied. The explanation given to the organization stated: "as in the

opinion of the Law Department the processing should be done through a city department and that the ladies of this organization be urged to cooperate with the city in making a real test of processing Utah coal when funds are set up in the proper department."[87]

This response points to a couple of significant facts regarding urban efforts against smoke pollution. First, male city officials intended to be in control and seemed to resent the pressure that the Women's Chamber had created. It also points to a degree of arrogance based both in gender and professional ideologies. The city wanted the Women's organization to conduct a "real test" implying that the women were not qualified or perhaps, even capable of understanding a valid experiment, despite their demonstrated expertise and help from professional engineers.

While the City Council unanimously rejected the Chamber's petition, Mayor Erwin disagreed. He had gradually become a vocal ally of the Women's Chamber and grew to believe that the city smoke abatement committee should cooperate with the Chamber in raising money for a test. Erwin wrote to the Chamber offering to make personal contributions and lend his support to future fund-raising efforts in order to send coal somewhere for a commercial test.[88]

Perhaps Erwin's support also stemmed from other disagreements with the members of the City Commission. Salt Lake's government had five separate departments with each of the four commissioners and the mayor responsible for a specific department. Erwin felt that the entire board should be accountable as a body for the decisions of the departments instead of each commissioner having separate responsibilities and decision-making autonomy. Erwin felt that under the present system he was compelled to follow

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[87] Salt Lake City Commission Minutes Book, 13 January 1938, 39, USA.
[88] Mayor E.B. Erwin to Mrs. Lund, no date, WCCF, USHSA.

four separate agendas, which sent a mixed message to the public and was a potential waste of overlapping resource allocation.[89]

The Women's Chamber eventually lost a potentially important ally in Erwin during 1938 when he was forced to resign after being implicated with the chief of police in a vice conspiracy scandal. Despite this loss, the Chamber initiated a fund drive to raise the $1500 it needed to ship one hundred tons of coal to a processing plant in Frankfurt, Germany for a commercial test. It had finally determined that the American Lurgi Corporation offered the method that could best handle Utah's coal and produce the desired results needed to convince Utah legislators of the feasibility of coal processing. The company had eighteen plants in operation worldwide, including ten plants in Germany. It had also established a positive reputation for its innovative work and successes dealing with several types of coal. With a company finally chosen, the Chamber began a fund drive that targeted businesses and individuals that had previously expressed a willingness to help. After three weeks of effort, however, the Chamber had only raised $252, and as the year was coming to a close it still needed almost $500.[90]

The situation seemed to improve though, by the end of 1938. The Women's Chamber had succeeded in receiving the endorsement of The General Federation of Women's Clubs at the state level, which meant that it would receive the official endorsement of 93 other women's organizations in Salt Lake and around the state. These

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[89] *Journal History*, 8 February 1938, 2, taken from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, same date, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' Archives. Erwin was also upset that his appointed chief of police was accused of corruption and accepting kick-backs to allow prostitution and other illegal activities take place in the city.
[90] Women's Chamber of Commerce Finance Committee Report, March 1937 to March 1938, 9, WCCF, USHSA; and Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, *State of Utah Low- Temperature Carbonization of Utah Coals*, a report of the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, May 1939, 342-43.

organizations included over 10,000 women, and offered the possibility of increased economic and political aid for the organization.[91]

As news of the new alliance became public knowledge, the city was in the process of considering another request from the Women's Chamber to supply the final $500 for the commercial test. The new mayor, Ab Jenkins, recognized the possible political ramifications of the Chamber's additional support. He was able to successfully work with the Commission and convince its members to appropriate the final $500 that the Chamber needed.[92]

Fresh off this success, the Women's Chamber, in early 1939, invited Dr. Frank Mueller of the American Lurgi Corporation to Salt Lake in an effort to further convince municipal and state politicians that they should appropriate the necessary funds to build their own plant. In his talk, Mueller proclaimed that, "the test tube stage of smokeless fuel investigation had been sufficiently well done," a not so subtle message directed at the state funded Research Foundation. The Women's Chamber then made arrangements with Mueller to have two tons of coal shipped to Frankfurt for the commercial testing. The Women's Chamber eventually sent only one ton of coal to Frankfurt, Germany in April of that year, but it was confident that this was a sufficient amount to provide for a reasonable commercial test.[93]

All the momentum by early 1939 seemed to on the side of the Women's Chamber. In May, the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation finally published the results of its three- year study in a 900 page report. The Foundation had been persuaded

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[91] Women's Chamber of Commerce Finance Committee Report, March 1937 to March 1938, 11. See also Women's Chamber of Commerce Presidential Report, 6 March 1939, 3, WCCF, USHSA.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., 3-4. See also Mrs. W.J. Thomas, Chairman of the Legislative Committee, Women's Chamber of Commerce to Utah Legislator, February 1939, USHSA.

by the Women's Chamber to at least entertain the possibility of using a non-Utah based company because it had similarly determined, just as the Chamber had the year before, that it would be difficult to find a viable Utah based company. In this light, the Foundation sent a few twelve pound samples of Utah coal to various companies including Lurgi. Out of seven tests done, the Lurgi Company had determined that at least one of their processes would successfully work for home consumption using processed Utah coal. The Foundation, however, could not obtain written financial estimates as to the cost of building and running a plant in relationship to the price that would be charged for the coal and the potential profit from the refined by-products. It therefore recommended, among other things, that the state should construct and run a semi-commercial processing plant for a one-year period as the only real means of determining the economic production, distribution, and marketing viability of smokeless fuel.[94]

The final report spawned a great deal of debate and the introduction of a bill in the Utah legislature that would have appropriated $75,000 for the construction of a test plant. Opposition to the bill however, came from the least likely of sources. The Women's Chamber and the Women's Legislative Committee opposed the legislation on the grounds that a commercial test was already taking place and that a pilot plant would be a waste of money. Other opposition leaders reasoned that if the commercial test was successful, then the state could fund the building of a commercial plant, but that it should wait for the test results before "spending $75,000 more of taxpayers' money." Ultimately, opposition killed the bill.[95]

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[94] *State of Utah Low- Temperature Carbonization of Utah Coals*, 8, 345-46, and 350-51, Brigham Young University Special Collections.

[95] Mrs. W.J. Thomas and the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce to the Utah Legislature, February 1939, WCCF, USHSA. See also Utah House Bill #156 and Senate Bill #157, USA.

Meanwhile, by July, preliminary results filtering back from the Lurgi Company in relation to the tests requested by the Women's Chamber were encouraging, but the full report was not received until February of 1940. Unfortunately, despite the successes of the test, world events in Europe and elsewhere in combination with the political atmosphere in Utah prevented the Lurgi Company from exporting its technology and building a plant in Salt Lake. The samples and small amounts of by-products that were received by the Chamber did, however provide them with sufficient evidence that Utah's coal was suited to commercial processing and that a plant could be profitably operated and that processed coal could be sold at a competitive price with lump coal. With the physical proof in hand that coal processing was feasible, the next step for the Chamber would be to persuade the city and the state to construct a commercial processing plant.[96]

**Conclusion**

Daniel Rodgers argues that it is important to understand how issues become part of the political dialogue, and how the problems are defined and framed. When scholars contemplate these questions, they can then accept the fact that people with "ideas" "have a brief role to play in the political process, framing alternatives and solutions." The efforts of the Women's Chamber should be taken seriously because they were able to transform "a tragic but incurable condition into a politically solvable problem and, by that very act," defined "the field within which legislators and executives" would "ultimately maneuver."[97]

The Women's Chamber had successfully forced the city and the state to seriously consider the fact that it was possible to both clean Salt Lake's air, and create a stronger

[96] Women's Chamber of Commerce President's Report, 17 March 1941, 4, WCCF, USHSA. See also, Women's Chamber of Commerce to the City Commission, 23 May 1940, 408, #121, SLCCBA.
[97] Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 6.

economy that potentially could be controlled locally. They had also begun to slightly alter the idea in many Salt Lakers' minds that smoke meant progress and prosperity. They began to force decision makers to contemplate a mentality that was based more on health and aesthetics than simply economic gain for its own sake. The failure of the Women's Chamber up through 1939 to secure the building of a processing plant may have been that they were not radical enough in insisting on and pressuring the state to spend more money to encourage a local company to develop a coal refining process. The Women's Chamber's impatience to get the problem solved immediately caused a rift within the organization and an additional political dynamic with the creation of the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation. This organization was able to obtain state funding and alter the political debate away from an emphasis on environmentalism and back towards conservationism. Despite this setback, the Women's Chamber would continue to pressure the city and the state to alter how they viewed air pollution. Yet, as will be shown in the next chapter, the infusion of federal money into the economy made it that much more difficult for the Women's Chamber because the city began once again to live with the burdens of prosperity and the confirmation in many decision makers' minds that environmentalism was antithetical to prosperity.

## Chapter 6

## "THIS SMOKE CONTROL LAW IS THE BIGGEST THING EVER ATTEMPTED IN SALT LAKE CITY"

The Women's Chamber of Commerce, encouraged by the results of the tests in Germany, succeeded in garnering widespread support from politicians, professionals, and the general public, and in once again making smoke reform an important political issue. It would spend the next three years trying to persuade city and state officials to build a processing plant. However, during this time period, the city chose to go in another direction by developing and implementing yet another new smoke abatement plan, this time modeled after efforts in St. Louis. William Butler, the city smoke inspector, successfully took the political center stage away from the Women's Chamber, at least temporarily, while a war related economic boom further complicated air pollution issues.

After focusing their efforts for a brief time on war-aid to Great Britain in the last half of 1939, the Women's Chamber again began lobbying for the construction of a $250,000 coal processing plant. The organization had proved that "smokeless fuel" was feasible and it still held out hope that a city ordinance banning the use of unprocessed fuels would be passed.[1] With the war in Europe, however, an even greater emphasis was placed on industrial production, thanks in large part to an infusion of federal money. As the economy improved, city boosters felt more validated in their choice to privilege industry over urban nature or health.

[1] Lund, President's Report, Women's Chamber of Commerce, 17 March 1941, WCCF, USHSA.

