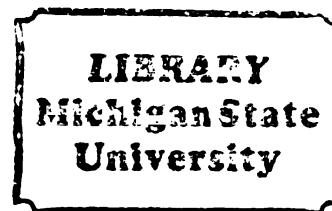


Thesis



This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

The Great Strike: Religion, Labor and Reform in
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1890 - 1916

presented by

Jeffrey D. Kleiman

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in History

Peter Levine
Major professor

Date July 23, 1985



RETURNING MATERIALS:
Place in book drop to
remove this checkout from
your record. FINES will
be charged if book is
returned after the date
stamped below.

AUG 26 '86
SEP 04 1986
984369 HM
400 A047
AUG 01 2004
MAR 05 1991
OCT 27 1992
MAR 05 1993
357
JUN 24 1994
1244519

JUN 08 2002

AUG 01 2004

MAR 05 2008

MAR 15 2010

121810

**THE GREAT STRIKE: RELIGION, LABOR AND REFORM IN
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, 1890-1916**

by

Jeffrey D. Kleiman

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

1985

Copyright by
Jeffrey David Kleiman
1985

ABSTRACT

THE GREAT STRIKE: RELIGION, LABOR AND REFORM IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, 1880-1916

By

Jeffrey D. Kleiman

This study of the relationship between municipal reform and worker-employer conflict in Grand Rapids, Michigan, between 1880 and 1916 provides another instance that helps explain reform in the Progressive Era and the limits of working class protest in industrializing America. In Grand Rapids during these years, manufacturers and bankers secured control of city government through the process of charter revision. Yet ratification of these changes could not have occurred without the support of working-class voters. Wage earners provided the critical margin of victory at the polls for a government created to reduce their own involvement. This study offers an explanation of this behavior by focusing on the events leading up to the furniture workers' abortive strike in 1911 and the aftermath of the charter reform.

The strike was a key episode demonstrating the inability of workers to act in a class-oriented way in economic affairs. Unable to organize for effective action in a major strike, workers were in no position to act collectively in the political arena. During the strike of 1911, workers could not agree upon the tactics to follow. The major ethnic groups involved, Dutch Calvinists and Polish Catholics, disputed whether to restrain nonstrikers forcibly or through picketing. Conflicting religious doctrines further eroded any class solidarity as Calvinists withdrew from union organization, a factor critical to the strike's failure. Additionally, many wage earners were characterized by a high degree of home-ownership,

typical for medium-sized industrial cities. The pride and burden of mortgage payments, taxes and improvement increased dependence on uninterrupted wages. Class conflict threatened workers who placed the security of private property above class solidarity. Fragmented by ethnicity and religion, and encumbered by mortgaged property, workers in Grand Rapids divided on the best course regarding charter reform in 1916.

Samuel Hays and James Weinstein noted the important class-oriented nature of Progressive Era municipal reforms but did not suggest how a minority interest was translated into political fact. The case of Grand Rapids offers some insight into that aspect of change at the grass-roots level.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of the people who made completion of this work possible.

Professor Peter Levine's kind patience and masterful criticism guided this project from its inception. His influence kept this study from becoming merely an exercise in local history without importance for other historians. Professor William Hixson contributed much insight into the important connections of religion and politics while giving a careful reading of the text. An Urban Affairs Program Graduate Fellowship provided seed money to begin research and present preliminary findings to colleagues in the History Department. A special note of thanks goes to Gordon Olson, City Historian of Grand Rapids, whose support and encouragement were unflagging. Finally, but most of all, I must thank my wife, Kim Hartley. Her ability to live with a graduate student while raising two children provided a major source of peace and understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
List of Tables	v
Introduction	vi
Chapter I The Rule from Above 1890-1906	1
Chapter II The Divided City 1890-1906	34
Chapter III Selecting Mayor and Minister 1906	66
Chapter IV The Great Strike 1911	97
Chapter V The Battle for Reform 1912-1916	136
Conclusion	175
Appendix A Directory of Interlocking Directorates among Banks and Major Furniture Factories	180
Appendix B Principals of the Banking, Furniture and Social Elite in Grand Rapids, 1911 Based on the City Directory, <u>Dau's Blue Book</u> , Reports of the Michigan Banking Commission	183
Appendix C Maps of Grand Rapids	184
Bibliography	187

LIST OF TABLES

		<u>Page</u>
TABLE 1	Comparative Growth of Four Major Industries in Grand Rapids, 1890 and 1910	4
TABLE 2	National Increase in Non-Farm Housing	5
TABLE 3	Growth of Housing Stock in Grand Rapids	14
TABLE 4	Breakdown of Major Firms Interlocked and Excluded	23

INTRODUCTION

This study of the relationship between municipal reform and worker-employer conflict in Grand Rapids, Michigan, between 1880 and 1916 provides another instance that helps explain reform in the Progressive Era and the limits of working class protest in industrializing America. In Grand Rapids during these years, manufacturers and bankers secured control of city government through the process of charter revision. Yet ratification of these changes could not have occurred without the support of working-class voters. Wage earners provided the critical margin of victory at the polls for a government created to reduce their own involvement. This study offers an explanation of this behavior by focusing on the events leading up to the furniture workers' abortive strike in 1911 and the aftermath of the charter reform.

Grand Rapids was a typical industrializing city at the turn of the century. Economic expansion sustained demographic growth as the city's population more than quadrupled in the decades after 1880. Manufacturing changed also; before 1880 it had been seasonal, small, and centered on extraction. After 1880 industry moved to large-scale production of consumer goods for a national market. Flour and saw mills remained along the river, but huge furniture factories appeared alongside the rail lines and spurs, their smokestacks a prominent feature of the new city skyline.

The formation of two new classes accompanied this era: the industrial-capitalist and the wage earner. Relations between employer and worker remained peaceful for more than twenty years of economic expansion. Industrialists were busy coping with problems of competition. They responded by forming a series of trade associations and interlocking directorates to control wages, production, and shipping costs. In the process, industrialists also created a series of new banks to stabilize the seasonal demands for capital and reduced their dependence on the larger urban financial centers. Dutch and Polish immigrants provided inexpensive and skilled labor to the growing industries. Steady year-round wages, though slightly depressed by national standards, permitted wide-spread home-ownership among workers, the mortgages frequently granted by savings institutions that were a part of the manufacturers' banking network. In this relatively peaceful and expansive era, immigrant workers turned their attention to family life rather than shop floor organization. Church and fraternal groups occupied central importance instead of union activities.

In Grand Rapids, as elsewhere, important political repercussions followed this separation of home and workplace. Fragmentation shaped workers' responses to local and national issues. Instead of a class-based response, neighborhood, parish, precinct and ward became the landmarks of political consciousness. Competition among working-class wards for political power and city resources were reflected in the shifting aldermanic alliances. Protecting the interests of constituents became the goal of partisan politicians. Class-based appeals fell to the largely ignored Socialist Party. This identity with neighborhood and ward was reinforced

by the tendency of ethnic and religious groups to cluster together. Frequently, even homogeneous groups splintered apart into separate enclaves, divided by religion and provincial loyalties.

The one major attempt to create a city-wide class-conscious identity failed to overcome these divisions. A strike by workers in Grand Rapids' principal industry, involving more than a quarter of all the city's wage earners, took place in the summer of 1911. Even though united in a common industrial pursuit and facing a small group of easily identified industrialists, furniture workers could not sustain collective action against their employers. Appeals to working-class solidarity ran counter to the goals of home-ownership and neighborhood security valued by many workers. The very conservative nature of trade union tactics used by strikers accentuated the differences among workers and their localistic orientation. The American Federation of Labor disavowed any attacks on capitalism or private property. This conservative and apolitical approach provided no alternative to the church and neighborhood identity of laborers. Without any other reference points, ethnicity and religious doctrines curbed united action by workers.

When industrialists turned to the acquisition of political power as an extension of their economic importance, class-based resistance faltered again. Unable to organize effectively during the strike of 1911, workers were in no position to act collectively in the political arena in 1916 as industrialist-reformers urged fundamental changes in the city's government. Citing the unprecedented disruption of the strike and the potential danger to private property it posed, manufacturers pushed for the concentration of power into the hands of a commission-manager system.

Asserting that city-wide awareness must precede effective government, the proposed reforms called for the elimination of ward-level aldermen and the substitution of fewer at-large commissioners. While many wage earners saw that the wealthier citizens would benefit from this; resistance formed along class lines, but it remained fragmented. Enough workers believed that private property secured by efficient government, fiscal responsibility and centralized leadership were more important than class solidarity. The political ascent of Grand Rapids' industrialists became possible only with the help of wage earners who provided the critical margin at the polls in 1916.

Grand Rapids is a case study that links the initially successful resistance to industrialists' quest for political power in the 1870's described by Herbert Gutman to the victory of corporate centralization analysed by Samuel P. Hays. This "triumph of conservatism" at the grass-roots level paralleled national trends described by Gabriel Kolko. Grand Rapids also provides some clue as to how it was possible for a minority of economically powerful citizens to change the balance of power in a democracy, where workers greatly outnumber them.

In this study, the first two chapters explore the parallel trends of increased cooperation among industrialists at the time that workers drifted farther apart and centered their lives on home-ownership, church and ethnic groups. The third chapter focuses on two men who came to represent the city's divergent economic interests in 1906. George Ellis appeared as a spokesman for the wage earner in the biannual mayoral elections. At the same time, businessmen found a champion for their cause in the dynamic Baptist minister, Alfred Wishart. As this chapter makes

clear, these men articulated two distinctive viewpoints regarding the city's social problems and helped to polarize local politics, a division that became critical during the strike summer of 1911.

Chapter four presents the events of the strike by furniture workers that created an unprecedented disruption in the city's history. Violence by strikers against workers who wanted to return to the plants and an episode of crowd action against one of the factories suggested to some citizens that Mayor Ellis could no longer govern impartially or effectively. The final chapter offers an analysis of the proposed charter reform and the successful ratification efforts by industrialists. Ultimately, the same ethnic and religious divisiveness that plagued efforts to forge a working-class movement during 1911 reappeared in 1916, handicapping opposition to the new government.

Sources for city-wide growth in Grand Rapids were abundant. State Labor Reports, Banking Commission Reports, and city directories all provided the detail to fill out trends suggested by Federal Census material. A manuscript copy of the thirteenth census facilitated checking accuracies and discrepancies in other sources. The availability of professional industrial journals and daily newspapers provided much in the way of establishing a narrative framework and the starting point for historical analysis. City tax records, plats, real estate and fire atlases complemented microfilmed copies of mortgage records; together, these sources unfolded patterns of neighborhood growth, home-ownership by workers and nuances of class distinctions around the city that made election results more telling than simple partisan labels.

More difficult problems appeared in reconstructing particular attitudes among workers and reformers. Church records, both diocese and congregational archives, remained closed. Union records, save for the national trade union journal for the Carpenters and Joiners Union, did not exist. Despite the many pages of recorded meetings in city council, little actual debate among aldermen appeared to hint at the politics involved. Under these circumstances, the city's range of daily and weekly papers assumed great importance. Through the editorial columns, letters to the editor and news stories came accounts of behind-the-scenes bargaining and long standing animosities. In the community, annual election pamphlets published by reformers supplemented their weekly newspaper in shedding some light on forgotten political issues.