Despite the distraction of the war in Europe, the Women's Chamber continued to push for a program of complete smoke elimination. With Salt Lake's and Utah's economies vastly improving, and personal incomes rising, concerns over the ability of residents to pay slightly more for their fuel should have been abated. Had this been the only roadblock, it is quite conceivable that the city and the state might have moved ahead with a processing plant. On the other hand, concerns still existed about its feasibility and those doubts were reinforced by debates over the "Americanness" of a government entity owning and operating such a plant. By 1939, many of the programs from the New Deal had been curtailed or ruled unconstitutional, and many of the more "radical" measures had been scaled back, which gave local and state governments more control over federal money. Many states and municipalities then chose to use privately owned banks and businesses, which gave the illusion of free market capitalism, but also meant that local prejudices could be cemented in terms of how the monies were used.[2] Also by 1939, even though some in the U.S. had gazed admiringly at Hitler and Mussolini for what they had done to turn around the economies of Germany and Italy, most Americans began to see those two leaders for what they really were. Thus, most Americans associated anything state owned with Communism and Fascism. As previously mentioned, the Democratic Party in Utah was already split by 1936 between those who thought the New Deal was too conservative and those who thought it too liberal and the events in 1939 only heightened the fears and skepticism of state lawmakers and made it that much more

[2] Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform,* 140-143. See also, Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis.* These studies demonstrate for example that discriminatory racial attitudes and power structures would be upheld in cities like Detroit due to the manner in which New Deal policies were administered at the local level.

difficult for them to consider allowing municipalities or the state to own or control the energy producing industry.[3]

The fact, however, that the Women's Chamber continued to push for smoke elimination during this time demonstrates, not only its commitment to the environment, but that it defined American democracy in a slightly different way. It believed that city and state governments needed to work for the betterment of all the people and its members thought that emphasizing urban nature would allow Utah's residents to have more control over their physical surroundings, which would signal greater control over the state's political and economic systems. In other words, it believed that the state and the municipalities should have more control over how the state's mineral wealth was being used, thereby widening the potential benefits (economically and in terms of "quality of life") to more groups other than the coal and railroad industries. The Women's Chamber, therefore, clearly represented a transitional group between older conservationists and modern day environmentalists in terms of its ideology as described by Hays and Stradling.[4]

The women's concern with smoke pollution remained high because, with the nation and Salt Lake once again enjoying an industrial boom, the city's air pollution quickly worsened. The state became home to ten major military bases, an army hospital, a steel mill, an oil refinery, munitions and other war-related factories, and the home of several defense contractors and sub-contractors. It is estimated that the state added

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[3] Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform*, 265-268. See also, Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Robert Fishman, ed., *The American Planning Tradition*, 8; Kearns, "Utah Electoral Politics, 1932-1938."
[4] Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, and Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*. See also, Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*.

almost 100,000 new jobs during the war, and the number of manufacturing establishments grew from 549 to 772.[5]

With industrial expansion and increasing levels of air pollution, the Women's Chamber once again took the offensive and called upon the municipal government to require all locomotives that operated within the city limits to use only electric power. It also renewed its pressure on the City Commission to pass an ordinance prohibiting the burning of any fuel that smoked after 1 January 1942. Lund also offered to share all the technical, scientific, and logistical information that her organization had gathered in order to better facilitate the transition. She believed that the proposed deadline would allow fuel merchants ample time to liquidate their old inventories and begin stockpiling the new fuel. Lund argued that because large industries throughout the world were now using coal by-products, the coal processing costs were economically feasible. She also pointed out that with natural gas and electricity the consumer had additional choices so there was no way that a smokeless ordinance would violate anyone's constitutional rights.[6]

The men who ran the city had different ideas. The City Commission, spurred on by the Men's Chamber of Commerce and concerned about the proposed ordinance from the Women's Chamber, decided on another strategy that would better preserve the economic status quo. In 1940, in response to the successful smoke abatement program in St. Louis, Salt Lake sent its city engineer, William L. Butler, along with Gus Backman, the commissioner of the Chamber of Commerce smoke abatement committee, and Van

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[5] Poll, et. al., *Utah's History*, 497-498, 500.
[6] *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 17 December 1940, 4. Taken from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 December 1940, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' Archives. See also City Commission Records, 17 December 1940, 961, SLCCBA.

Law from the Denver and Rio and Grande Western Railroad, to that city in order to investigate how it had achieved its much publicized success.[7]

Butler and Backman returned from their fact-finding mission with a great deal of optimism and enthusiasm for what they observed. St. Louis' officials claimed that they had successfully eliminated 85 percent of their air pollution. The Salt Lake contingency also claimed that the St. Louis officials believed that the key to their success was an effective propaganda campaign using the local newspapers and radio stations to get the residents to believe and support the program, and that they used a strategy based more on education and volunteer cooperation rather than punishment. Backman believed that while Salt Lake could not implement the entirety of the St. Louis plan and still protect Utah's soft coal industry, it could emulate many of St. Louis' strategies and see a marked improvement in Salt Lake's skies.[8]

For its part, the St. Louis plan did experience some success. Despite protests and lawsuits from the Illinois coal industry and local business interests, St. Louis' City Council passed a bill in 1939 that mandated that "all consumers of high- volatile coal use mechanical stokers; that anyone not employing a stoker use smokeless fuel; and that the council empower the city to purchase and distribute coal in emergencies."[9] During the subsequent winter, the city had better quality coal from Arkansas shipped in because they felt that there had not been enough time for retailers and citizens to comply with the ordinance the first winter. The Arkansas coal was between 15 and 30 percent less volatile and, as a result, the U.S Weather Bureau concluded that the number of hours of

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[7] "City Board Orders Sweeping Program to Curb Smoke Evil," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 February 1941, 21. See also City Commission Records, 29 January 1941, 77, #16, SLCCBA.
[8] City Commission Records, 18 February 1941, 128, SLCCBA.
[9] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 166.

thick smoke during the winter of 1940-41 had decreased by 83.5 percent compared to the previous winter.[10]

As more details from the St. Louis ordinance came to light, though, Salt Lake faced increased pressure from reform groups to make its smoke laws even more stringent than what it initially contemplated. In response to the outcry, Backman went on the offensive arguing that the St. Louis regulations were more stringent than Salt Lake could afford to implement:

> Every coal yard has to have a special license as does everyone handling coal...It has practically put truckers out of business...We have more stokers in the city and we can accomplish the same results without ruthless legislation...At the same time Salt Lake must take into consideration that 10 per cent of the people in Utah are dependent upon coal for their livlihood [sic]...Something should be done, and can be done in Salt Lake. With the type of people we have here, we need not be so severe.

Backman also pointed out that St. Louis would not allow coal with a volatile content of more than 23 percent, while the coal from Carbon County, Utah was around 34 percent.[11]

Despite the opposition, the city gave Butler, with the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, the responsibility to develop a new smoke campaign for the city that mirrored the St. Louis plan. However, because the city government called only for gradual smoke abatement rather than complete elimination, the Women's Chamber along with the Women's Smokeless Fuel Federation, the Salt Lake Chapter of the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, and the Salt Lake Council of Women joined in protest. Yet, smoke abatement rather than elimination was the more common approach adopted by cities as they tried to balance smoke control with industrial and economic growth, while at the same time complying with pressures to create a more livable urban space that

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[10] Ibid., 166-167.
[11] "For Strict Smoke Rules," *Salt Lake Tribune*, no date, private collection of Harriet Arrington.

incorporated the benefits of urban nature. This was especially true in Utah with the economic upturn in the state caused by the introduction of new war-related industries. When World War II began in Europe, Utah vigorously and successfully lobbied the federal government for military contracts. As a result of the increased construction for the military, between 1940 and 1943, the number of jobs in the state jumped from 148,000 to 230,000. Before 1940, the total income for Utah was under three hundred million dollars, but by 1943 it more than doubled to over seven hundred million. The infusion of government spending also meant that instead of the per capita income being 18 percent below the national average before 1940, it was a little over 2 percent higher by 1943.[12] The state legislature, upon the urging of Governor Maw, also established the Department of Publicity and Industrial Development to lure more industries into the state, rather than relying solely on the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce to do this. Some local and state officials feared that if the air pollution laws were too stringent it could dissuade industries from doing business in the state. Economic growth fostered by the federal government contracts, created the situation wherein proponents of abatement would win out over those demanding elimination. [13]

Despite this situation, the Women's Chamber remained steadfast in its goal of giving Salt Lake clean air. Yet, to city boosters, increased domestic federal spending was proof that municipal growth was not necessarily tied to urban nature, at least in the short-term. Cities across the nation recognized that economic prosperity and the lure of capital and industry could be obtained without necessarily adding parks, plazas, and other spaces where nature could be incorporated. Thus despite all of its efforts in the 1920s and

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[12] Ibid. 498, 505.
[13] Poll, et al., eds, *Utah's History*, 497-98.

during the New Deal to create clean, efficient, and orderly cities, the federal government now undermined some of its goals thanks to defense spending serving as a disincentive to more responsible urban planning and to the incorporation of urban nature into the municipal structure.[14] In the long-term such thinking could prove disastrous for U.S. cities, but in the 1940s, Salt Lake City officials and businessmen did not see this.

Thus, as Salt Lake embarked upon its new smoke abatement plan in 1940-41, it is telling how Butler constructed and enforced the new laws. He claimed that he would target industrial, commercial, and residential areas, but specifically the railroads and industry. The railroads were responsible for 40 percent of the city's smoke while the factories produced an additional 35 percent. The remainder of the smoke came from the residential districts and from sources outside the city limits. Butler therefore wanted the railroads to modify their locomotives, especially their switching engines. The new plan called for locomotives operating within the city limits to be equipped with mechanical firing equipment. Additionally, all locomotives in the roundhouse had to be fired by auxiliary mechanical firing equipment or direct steaming. If the railroad companies violated the new ordinances they, as well as the individuals operating the banned equipment, could potentially face stiff fines.[15]

The new smoke codes drafted primarily by Butler also required all industrial, commercial, and residential heating plants to be equipped with mechanical firing devices or to use a smokeless fuel. The 280 page smoke ordinance proposal also specified that smokeless fuel could not contain more than 20 percent volatile matter and that all new

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[14] Alan Brinkley, "The National Resources Planning Board and the Reconstruction of Planning," in Fishman, *The American Planning Tradition*, 173-191.
[15] "Group Seeks Start on Smoke Drive," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 March 1941, 21 and "Smoke Expert Drafts Rigid Railroad Law," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 April 1941, 11.

buildings had to be constructed with a mechanical firing device. The new law also attempted to better regulate those qualified to install and maintain furnaces. Finally, it required engineers, firemen, and journeymen installers of steam pressure plants and boilers to be licensed through a series of seminars and tests.[16]

This new ordinance was not exactly revolutionary. Many of these same regulations, such as the law requiring industrial, commercial, and residential heating plants be equipped with mechanical firing devices, had been in place since the 1920s and the philosophy behind the city's efforts continued to center on the path of least resistance to business. Too, regulations are only effective when the resolve to enforce them is strong and when practical means are available to allow poorer residents a means to comply. In Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, for instance, when the municipality attempted to emulate the St. Louis plan, heavy lobbying by coal companies combined with the war, negated any strict enforcement of the laws. The decisions by these cities in favor of "technological" solutions instead of coal processing plants also reflected a policy that gave priority to economic progress at the risk of the public health, despite evidence in cities like New York, Philadelphia and Chicago that demonstrated improved economic conditions in areas of those cities when they converted their commuter trains from steam to electric.[17]

Thus, it is no surprise that the Women's Chamber opposed what it saw as a repeat or a continuation of half- way measures from previous decades. The major complaint by the Women's Chamber was that even though the state's economy was improving, several

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[16] "City Schedules Hearing on Smoke Control," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 February 1941, 17. "280 Page Smoke Ordinance Draft Nears Completion," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 29 April 1941, 9. "Smoke Officials Will Name Six Examiners," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 May 1941, 17.

[17] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 162-175 for a discussion of Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, and 111-114 for a discussion of New York, Philadelphia and Chicago.

thousand households were still unable to install mechanical firing devices and that smokeless fuel was still too expensive because it was not manufactured in the state. The Chamber felt that most people would simply ignore the ordinances because they were not economically feasible and, just as in the past, it doubted that the city had the resolve to vigorously enforce the new regulations.[18]

Butler's licensing proposal, designed to eliminate the amateurs and to professionalize the industry, had also been attempted in the early 1920s, but had not been as successful as many had hoped. One of the problems with firemen was that there were too many poorly trained individuals who simultaneously attempted to oversee several heating plants. Several businesses and larger apartment buildings, in an effort to cut costs, paid low wages to the men who tended their furnaces causing many of these employees to seek additional work looking after several plants. There were also individuals who installed furnaces without proper training. Butler therefore concluded that placing more emphasis on education rather than punishment would alleviate much of the problem. He felt that had he not been willing to base his proposals on aid and understanding, the new ordinances would have been met with apathy and outright hostility from a large portion of the private sector.[19]

Butler and the City Commission thus relied on the local population to comply voluntarily. They hoped that a city whose residents had historically been civically involved and, who, through church sermons were taught the importance of obedience to church and civic laws would gladly cooperate to alleviate the smoke problem. City officials also hoped to tap into the beautification movement started by the LDS Church in

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[18] Women's Chamber of Commerce to Salt Lake City Mayor and the City Commission, 28 April 1941, WCCF, USHSA.
[19] "Board Okehs [sic] Engineer's Smoke Plan," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 March 1941, 13.

the mid- 1930s. The LDS Church, through its various monthly publications, such as *The Improvement Era*, *Progress of the Church*, and the *Deseret News*, had begun a beautification program of its own, which was directed at its members to make improvements to and beautify local chapels, their homes, and by extension, their neighborhoods and communities. The publications contained articles almost every month offering tips, encouragement, and explanations why church members needed to paint their homes, plant trees and flowers, and clean up debris. Some of the reasoning that was offered came from a desire to create a positive impression on "gentiles" for the sake of proselytizing. For example, an article in the *Progress of the Church*, which was written by the Presiding Bishopric, which is the ecclesiastical branch of the church's governing system responsible for temporal welfare, stated in relation to the beautification drive, "Many people shall come up to learn of our ways. Can we attract their attention in any better way than with beautiful homes and public buildings and parks?"[20] An additional reason for the project was to put unemployed church members back to work on a temporary basis so that the relief they were receiving would not seem like charity. Along these lines, Marvin O. Ashton, who was the chairman of the Church-wide Improvement and Beautification Committee wrote, "Let us banish from our communities discouragement and idleness and put our Church building, inside and out, in the proper condition of repair and beautification."[21]

Despite a positive response by church members to the beautification campaign, the city badly misjudged the mood of the public regarding its attitudes about Salt Lake's

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[20] *Progress of the Church*, September 1939, and Marvin O. Ashton, "A Thousand Wards Join The Church-Wide Improvement Procession," *The Improvement Era*, June 1937, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' Archives.
[21] Ashton, "A Thousand Wards."

elected officials and those who controlled the economy. Many doubted that the air pollution problem would ever be solved, regardless of the program. Many residents were tired of the financial hardships they had faced for over a decade, and were unwilling to make any more sacrifices without assurances that their efforts would bear some sort of tangible fruit.

Therefore, when the city announced its new smoke abatement plan amidst great fanfare and expectations, many who had closely followed the history of the city's efforts were not impressed. At a public hearing held on 7 March 1941, over one hundred people representing various civic groups, including the Women's Chamber, the Women's Smokeless Fuel Federation, and the Salt Lake Council of Women turned out to express their displeasure with the plan, while representatives of the Utah Coal Operators, the railroads, the men's Chamber of Commerce, and other industries who supported the plan were also in attendance.[22]

Butler began the meeting by outlining the major parts of the smoke abatement program and by explaining that the goal of the project was to provide immediate relief from the pollution while incurring the least amount of hardship to any one individual or company. He explained that the best way to accomplish these goals was through a reliance on better furnace technologies, or in other words by legislating that new furnaces either had to have a mechanical stoker or people had to begin using smokeless fuels such as natural gas, electric heaters, or processed coal.[23] Butler's plan was endorsed by a R.T. Senior who represented the Utah Coal Operators Association. Senior agreed that the abatement plan could be successful as long as the city and its residents were vigilant and

[22] City Commission Records, 7 March 1941, 179, SLCCBA.
[23] Ibid.

educated on the best coal burning methods. He added that the pollution problems were not from the coal, but from the equipment and that some of his company's engineers had developed a stoker that could burn Utah's coals with "practically no smoke."[24]

Lund next spoke and countered such optimistic pronouncements. She claimed that a large percentage of Salt Lake's homes did not have basements sufficiently large enough to install the new equipment and could therefore only be serviced with natural gas (which, she further pointed out, most people in this group could not afford anyway), thus making the laws ineffectual. The only real solution according to Lund was building a coal processing plant so that this group of people did not have to rely on natural gas but would be able to easily purchase coal. She also pointed out that various interests had combined to pressure the state legislature to pass a bill rendering Salt Lake's ordinance illegal. She then requested that the city donate land and water for the construction of a processing plant.[25]

A chorus of voices supported Lund and agreed that smokeless fuel seemed to be the best solution. Niels Christensen of the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation asked why the city had decided to "enact a smoke abatement program now, after years of apathy and failure." He then offered that most residents wanted a permanent solution "not a program of continued expense which is but a subterfuge, and the only solution is a smokeless fuel." Christensen went on to label the commission as the "errand boy" of the Chamber of Commerce, saying that, "The majority of citizens are not in favor of the chamber of commerce sponsoring anything...because their membership is paid for by

[24] Ibid., 180.
[25] Ibid., 180.

outside interests."[26] L.C. Karrick then charged that American oil companies had marshaled their forces to block any attempts nationwide to extract oil from coal and that there was overwhelming scientific evidence, including from the University of Utah, that coal processing was a very feasible alternative. Other voices, including Alice Merrill Horne, Judge Reba Bosone, and Mrs. G. Byron Forbes who were formerly members of the Women's Chamber, echoed Lund's request for the city to adopt a permanent solution and to donate land and water and even funds towards building a processing plant.[27]

Accusations against the City Commission of catering to railroad, coal, and other business interests were not unfounded. During the meeting, Mayor Jenkins, as well as city council representatives defended their policies and the likes of the Denver and Rio Grande Western, arguing that it had been vigilant in complying and making progress towards smoke abatement. The records, however, indicate otherwise. Smoke inspectors and city engineers complained often about the lack of efforts and non- compliance from the railroad industry dating back to the early 1920s, yet the city refused to issue fines or exert any meaningful pressure for these industries to improve. Coal companies, the railroads, and the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce had also been active lobbyists in thwarting local and state legislation that would have banned the use of unprocessed coal.[28] It was clear to many that the city's plan was geared towards placing the burden of the problem primarily on residents by blaming them for improper firing techniques, using

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[26] Ibid., 181. See also "Contending Units Advised to Get Together," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 March 1941, 19.
[27] Ibid., 181-182.
[28] Ibid., 182. See also for example, City Commission Records, 25 November 1930, 625, wherein the city engineer complains that the D.R.G.W. has failed to comply with the smoke laws. See also Letter from Commissioner of Streets and Public Improvements to City Commission, 17 October 1934, 567-68, SLCCBA. The issue with the railroads continues well into the 1960s in fact, amid continuous promises of substituting diesel engines for coal. As previously documented, the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce and the coal industry also joined forces to create several pamphlets trumpeting the advantages of Utah's mining and other mineral industries.

outdated equipment, and in general, not being vigilant enough in fighting the smoke pollution. The city government still clung to the idea that industry needed to be protected and that those individual households who burned the coal should shoulder the burdens of its ill- effects and should be more responsible for countering those effects.

Many residents at the meeting did accept the city's argument that they used the coal and were therefore partially responsible for the pollution, and that the coal industry's economic health was tied to Salt Lake's. Led by Lund's logic, however, they continued to argue that even if the majority of Salt Lakers complied, there were still several thousand homes that financially could not retool, which would affect the entire city. Many at the meeting therefore blamed business interests and the fuel itself for the problems, but they were nonetheless still willing to accept some of the burdens and responsibilities for using coal. Ultimately, what they wanted though was a way to equalize the burdens and benefits of smoke elimination, and more people began to believe that the way to do that was through processed coal. The exponents of the city ordinance felt that it was the city and state government's responsibility to give them more options, something they believed was not being done.

There were also some in the audience who chided city leaders for not adopting a complete ban on all polluting fuels and for not pursuing a coal processing plant. City commissioner Oscar W. McConkie responded to such criticism by asking, "Since we know we cannot have a fuel processing plant right now, why is it that so many of you are opposed to gaining as much relief as possible under the abatement program?" Yet, McConkie and some of his fellow councilmen then conceded that processed coal and a processing plant were probably the best alternatives, but that the city could not at that

time produce the necessary funds to build a plant. When pushed further, the Commission surprisingly agreed that they would, in principle, agree to donate the necessary land and water for a plant. The meeting finally concluded with McConkie suggesting that each of the opposing civic groups select a member for a citizens' committee that would jointly draft a plan of how best to fund and build a processing plant. Mayor Jenkins seconded the idea and a week later, on March 13, gave the civic groups an almost impossible deadline of March 19 to submit a plan.[29]

The Women's Chamber of Commerce along with the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation, the Women's Smokeless Fuel Federation, the Salt Lake City Council of Women, and L.C. Karrick attempted to combine forces in creating a plausible solution to the processing plant question, but this union was doomed from the start. As explained in the previous chapter, the groups differed fundamentally on whether or not the processing company should homegrown, the processing techniques that should be used, and, although they agreed that the costs should be equally shared, the groups haggled over how best to fund the plant. The coalition finally asked for more time and was given until April 1 as a final deadline with the warning that if no reasonable proposal was made, the city would go ahead with its own plans.[30]

With this pressing deadline and an inability to come to a consensus, the citizens' coalition adopted an unexpected tactic. It felt that the additional money earmarked for more inspectors could be better used for building a coal processing plant. Their alternative plan argued that before more money was spent on an abatement program, the city should demonstrate its commitment to, and the effectiveness of the new ordinance by

[29] "Contending Units Advised to Get Together," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 March 1941, 19. See also City Commission Records, 7 March 1941, 182 and 13 March 1941, 199, SLCCBA.
[30] City Commission Records, 19 March 1941, 211, petition #8.

forcing railroads and factories to "first comply with previous smoke laws of years past, because they were responsible for 75 percent of the smoke anyway."[31]

This strategy then prompted opposition to the city's smoke abatement plan from the railroads. They wrote to the Commission and the papers to protest accusations that they were responsible for such a large amount of smoke. F. H. Knickerbocker of the Union Pacific claimed that his company had installed $80,000 worth of smoke-reducing equipment in 1937 as proof of his company's commitment to smoke abatement. The railroad had installed drafting units that created a funnel force when cold engines were pre-heated with hot water and steam. This caused the coal to burn more thoroughly and supposedly reduced smoke by 20 percent.[32]

Ultimately, the City Commission was able to allay the fears of the railroad. Ignoring the April 1 deadline given to the citizens' group, it unanimously passed Butler's smoke abatement plan on 27 March 1941. The commission said that smokeless coal and a processing plant were good ideas, but added that the city did not feel it had the proper jurisdiction to build a plant. One member of the commission compared the problem to citizens wanting safer streets, he pointed out that most of them committed minor traffic infractions, yet complained that there were not enough police to monitor things. Therefore, he reasoned, with additional inspectors, the "few" who were unwilling to cooperate would face prosecution. The Commission also wanted to go on record that they had no problems with the railroads and that they believed that industry had been

[31] "Official Proposal of a Special Committee Representing the Organized Groups Who Favor Elimination of Smoke Through Coal Processing," 20 March 1941, WCCF, USHSA.
[32] "City Schedules Hearing on Smoke Control," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 February 1941, 17 and "City Adopts Program to Curb Smoke," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 March 1941, 17.

cooperating to the fullest. The Commission also expressed praise to the local papers for their support of the plan.[33]

The uncompromising nature of the Women's Chamber's call for the "complete elimination of all smoke" no doubt contributed to those industries which "controlled the Chamber of Commerce" into supporting the city's new plan. Yet it is also evident from the records that most Salt Lake businesses were not too worried about the new laws either. Enforcement had historically been rather lax, and unless a company was violating the smoke laws in an extreme way, it did not have to worry about fines or being shut down. Perhaps this is why the Women's Chamber was so unwilling to accept half a loaf. The political pressure it garnered did force city officials into addressing the problem with at least a degree of sincerity and financial commitment, yet it learned from past experience that if it stopped pushing, the issue might not even get cursory attention.