Information about important business organizations also remained unavailable during research on the dissertation. Both the Furniture Manufacturers Association and Employers Association did not permit use of their files. Membership, attitudes and by-laws of those associations had to be gathered from whatever contemporary public sources reported their activities.

Private correspondence did not exist, either. "Public" letters, exchanged in newspaper columns, remained the principal sources of "private" attitudes and convictions, especially during the strike summer of 1911. For the two major ethnic communities in town, the early copies of Polish newspapers have been lost, and the Dutch papers centered on doctrinal matters until after the period discussed.

Despite these gaps in the evidence, Grand Rapids in the Progressive Era contains an important clues to a larger story in American history.

While it may be argued that the influences of working-class people were ignored at the national level due to the inaccessibility of major lawmakers to all but the wealthiest citizens; or that the same corruption and conservatism permeated state governments; it will not do to say the same for grass-roots political reform. Unable to bridge ethnic differences in a single industrial city, how could workers hope to instill class-consciousness on a national level? Failing to sustain a conservative union movement even within a single industry, where would wage earners find the necessary agreement to support laborers in other areas? The same disorganization of the workplace carried over into the political arena. The success of Progressive Era municipal reformers and failure of labor advocates were not two separate developments, but complementary halves of the same redistribution of power in American life.

CHAPTER I

THE RULE FROM ABOVE:

BUSINESSMEN, BANKERS AND THE DRIVE TO ORGANIZE

1890-1906

The furniture industry dominated Grand Rapids. From this fact flowed the political and economic life of that city in the Progressive Era. The manufacture and marketing of this durable consumer good demanded a high degree of organization among the principals involved. From the beginnings of the industry in the mid-1880's the Grand Rapids industrialists cooperated with one another to stifle competition from other local manufacturers. They united in a series of mutually advantageous groups to control productivity, costs and labor. For in an economy as volatile as that in late nineteenth-century America, stability was a precious commodity. Control over the production process remained essential to survival. Yet production of a durable consumer good such as furniture demanded more than control for survival. It called for continual expansion. Continued profits required expansion beyond local and regional markets to the wider horizons of national and international markets. Grand Rapids firms had to manage their city-wide affairs adeptly or be drowned by larger cities whose diverse economies and greater capital reserves outclassed those of Grand Rapids. They did so between 1890 and 1906 by creating professional trade associations that included a private employment agency to monitor the labor force and incorporated new local banks to reduce dependence upon "outside" sources of capital from Chicago, Detroit or New York.

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, businessmen across the country were involved in a process of consolidation. Pressed by the need to increase stability in the marketplace, regulate competition and control production, leaders of large corporate enterprises formed associations in pursuit of these goals.¹ Yet efforts to promote these interests involved more than the manufacturers themselves. Bankers also tried to control money and capital markets that fell to the same unpredictable conditions facing industrial producers. Manufacturers and financiers alike sought to curb seasonal irregularities in the availability of ready money. They preferred a system in which the demand for money and the rates charged for its use was less erratic. The liquidation of banks' assets in the form of loans and mortgages prompted by panic or recession endangered the entire drive for industrial expansion.² In order to secure this effective rationalization of the marketplace, industrialists and bankers needed to translate this new organizational movement into political power, to encourage compliance with the growing network of "regulated" interests and punish those who stepped outside it.

Organizational leadership was critical in another respect, too. Grand Rapids lacked any natural advantage in terms of industrial competition. The city stood removed from the major east-west rail arteries. Thus any help its proximity granted to Michigan timber reserves became vitiated by the distance required to ship the manufactured product. Water power from the Grand River played an important role in initial advantage when the manufacturing base of the city remained more diverse. Yet by the late nineteenth century, furniture and other factories moved away from the river, relying instead upon coal generated electricity or steam power. When plant expansion became a reality, relocation along the rail spurs

rather than the river dictated the move. In short, neither the city's location nor natural resources accounted for the dramatic rise of the furniture industry in Grand Rapids. Rather, domination of the local economy grew from the concerted efforts of local industrial leaders and financiers to build up the furniture industry.³

From 1890 to 1910, the furniture industry outdistanced all other industries in Grand Rapids, despite the absence of any inherent advantages of location or resources. (See Table 1.) By the latter date, one in every three wage earners found work in the furniture factories. Grand Rapids stood among the fifty largest cities in the nation in 1910 in terms of population, yet in relative terms, the economic power generated by the furniture companies gave the city greater strength than its 110,000 population suggested. Based on a ranking of value added by manufacture, Grand Rapids stood forty-second in a national list of seventy-five. It commanded thirty-ninth place among the same seventy-five for the number of workers in manufacturing, fourteenth among industrial centers outside New England.⁴ In the value of its products, Grand Rapids outshone much larger cities such as Atlanta, Denver, Omaha, Portland, and Seattle. National significance was accorded to this industrial development. The Federal Census noted that "by far the most important industry is the manufacture of furniture, Grand Rapids being in fact the recognized center of the furniture industry in the United States."⁵ When compared to American cities on the basis of furniture manufacturing, Grand Rapids stood head to head with the five largest cities in the nation. The role of the furniture industry was critical to the economic health of Grand Rapids.

TABLE 1

Comparative Growth of Four Major Industries in Grand Rapids,
1890 and 1910

<u>Type</u>	<u>No. of Firms</u>	<u>No. Employed (1890)</u>	<u>No. of Firms</u>	<u>No. Employed (1910)</u>
Flour and Grain Mills	10	136	8	184
Foundry and Machine Shops	18	558	49	1815
Furniture Manufacturing	31	4347	54	7854
Sawmill and Lumber Yards	12	629	20	709

(Source: State of Michigan Census Reports, 1890, 1894, 1900, 1904;
Federal Census Report on Manufacturers, 1910)

City residents had every reason for loyalty to the manufacturers. One did not have to be a wage earner to appreciate the semi-annual trade shows that lasted for six weeks at a time. Retailers and salesmen of every sort, from all across the country, would pour into the city, spending money and boosting the local economy. The number of buyers attending these trade fairs jumped from 161 in 1893 to more than 1,500 in 1900 and continued to increase annually.⁶ These buyers represented need for furnishings created by a rapidly urbanizing nation. On one hand, the rise of cities brought office buildings and chain stores, providing the market for thousands of display cases, desks, filing cabinets annually. Sixty chain stores operated nationally in 1900 and by 1910 the number jumped to more than 257.⁷ F.W. Woolworth of Philadelphia and S.S. Kresge of Detroit were

only two of the more prominent entrepreneurs in this field. Their stores and hundreds more like them all needed to be furnished, and the case goods manufacturers of Grand Rapids gladly filled the bill.

The unremitting growth of cities also created a demand for household furnishings. Migrations to the city from the countryside and Europe outstripped existing housing stocks. While it would be years before the poorer wage earners might occupy a private home, hundreds of thousands of families did so every year. American cities produced markets for mass-produced goods such as bedroom suites, living and dining room sets and countless end tables, book cases, and chairs. Whether New York, Newark or Omaha, every category of American city grew dramatically in the decades after 1890, bringing with it the need for household furnishings.⁸ (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2

National Increase in Non-Farm Housing

1890 - 1899	294.000
1900 - 1909	361.000
1909 - 1919	359.000

(Source: Federal Census, Report on Housing, 1940.)

Aggressive leadership on the local level changed furniture manufacturing in Grand Rapids from merely one industry into the industry, exploiting this ever expanding national marketplace. Innovative uses for established products explained some of the success. Entrepreneurs such as John Widdicomb help to illustrate this. John Widdicomb began his own firm in 1897 after working with the family firm in his youth. His own company stepped outside the conventional market of office and home furnishings to solicit business from the Singer Manufacturing Company. Widdicomb secured a major order in 1901 for 200,000 five drawer oak sewing cabinets. They were shipped at the rate of two thousand a week at a profit of four dollar apiece. Two years later he repeated the offer with the National Sewing Machine Company.⁹

Yet this aggressive leadership rarely led to dissension in the ranks of manufacturers. Cooperation, close cooperation, among the leading industrialists characterized the industry in the years after 1880.¹⁰ Grand Rapids manufacturers were among the first to organize local and national industrial associations. The intense competition of a national market, coupled with erratic swings in the economy all helped drive manufacturers in a search for stability. In the decades after 1880, furniture manufacturers centralized information and purchasing power to deal with railroads and labor. The Grand Rapids Furniture Manufacturers Association, founded in 1881, dealt with bargaining over freight rates, insurance claims and dealer insolvency. The FMA became a leader in the national association of furniture manufacturers by the turn of the century.

It was logical enough for manufacturers to use cooperative association beyond dealing with the railroads to fix prices and limit production. So successful were their efforts at consolidation, that by the

early 1920's, the Grand Rapids FMA was investigated with other furniture groups by the Federal Trade Commission. Price-setting stood as the principal charge. More than ten percent of the firms named in the Federal Government's suit against national manufacturers were located in Grand Rapids. Pleading nolo contendere manufacturers paid the fine for violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act rather than pay mounting legal costs.¹¹ Such clearly illegal actions under the Sherman Act had been flagged down as early as 1898.¹² It was not as if the Grand Rapids industrialists had been operating in a grey area of the law until after the war. Rather, the Federal suit merely drew attention to a standard procedure that had grown unchecked for a generation.

This concentration of power, especially on the local level, was not haphazard. It was part of a concerted policy to rationalize a hometown industry, and eventually embraced efforts to regulate wages and working conditions. Furniture manufacturers created their own, privately funded Employers Association in 1905 in competition with the publicly-run State Free Employment Bureau established that same year. The Employers Association kept a card of every worker who had ever been employed in the city's furniture factories. Here the manufacturers monitored wages, productivity and union sympathies among workingmen.

Among its self-appointed tasks, the Association determined what employees were "competent or worthy" of employment and provided encouragement "to all such persons in their efforts to resist the compulsory methods sometimes employed by organized labor" to unionize a shop. The Employers Association also promised "to protect its members...against Legislative, Municipal and other political encroachments" on their professional autonomy.¹³ This close-knit fraternity also worked to police

its own members by assuring uniformity of wage levels, discouraging any competition for skilled workers. One example concerned a disgruntled worker who left one company to seek a job with another furniture concern. He had received \$2.00 per day on his former job, and when applying to the other firm, asked for \$2.25 per day without mentioning his old wage rate. Upon returning the following day to see about work with the other company, he was informed that \$2.00 was all he had gotten and all he could expect to get.¹⁴ Presumably any complaint would have rendered him no longer "competent or worthy" to continue working in Grand Rapids.

During the period from 1890 through 1910, furniture manufacturers worked to undermine efforts to organize labor. Unionization of skilled labor, limited as that may have been, posed a double threat to the manufacturers. First, it would have provided an organized counterweight to the control factory-owners exerted in the workplace. Unilateral decision making about wages and hours would have to be abandoned. Second, union membership would draw in national support for collective bargaining. Despite the conservative nature of craft unionism, it provided a dangerous first step to challenging the local authority gathered into the hand of furniture manufacturers. The rout of strikers in 1911 was more than the repudiation of shared control of the workplace. It severed links between local wage earners and the American Federation of Labor through its largest craft union, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.¹⁵ The Furniture Manufacturers Association remained a tightly knit group of local elites exercising influence for "their" city as they saw fit.

The consolidation of power on the local level did not rest with the formation of the Furniture Manufacturers Association of the Employers

Association. The emergence of furniture manufacturers among bankers paralleled their domination of the wage-earning population in the years after 1890. Rather than enlist the ranks of Grand Rapids' older commercial and savings banks, a handful of the most influential industrialists helped to create new institutions through which to conduct their business. In the years after 1905, three new major banks with furniture executives at their command opened in the city.¹⁶ Just as the furniture manufacturers dealt with national rivals through cooperation in professional associations, and the national labor movement through blacklisting, so they tried to deal with the regional money merchants by stepping away from dependence on larger markets to create a hometown alternative.

The manufacturers sitting on the boards of directors and in executive offices of these new banks were not men of the middling or smaller firms, but among those largest concerns in the city interlocked with each other. For example, the Oriel and Berkey-Gay furniture companies shared officers and accounted for nearly eight hundred employees, in addition to having direct ties to the Kent State Bank, one of the largest in the city. The City Trust and Savings (1905), the Kent State Bank (1908), and the Grand Rapids National City Bank (1911), all brought in men whose companies employed more than two hundred workers each.¹⁷ Prior to the formation of these banks the only representative of furniture interests on the older banks established since 1864 was William Hovey Gay, and his appearance may have been due to deference as the scion of the pioneer elite as any economic power he wielded. These earlier banks and savings concerns were led by a variety of locally prominent businessmen whose interests spread beyond the city into the state. Among them were: J. Boyd Pantlind, hotel

entrepreneur; Lester Rindge, shoe baron; Amos Musselman, wholesale grocer.

In fact, the Federal Government recognized the extent to which the Grand Rapids banks exercised a virtual monopoly in their region. After passage of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act in 1914, all banks and their directors had to apply for exemption from that portion of the Clayton Act barring interlocking directorates. More than five percent of the total number of directors denied exemption came from Grand Rapids, involving the Kent State and Grand Rapids Savings banks. These banks were not only interlocked with each other, but also with five of the city's largest furniture manufacturing companies.¹⁸

On one hand, it is difficult to say with absolute assurance how the furniture men exercised their newfound influence in the banking community. Analysis of long-term and short-term investment by banks, in the forms of loans versus mortgages of the "new" banks after 1905, did not differ significantly from the pattern set by older banks. The proportion of money committed to loans, as opposed to mortgages, bonds and securities, did not vary over time compared to the older Grand Rapids banks.¹⁹

On the other hand, the total amount of money lent for short-term purposes, especially among the "new" banks of 1905-1911, suggested that money went to deal with the cyclical demands of the marketplace and seasonal demands in the purchase of raw materials, shipping and storage. In absolute terms, the "new" banks accounted for nearly half of all capital reserves committed to short-term loans.²⁰ By the same token the manufacturers could be assured that favorable loan rates and terms of repayment could be secured, and that money needed by them would not be drained off to "outside" interests at the time it would be needed most. In

short, the increasing role played by the furniture manufacturers in the financial community was an extension of their efforts to rationalize their home time. Control of money was critical to keeping the large scale manufacturing plants flexible enough to respond to changing market situations.

Bankers themselves operated to reduce the unregulated flow of money in their city through the formation of clearing houses. The most famous was the New York Clearing House, but all across the country in cities such as Topeka and Buffalo, bankers began to coordinate the difficult business of tracking cash and settling balances on a daily basis through the formation of association, called clearing houses.²¹ In Grand Rapids, as across the nation, local banks created a clearing house not merely to facilitate the transfer of business drafts and other instruments, but also to lend a hand to local industrialists.

The Grand Rapids Clearing House had been established in 1885, and by 1900 had become a permanent feature of the city. Its chief officers and board of directors were drawn from three of the four commercial banks in Grand Rapids, and one of the three "new" banks; although no furniture men, even William Gay, had served at the executive level at the Clearing House, the continuity of interlocking influences was not diminished. One function of particular concern in this context was that in cooperating with each other and keeping tract of the balances owed to each other (and "outside" banks), the Clearing House could coordinate the flow of loans so that no member bank would ever come up short or pressed for immediate payments. The cash settlements and management of money flow at the Clearing House helped to keep enough cash in the vaults to meet the needs

at hand, and thereby reduce dependence on borrowing from "outside" banks.²²

Bank officers frequently lent money to manufacturers, and the money was then drawn from reserves and committed to certain ends: raw material, shipping, machinery.²³ In hard times, banks could be called upon to make good the notes drawn against them by another bank, prompting a crisis in liquidity. Those loans given to the manufacturer would effectively become fixed assets of the bank, essentially creating an interest in the company's operation by the bank, if not an actual voice. In times of panic or recession, should the banks compel the repayment of those loans, this would naturally cause trouble by curtailing manufacturing, throwing men out of work, interrupting production. The years after 1905 were especially unsteady, subject to fluctuations and contractions in 1908, 1910-1911 and again in 1913-1914. Consider how important the professional intimacy must have been for the Grand Rapids furniture manufacturers, with their emphasis on private ownership and absolute control of their factories, when borrowing money from a bank and thereby creating a de facto investor. It made sense to insure friendship and share control of the city's available financial resources.

Thus banker and businessman were naturally allied, at least on the local level, in the attempt to create a stable environment where the demands upon money were predictable and orderly. It would be easier to do business if the bank representing the loan, and possibly the fixed assets of company, were members of the same group. For the manufacturers, it would be most desirable if the availability of money could be controlled along with production markets.

The banks could only guess what the next day would bring in terms of available money, since their world was equally unorganized and lacking coordination on the national level. Meager efforts to rationalize the money and capital markets would come only after 1913 and passage of the Federal Reserve Act. As a contemporary source put it, without the successful management of loans, their recall in times of "financial stringency" resulted in pressure to liquidate bank assets would "disarrange the entire industrial system."²⁴ There was therefore, ample inducement for cooperation among both furniture manufacturers and bankers alike to rationalize their respective marketplaces.

In Grand Rapids, urbanization also had a subtle impact on the structure of the economy that brought the industrial and financial communities into greater contact with the wage earners after pay day. As the demands for housing increased after the turn of the century, institutional sources for funding long-term debts, such as mortgages, began to outdistance private alternatives.²⁵ Although the institutions lending the money were smaller neighborhood building and loan association, they were tied to the established network of money and capital markets. Grand Rapids' chief savings and loans shared officers with the major banks and furniture factories, as in the case of the Mutual Home and Loans Company. The Mutual's president, John Mowat, enmeshed the mortgage company in the financial interests of the National City Bank, where he served as a director, and the Grand Rapids Chair Company, where he was vice president. As the number of homes increased in Grand Rapids (see

Table 3), the influence of the banks and furniture manufacturers increased accordingly.²⁶ Any pretense that the city's five separate savings and loans associations competed with one another or stood apart from the major banks ended in 1911 when it was announced that these five mortgage companies would pool their resources into a single fund.²⁷

TABLE 3

Growth of Housing Stock in Grand Rapids

	<u>Total</u>	<u>1-Family</u>	<u>Duplex</u>	<u>2-Family</u>
1890 - 1899	8,879	3,577	429	2,738
1900 - 1909	9,678	4,617	539	2,757
1909 - 1919	7,893	4,843	410	1,628

(Sources: Federal Census, Report on Housing, 1940.)

Across the country, as well as Grand Rapids, an increase in the housing supply was accompanied by a jump in mortgage debt. From 1890 to 1910, the national increase nearly doubled outstanding mortgage debt for private homes. On a household basis, this increase translated into a family debt from \$289 to \$316,²⁸ quite a burden when many wage earners across the country and in Grand Rapids relied upon the contribution of the entire family to bring in an average annual income of \$700.²⁹ The ratio of mortgage debt to income remained almost steady during the same decades, suggesting that not only were more families incurring long-term debt, but also more of it.

On the eve of World War I, nearly half the homes in Grand Rapids were owner-occupied, and the majority of those were mortgaged to local banks and savings and loans.³⁰ Of equal significance was the high degree of home-ownership among the Dutch and Polish members of the city, the very same groups who composed nearly all of the furniture workers.³¹

While this made wage earners and home-owners more dependent upon the industrial elite, it also freed these elites from increased dependence upon larger regional or national money and capital markets.³² Furniture manufacturers did not have to venture to the bankers of Chicago or New York for the life of their business; they could effectively exploit the local capital reserves to which the workers had contributed through their savings. Yet if push came to shove and both groups wanted to draw upon the city's available capital pool for their respective needs, it would clearly lie within the industrialists' interests to expand at the expense of the worker. For those who had already committed themselves to long-term debt in the form of a home mortgage, their dependence was ever greater, and attempts to challenge the manufacturers for better working conditions

could result in blacklisting: no job, no home, the burden of debt. The worker might even be denied access to his savings if it had been lent by banks to the commercial borrowers.

The network of industrialists and financiers allowed the furniture manufacturers to build a base of social and economic power on the local level while avoiding the larger national trends towards involuntary industrial consolidation that plagued other industries. Unlike oil or steel production, furniture manufacturing had no Rockefeller or Carnegie who tried to dominate it. By adroit use of local banking institutions, the Grand Rapids manufacturers could also put distance between themselves and the major national banks that felt the pressures exerted by these continental giants. Grand Rapids' elites were more concerned with holding at bay "outside" influences in their city. They were closer to the men described by Michael Frisch and John Ingham, political leaders and successful manufacturers whose concerns were closer to home.³³ They made the most of municipal domination, cooperating within the framework of manufacturing associations, employer groups and the like in order to better exploit the growing national markets. Industrialists and financiers of the Furniture City wanted the best of both worlds: huge sales in an ever widening marketplace and independence from the larger political and economic trends that made such growth possible.

Nineteen firms formed the heart of the city's furniture industry, wielding enormous influence on the cyclical rise and fall of unemployment, wage levels and production. These nineteen companies accounted for one

quarter of the city's entire labor force and more than eighty-five percent of the furniture workers. At any point, they might have six thousand men laboring at various states of production. These largest firms tended to be more stable than the smaller furniture companies, experiencing less variation in the number of men employed. Due to the stability of these large plants, workers could look forward to eleven or twelve months of steady employment unlike their counterparts in the machine shops or grain and woolen mills.³⁴

These nineteen firms, with one exception, were locally owned, privately operated and managed. In keeping with the ideal of "our town," outside influences in terms of investment of absentee ownership were discouraged. Their owners, as we shall see, had either been born in Grand Rapids or moved there at a young age for the express purpose of settling and setting up a business. Their identification with the city as one of personal interest was not accidental. Guiding these nineteen firms were slightly less than two dozen men, who exerted influence beyond their immediate business concerns to guide the city's economy through active involvement that embraced commercial and savings banks, institutions second to their own manufactories as a source of money. With one-third of the wage-earning population directly engaged in the manufacture of furniture, and hundreds of others working in ancillary pursuits, this small group of men consciously pursued an attitude against political and economic influences that threatened their efforts to impose stability on their city, their industry.

Among these nineteen largest companies there were eight firms that formed a special inner circle of power. They included the Berkey-Gay, Grand Rapids Show Case, Phoenix and Oriel companies, each employing

more than four hundred men, and each turning out a variety of items directed at furnishing the expansive urban market comprised of homes, apartments, and offices.