Following its March 27th victory, the commission then had to decide when to implement its program. Both John B. Matheson, the city street commissioner, and Butler pushed for a September or October first deadline. The Union Pacific and the Denver and Rio Grande Western publicly announced that they would comply. The railroads then quietly petitioned the city asking to delay enforcement of the ordinances until the new year to supposedly give them additional time to convert their equipment.[34] Both the U. P. and the D. & R. G. W. were aware that they were major polluters, and that they could comply with the new ordinance. Neither company, however, felt sufficient pressure from either city or state officials to seriously make the efforts to alter their equipment.

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[33] "City Adopts Program to Curb Smoke," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 February 1941, 17. See also City Commission Records, 27 March 1941, 236, petition #48, John B. Matheson to the City Commission, SLCCBA.

[34] "Railroads Ask Time to Meet Smoke Rules," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 April 1941, 1B. See also "Official Asks Deadline in Smoke Drive," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 April 1941, 11.

Nevertheless their petition did spark additional debate within the city commission. Matheson did not want to extend the date to 1 January 1942, reasoning that if the commission delayed implementation once, another excuse could be used on that date to justify pushing enforcement even further back. He did concede, however, that the railroads would not be "thrown in jail" if they could not comply until the beginning of 1942.[35]

Mayor Ab Jenkins, however, countered by publicly asserting that if exceptions were going to be made, the fairest policy would be to begin enforcement at the beginning of the following year for everyone. Since, no one on the commission wanted to be accused of blatantly playing favorites, particularly to one of the industries that had been under so much fire, its members told the public through the papers that they had decided unanimously to begin enforcing the ordinances on 1 October without any exceptions. The railroad officials also publicly announced their intentions to fully comply with the enforcement date, adding that diesel switch engines were already on order and would be arriving within the month.[36]

While public concerns were thereby assuaged, in reality, Mayor Jenkins wanted to quietly include an amendment to the smoke ordinance date that would have allowed the railroads an additional year and a half to comply. Others on the Commission and Butler secretly agreed that October 1 would be the official date, but that an exception would be made for the railroads. They also admitted publicly that the new diesel engines for the

[35] "Railroads Ask Time to Meet Smoke Rules," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 April 1941, 1B. See also "Official Asks Deadline in Smoke Drive," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 April 1941, 11.
[36] "Board Fixes Oct. 1 for Smoke Rules," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 June 1941, 14.

Union Pacific and the Denver and Rio Grande Western would not be arriving until January of the following year.[37]

The records also reveal that the City Commission had a great deal of doubt and skepticism in its own ranks concerning the potential effectiveness of the new smoke abatement plan and that the pressure from groups like the Women's Chamber weighed heavily on the Commission's resolve. Commissioner McConkie acknowledged that he was aware that "many in the public felt that the resolve to enforce the new laws would not be very strong." He warned his companions that the smoke program could take up to six months to get going and he asked every member on the Commission to remain united and to pledge their support to Butler so that the ordinances would be fully enforced. McConkie's suggestion was seconded and the Mayor then offered that the Commission needed to be involved in enforcing the ordinances so as not to "put the burden on one pair of shoulders but on all."[38]

The unity of the Commission was quickly tested during the fall, as seemingly minor problems became major political issues. During the spring and summer of 1941 the first phase of the new abatement program began in earnest. In June, Butler started holding training seminars as part of the educational portion of the city's new program. He held classes instructing engineers and journeymen concerning the best methods of installing and firing furnaces. In one such meeting he pointed out to his listeners that Salt Lake had 3,421 commercial and industrial plants that produced as much smoke in an hour as most private residence could in nine months. He then chastised his audience for their

[37] City Commission Records, 8 April 1941, 263, petition #21; and 8 April 1941, 269, SLCCBA.
[38] City Commission Records, 10 April 1941, 278, SLCCBA.

wastefulness adding that "If coal cost as much in Utah as it does elsewhere, operators would be happy to cooperate."[39]

Most industries seemed to comply with Butler's campaign of education and positive feedback. Of the 79 class "A" offenders who had been targeted over the summer (class A being the worst), Butler reported that 58 had already started remodeling their heating units to conform with the ordinances, and 21 others asked the smoke division to survey their plants and give them recommendations to modify their equipment. Only two companies had not decided to fully cooperate. In response, Butler warned that each violation constituted a separate offense and that the violators could be prosecuted.[40]

While Butler was initially pleased with the efforts of most companies to comply with the new ordinances, his attitude toward private citizens was not as positive. He complained that "Most people in town are taking this campaign too lightly, they say that smoke control is old stuff here. Everyone agrees that smoke control is a wonderful thing for everyone else, but when it is applied to their particular case, they begin to holler."[41] Butler's complaints stemmed in part from the numerous citizens' petitions received by the mayor and the commission beginning in the late fall that requested exceptions be made to the new ordinances. Many citizens had coal stockpiled in their basements that they wanted to burn before they began to comply with the new laws. The problem was that these citizens either possessed furnaces that could not be converted, or they could not afford to purchase the proper equipment. The petitions asked the mayor to allow the residents to burn their non-processed reserves before they had to use smokeless coal or install mechanical equipment. The city made arrangements with many dealers so that

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[39] "Butler Asks S.L. Industry to aid War on Smoke," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 June 1941, 14.
[40] "Smoke Law Violators Mend Ways," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 June 1941, 14.
[41] "Anti-Smoke Drive Hits New Stride as Autumn Near," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 August 1941 5C.

residents could trade their coal for the smokeless variety, but citizens complained and felt it was an unreasonable request by the city to have them shovel several hundred pounds of coal out of their basements when they could more easily burn what they already stockpiled. Smokeless briquettes also cost two dollars and fifty cents more per ton than regular lump coal and some residents felt that this cost was too high.[42]

One particular story that received a lot of attention in the press and exemplified the hedging attitudes of some Salt Lakers and the City Commission concerned a Mrs. Herman Zobrist. She had amassed eight tons of coal and had recently installed a new furnace before the city ordinances were passed and her furnace was not equipped for smokeless firing. She claimed that the she was going to install a mechanical stoker in the summer, but in the interim she asked the city to allow her to burn her coal reserves free from legal repercussions.[43] In this case, Butler, perhaps feeling the pressure to prove all the naysayers wrong about his smoke plan, decided to adopt a more rigid stance. He argued that he could not legally dismiss anyone from breaking the law, because his job was "to enforce it." Instead, he went out of his way to make arrangements with a dealer so that Zobrist could trade her unprocessed coal for a smokeless variety. Zobrist did not accept this alternative because of the difficulty she felt she would have in removing the coal by herself, or the added cost of paying someone to do it for her. In addition, she was unhappy that she would lose over two dollars per ton with the exchange. Her case typified the problems and reluctance of many residents.[44]

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[42] "Smoke Body Offers Aid to Residents," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 October 1941, 11.
[43] "Appeal to Burn Coal on Hand Poses Smoke Law Problem," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 October 1941, 21. See also City Commission Records, 13 November 1941, p. 807 & 810, #52, SLCCBA.
[44] Ibid.

Mayor Jenkins, for his part, appealed to the smoke division and asked it to use discretion so as not to work any "undue hardships on residents." He also added that Butler and the smoke department could rule on unusual cases.[45] In reply, Butler reminded the mayor that the commission, not he, passed the ordinances, and that he was not given the authority to permit any exceptions.[46] Open debate among the city commission members ensued as to the degree to which their policies ought to be enforced. Commissioner George D. Keyser felt that "the commission should back the smoke abatement division 100 per cent," and that "enforcement should not be deviated from by one commissioner telling violators they can violate the code with immunity." He then added, "To me, ordinances are meant to be enforced. This smoke control law is the biggest thing ever attempted in Salt Lake City, and the commission should back it to the limit." Commissioner McConkie, on the other hand, had "no complaint, if leniency was shown in worthy cases." After much spirited debate, the commission could not come to an agreeable compromise. It finally decided to refer Zobrist's letter to the commissioner in charge of the smoke division, John Matheson, who quietly granted the exception.[47]

In the midst of this discussion the City Commission also had to deal with another smoke pollution concern: how best to dispose of the autumn leaves. Residents had been accustomed to burning them as well as other rubbish in the late fall or early spring. Beginning in 1938, the Women's Chamber had been petitioning the city to ban the practice and finally saw success with its incorporation into the general smoke abatement plan of 1941. The city hoped to divert the road construction crews from their normal

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[45] "Mayor Urges Leeway in Smoke Ruling," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 October 1941, 21.
[46] "Appeal to Burn Coal on Hand," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 October 1941, 21.
[47] "Smoke Control Appeal Gets New Hearing," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 November 1941, 19, and City Commission Records, 13 November 1941, 807 & 810, #52, SLCCBA.

duties two days a week in the month of October to collect leaves and rubbish that residents were encouraged to place in bins or containers.[48]

Commissioner Matheson, whose task it was to keep the streets paved, clean, and safe, had wanted to collect the leaves and rubbish separately from the normal trash collection. The city owned some special incinerators that could burn the refuse while producing less smoke than that created by the average citizen, but it was necessary that the leaves be separated from the regular trash so that they could be properly burned. Unfortunately, either too few residents wished to comply or they lacked the proper sized bins in which to place the leaves. By the middle of the month, so many citizens had deposited their debris in the gutters or in the streets that it became a danger to automobiles. Matheson did not want to allow people to violate the new ordinance in the first months of implementation, but his department also lacked the necessary manpower and equipment to properly do the job. He finally determined to ask residents to place as may leaves as they could in containers and pile the balance on the parking areas next to, but not in the gutters the day before garbage pick-up. He hoped that his men could then get as much of the rubbish as they possibly could. He also decided to have his road crews aid the garbage men in collecting the leaves with the trash and to use road construction trucks as part of the process.[49]

This idea proved to be equally unsuccessful. Out of frustration, Matheson asked members on the Commission for suggestions. The leaves issue, like the coal storage issue, revealed the apathy and skepticism of many of Salt Lake's private citizens towards

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[48] Mrs. Anthony C. Lund, President's Report of Women's Chamber of Commerce, 7 March 1938, 3, USHSA. See also "S.L. Official Sees Progress in Smoke Elimination," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 October 1941, 22.