Since the turn of the century, these eight firms had been members of the local Furniture Manufacturers Association, whose trade publications, the Furniture Manufacturer and Artisan and Michigan Tradesman served as official organs for businessmen everywhere. Reaching a wide audience through national circulation, they defended the Canadian Reciprocity Treaty of 1911, published articles about production and worker safety.³⁵ The Artisan and Tradesman boosted "scientific management," and kept firms across the country in touch with each other, recording the deaths of prominent leaders, promotions and business failures. Through the pages of these journals came editorials pleading for stability in the marketplace and rationalization of production. These journals would also be the only national window on the strike and voiced Grand Rapids manufacturers' damnation of the city's government under Mayor George E. Ellis.

A closer look at four of these eight companies provides a case study in the special relationship among the industrial leaders and the extent of their influence. The Berkey-Gay, Oriel, Grand Rapids Show Case and Phoenix companies were at the heart of a series of interlocking directorates in both the furniture industry and the banking community.³⁶ Berkey-Gay and Oriel shared executives William Hovey Gay and John A. Covode Jr. The Phoenix and Royal Companies were also part of a tightly knit consortium headed by Robert Irwin and Alexander Hompe. Between these two sets of interlocking directorates were employed almost twenty percent of the city's furniture workers and nearly half of the workers represented by the nineteen largest firms.

These four men shared the neighborhood on the bluff overlooking the downtown and factory districts, looking across the river to the working-class neighborhoods on the West Side. Members of the prestigious Peninsular Club, their personal and professional interests went beyond the manufacture of furniture and its marketing to embrace banking. Their competition in the national markets made access to funds for expansion vital to continued success. It would be estimated at one time that these four interlocking firms held anywhere from fifteen to thirty percent of the national market for their goods.³⁷ Yet rather than turn to major financial centers in Chicago or New York, they sought control of the four principal commercial banks in Grand Rapids.

William Hovey Gay was born in Grand Rapids in 1863, the son of a prosperous furniture manufacturer and the grandson of William Hovey, a pioneer settler and entrepreneur. It was Gay's effort that established the local Furniture Manufacturers Association in 1881. His rise to the ranks of industrial leadership came from the bottom of the business, learning all aspects of the craft: sales, manufacture, and management. Born a Baptist and member of the Fountain Street Church, he served as president of the Berkey-Gay Company, and the People's Savings Bank while also acting as a director for the Fourth National Bank and Michigan Trust Company. The People's Bank was a major savings institution, but of minor concern to industrialists. It was Gay's service on the Fourth National Bank's board of directors that put him in proximity to the more powerful Kent State Bank. Combined, the Fourth and Kent banks wielded assets approaching a million dollars, small by today's standards, but representing a respectable amount for businessmen needing credit for seasonal expansion.³⁸

Gay's ties through the Fourth and Kent banks came through his business partner, John A. Covode, Jr. Covode's father gained national recognition in the years before the Civil War. As a Republican Senator from Pennsylvania, he had helped expose corruption in the Buchanan administration, further discrediting the Democratic Party. Covode came to Grand Rapids as a young man of 23 and applied his college education to making money as a partner in the flour mills. A devout Baptist, he too supported the Fountain Street Church.

Both Covode and Gay shared membership in the exclusive Peninsular Club and their homes were barely a block apart on the hilltop in the Third Ward.³⁹ Their common knowledge of the workings, policies and direction of capital in these two banks spread down to influence the West Side Savings and Loan, third largest such institution in the city, and a vital center for mortgage money to home-owners.

It was through Covode's connections in the Kent State hierarchy that the two men could amplify their advantage in understanding the economic health of Grand Rapids. The Kent State Bank stood directly interlocked with the Old National and City National banks, whose combined assets approached two million dollars, and brought Covode into contact with Alexander Hompe. Hompe owned factories and exercised control through interlocking executive positions over another one thousand wage earners. Hompe had been born in upstate New York, attended Cornell and then moved to Grand Rapids at the age of 26, in 1891. He moved up in the Royal Furniture Company to the rank of vice-president. His most important connection for the furniture men, however, was his intimate business relationship with Robert Irwin whose own Phoenix and Royal companies added another four hundred men to the employment rolls in the

city's labor force. Irwin had been doing business with Hompe since the turn of the century, and was to emerge as the principal spokesman for the furniture industry on the local and national level. Robert Irwin's account of the strike became the official version published by the manufacturers' in the Artisan; he headed the city's charter commission in 1912 and then served as president of the local Furniture Manufacturers Association.⁴⁰

These four men, Covode, Gay, Hompe and Irwin, could share information and access to policy being made around the city, in its factories and banks. Connections with the Kent State Bank also brought Gay and Covode into the realm of the two largest savings and loans associations, the Mutual Home and Grand Rapids Mutual Savings associations, whose membership exceeded five thousand or nearly ninety percent of all the city's residents enrolled in such institutions.⁴¹

This pattern of shared access to information and policy-making was spread out among eight firms whose connections formed an elaborate network throughout all of the city's banks. There remained little likelihood that any significant amount of money could pass into or out of the marketplace without work quickly making the rounds. The formal self-policing process of the Furniture Manufacturers Association was reinforced by an informal network of social and business clubs.

Indeed, the workingmen of the city involuntarily became part of this network if they chose to pursue "respectable" patterns of home-ownership and savings accounts. Their wages, if placed into banks, fell back into the control of their employers. As money for mortgages and other long-term loans became tied more closely to other capital markets on a regional and national basis, they had to rely on the banks to use that money wisely. Yet, the Grand Rapids banks were linked directly to the furniture

manufacturers who did their best to keep most of their own financial dependency limited to the local money market. In this way, one-third of the city's wage earners trusted the security of their employment to a single industry, while even more fed their savings into the pool of capital that was dominated by these particular industrialists who might want to tap those very savings for the purposes of expansion or other commercial investment. Virtually any factory of note, employing more than two hundred men, became enmeshed in this relationship among manufacturers and between employers and employees. By 1911, the Grand Rapids furniture workers had become involuntary partners in financing the very companies they worked for, yet they were continually denied any voice in determining wages or hours.

The importance of belonging to the FMA and Employers Association becomes apparent upon closer inspection of the furniture companies. Although united, they were by no means monolithic. Eight companies formed the basis of an interlocking network with one another and the banks, leaving eleven firms only partial connections to the financial community and indirect links with one another. (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4

Breakdown of Major Firms Interlocked and Excluded

<u>Interlocked Companies</u>	<u>No. Employed</u>
Berkey and Gay	454
Phoenix	434
Royal	207
Grand Rapids Chair	387
Oriel	385
Imperial	285
Wm. Widdicomb	405
Macey	360
<u>Independent Companies</u>	<u>No. Employed</u>
American Seating	631
Grand Rapids Show Case	569
Sligh	424
Michigan Chair	394
Luce	360
Michigan Cabinet	285
J. Widdicomb	269
Gunn	252
Stickley Bros.	251
Nelson-Matter	214
Valley City	211

(Source: Grand Rapids City Directory, 1912; State of Michigan Bureau of Labor Reports, 1910, 1911, 1912; State of Michigan Banking Commission, Reports, 1910, 1911, 1912. For a full statement of the principals involved in the interlocking directorates, see Appendix A.)

When the eight firms interlocked are measured against the nine excluded firms, an interesting pattern emerges. They were neither so big in terms of tangible assets or absolute number of men employed as to be able to survive on a national level or dominate the local one unless brought into an informal network aimed at rationalizing all aspects of the marketplace. Based on a ranking of tangible assets rated by Thomas' Register, the eight interconnected companies all shared a middle ranking, their assets about \$100,000 to \$300,000. The only exception was Berkey-Gay, with holding in excess of a half million dollars.⁴² There were wealthy businessmen behind these concerns, but certainly not the wealthiest; their clout was best exercised collectively. With the exception of William Gay, none could claim a patrician status based on family ties to the city's founding fathers.

The excluded firms, a more diverse group, were larger on the average. Their tangible assets were rated in the range from \$300,000 to more than a million dollars. These eleven companies were large "independent" firms bound to the industrial and mercantile community by membership in the FMA and the influence they could exert in the numbers of wage earners employed. They may have had access to outside capital, as did the American Seating Company, never fully accepted because it was a member of the "seating trust" that operated several factories around the country with headquarters in Chicago. Or they may have been dissenters from the inner circle, such as the John Widdicomb Company, formed by a family rupture in the older business.

The issues of inclusion and exclusion in the Grand Rapids manufacturing community found expression in another way. During these years of urban industrial expansion, two "outside" firms tried to settle in

the city with differing degrees of success. The Brunswick-Balke Company of Ohio and the American Seating Company of Illinois arrived as the drive for consolidation of power was underway. Although explicit statements about these two firms were absent from the press at the time, the daily papers reminded city residents of these incidents during the strike of 1911 as the entire economy slowed down due to the intransigence of the manufacturers' refusal to negotiate. The furniture manufacturers did everything in their power to curtail the abilities of these two companies to operate in Grand Rapids. Both firms were interested in the same labor pool, and to some extent the same markets. Yet by virtue of the fact that the Brunswick-Balke and American Seating companies were neither locally owned nor controlled, they became suspect to the city's industrial elite. These firms were loyal to corporate headquarters in Delaware and New Jersey, dependent on the money markets in Chicago and New York, clearly beyond the reach of Grand Rapids. Additionally, manufacturers feared that potentially rival firms might offer higher wages, thus upsetting local control over the labor market. Such fears were not unfounded. A special report of the Board of Trade found that hundreds of skilled workers were leaving Grand Rapids to go to the better paying jobs in automobile plants in Detroit, Flint, Pontiac and elsewhere.⁴³

The Brunswick-Balke Company was incorporated in 1907 as a merger of three Ohio firms. The company's original products, sold in the growing national urban markets, had been billiard and pool tables, along with bowling alleys, ten-pins and balls.⁴⁴ Yet by the time the interlopers came to Grand Rapids, the established manufacturers had reason to eye them with suspicion, because the Brunswick Company had moved into the field of refrigerators and case goods. They too would demand the services of

skilled woodworkers such as carpenters and joiners. There was another reason for regarding the outside firm with distrust. Shortly before coming to Grand Rapids, they had recognized the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively; the workers' agent was the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the largest and most influential union in the American Federation of Labor.⁴⁵

The established furniture and financial communities created an inhospitable environment for the Brunswick-Balke Company, and that firm left Grand Rapids shortly after a year of setting up shop. The potential for disruption by this "outside," unionized concern became apparent after the company's relocation to Muskegon. The original number of wage earners employed in Grand Rapids in 1905 had been 143. The numbers jumped threefold by 1907 and on the eve of the Great Strike in Grand Rapids, 1911, Brunswick-Balke paid wages to more than seven hundred men.⁴⁶ Had such a large closed shop remained in Grand Rapids, local manufacturers would have faced a more difficult time in maintaining control of their labor markets.