[49] "Street Repairs Halt Today for Leaf Collection," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 October 1941, 19. See also City Commission Records, 16 October 1941, 755, #181, SLCCBA.

the smoke abatement program. Most residents were concerned about the smoke problem, yet they were unwilling to comply with the ordinances that were inconvenient to them. How best to dispose of the leaves also indicated that although Salt Lake City was willing to employ more smoke inspectors, it struggled like most cities with how to deal with its refuse problems. The fiscal and physical challenges created through the diversion of men and material to collecting leaves was only exacerbated during the harsh winter of 1940-41. Matheson's department had spent more than its annual budget on snow removal and some of the street repairs were not finished due to the deployment of road crews to other tasks. The failed strategies prompted Matheson to ask the Commission to suspend the laws the following spring. The Commission obliged and some of the smoke abatement laws were changed, allowing citizens to again legally burn leaves and rubbish during the months of April and October.[50]

Despite the initial complications and glitches in the new program, Butler remained optimistic. The first day of phase two of the abatement plan, namely inspections and "soft enforcement" saw 68 volunteer engineers help the eight city inspectors patrol the industrial and commercial sectors of the city from five to nine a.m. They reported 150 violations but determined an overall smoke density reduction of 50 percent from the previous year thanks to the summer education program.[51]

Butler believed that the strategy of education, inspection, and enforcement was going to succeed. After the first month he confidently reported that the overall smoke pall had been reduced by 39 percent compared with the same month of 1940. He also claimed that there was a 39 percent reduction in the average daily duration of smoke from

[50] City Commission Records, 7 April 1942, 265, #60 and 9 April 1942, 278, 81, 82, #42, SLCCBA..
[51] "Smoke Pall Lightens in Salt Lake," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 October 1941, 17.

210 to 128 minutes, and the amount of soot fall amounted to almost 34 percent less. He claimed that both the industrial and commercial districts showed a reduction in air pollution of almost 40 percent overall, while the residential areas had only improved 18 percent. Despite the poor figures for the residential areas the early indicators were extremely encouraging, particularly in light of the fact that October of 1941 was colder than 1940.[52]

With the encouraging statistics of the first month and the belief by Butler and his department that the industrial and commercial sectors were on the right track, the city smoke division decided to begin focusing its efforts on teaching private citizens how to properly fire their home furnaces. Unfortunately for them, weather conditions changed dramatically in November, producing a temperature inversion causing air to become trapped in the mountain valleys including all the pollution that had not escaped into the upper atmosphere. The air became so bad at one point that the Salt Lake Tribune reported that the "pea soup murk...reduced Christmas lights to blobs of weak color."[53]

The Women's Chamber, which had taken a wait and see approach with the city's new plan, now wasted little time in resuming its attacks on the commission and the mayor. Lund publicly warned that, "Vigorous, renewed action on the smoke menace will be formulated." She also renewed accusations that the city's leaders and the new smoke program failed to give any appreciable relief and reiterated that "[e]limination, not merely abatement of smoke, is possible and feasible, and it is the city commission's business to do something about it." She then called upon the city once again to take responsibility

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[52] "Smoke Control Cuts S.L. Pall by 39.4 PerCent(sic) in October," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 November 1941, 17.
[53] "Murk Blamed on Air Strata," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 27 November 1941, 13.

for building a processing plant as the means to ensuring that an inexpensive smokeless fuel would be available to all Salt Lakers.[54]

A few days later, the Women's Chamber again publicly challenged the city government to pass a resolution whereby the city would levy a small tax on coal purchases to be used to invest in a coal processing plant. The resolution also called upon the commission to make smokeless fuel mandatory for all industrial, commercial, and residential heating plants. The Chamber argued that a tax would more than pay for itself in the form of lower cleaning, renovating, and painting bills. It also argued that selling the by-products would make smokeless coal the same price as regular coal. The resolution ended by announcing that, "The last few days have proved that the smoke abatement laws are a complete failure."[55]

The renewed public criticisms by the Chamber forced the city to hold public hearings yet again on the issue. At one hearing, held just three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Lund questioned claims that the city's air quality had been improving. She argued that her organization had conducted its own studies and concluded that since 1921, despite all the efforts and money spent on abatement, Salt Lake's air had become worse, not better. Mary Edgeworth, also a member of the Women's Chamber, then spoke out claiming that she and the organization did not wish to interfere with the smoke department, but they felt they had no choice, pointing out that every program the city had tried, had failed. Both she and Lund urged the city to secure funding from both the federal and state governments to build a processing plant. Edgeworth finished by threatening the commission with a large-scale public demonstration to further pressure

[54] "Women's C. of C. Unit Scans Smokeless Fuel Petition," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 November 1941, 10.
[55] Women Ask Law Forcing Smokeless Fuel," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 December 1941, 17.

city officials if they continued what she deemed as an unfruitful path. Lund's threat had some political meaning to it because by this time the Women's Chamber belonged to the General Federation of Women's Clubs whose Utah membership boasted almost 10,000 women by the end of 1939.[56]

**The Failure of the Salt Lake Smoke Abatement Plan**

Despite all of the pressure and efforts by the Women's Chamber and other civic groups, a coal processing plant was never built in Salt Lake. World War II diverted most of the nation's resources to defeating Germany and Japan and, despite Salt Lake's poor air quality the local papers credited the city's abatement plans for vastly improving the city's air quality. Butler claimed that air pollution had been cut by almost 51 percent during that winter. The *Salt Lake Tribune* also tried to put a positive spin on the number of violations by pointing out that of the 4,220 smoke violations from the industrial and commercial districts and the 1,675 from residences 641 came from persistent violators. It also suggested that the city's enforcement and education efforts were causing most Salt Lakers to comply by installing better equipment and operating their furnaces with greater care.[57]

As World War II dragged on and the major emphasis in the state continued to be production, it is still somewhat remarkable that Salt Lake City attempted to battle its smoke demons at all. The challenge became increasingly more difficult, however, because of the limited amount of materials available to improve heating equipment,

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[56] City Commission Records, 9 December 1941, 863, SLCCBA. See also "Women Ask Law Forcing Smokeless Fuel," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 December 1941, 7; and "S.L. Firm Plans Smokeless Coal Factory," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1941, 13. See also, Mrs. Anthony C. Lund, President's Report of the Women's Chamber of Commerce, 1940, WCCF, USHSA.
[57] "City Reduces Reduction of Smoke by Half," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 13 March 1942, 17.

process coal, and the minimal incentives to alter behaviors. In this context, the first salvo fired at weakening the smoke ordinance came in April of 1942 when Commissioner Matheson announced that the city smoke ordinance was going to be amended to allow residents to burn their rubbish and lawn remains. He defended the policy change on the grounds that all the trucks and men were needed to begin repairing the streets after the long winter. He also pointed out that during the previous fall, the city had hauled more than two hundred extra loads of refuse at a budgetary loss of $8000, and it expected even more the next fall. The city offered further justification in the fall months for its waffling, pointing to the numerous petitions the smoke office received from businesses asking for permission to burn as much of their trade wastes as they could because scavengers who had collected such refuse in the past were now much fewer in number do to the economic upturn. Matheson did not feel that the extra costs of collection were justified, so he urged citizens to burn as much rubbish as they could before the fall months began.[58]

Matheson's concerns proved to be somewhat justified. The following spring he was again lamenting that his department was woefully under-funded and under- manned. He complained to the commission that his office was being bombarded with "incessant" calls from residents who had placed rubbish and other items on the curbs and were wondering why it had not been picked up by the city's garbage collectors. Matheson reported that citizens had deposited "refuse from attics, basements, garages, and gardens on the streets," and even though the city was not required to do so, people were getting upset when it was not hauled away within a couple of days. Part of the explanation for

[58] "City Amends Smoke Ruling to Allow Rubbish Burning," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 April 1942; see also City Commission Records, 16 October 1941, 755, #181, and 7 April 1942, 265 #60, and 15 October 1942, 735, #21, SLCCBA.

the abundance of "stuff" was the success of a spring clean-up drive sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. It seems Salt Lakers were eager to beautify their homes and private properties so much so that the city was almost two months behind in its collection schedule. As a result, Matheson in the spring of 1943 again asked the city to allow residents to burn their rubbish in violation of the smoke laws, and he also asked the other commissioners to loan him any excess labor they could spare.[59]

The city's decision to once again allow the burning of rubbish, combined with Butler's report presented the Women's Chamber with yet another opportunity to criticize not only the city commission, but Butler's reported success of the previous winter's smoke campaign. The Women's Chamber openly challenged Butler's claims that smoke abatement had resulted in a 50 percent smoke reduction and added that it believed the majority of Salt Lakers were also skeptical of the findings. Lund took the opportunity to once again call for the construction of a processing plant and claimed to speak for the women of the city. She argued that:

> The lack of appreciable improvement in the city's smoke condition and the destruction to health and property because of the smoke, as well as the spending of $25,000 per year without benefit to the people, has caused the women of the city to protest. They are asking for relief from this destruction through the industry of coal processing and are asking that Salt Lake City build a plant and receive benefits through that industry.[60]

Despite the war, the Women's Chamber continued to focus on the long- term health of both the city and its citizenry. The Salt Lake Tribune, in an about face, lamented the

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[59] Commissioner Matheson to the City Council, 7 April 1943, 212, #43, City Commission Records, SLCCBA.
[60] "Women Rap Move to Burn Rubbish," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 April 1942, 10.

city's decision to rescind the burning ordinance, and urged people to use restraint in burning leaves.[61]

With the momentum of public opinion again swaying on the side of the Women's Chamber, Butler took the opportunity to take a few jabs at his detractors. In a speech to the American Meteorological Society Butler criticized both the civic groups who opposed him and some on the City Commission. "It is useless to look forward to a spectacular cure. Success comes only after long-continued, highly skillful effort...It is of little use to complain of smoky stacks and allow new ones to be added daily, and it is not often that smokelessness is one of the main objectives in an installation."[62] Butler contended that the solution to the problem of new plant production was to provide engineering expertise. In other words, Butler felt that the civic groups, particularly the Women's Chamber did not have the necessary credentials to assess and present viable input because they were not professional engineers. His opinion and treatment of the Women's Chamber echoed that of the city government. The Women's Chamber's ideas were often dismissed along these lines even though they demonstrated that they understood the problems and potential solutions as well as, and in some cases, even better than Butler and the City Commission. In fact, the ideas of the Women's Chamber may have been dismissed more quickly because they were women. Butler also chided organizations like the city government and the Chamber of Commerce because they in essence wanted to "eat their cake and have it too." Butler correctly recognized that many in the city courted new industries without regard for the environmental consequences, yet at the same time wanted a cleaner, more beautiful community. Perhaps he finally truly recognized the

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[61] "Smoke Signals Tell of City's Clean-Up," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 April 1942, 12.
[62] "Butler Bares Efforts in Smoke Control," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 June 1942, 17.

political nature of a problem he had previously believed could be solved strictly through scientific rational and technology.[63]

It seems that Butler's undoing did in fact come as a result of his overconfidence in the omniscience of his profession to solve every problem through technological innovations. In the early twentieth century, sanitary engineers replaced health officers as the leaders of refuse reform in the United States. By 1900, engineering was the second largest profession in the nation with over 45,000 members. By 1930 that number more than quadrupled with approximately 230,000 employed engineers throughout the country. With male engineers assuming the mantel as the authority on better urban health and sanitation practices and systems, the voices of women, who traditionally were responsible for the health and welfare of their families, and by extension society, could have easily been displaced. Yet they refused to relinquish this responsibility so easily. As other studies have shown, women's organizations continued to lobby and work for better water and sewer systems and many did so by proposing known scientific means. The problems and solutions these women's groups (speaking of the middle-class primarily) brought to light often came from their unique perspectives as housewives, mothers, and political participants. The members of the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce serve as a case in point.[64]

Engineers, beyond their regulatory duties, also related themselves and their professional responsibilities to a higher calling. Ellen H. Richards, a sanitary engineer stated in the early 1900s that, "The sanitary engineer has a treble duty for the next few years of civil awakening. Having the knowledge, he must be a leader in developing

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[63] Ibid,, 17.
[64] Melosi, *Garbage in the Cities*, 80 and 84; Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*; Longhurst, "Don't Hold Your Breath."

works and plants...But he must be more; as a health officer he must be a `teacher' of the people to show them why all these things are to be." Many in the profession had complete faith in science and technology, and they had complete confidence that it was they who held the answers to society's problems.[65]

The running battle between the Women's Chamber and Butler continued through the winter of 1942-43. The war only exacerbated pollution problems due in part to railroad traffic that had increased by over 100 percent. The railroads, despite repeated assurances to the city, had failed to improve their firing methods and had not replaced the coal-fired switch engines with diesels. In fact the problems with the railroads continued into the early 1960s. After the war began, Salt Lake also witnessed a 33 percent population growth along with increased industrial activity. The Chamber of Commerce continued to do its part to foster growth through the publication of another pamphlet in 1943 entitled "Utah, Land of Industrial Opportunity." It boasted that, "It is the policy of the state government to assist in creating favorable conditions to enable our industries to prosper." It also continues the same claims of earlier propaganda highlighting the low wages, and at the same time a well- educated, and 98 percent "Anglo-Saxon" work force. Yet, despite the city's growth, Butler claimed that for the 1942 through 1943 winter, smoke production had been reduced by almost 5 percent from the previous year. He also reported that the city's smoke density, duration, and the amount of area covered by the smoke had been at its lowest level in ten years.[66]

The Women's Chamber and much of the general public, including the mayor, received Butler's report with great skepticism. Mayor Ab Jenkins had publicly been one

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[65] Melosi, *Garbage in the Cities*, 90-93. See also Worster, *Rivers of Empire*.
[66] "Study Shows S.L. Gains in War Against Smoke," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 April 1943, 16. "Utah, Land of Industrial Opportunity," Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, 1943, USHSA.

of the biggest proponents of the smoke abatement program, and the city's dual approach to prosperity through industrial growth and city beautification. He had also been one of the proponents of making sure that the City Commission was publicly united in its enforcement of the smoke program. Jenkins was fiscally conservative, receiving criticism along with the rest of the commission for not budgeting more for the park service for example. The city spent only $23,000 dollars to run and maintain its parks in 1941. Fred Tedesco, in charge of the parks and public property, complained that the parks were in bad shape and that other cities of comparable populations spent $105,000 per year on average for their parks. Tedesco then linked the rise in juvenile delinquency and a threat to American democracy with the poor condition of the parks. He quoted Secretary Harold Ickes, who believed that. "If there are any among us today, particularly among our young people who become so confused by tragic world events that they are beginning to doubt the democratic way, let them go into our parks."[67]

It is therefore somewhat surprising that Jenkins criticized Butler publicly through the papers and at one of the bi-weekly council meetings. He proclaimed that: "The way the smoke problem is now being handled in Salt Lake is more or less a joke." Jenkins' committee then recommended that the city adopt a plan to build a smokeless processing plant, establish state policies on smoke elimination, and initiate private development for the coal processing industry and the establishment of a market for the processed by-products at the state level.[68]

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[67] City Commission Records, Fred Tedesco, Commissioner of Parks and Public Property to the City Commission, 8 October 1942, 718, #197.
[68] "Smoke Starts Dispute by City Officials," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 October 1943, 9. See also City Commission Records, 28 October 1943, 630, #17.

Jenkins felt that the major reason that the smoke problem persisted was the direct cause of the smoke ordinance. He gradually became persuaded by the Women's Chamber, and, ironically, by some of Butler's comments, that it was impossible to promote smoke abatement while at the same time encouraging new industries without altering the make-up of the energy source. This also served as a public admission of sorts by Jenkins that the largest industries, which also tended to be some of the biggest polluters, were not being vigorously prosecuted. Instead, the smoke department went after smaller businesses and minor landlords. In response, Butler accused the Mayor of trying to make a political issue of how the smoke department operated. He also tried to dispel accusations that his department was conducting experimental methods to solve the pollution problem. He contended that the plan was the "composite result of years of scientific engineering research. The methods employed by this division are those proved through use to be effective," and he further added that his department endorsed the use of a smokeless fuel.[69] Jenkins later publicly repealed his criticism of Butler by explaining that his remarks were not a personal censure, but rather, were aimed at "the methods they (the smoke department) use and which they are compelled to use because of governing ordinances."[70]

The Mayor also became disillusioned with the way the City Commission operated. Like his predecessor E.B. Erwin, Jenkins did not like the fact that each commissioner exclusively made decisions for his department, and he wanted the commission to jointly decide the major issues. With the mayoral election looming, Jenkins realized that the air quality of the city was an important issue and he wanted to

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[69] Ibid.
[70] "Mayor Condemns Smoke Ordinance," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 October 1943, 3B.

try and distance himself from what many residents saw as a failed program. The growing rift between Mayor Jenkins, Butler, and the City Commission over the smoke issue was only exacerbated in November of 1943. November 12 and 13 proved to be two of the worst days in terms of dense smog that the city had seen in quite some time. Butler blamed the more than 1100 leaf fires that had burned between November 9 and 14. In response Jenkins again decried Butler and the smoke laws by encouraging residents to continue burning their leaves, explaining that the smoke problem would still exist even after all the leaves had burned. Butler then accused the Mayor of interfering with the Smoke Department and reminded everyone that Jenkins had voted for the smoke control program. The smoke pollution was so bad in the middle of November that visibility in the downtown section was a mere block and a half. Ironically, some of the thickest smoke density was recorded around the City County Building where the Smoke Abatement office was located.[71]

The Women's Chamber tried to again capitalize on the fissure in the city government by suggesting that the twenty thousand dollar appropriation to the smoke abatement program for 1944 should go towards the construction of a processing plant. Lund argued that there was too much overlap in the city departments causing wasted duplication of many tasks. As an example she had an apartment manager named Mrs. T.F. Jackson testify that on one occasion an inspector had been sent to watch the smoke from her chimney, and after some two hours there finally learned that the apartment was heated with natural gas! Jackson went on to complain that she felt the smoke problem

[71] "Engineers Claim Burning Leaves Cause Blackout," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 November 1943, 1B. See also "Smog Blanket Darkens Official City Relations," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 November 1943, 11.

"was worse and her apartments dirtier than ever as she had to clean the wallpaper three times a year now instead of once, increasing the cost of operation."[72]

With Salt Lake's mayor and a few more important political allies, the climate seemed ripe for the Women's Chamber to see their goal of a processing plant come to fruition, and this new political coalition successfully convinced the state legislature to action. The state began considering moving a processing plant already in operation in New Haven, Connecticut, to Salt Lake. At a public meeting to consider the issue, Colonel Frederick Pope of Coalogs Inc. explained that his company could move $35,000 worth of machinery and $3,000 worth of lab equipment for a forty ton a day pilot processing plant. In addition to paying for the materials, the state would also have to furnish a building, railroad siding, roads, and a means of disposing of the waste. The final cost was estimated at about $102,000.[73]

Governor Maw was heavily in favor of a processing plant as was the newly elected Salt Lake City Mayor, Earl Glade. Maw wanted the legislature to approve funding for a small test plant. In 1941 the Utah Conservation and Research Foundation had proposed that the state build a pilot plant to determine the feasibility of processing Utah coals, however at the time many groups only wanted a Utah based company and distillation process to run the tests. The Chamber at that time had opposed the recommendation on the grounds that a German-based company had already conducted a successful commercial test, thus making a pilot plant a waste of money. Additionally, the Women's Chamber felt that there was not a Utah based company that could sufficiently do the job. This time around, the Chamber realized that a successful pilot plant would

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[72] "Women Rap S.L. Smoke Control Unit," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 November 1943, 17. See also City Commission Records, 28 December 1943, 743, #591, SLCCBA.
[73] "State Weighs Smokeless Fuel Merits," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 February 1944, 13.

only be a temporary transition to an enlarged commercial enterprise and they fully endorsed the idea.[74]

The Utah Coal Operators Association also became interested in investigating a processing plant. The coal industry was intensely divided on what kind of impact coal processing would have on the industry, but with rising public and political opinion in favor of a plant, both on the city and state levels, combined with the fact that the Federal Government announced that it was going to make thirty million dollars available for the construction of plants throughout the nation, the coal owners concluded that the best action would be to control the research and direction of the process. Victor W. Sweet, one of the larger coal operators in the state admitted that smokeless fuel was "inevitable."[75]

In August of 1944 plans were submitted to the state engineering department to immediately begin construction of a plant on land purchased by the state at the corner of Chicago and Delaware Streets. The state finance department had already allocated thirty-five thousand dollars for the initial construction. It hoped to have the plant in operation by late fall of the same year. The engineering department, however, decided to conduct more tests at the University of Utah before giving its approval. It was not until November of the following year that the go-ahead was given and construction on the fifty ton per day plant began. The Coalogs Inc. Corporation was to oversee the transfer of

[74] "Smoke Costs Salt Lake $10,000 Daily," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 February 1944, 10. See also "Smokeless Fuel Project Set for Discussion," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 13 February 1944, 10B.
[75] "Coal Group Probes New Fuel Plant," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 March 1944, 1B.

equipment from New Haven and the building of the necessary facilities, however, it ran into financial difficulties and the test plant was never completed.[76]

Meanwhile, after the winter of 1943, William Butler acknowledged that soot fall had increased by 10.4 percent from the previous winter. Butler blamed the war for the majority of the problems, but he pointed out that 119 commercial and 11 industrial plants were repeat offenders and that those companies could not procure the necessary materials to make corrections due to war shortages. He also blamed the war for the diminished number of availably trained firemen and boiler operators, which he credited as the primary cause for the poorly managed furnaces.[77]

By the winter of 1944-45, Butler was feeling the pressure from many groups to once again enforce the city smoke regulations more vigorously. Earlier that year the federal government began allowing more materials to the public so that the necessary alterations to their furnaces could be accomplished, thus eliminating this excuse. This prompted Butler to warn that, "both individuals and companies would be prosecuted for repeated violations of the code." As he had done in the past, however, his tough talk was followed by increasing the number of inspections and educational workshops for furnace operators and by once again levying fines and other punishments on repeat offenders of small companies as a token sign that the city was serious about cleaning the air. In fact, the first major conviction did not occur until April of 1945 against the Specification Motor Oil Company. Alfred D. Sutton was charged with operating a high-pressure boiler