Facts surrounding the removal of the Balke Company from Grand Rapids never became public knowledge. Indeed, the only time that the powerful Board of Trade undertook any investigation of the incident was in the heat of the strike during the summer of 1911. Complaints in the daily papers had to be refuted that the furniture industry controlled the city and the Board of Trade set out to record the facts of the case, at least to satisfy members of the Board. According to the official record, the Brunswick-Balke Company moved out of Grand Rapids because "Muskegon has partially bought said Company, body and soul by paying a cash bonus of \$60,000 to remove there, and a year ago [1910] again handing them \$12,500

to stay." Such incentives for industrial relocation were common practice in the highly competitive world of urban expansion. Yet Grand Rapids' commercial leadership never felt "the need to give bonuses to get the right kind of people to come here," and never would. "The plants we want," continued a special report by the Board of Trade, "are the plants that do not need, or ask for alms."⁴⁷

Strained professional relationships characterized the dealings between Grand Rapids manufacturers and the American Seating Company. The American Seating Company, whose principal headquarters remained in Chicago, joined the local Furniture Manufacturers Association when it arrived in the city in 1902.⁴⁸ It differed from Brunswick-Balke to an important degree in that American Seating came into the community through the purchase of an older, established plant. The sale did not excite comment in the newspapers or professional journals, perhaps because the new owners were quick to continue membership in the FMA and did not recognize unionized workers. Yet during the strike, the hidden rifts emerged, when American Seating became among the first to settle with the strikers and was threatened with expulsion from the FMA.

The furniture manufacturers managed to play an important role in the development of Grand Rapids in the decades after 1880. In slightly more than twenty years, however, they had managed to organize locally for the benefit of their professional interests. They began with the creation of the Furniture Manufacturers Association to oversee production and price, the Employers Association to monitor wages and union sympathies, and

finally through the creation of banks to tap the capital reserves of the city. All three of these organizational innovations intersected in the series of interlocking directorates among ten of the largest furniture companies. Informally, the powers that guided Grand Rapids' economic life might meet over a drink in the posh Peninsular Club or casually stroll along the Hilltop neighborhood on a quiet afternoon.

The influence of the furniture manufacturers and financial community became pervasive, but subtle. They could not exercise direct control over important municipal policy affecting economic growth: taxes, land use or the allocation of services. However, they had no need to seek direct control of the city government in this period. There had been no crisis demanding intervention nor any challenge from the wage-earning population to their concentration of economic power. In fact, the deep seated divisions of ethnicity and religion among the working class of Grand Rapids made any concerted response to the manufacturers' accumulation of economic influence unlikely.

CHAPTER I

Endnotes

1. The literature is extensive, but best summarized by Edward C. Kirkland, Dream and Thought in the Business Community (Ithaca, 1956), Samuel P. Hays, The Response to Industrialism (Chicago, 1957), Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism (New York, 1962), Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order (New York, 1967), Alfred D. Chandler, The Visible Hand (Cambridge, 1977).
2. Kolko, op. cit., pp. 146 ff.; Robert Wiebe, Businessmen and Reform (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 154 ff.; for a closer look at how this process of management and self-regulation took place, see Jonathan Lurie, "Private Association, Internal Regulation and Progressivism: The Chicago Board of Trade, 1880-1923, as a Case Study," American Journal of Legal History 16 (1977), 215-238.
3. Richard D. Kurzhals, "Initial Advantage and Technological Change in Industrial Location: The Furniture Industry in Grand Rapids, Michigan" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, M.S.U., 1973), p. 117; Allan R. Pred, The Spatial Dynamics of U.S. Urban-Industrial Growth, 1800-1914 (Cambridge, 1966); for a less analytical, but detailed narrative of the process of growth, see James Bradshaw, "Grand Rapids Furniture Beginnings," Michigan History 52 (Winter, 1968), 279-298; and "Grand Rapids, 1870-1880: The Furniture City," Michigan History 55 (Winter, 1971), 321-342.
4. Twelfth Federal Census, volume on Manufactures, p. 84.
5. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Special Bulletin, no. 18; Department of Commerce and Labor, Census of Manufactures, pp. 11, 13.
6. Kurzhals, op. cit., p. 117.
7. Sidney Ratner, Richard Sylla and James Soltow, The Evolution of the American Economy (New York, 1979), pp. 376-378.
8. Herbert B. Dorau and Albert G. Hinman, Urban Land Economics (New York, 1928), passim.
9. Frank E. Ransom, The City Built on Wood: A History of the Furniture Industry in Grand Rapids, Michigan 1850-1950 (Ann Arbor, 1955), pp. 51, 53.
10. Ransom, Ibid., Z.Z. Lydens, The Story of Grand Rapids (Grand Rapids, 1966), pp. 304-305.

CHAPTER I
Endotes, continued

11. Federal Trade Commission, Report on the House- Furnishings Industry (Washington, D.C., 1923), v. 1, pp. 51, 54, 143, 407. Undoubtedly essential to the success of the manufacturers was the high degree of control they retained over their factories. The number of privately held companies in Grand Rapids, that is to say, not subject to public investment or scrutiny, was three times greater than the average for the state of Michigan. The number of large companies open to public investment, by contrast, was less than half the statewide average. In 1911, there would be only one furniture company in Grand Rapids listed in Moody's Manual, and that was owned by "outside" men.
12. William Letwin, Law and Economic Policy in America: The Evolution of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act (New York, 1965).
13. The Grand Rapids News, April 19, 1911, p. 12; The Observer, July 7, 1911, p. 1.
14. Viva Flaherty, History of the Grand Rapids Furniture Strike (n.p., 1911), p. 21.
15. Robert Christie, Empire in Wood (Ithaca, 1956); Morris A. Horowitz, The Structure and Government of the Carpenters' Union (New York, 1962).
16. Report of the Commissioner of the Banking Department of the State of Michigan (Lansing, 1912); Lydens, op. cit.
17. Ibid.
18. Michigan Investor, v. 15 (September 30, 1916), p. 12.
19. Report of the Commissioner of the Banking Department of the State of Michigan (Lansing, 1912); Lydens, op. cit.
20. Ibid. State reports give the aggregate figures only. The function of banks as lending institutions, often founded by the very people they're meant to serve, is covered by Fritz Redlich, The Molding of American Banking (New York, 1968); Paul B. Trescott, Financing American Enterprise (New York, 1963); Herman Kroos, The History of Financial Intermediaries (New York, 1968).
21. James Cannon, Clearing Houses: Their History, Methods and Administration (New York, 1900), p. 14.
22. The emergence of local and regional markets in competition with national markets has been discussed by John A. James, Money and Capital Markets in Postbellum America (Princeton, 1978); Richard Sylla, The American Capital Market 1846-1914 (New York, 1975).

CHAPTER I
Endnotes, continued

23. James, op. cit., Kroos, op. cit., Redlich, op. cit., Trescott, op. cit.; State Banking Reports do not provide detailed seasonal demands for capital, only the aggregate figures. The annual figures, while aggregated, do provide for some analysis on the nature of long- or short-terms loans, however.
24. Cannon, op. cit., p. 14.
25. Leo Grebler, et al., Capital Formation in Residential Real Estate (Princeton, 1956), p. 164. The same pattern of growing dependence on institutional sources of lending for the increasing numbers of wage-earning home-owners can be seen in Detroit as studied by Olivier Zunz, The Changing Face of Inequality (Chicago, 1982), and Matthew Edel, Elliot D. Sclar and Daniel Luria, Shaky Palaces (New York, 1984) which discusses the same problem in the Boston area, and a more theoretical framework by David M. Gordon, "Capitalist Development and the History of American Cities," in William K. Tabb and Larry Sawers, eds., Marxism and the Metropolis: New Perspectives in Urban Political Economy (New York, 1978), pp. 25-63.
26. Mark S. Mizruchi, The American Corporate Network 1904-1974 (Beverly Hills, 1982) and Ann R. Marusen, "Class and Urban Social Expenditure: A Marxist Theory of Metropolitan Government" in Tabb and Sawers, op. cit., pp. 90-112.
27. Grand Rapids Evening Press, October 28, 1911, p. 15.
28. Grebler, op. cit., p. 164.
29. Report of the Immigration Commission (Washington, D.C., 1911), v. 15, pp. 487 ff. This is part of a larger study of immigrants in industry, with a special study of the furniture industry in Grand Rapids; Paul Douglas, Real Wages in the United States 1890-1926 (Boston, 1930); Albert Rees, Real Wages in Manufacturing 1890-1914 (Princeton, 1961).
30. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Mortgages on Homes: Report on the Results of the Inquiry as to the Mortgage Debt on Homes Other than Farm Homes at the Fourteenth Census (Washington, D.C., 1923).

CHAPTER I
Endnotes, continued

31. Report of the Immigration Commission, p. 531. Implications of this are to be discussed more fully in Chapter II of the dissertation. An early critic of home ownership for workers was Frederic Engels, who wrote a series of pamphlets based on "The Housing Question" in the years before 1887. Engels noted that "the workers must shoulder heavy mortgage debts in order to obtain even these houses [the small, crowded homes] and thus they become completely the slaves of their employers; they are bound to their houses, they cannot go away, and they are compelled to put up with whatever working conditions are offered to them." William Haywood of the Industrial Workers of the World will offer a similar analysis as cause for the failure of the furniture workers' strike in 1911.
32. The Grand Rapids edition of Dau's Blue Book and Social Register lists membership of both elite associations in the city, the Peninsular Club and the Kent Country Club. Included among both sets of members are virtually all the major furniture manufacturers and bankers. (See Appendix B.) Discussion of the size of the community and the increased significance assumed by interlocking companies can be seen in Mizruchi, op. cit., pp. 38-39, and towards an explanation of why this occurred, see the comparative study by John N. Ingham, "Rags to Riches Revisited: The Effect of City Size and Related Factors in the Recruitment of Business Leadership," Journal of American History 63 (1976), 615-637.
33. Michael Frisch, "The Community Elite and the Emergence of Urban Politics: Springfield, Massachusetts 1840-1880," in Stephen Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, eds., Nineteen Centruy Cities (New Haven, 1969), pp. 277-296, and John N. Ingham, "The American Upper Class: Cosmopolitans or Locals?" Journal of Urban History 2 (1975), 67-86.
34. Employment duration taken from Michigan State Census Reports, 1890, 1894, 1900, 1904.
35. Wiebe, Businessmen, pp. 95-97.
36. Linda Ewen, Corporate Power and Urban Crisis in Detroit (Princeton, 1978); Mizruchi, op. cit., Michael Allen, "The Structure of Interorganizational Elite Cooperation: Interlocking Directories," American Sociological Review 39 (1974), 394-407, Peter C. Dooley, "The Interlocking Directorate," American Economic Review 59 (1969), 314-323.
37. Federal Trade Commission, op. cit.

CHAPTER I
Endnotes, continued

38. John Jay Knox, A History of Banking in the United States (New York, 1903), Redlich, op. cit., and see also Statistical Abstracts of the United States Census (Washington, D.C., 1911), pp. 577-677, tables on "Money, Banking and Insurance."
39. Grand Rapids City Directory (Grand Rapids, 1911).
40. Grand Rapids Herald, June 28, 1953.
41. Figures are based upon Reports of State Banking Commissioner for 1910. The specific membership rolls are as follows:

Grand Rapids Mutual Home Bldg. and Loan ..	2,577
Mutual Home and Loan	2,957
West City Savings and Loan	466
Valley City	352
Grand Rapids Savings and Loan	163
42. Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers (New York, 1914), pp. 2374-2379.
43. Minutes of the Board of Directors, Grand Rapids Board of Trade, June 13, 1916, p. 7.
44. Moody's Manual 1904, 1908, 1911.
45. Christie, op. cit.
46. Annual Reports, Michigan Department of Labor, 1900, 1902, 1904, 1908, 1911.
47. Minutes of the Grand Rapids Board of Trade, Board of Directors Meetings for June, 1911, and January, 1912. Bound copies in the Grand Rapids Public Library.
48. Moody's Manual, 1908.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVIDED CITY: CLASS AND ETHNICITY IN AN INDUSTRIAL SETTING

Many reasons have been offered for the failure of a sustained class conscious movement to take root in America. The question posed by Werner Sombart in 1905, "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" has prompted a variety of competing explanations. Traditional explanations have argued that universal manhood suffrage and general prosperity blunted Socialism's appeal to class-consciousness. Louis Hartz asserted that this country was not created from a "genuine revolutionary tradition" and as a consequence lacked the ideological foundations for the widespread acceptance of socialism. Daniel Boorstin argued that the pragmatic quality of American politics eschewed ideology to favor compromise. Stephen Thernstrom demonstrated a slow but certain acquisition of property by wage earning families, a view recently supported by Olivier Zunz and Matthew Edel. A few continue to argue along with Jeremy Brecher that any efforts to organize along class lines were brutally repressed. David Brody and others have pointed to the deep seated antagonism among workers based on ethnicity and religion. Such barriers to collective action and class consciousness only intensified during the period of greatest immigration in the Progressive Era. Fragmentation and conservatism characterized the wage earning class.¹

Part of the answer to the problem of sustained working-class consciousness may lie in an examination of Grand Rapids. William Haywood, cofounder of the Industrial Workers of the World, perhaps the

most radical union organization in modern American history, visited that industrial city during its greatest crisis, the strike by furniture workers in 1911. Several years later he published an analysis of the situation in an attempt to explain why so many workers had failed so miserably in their efforts to challenge the city's industrial elite. In his editorial "What's the Matter with Grand Rapids?" he cited three critical factors inhibiting the advance of a class-conscious struggle: ethnic divisions, both between and within various immigrant groups; adherence to organized religion; a high rate of home-ownership among wage earners.²

These three factors, according to Haywood, made it easy for the continued and unassailable rule by capitalists. Factory-owners and financiers did not have to compromise with the workers. The manufacturers did not have to repress "revolution." The wage earners themselves made it easy. They had become tied to a conservative, propertied, church-oriented existence that all but extinguished radical activity in the furniture city.

Home-ownership was a chief cause in the "conservative and timid" nature of the working men, and "a snare and delusion for the workers." He continued by saying that in his 24 years of travel in the United States "I have always observed that those cities in which large numbers of workers owned their homes were always low-wage, long-workday, open shop towns." Even were wages adequate, the costs of maintaining the house as a wage earner's investment only furthered the sense of dependency: taxes, assessments, insurance, repairs. Once on the "home-buying stint" all extra time and money found its way into the home. "You can't help it," wrote Haywood, "that is the home-buying psychology." Haywood extolled the

thirty or so pioneer members of IWW local 202 and damned the thousands of other "wishy-washy" trade unionist advocates in the city.

We need to take Big Bill's statements about the furniture city seriously because Grand Rapids represents the experience of so many medium-sized industrial centers across the United States in the Progressive Era. So often attention has been paid to the Goliaths of the American economy: New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, or Pittsburgh. Yet the greatest rate of growth and attendant problems of urban reform occurred in the medium-sized cities.³ Although the composition of its immigrant population and particular economic base make Grand Rapids unique, its rate of growth, and percentage of foreign-born population employed as industrial wage earners, all fall within the range described by scholars examining the general trends of urban industrialization in the decades after 1880.⁴ This feature of widespread home-ownership was not unique. Although high, it did not grossly eclipse other similar centers, and may tell us much about the conservative nature of the working class.

The first thing noted by William Haywood was the "the character of the population" in Grand Rapids. He cited, with some contempt, that the dominant nationality was from Holland, family-oriented men who migrated from farm communities and small settlements where the standard of living was low. These "God-fearing" and "law-abiding" sorts were the worst possible material from which to cut the revolutionary cloth.⁵ Yet beyond this, Haywood's insight embraced an important issue only recently explored by scholars. Despite the already cautious nature of the Dutch community, it could never readily be forged into a revolutionary force because of the extreme fragmentation.

Although bound together by a common language and (to the outsider) religion, as Haywood noted, "there are differences in the workers of the same nationality coming from different sections of the same country, but living under different conditions." It was precisely these provincial disagreements, coupled with subtle but virulent religious differences, that separated the Dutch immigrants from the larger group of wage earners and from each other. The province of origin coupled with year of emigration, were the most important factors in coloring the complexion of this major component of the immigrant community.⁶

The overwhelming majority of Dutch immigrants came from Zeeland and Frisia (Friesland). Their antagonistic relationship did not end upon embarkation, but came through intact to Grand Rapids. These provincial differences became expressed and strengthened as Hollanders settled around the city in various pockets. They did not cluster in a "ghetto" fashion but, as Howard Chudacoff has shown for various groups in Omaha and Zunz for Detroit, moved freely around the city.⁷ David Vanderstel, who studied the Grand Rapids Dutch exhaustively, said that it would be more appropriate to talk of many "Little Hollands" rather than one "Little Holland" section of the city. In fact, to be entirely accurate, one should speak of "Little Zeeland," "Little Friesland," or "Little Overijsel."

In a study of 6,500 Dutch immigrant households, Vanderstel found a web of conflicting regional and religious differences that split the Hollanders reinforced by geographical dispersion around the city. He found five distinct Dutch neighborhoods, scattered on both sides of the river; the chief bond uniting them was the effort to remain true to the Reformed Faith and Dutch language. By 1900, the Dutch of recent emigration, their

predecessors and children accounted for more than one quarter of Grand Rapids' population.

Haywood noted that these Hollanders, especially those on the crowded West Side and settling by the railyards along the Grandville area, were characterized by large families. "The dominic impresses on the slave the duty to marry early and propagate a large family," wrote Haywood, that would inhibit any radical behavior by creating enormous responsibility and reinforcing a conservative outlook. Indeed, the larger than average family size among the Dutch was a reality. More than 13% of the Dutch families in this neighborhood had more than six children, far above the city-wide average. Even excluding this dramatic case, many Dutch households ranked well above the average for other immigrant groups with four children.⁸

The Dutch shared the crowded neighborhood around the East Side Brickyard with the Poles. "In an 800 foot square area," wrote Vanderstel, "there were three alleys, one narrow street, and over 100 lots" where 103 households clustered together.⁹ And this closeness was reinforced by two other features: the period of emigration and religious loyalties. To outsiders, they were a cohesive group, indistinguishable from one another and allied in their purpose to remain wedded to the Reform Church and Dutch language.

One of the earliest and most pressing drives that fostered emigration was the pursuit of "pure" religion in the mid-nineteenth century. Certain that the state church of the Netherlands faced corruption, these new puritans created a colony in western Michigan that became the focal point for further settlement in the next half century. While economic pressures loomed as crucial factors that cannot be ignored, especially during a

profound agricultural depression in the decade after 1880, the insularity of Grand Rapids' Hollanders can be traced to their desire for a pure, reformed church.

From the very earliest settlement, the Dutch had pursued deliberate cultural and ecclesiastical isolation.¹⁰ It was not until the pressures of Americanization fostered by the Great War in 1917-1918 battered on their self-imposed removal, that Dutch ethnocentrism would be moderated. The doctrine of the true Church led one Dutch minister to say, "my greatest fear about America was that our Reformed people would pass over into a shallow Methodism."¹¹ The Dutch language became the vehicle of instruction, and not until 1902 was any concession made to church services in English, and not until 1910 was a Hollander paper published in English. As one prominent Dutch spokesman said, "in our isolation is our strength."¹²

Two examples illustrated the importance of religion played in rendering the Dutch community distinct and apart from the urban industrial culture surrounding it. The first episode took place in the Spring of 1888. The Grand Rapids Street Railway Company modernized its lines with the purchase of steam driven carriages. Such loud and powerful engines became quite popular with the weekend traffic to Reed's Lake outside the eastern city limits, a popular site for sports, picnics and drinking. However, a new line had been laid in front of a Reformed church, provoking outrage from the congregation. They did not want the noise, feared danger to their children, disruption of Sunday services, and more importantly, they detested the "common rowdyism and drunkenness prevalent among the merry-makers on the line on Sundays." When the congregation called for the line's suspension on their Sabbath, the Company

ignored their request. In response to the Company's indifference, men and women repeatedly tore up the track in a running battle that went on for more than a month. It was not until the Kent County Circuit Court enjoined the company from operating that line on Sunday that peace was restored.¹³

Yet such an attitude did not stem disruption in the religious community. By the late nineteenth century, the earlier Christian Reform Church and later Reformed Church had split over the Reformed Church's overly "worldly" perspectives. Essentially the Reformed Church had dallied too readily with this world by its sanction of secular fraternities and open discussion on the propriety of labor unions. This, coupled with theological differences centered on hymns, revivals and prayer meetings, forced a series of eruptions as congregations split in Grand Rapids. "We are convinced that ecclesiastical alliances of any kind between orthodox and liberal are contrary to the word of God," pronounced the classis Holland in 1924.

An example of this splintering tendency could be seen in the years 1882-1890, as the Fourth Reformed Church in the city's Fifth Ward was wrent by schism. The Coldbrook Street Church congregation repeatedly sought injunctions from the Circuit Court of Kent County, asking for a cease and desist order to prevent seizure of church property by "renegade churchmen."¹⁴ Such antagonism was reinforced when we recall the provincial differences that could pervade crowded neighborhood life. Separation might have entailed the movement of a dissenting Groninger group away from the predominantly Zeelander congregation.

The second incident, in some ways a bit more severe, brought one of the few censures from the native protestant community to the Dutch

immigrants. In June, 1905, a small pox epidemic swept through the city, taking thirty-four lives. The Dutch represented a high proportion of those infected, and the city physician and other health officers noted the greatest opposition to vaccination came from the Holland neighborhoods. Dr. Koon, the city health officer, found cases among the Dutch that had been hidden---including a man selling milk who was later struck with small pox. "Every unvaccinated person," stated Dr. Koon, "is a menace to this city." The City Council passed an ordinance closing public meeting places and limiting the operational hours of others in an attempt to curtail the dangers to public health.¹⁵

The Christian Reformed Churches protested about the closure vigorously. Alderman Dykstra introduced a resolution calling upon the Board of Health not to discriminate against the church in enforcement of orders to have public meetings closed, especially those on the Southeastern part of the city. Needless to say, this conflict between Dutch Reform Calvinism and the new urban environment abated gradually. Suspicion was not allayed entirely until after the First World War, especially since the epidemic had a direct cost to the city and county exceeding \$20,000.¹⁶

While not all Dutch immigrants became furniture workers, the majority of furniture workers were Dutch. About half the seven thousand man labor force of the city's chief industry were drawn from these ethnically divided, religiously cantankerous people. Slightly more than forty percent of the remaining workers were composed of Poles, with the upper echelons of shop foremen and floor management made up of Germans and Swedes.¹⁷

Yet the Poles were no less isolated from the industrial city. Although the Dutch had come earlier and over a longer period, the Poles

began to arrive just as migration from the Netherlands began to slow, and in contrast to the Dutch who had come at a constant rate, the Poles increased their number annually after 1890.¹⁸

As the city's population continued to grow, fed chiefly by immigration, the Poles, while not the largest group, were highly visible on three accounts. First, they remained mostly on the city's West Side. Despite the appearance of a second Polish settlement on the eastern city limits near the Brickyard, the majority of Polish immigrants acquired homes and raised families across the Grand River. Second, their Catholic faith made them stand out against a predominantly Protestant city where the other important Catholic groups in town were the Germans and Irish. Finally, the Poles composed a disproportionate element of the furniture industry. Polish wage earners would be highly visible during the strike of 1911.