[76] "State Studies New Fuel Plant," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 August 1944, 8. See also "Officials Set Smokeless Plant Start," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 November 1945, 21.
[77] "S.L. Smoke Increases, Chart Shows," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 May 1944, 9.

without a license and "in a careless and negligent manner." As a result the plant was ordered closed until the proper modifications were completed.[78]

While Butler had relied primarily on education and inspections, in fairness his hands were slightly tied. He did not have the clout to override directions given from county, state, and federal government officials, nor did he have the authority to prosecute those who operated those buildings. This group comprised some of the worst polluters in the city. Especially notorious was the United States Quartermaster Laundry. The army took over the Troy Laundry Company in 1942 and, according to Butler, would have been condemned in 1943 if it had been a private company. Despite the many complaints against it, the army did nothing to correct the problems, and Butler was powerless to do anything.[79]

As mentioned, members of the Commission also discouraged and even prevented Butler from properly enforcing the smoke ordinances against the largest industries. The on- going battle with the railroads is a case in point. Dating back to the city's first smoke abatement plans, and depending on whose reports and statistics one chooses to believe, the coal-fired engines had been responsible for at least 10 percent of the city's pollution. Despite repeated promises to improve their equipment, the offences remained and became worse without any sort of punishments or fines from the city. The war only gave the railroads increased license to operate free of any smoke restrictions. In 1946 the city again asked that the railroads remove all of their steam engines that were operating within city limits. R. K. Bradford, an executive for the Denver and Rio Grande Western,

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[78] "Chief Engineer Assures S.L. of Less Smoke This Winter," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 September 1944, 17; "City Engineer Warns Fuel Users Smoke Ordinance Will be Enforced," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 November 1944, 9; "Engineer Eyes Smoke War," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 November 1944, 20; and "Firm Charged in Smoke Ban," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 April 1945, 17.
[79] "S.L. Official Scores Smoke from Army Laundry," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 March 1945, 14.

responded first by agreeing to abide by any rulings the city made, then resorting, as they had in the past, to threatening to permanently remove all of his company's steam engines that operated between Helper and Salt Lake from operation, which, he claimed, would cause six hundred men to lose their jobs and cut off the supply of coal to the city. He also warned that the lost railroad traffic would cost the coal industry six- hundred thousand tons of coal per year throwing even more people out of work. A Mr. Thompson representing the Union Pacific and a Mr. D. Howe of the Western Pacific claimed that compliance with the ordinance would have the same effects on them.[80]

By war's end, Butler seems to have had a better understanding of the political nature of the smoke problems, or at least seemed finally willing to acknowledge them. He finally attempted to take a hard-line stance against the railroads in particular by insisting among other things, that no coal or oil fired engines be allowed in the city. Further, he was only willing to give the railroads sixty days in which to comply. Butler's new public attitude prompted a litany of petitions to the Commission from several groups hoping to again stave off stricter smoke enforcements. State legislatures representing the coal operators in their districts, the railway workers union, coal workers, and even some farmers' groups were among those who lobbied in protest. Just as in the late 1930s, groups of people who did not live in Salt Lake, but felt they would be adversely affected by the city's decisions, played an important role in keeping the city's air dirty.[81]

The City Commissioners, bowing to pressure, ordered Butler to back- off and prepare an alternate plan. The Commission sent the new proposal, which had ten

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[80] "Carbon Fears S.L. Proposal," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 May 1946, 8A. See also, City Commission Records, 23 May 1946, 353, SLCCBA.
[81] City Commission Records, 8 June 1946, #584; 11 September 1946, 601, #584; 14 August 1947, 527, #s 635, 638, 705, 725; and 20 August 1947, 540, #183, SLCCBA.

demands from Butler, to the railroads for their approval and suggested changes. The railroads agreed to immediately comply with eight of the ten items, stating that the final two demands, one of which was the banning of all the coal and oil- fired switch engines, would be taken care of within a couple of years. The city and the railroads thus came to a compromise. The railroads agreed to begin altering their steam-operated switching and transfer locomotives and the city agreed to suspend its ban against the operation of all steam engines within the city limits. Commissioner Matheson defended the compromise by stating "We want effective control of smoke in Salt Lake City, yet at the same time we do not want to harm industries which are so vital to the city's prosperity and well being."[82]

Despite repeated assurances from the railroads, they continued to be one of the city's biggest polluters into the 1960s. Yet, even with their non-compliance and Salt's Lake's growth, records from the city engineering department suggest that the city's air quality did improve for a time, thanks in large part to more homes, businesses, and industries' conversion to natural gas. Nevertheless, from the start of the Smoke Abatement Program in 1941 through the winter of 1945-46, some studies suggested that Salt Lake City had seen a reduction in soot fall by 65 percent, although this figure was highly debated. The improved air quality prompted many Salt Lake residents to laud the city and Butler's efforts, at least temporarily. A Mrs. Florence Dean Williams who lived in London for a number of years remarked, "I thought Salt Lake was the dirtiest city in the world when I first arrived, and five years ago when they said they were going to control the smoke I did not believe it. I feel much better about Salt Lake now, and I think

[82] "A New R.R. Smoke Control Plan," *Salt Lake Telegram*, 12 June 1947 and "Making Progress on Smoke Elimination," *Salt Lake Telegram*, 19 November 1948. See also, City Commission Records, 10 July 1947, p. 447 and 30 July 1947, p. 487, SLCCBA.

most people will agree with me." Another resident was quoted as saying, "This has been the cleanest year in Salt Lake City that I can recall, with furnace smoke cut almost entirely. The improvement has been reflected in the cleaning bills in my apartment houses." Even Lund offered tempered praise, "Weather conditions may have some bearing on the situation, but Salt Lake does seem to be more pleasant."[83] Citizenry praises, however, would again turn to criticisms during the winter of 1947-48. The air quality was so bad that it prompted the Salt Lake Tribune to remark "If the Smoke Doesn't Go, the City Will."[84]

Several snags prevented the city from ever building its own processing plant, but the Women's Chamber of Commerce did get a glimpse at what it was working towards. In 1948 the first shipment of processed coal from a plant built in Wellington, Utah arrived in the city. Plant owners claimed that the new facility could process 128 tons of coal a day, but the venture was short lived. The city by this point had begun an almost complete conversion to natural gas and the processing plant soon went out of business.[85]

Through its persistence, the Women's Chamber introduced the possibility of cleaner skies and successfully linked urban cleanliness to increased personal economic control and the possibility of greater direct democratic political action. It also forced city officials to maintain at least cursory efforts to appease the public, and, in the process, improved the air quality for a time, giving the public some hope that permanent relief was possible. Groups like the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce also represented an important link between the environmentalists of the Progressive Era and the post-war

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[83] "S.L. Official Scores Smoke From Army Laundry," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 March 1945, 14; "Salt Lakers Hail Progress of Smoke Campaign," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 April 1946, 9.
[84] "If the Smoke Doesn't Go, the City Will," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 September 1948, 2-3.
[85] "Can We Eliminate Smog?," *Deseret News*, 17 December 1948.

environmental movement. The proponents of smoke elimination successfully infused issues into the public debate over how best to utilize public space for the common good and demonstrated and verbalized to the city government the desires of residents for urban environmental amenities.

The Chamber, however, failed in its ultimate goal of complete elimination of Salt Lake's smoke for a couple of reasons. The first is the historical timing of their efforts. If the organization had begun in 1932 when the state's legislative bodies were almost completely overturned, perhaps it could have convinced the state and the city to build a plant. By 1936, though, the Democratic Party was divided and the state gradually grew leery of the New Deal's more "radical" programs. Additionally, even though the organization succeeded in making pollution an important issue in the midst of the Great Depression and World War II, financial difficulties to individuals and the municipality were successfully leveraged by opposition groups to avert what they saw as the most extreme parts of the smoke abatement plans.

Yet despite these failings it is amazing that reformers like the Women's Chamber of Commerce were able to make environmental issues so publicly and politically important. As demonstrated, they were able to do so because they successfully connected the construction of the built environment-- issues related to health, beauty, and urban nature-- to greater personal control and freedom, both economically and politically. In essence, they believed that urban nature was the key to local and personal autonomy because it would have a positive effect on the character of American citizens, and in the process, would thus fortify the nation and its democratic beliefs. This was particularly important given the threats the free world faced during the 1930s and '40s. The

Women's Chamber's appeal to the commonality of environmental issues to all social groups and economic classes and its attempts to get residents to see the city as an entire entity, while simultaneously focusing on improving their own homes and neighborhoods, was an important tactic that foreshadowed post-war environmental efforts in the nation's suburbs, as activists pushed for "quality of life" issues.

## Conclusion

In his important book, *Atlantic Crossings*, Daniel Rodgers argues that if we are truly to understand "the nature and results of reform movements we must shift the focus of our inquiry." "Conventional political analysis," he contends, "cleaves hard to what is called outcomes analysis; its home turf is the legislative process and the heavy claims of interest and political advantage brought to bear there. This emphasis is not without ample reason. But the political process is broader than outcomes. One must also ask how issues get into the political stream itself, how problems are defined and issues framed."[1] This investigation of urban environmentalism in Salt Lake City and Lansing has undertaken such an analysis. It has argued that historians of urban environmental reforms need to consider more specifically the definitions and meanings various groups of urban residents gave to the environment as part of the understanding that how the issues were framed help account for the outcomes. Along these lines, Maureen Flanagan cogently argues that historians "ought to be able by now to see that" in addition to machine, ethnic and class politics, "gender politics also exist," and are manifest through battles over resource allocation, including how urban spaces are defined and built.[2]

There is no question that women have historically played an important role in the conceptualization and actual construction of cities, and that the unique perspectives that many women have brought to the table, because of the roles society has traditionally given them, often challenge the status quo. It also seems to be clear that women were not always at the forefront of environmental reforms, and that, as the case in Salt Lake

[1] Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 6.
[2] Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts*, 196; See also, Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City*.

demonstrates, they were not united even within their own socio/economic class. Despite this, in order for scholars to better re-create the past, it is essential that they recognize and acknowledge when women took center stage, when women shared the stage, and when they were in the background or on the fringes. The failure to incorporate the efforts and ideas of women into the historical record, where and when they are there, or the failure to take their ideas seriously because they are not fully and immediately incorporated into public policy, cheapens the historical record. Historians, by following the path and contextual transformation of ideas such as the urban environmentalism in the first decades of the 20th century and earlier, can then more fully understand its ramifications when it reemerges and becomes part of public policy decades later.

In the 1930s and '40s, it is clear, for example, that the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce framed urban environmental issues within the context of attempts to restore local and personal control of the political and economic structures of their communities. They did this by "imaging the city as a shared home," which, "gave women a metaphor through which to articulate and establish a different and more comprehensive set of priorities for city government."[3] This indicates that attitudes about the environment were neither monolithic nor were they solely defined by engineers and politicians. While a conservationist philosophy, as had been defined by turn-of-the-century reformers and codified by the Theodore Roosevelt administration, tended to be more pervasive among most engineers and municipal politicians, other groups and individuals sought to better integrate the environment and an environmental attitude not just into the physical structure of the city, but into the structure of the urban political and economic systems. For these groups, the desired end result was to transform the urban

[3] Ibid., 86.

environment for the sake of improved health, increased personal autonomy and a fairer and more broad-based political and economic democracy.