Of the city's 110,000 residents in 1909, almost a tenth were Polish. Yet the Poles did not find a close comforting embrace in Grand Rapids among the other Catholic population there. Just as old world divisions had animated the Dutch in their provincial and religious antagonism with one another, the same deep felt, traditional animosities followed the Polish immigrants. Here Haywood's analysis about the importance of divergent provincial loyalties among the Holland workers could be extended on a larger scale to the history of Central Europe.

The Germans had preceded the Poles to Grand Rapids and taken hold of the skilled jobs in the furniture factories. German artisans became the foremen and shop directors in the new industrial setting, in charge of both Dutch and Polish immigrant wage earners. Yet the Germans also dominated the ecclesiastical structure, and never really let the Poles

forget that just as their native country had been absorbed into the German Empire so too were they still dependent upon them in spiritual matters. Two examples help illustrate this friction and subordination that plagued the Polish settlers.

The first involved the creation of the first Polish parish in Grand Rapids. The diocese of Grand Rapids had been created only recently in 1882, and German born Henry Joseph Richter of Cincinnati had been appointed its Bishop.¹⁹ The majority of Poles had come from the area around Posen in Prussian Poland (annexed 1792) and sought to recreate a church modeled on the Basilica at Trezenieszno.²⁰ Although the basilica would not become a reality until 1983 (when Polish Pope John II ascended the throne of Peter), the creation of a church began in 1881. Dedication of the church might have proven embarrassing had not the Bishop named the parish for a saint whose legacy appealed to both German and Pole alike. St. Adalbert was the name chosen by Bishop Richter and it conveyed the double edged relationship between the episcopal powers and his charges. St. Adalbert, a German monk, had brought Christianity to the Poles in the ninth century, and was revered by both groups. His shrine in Gniezno stood in the heart of eastern Poland, in the region between Poznan and Trzemeszno from which many of the city's West Side immigrants had come. Richter was far less conciliatory more than a decade later as the Polish parish on the city's East Side by the Brickyard was named. Over the objections of parishioners who wanted to name the church after Polish St. Stanislaus, Richter instead overrode their request by episcopal ukase and dedicated the structure to the German St. Isidore.²¹

Richter acted again in 1904 to maintain discipline as well as a distinctly German Catholic bearing to his Diocese when he transferred

Father Simon Pognis out of Grand Rapids to the more distant reaches of Gaylord, Michigan, then called "Siberia." Pognis had been the first Polish priest ordained for the Grand Rapids parish and arrived in 1886, five years after Richter. He served St. Adalbert's well, but infused his service to the Bishop with a call for Polish national consciousness. Father Pognis tried his best to pull Poles into the movement for a Polish National Church in the United States.²² Such actions not only set him into personal conflict with the German Bishop, but also served as a direct challenge to the established ecclesiastical structure dominated by the Germans and Irish. On the local level, Pognis also troubled the aging bishop by urging Poles to act collectively and assert political influence in Grand Rapids. He founded the Polish Political Club in 1899, which slowly began to mobilize immigrant votes in behalf of their countrymen, electing an alderman the year before Pognis' departure and eventually helping to elect George Ellis mayor in 1906.²³

The sources and expression of division among the wage earners, especially those in the furniture industry, were subtle, but still important. Aside from the occasional taunt exchanged between children, there is no evidence of any strong antagonism between the Polish and Dutch residents in the city.²⁴ Then again, neither was there any sign of close cooperation. Rather, residential patterns by 1911 suggested that each group felt comfortable within its own "territory." Informal barriers of major streets separated the two groups in the densely settled North West Side, as did a street railway in the Sixth and Seventh Wards. In fact, there was apparently less friction between Catholic and Calvinist than between Dutch Reformed and their American Protestant counterparts.

Nonetheless, there were differences between Dutch and Polish workers in terms of their wage levels and households. Class might have been the common denominator to a group of immigrants otherwise separated by language and religion. Yet even among the large body of wage earners, ethnicity tended to dictate divergent experiences in the workplace and home. There was little ground of shared experiences, and the already fragmented immigrant community found little basis for class cohesion in the workplace.²⁵

The principal basis for the differences between Dutch and Polish workers in the furniture factories was their time of arrival into the city. The Dutch arrived earlier, on the average of five years earlier than the Poles, and here was a critical difference. This translated into an economic advantage in regard to wages earned and development of family earlier in the life cycle. As a result, first-generation Dutch immigrants tended to earn more and have larger, older families than the Poles by 1910.²⁶

Recent scholarship suggests that immigrant wages were conditioned in part by the degree to which the workers had some saleable skill: language, literacy, basic knowledge of arithmetic.²⁷ As immigrants possessed more and more of these skills, they made a slow climb up the wage scale, and with the help of the entire family, slowly acquired property.²⁸ It was not a meteoric rise, but one that came to many over a long period of time. Second-generation Dutch rarely remained in the furniture factories, but those who did continued to have a significantly higher wage over their first generation counterparts. On the other hand, second-generation Germans and Swedes tended to remain in the industrial shops, rising to positions of foremen and management, commanding far higher wages than even the second-generation Dutch.²⁹ Given these

factors, the Holland wage earners had a different experience than the Poles, helping to create rifts that could be closed only in some extraordinary circumstances.

The Federal Government noted the correspondence between residency and increased earning ability in a lengthy forty volume report on immigrants in all branches of industry. However, the report accorded special attention to Grand Rapids in its discussion of the furniture industry in the United States, suggesting that local conditions paralleled larger national trends. Drawing from the wealth of information about Grand Rapids from this report, discrepancies between Dutch and Polish workers becomes even more pronounced. On a weekly basis, Netherlands earned about eight percent more than their Polish counterparts. On a yearly basis, this created an even larger gap between the two sets of wage earners, as the Dutch immigrants earned an average of \$559 compared with the Polish average annual income of \$511, or a difference of nearly ten percent. Even so, second-generation Dutch earned about \$646 while their German and Swedish supervisors brought home more than \$700 annually.³⁰

The wage differences carried over into the household economy and the way in which the Dutch and Polish families of furniture workers supplemented the father's income. The Dutch family cycle began earlier, so that by 1910, Dutch households were larger than Polish, with five children against the Polish average of two. The children of the Dutch workers were older, and as a consequence were more likely to work outside the home. It was the contributions of these older children, especially the males, that accounted for 40% of all additional income to Dutch households. Among Polish families, children working outside the home barely totalled one quarter of supplemental income. Among Polish

immigrants, the greatest portion of additional money came in from boarders and lodgers, usually other Poles or the growing numbers of Lithuanians. In 120 detailed case studies, the Federal Government found that one-third of Polish families in Grand Rapids derived more than half the household income from boarders, while another third letting out sleeping space to supplement wages from the furniture factories.³¹

Household conditions for Polish immigrants were also shaped by the fact that their houses or flats were consistently smaller and therefore more crowded than those of their Dutch coworkers. Tax information confirms the detailed investigation by the federal government that Polish households had twice as many people sleeping per room, and more rooms used for sleeping than in either first or second generation Netherlands immigrants.³² The number of Polish families who had only two rooms for use other than sleeping, such as cooking and perhaps entertaining, was twice that of the first generation Dutch. While both groups of immigrant workers and their families coped with crowded quarters, they adopted different strategies to supplement wage income. This difference created an unmistakable gap between two sets of experiences that would close only in the face of the most pressing need.

Yet the need for this supplemental income, whether from child labor or letting rooms, came from the fact that many workers owned their homes and struggled to make mortgage payments, tax payments and necessary improvements on their property.³³ The meager private space occupied by many wage earners was their own and it was this salient characteristic that William Haywood pronounced as the chief inhibition to rousing any sort of class-conscious challenge to the entrenched economic powers. The rates of home-ownership among the furniture workers surveyed by the Federal

Government was quite high, yet conformed to aggregate data compiled by the Census Bureau.³⁴

More than half the Polish wage earners and nearly three-quarters of the Dutch workers owned their own homes.³⁵ This is not to confuse ownership of homes with opulence, nor a statement of ownership with a free and clear title. Rather, the majority of homes in Grand Rapids, especially among the furniture workers, were small, extremely inexpensive and heavily mortgaged. Bill Haywood had hit upon an important source of working-class conservatism in Grand Rapids, and possibly the United States. For many of the Dutch and Polish and native employees, the investments in their homes represented a large stake. The high degree of home-ownership may not have been a measure of mobility, but immobility, tying workers to an arrangement of continued dependence upon the wage paying capitalists. With too much money invested to pull out and too little to exercise political influence, the working-class home-owners found themselves caught in an enticing but deadly "property trap."³⁶

This tendency for wage earners to commit themselves and their families to home-ownership and the attendant implication of conservatism was not lost on contemporary critics. Haywood only spoke as a witness to one particular episode. The National Housing Association sponsored a symposium in 1912 on worker home-ownership. Several speakers lauded the idea of widespread private home buying while others pointed to the precarious position into which it forced wage earners. "A working man owning his home, which is purchased after many years of savings," argued one participant, "puts himself to some extent in the hands of such employers as are most convenient for him to get to for further employment." Indeed, continued the same speaker, a wage earner must

remember "that if he buys his home and gets it half paid for, it is likely, as in the case of a strike, pressure may be brought to bear which will prevent him from getting a raise in wage or betterment of conditions."³⁷ Such a description fitted the conditions in Grand Rapids, even though they were offered as an appraisal of only the most general conditions.

Grand Rapids boosters pointed with pride to the high rate of home-ownership in their city. In fact, the furniture city had the highest rate of home-ownership for a city in the medium ranking of 100,000 to 500,000.³⁸ Fifty percent of homes in Grand Rapids were owned, with the highest specific incidence among Dutch and Polish residents. This pattern was not unusual for medium-sized cities in America in the early twentieth century. Nor did the Dutch and Poles of Grand Rapids depart from patterns of home buying in their ethnic group elsewhere across the nation.³⁹ Widespread home-ownership among wage earners in industrial cities had become the norm by 1920. Regional patterns of the Northeast created the image that congested slums and high-priced commercial properties dominated the municipal tax roles. In the large port and commercial cities of the East Coast, workers began to fill in the suburbs surrounding these nationally dominant metropoli. In the smaller industrial centers of the Midwest, however, factories within the corporate limits served as the locus for home construction and ownership. Yet this is not to say that wage earners dwelt amid wholesome gardens and white picket fences.