Yet, as the experiences in Lansing and Salt Lake demonstrate the multiple meanings and values that different groups ascribed to urban nature and how they put them to use in agitating for environmental reform, meant that certain ideas won out over others. These experiences also illuminate how and to what degree these groups attempted to incorporate those definitions into their local economies and into the built environment based on, and as a reflection of, their definitions of democracy.

Municipal and industrial leaders in both cities adopted the language and ideas of reform to fit their own definitions of democracy, one that inextricably fused democracy with capitalism. The Women's Chamber in Salt Lake City, like Harland Bartholomew in Lansing, deliberately or not, may have helped codify that synthesis of democracy and capitalism for the general public because of the cultural limitations they faced in trying to sell their ideas to a society that emphasized money above all else. The skillful political manipulations of institutions embedded in the power structure such as the railroads, coal companies, chambers of commerce, and the city governments seized upon the economic aspects of reformers' arguments with one result being the commodification of nature in an effort to reframe the issues to conform to their own ideas.

City leaders gave voters what they wanted in the short term-- jobs, inexpensive housing, cheap municipal services, personal prosperity--while giving the impression that they were also working to rid their cities of smoke, purify the water, and provide an efficient infrastructure. The fact is, however, that taxes continued to rise while urban centers became less desirable places to live. Residents did not feel they were living in

safe, healthy, and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods and that their voices were being ignored in favor of business interests. Because groups like the Women's Chamber had successfully connected urban nature to personal autonomy, many urban dwellers grew tired of the empty promises of city governments and eventually left for the suburbs as an act of political and economic protest and frustration.

There are several factors that conventionally explain post-war suburbanization, including federal government policies that provided inexpensive loans for housing on the outskirts of cities; red-lining, which trapped most blacks in the inner-city; companies relocating to the South, West, and outlying areas of large cities, prompting workers to move also; the federal highway system, which allowed people to quickly travel between home and work; and federal funding for infrastructures going to these new communities. Large cities that failed to recognize and properly counteract these trends tended to face financial hardships and urban decay. Cities like Detroit, for example, found this out the hard way. As early as the late 1940s, because Detroit mismanaged its housing crisis, the city saw hundreds of thousands of white residents flee to the suburbs in pursuit of a better life. White flight, in combination with the way the city handled racial issues, the relocation of automobile manufacturing plants, and the transfer of federal government defense spending to the Sunbelt meant severe urban decay for that city.[4]

As the cases of Lansing and Salt Lake illustrate, though, suburbanization can also be attributed to how cities, large and small, dealt with pressing issues related to the environment and the physical construction of their communities. Many white Americans, often led by housewives, felt politically disenfranchised as their concerns were continually ignored and sacrificed to the demands of business and industry. Many of

[4] Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

them hoped to gain a greater measure of political and financial empowerment by moving to suburban communities. They wanted clean air, open green spaces and lower taxes, and believed that all three were part of what constituted the "American dream," which is why Americans who could afford to, had been fleeing the central city for decades previous to World War II. Post-war urban flight, therefore, also came about due to the fact that most cities catered to the wants and needs of big business to the neglect of urban beautification and community development.[5]

Some results of surburbanization were a post-war cult of domesticity, isolation of the home and family, and a greater degree of conformity in America.[6] While it is quite likely that in the 1950s and '60s the promotion of home and family togetherness was a response to and served as a bulwark against the potentially destructive forces of the Cold War, the suburban home also symbolized greater political and economic autonomy. The manicured front and back yards signified a badge of the middle-class, and also gave Americans a feeling of security and having some control over their built environments through the manipulation of nature. This post- World War II America spawned increased feelings of security and helped create and renew the quest for an improved "quality of

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[5] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (Basic Books, 1988). See also Sugrue, *Origins*. Traditionally, cities that have had very diversified economies, which include tourism, have historically fared much better in terms of physical and economic growth, and in retaining residents. See for example, Peter Geoffrey Hall, *The World Cities* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979); Mark Girouard, *Cities and People: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). What all three of these books have as a common theme is that cities have had certain functions that have drawn people to them or in other words, the population follows the money. Those cities have subsequently developed their spaces- buildings etc. to cater to those functions. The rigidity or flexibility of municipal leaders to changing local, national and economic markets has determined in part the growth and prosperity of cities. While such studies account primarily for other economic factors such as industrialization, "high" finance etc, I also believe that urban nature needs to be included in the equation, and while people follow the money, perhaps American suburbanization patterns suggest that the "money" will follow the people too.

[6] Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*. See also May, *Homeward Bound*.

life." As American suburbanites had the time and turned their attention to preserving environmental amenities, the modern-day environmental movement took shape.[7]

Yet those same fenced backyards and the emphases on nuclear family unity led many to a general turning-away from broader community issues. Suburban communities began to resemble the larger cities people fled. Commerce and corporate offices and headquarters followed the people to the suburbs with the lure of lower real estate prices and the promise of huge tax breaks. Residents once again witnessed the diminishment of communal ties, witnessed higher taxes to subsidize corporate welfare, contributed to unplanned and uncontrolled growth, and once again faced a loss of local political control to the two main national parties. The result of this loss of local democracy has meant an increased disillusion by some with their suburban utopias and with America's political and economic systems.[8]

The physical environment has consistently been a window through which the ordinary citizen believes they have a voice. Robert Johnston shows through a series of studies by other scholars that the majority of Americans lean towards the idea of a "moral economy," "are overwhelmingly committed to the institution of private property," but are "deeply divided about what constitutes a fair distribution of private property and whether the community should decide how the individual disposes of that property" and that "seventy percent of the general public say that security is more important to them than advancement."[9] These ideas suggest that Americans accept capitalism, but have an aversion to big business and those who have too much. It also bolsters the argument that environmental issues in America have been and are still employed by individuals and

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[7] Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 2-4.
[8] Teaford, *Post- Suburbia*, especially chapter 5; and Garreau, *Edge Cities*.
[9] Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class*, 268.

groups because it is one of the few places of entry where they believe they still have some control over their lives and the political and economic systems. The environment affects personal property- something that is still considered almost sacred, and when it is threatened, will therefore garner widespread attention, sympathy, and support.

In conjunction with the growing disillusionment in the suburbs, America's larger cities have recently begun to "rediscover" the city plans of men like Bartholomew. Many municipal governments are now paying closer attention to creating and enhancing already existing open spaces of urban nature to facilitate an increased feeling of community and sense of personal autonomy. As a result of the many inner-city urban renewal programs, cities are now witnessing the in-migration of a younger generation who has grown disillusioned with what they perceive as a stale and isolating atmosphere in the suburbs. Many of the efforts by larger cities to lure people back emphasize better, more affordable housing, increased police protection, and better recreational opportunities that are often linked to the implementation of more urban nature—all ideas supported by the studies mentioned above.[10]

Just as Lansing has struggled as the result of the path it has taken, Salt Lake too saw its population stall and even decline for a time as people moved to the suburbs. In 1980 Salt Lake had only 163,000 people while by 1990 it dropped to less than 160,000. Up through the early 1990s, Salt Lake's air quality continued to be a serious problem, despite the fact that the city's economy became more heavily weighted towards finance and services. The air pollution was exacerbated by the region's growth and the increased use of automobiles by those who left for the suburbs and commuted back into the city to

[10] Anne Whiston Spirn, "Reclaiming Common Ground: Water, Neighborhoods, and Public Places," 297-314, in Robert Fishman, ed, *The American Planning Tradition*. See also Garreau, *Edge Cities*, and Teaford, *Post- Suburbia*.

work. By the late 1990s, though, Salt Lake began to take a more proactive stance to revitalize the downtown section, just as Lansing had tried to do in the 1980s. Salt Lake, however, unlike Lansing, placed a greater focus on housing, cultural recreation, and urban nature. As a result, Salt Lake's population began to increase to just less than 180,000 in 2003. The city built a highly popular light rail system that has already been expanded twice and will be extended even further north and south of the city, in addition to increasing its fleet of buses. The public transportation has helped improve the city's air quality and made it much easier for people to travel around the city and to the suburbs. There are also several good restaurants that have ample space for outdoor dining in the warmer months, a performing arts auditorium, and several places to go shopping. The city has also worked with private developers to renovate a number of the old factories and to convert them into apartments and condos.[11]

The urban nature downtown, though, is the result primarily of the Latter Day Saint Church and remains contested terrain for several reasons. Temple Square, the adjoining plaza, and the roof of the church's new conference center (which was made into a "natural" looking park) are all places that encourage reflection and relaxation. The LDS church has also recently purchased a large chunk of real estate downtown and has plans of creating mixed use buildings with commercial shopping at the street level and apartments and condominiums on the upper floors. They hope to encourage more residents to live where they work and to fill the streets at night on a more consistent basis

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[11] "Census Says S.L. Population Lost 1% Over Past 3 Years," *Deseret Morning News*, 24 June 2004; "Nordstrom Will Stay," *Deseret Morning News*, 28 August 2004; "LDS Church to Turn Triad into Education Center," *Deseret Morning News*, 23 June 2004; "Diversity Key to Revitalized Salt Lake, Mayor Says," *Deseret Morning News*, 17 June 2004; "Culture Block' Unveiled for Salt Lake," *Deseret Morning News*, 17 September 2004; "ACLU Starts Appeal in 2nd Plaza Case," *Deseret Morning News*, 22 May 2004.

with a greater diversity of local people. Yet, these improvements have not come without controversy. The city and the church have been accused of subverting democracy and limiting free speech for the manner in which the church purportedly obtained the plaza property from the city and because a stricter code of personal decorum is enforced for people who visit the plaza.[12]

The mid-century experiences, past and present, of Salt Lake and Lansing, then, illuminate the fact that contests over environmentalism did not disappear or completely give way to a conservationist philosophy in the 1910s as some have argued, nor did anti-smoke campaigns collapse across the United States by the 1920s as Scott Hamilton Dewey implies. The modern-day environmental movement and an environmental ethos, which have become embedded in the structures of the local, state, and federal governments, just as conservation had under Theodore Roosevelt, had its roots in the failed attempts of environmental reforms in the decades prior to World War II.[13] This environmentalism manifest itself in women's groups, like the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce and in the individual visions of professional planners like Harland Bartholomew during the 1920s, '30s, and '40s.[14]

As Americans continue to debate the meanings of democracy, it is clear that the relationship between cities and nature will continue to be an important part of the issue. It is also clear that how Americans define and use nature is a reflection of how they define themselves, of their economic values, and their ideas about democracy. As a

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[12] "Nordstrom Will Stay," *Deseret Morning News*, 28 August 2004; "LDS Church to Turn Triad into Education Center," *Deseret Morning News*, 23 June 2004; "Diversity Key to Revitalized Salt Lake, Mayor Says," *Deseret Morning News*, 17 June 2004; "Culture Block' Unveiled for Salt Lake," *Deseret Morning News*, 17 September 2004; "ACLU Starts Appeal in 2nd Plaza Case," *Deseret Morning News*, 22 May 2004.
[13] Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*.
[14] Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*; Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, Dewey, *Don't Breathe the Air*, 24-25.

society, if Americans can better understand the impact of the historical choices municipalities have made, they will have a better understanding of the physical world in which they live, and perhaps they will have a better idea of how they want to change it.

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USHSA- Utah State Historical Society Archives
USA- Utah State Archives
SLCCBA- Salt Lake City County Building Archives
WCCF- Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce Files

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