Going beyond the most general features of home-ownership reveals another dimension, especially in Grand Rapids. Rates of encumbrance were high, as were mortgage and interests, plus the amount of money needed for the purchase of a city lot. As Olivier Zunz has demonstrated, home construction and ownership might precede receiving city services by

a decade or more.⁴⁰ Added to economic burdens was the fact that a remarkably large number of homes were assessed far below the national average in Grand Rapids.

Almost one-third (29%) of all the mortgaged homes in Grand Rapids were valued at less than \$2,500; the only other city approaching such a high proportion of low valued homes was Scranton, Pennsylvania.⁴¹ These houses were small, generally of wood, sometimes cinder block, occupying lots nearly 50' X 50' or less. As industrial reports suggested, there were four or five rooms for a worker, his family and boarders. These homes, nearly three thousand in number, were worth an average of \$1,174, and carried an average debt of \$872---about half again as much as the average Dutch immigrant furniture worker earned annually, and more than two-thirds the yearly income of a Polish wage earner. Proportionately, this group held highest debt/value ratio at an average of 49.2%.⁴²

The next group of mortgaged home-owners numbered slightly more than four thousand, comprising half of all members of the encumbered property owners. Unlike the less fortunate wage earners, these homes had a lower debt/value ratio of 43.3% so that their mortgages, while considerably higher, represented a lesser degree of dependence on borrowed money. But such might be a polite fiction since these homes average \$3,325 with a typical debt of \$1,439. Across the country, most people had homes valued in this \$2,500 to \$5,000 range, but only in Grand Rapids was the total percentage so high, and when combined with the houses assessed below \$2,500, did it present a city of property owners who carried a burden for small, heavily encumbered homes.

Consider the following situation among wage-earning home-owners in Grand Rapids based upon Federal Census and city tax data. In both

absolute and relative terms, workers occupied the largest number of mortgaged homes in a city of 100,000 to 140,000 population; although fifty percent of all homes in the city were owned, half of these had been mortgaged for nearly half of their assessed value.⁴³ Most mortgages, gained from local savings and loans institutions or savings banks, controlled by the factory-owners, were held at 6%, a high enough rate considering that a savings account returned 2-3% in a bank or 3-4% in a Savings and Loan. Mortgages were also short term, renewable every one to three years.

These matters of financing a house must also be set against the volatile nature of the early twentieth-century economy, the lack of employment insurance or bargaining power among workers. A sizeable investment once made could readily be lost in any of the frequent cyclical down turns in the years after 1890. Employment in a highly sensitive (consumer) durable goods industry could provide no guarantee of income. Surviving the depression of 1893-1896 still left the aspiring home-owner to confront the Panic 1906-1907, and protracted recessions in 1910-1911 and 1913-1914.⁴⁴ Nor were the homes so tenuously held extremely valuable on the open market.

When Haywood wrote about the "home-buying psychology" that dominated Grand Rapids, he perceived a fundamental feature of that city and other such industrial centers in the United States. Nor were the small, heavily indebted home-owners evenly distributed around the city. Rather, they dominated the Southwest Side, along Grandville Avenue in the Twelfth Ward and much of the city's Near West Side, hugging the area between the railroad tracks and the steep bluffs rising up along the western most city

limits. On the East Side, they clustered together in the vicinity of the Brickyard, in the Fourth and Second Wards, by the city limits.

The growth of home-ownership among the lower levels of wage earners did not escape the attention of reformers during the Progressive Era. Observers across the entire political spectrum in America and Europe commented on the development of small savings accounts being fed to meet mortgage payments on small, heavily encumbered homes at the turn of the century. William Haywood echoed the radical sentiments voiced by Frederick Engels, who commented on the risk of working mens' associations dedicated to the purpose of acquiring homes. Engels, too, tied home-ownership among the wage-earning families to a conservative outlook that hindered class consciousness while creating an even greater dependence upon employers. He wrote that with the emergence of large-scale industry, "security of tenure in the dwelling place" had become "not only the worst hindrance to the worker, but the greatest misfortune for the whole working class, the basis for an unexampled depression of wages below their normal level...." Indeed, one of the complaints made by workers in Grand Rapids and supported by state employment reports was the notably lower level of wages paid to workers in the furniture industry of Grand Rapids. As Engels observed elsewhere, the workers shouldered heavy mortgage debts "to obtain even these houses and thus they become completely the slaves of their employers, they are bound to their houses, they cannot go away, and they are compelled to put up with whatever working conditions are offered them."⁴⁵

Nor was Engels alone in this criticism of property acquisition. Doubt appeared among participants in the second annual meeting of the National Housing Association, a pioneer organization in the United States devoted to

urban planning and housing reform. Paul Feiss, 1912 Chairman of the Housing Committee of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, noted the same conclusions as Engels, but did not share Engel's pessimistic assessment of the implications. Feiss commented on the chance to own a home as promoting "stability" and "social responsibility" among working families. Yet he also noted that the working man "puts himself to some extent in the hands of such employers as are most convenient for him to go to for employment." Such consequences should, however, be encouraged, so that "there will not be a desire for change in case of industrial disturbance; that they will not be carried away by the first hallucination that excitement may bring. I think it is reasonable to presume that the man who owns his home near his job is not going to be hysterical in deciding whether he shall strike or not."⁴⁶

Feiss was probably correct in his assessment of workers' resistance to "hallucinations" and "hysteria" in the decision to strike. In the context of Grand Rapids, this conservatism provided part of the drama involved with the overwhelming support strikers shared in their decision to challenge the furniture industry and the tenacity with which they dragged on their resistance. The strike in Grand Rapids was not carried on by large numbers of boarding house men, or transients, but a large body of debt-ridden homeowners. Yet by the same token, this encumbered status also provided the brakes to any radical response in challenging the industrialists' power. Thus the control Grand Rapids manufacturers retained over the flow of capital in their city through their interlocking directorates was complemented by the increased dependence by workers on that capital.

The usually optimistic reformer Frederic Howe worried about the increase of encumbered home-ownership across the United States.

Drawing upon the Twelfth Federal Census, Howe discovered that only 29% of all nonrural homesteads were owned outright, and even this represented a dramatic decline from the preceding decade. Being subjected to mortgage debt was no different than tenancy, he argued, and if anything, it was worse. Like Haywood and Engels, Howe saw that such large numbers of people created "no guarantee of personal liberty" in their pursuit of property. While he did not share their desires to redirect this liberty towards revolutionary ends, Howe did fear that the future would bring to "the father of a family...not...increasing opportunity for his children, but an ever-increasing burden to be paid to those who own the land." Howe argued for regulation of the housing marketplace rather than its abolition.⁴⁷

It is important to note that the pattern of home-ownership in Grand Rapids, whether free or encumbered, was not restricted to any part of the city. The pattern of propertied indebtedness was spread throughout the city, with the concentration of homes valued below \$2,500 as the most visible indication of the pattern. With such a high level of mortgaged indebtedness, most every element of the wage-earning population was affected. This remained one of the few unifying threads in the various ethnic and religious divisions among the people. The burden of property spanned the river, hilltops and ravines.

However, patterns of class could be detected by looking at tax records, census data and the city directory to show that the fellowship of encumbered indebtedness did not always bring with it equality of living

conditions. Distinct differences in occupational and propertied life-styles radiated out from the Hilltop precincts where the city's elites lived. Here were the most expensive homes occupied by bankers, factory-owners and lawyers, occupying the top .05% of homes valued in the city. In this Hilltop district, spanning the Second, Third, and Tenth Wards, lived John Mowat, William Gay, and Robert Irwin. Here was the home of the Fountain Street Baptist Church and the equally prestigious First Congregational Church. Broad tree-lined streets shaded solid brick houses with lots of 150' X 100' and more. Private autos carried residents downtown for shopping, or to the Peninsular Club for a convivial mixture of business, politics and "cheer."

Directly to the north, in the Fourth and Fifth Wards, were the uninspiring frame homes of the working classes. Save for the Polish and Dutch clusters on the eastern city limits by the Brickyard, this North End neighborhood housed a variety of blue-collar wage earners, mostly native Americans with a number of Canadian and British immigrants. This area of the city did not grow as quickly as the West Side or Southeastern portions of Grand Rapids, nor did it promise rapid growth. Rather, the area was characterized by little platted land and speculation in small lots. Property values fell readily into the lower half of all homes in the city, although it was a neighborhood of private homes. Apartment houses, boarding rooms, and flats did not form part of the residential geography here.⁴⁸

Directly to the south of the Hilltop precincts stretched the area along Madison Street, where the predominantly professional, native Protestant population gradually gave way to a neighborhood of second generation Dutch who found work in a variety of clerical or small independent positions in the city's economy. The tapering off of housing

values reflected the transitional nature of this area, quite unlike the abrupt shift characterized by the community of the North End.⁴⁹ Skilled craftsmen and independent shop-owners lived here; only towards the southern most reaches of the Madison Street neighborhood did wage earners appear. Here would be a stronghold for municipal reform in the years after 1911, following the leadership of the Hilltop to displace the Mayor and Aldermen. An interesting feature of this area was the absence of small consumer services such as groceries, drugstores or restaurants. People who lived here, even if they did not own a car, could get their shopping done downtown or along busy Franklin Street. Their proximity to the streetcar lines no doubt enhanced the desirability of the neighborhood and their own mobility. This aspect of their life contrasted sharply with two diverse immigrant neighborhoods in Grand Rapids, the strongly working-class community of Dutch along Grandville Avenue to the southeast, and the Polish immigrants along Davis Street on the west side of the river.

The Grandville and Davis neighborhoods shared certain traits. Unlike the aspiring homes on Madison Street, these areas were congested, among the most crowded in the city.⁵⁰ Not only were families consistently larger, but also for every single entry in the city directory and census along the mile of Madison Street, two or more appeared in these other neighborhoods.

The rates of home-ownership in these two predominantly immigrant areas were slightly above the city average, but the size of the homes, the lots where they were located and the value of the property fell far below the city average. Where lots on Madison Street might reach 80' X 100' rarely did housing lots exceed 360 square feet, and frequently less. These homes averaged \$1,620 each, well among the poorest third of the city; here

the similarities ended and the differences told the particulars of the two communities.⁵¹

Grandville Avenue did have a trolley line, like Madison Street, but its function was not the same. The Grandville Avenue line formed part of the inter-urban system of western Michigan, carrying as much business traffic as shopper. The line also permitted workers access to their jobs at the furniture factories, Pere Marquette Railroad Yards, or several other large, heavy industrial pursuits. In a peculiar way, the Grandville neighborhood served to promote the self-imposed isolation of many of the Dutch Reformed Church members there, since the area was separated from the rest of the city by steep ravines through which the Pere Marquette rail lines ran. The large number of groceries, drugstores and butcher shops help to make this area nearly independent, making a community that was "in Grand Rapids" without necessarily being "of Grand Rapids."

Davis Street, by contrast, lacked streetcars; only the tracks of the Pere Marquette line ran the length of the entire West Side. Here was the area chosen by many of the Polish immigrants to make their home and built upon the lots that had been held for speculation by several of the city's leading citizens such as the Hollister family.⁵² Homes in the Davis Street neighborhood had been built of cinder block mixed along with the usual small frame homes of other wage earners' living quarters. The average value of homes in this part of the city was \$800, among the lowest twenty percent of the city's assessed housing. Here was a high concentration of workers whose lives centered around the furniture factories as general laborers, finishers and varnishers. Only a few of the grocery, meat markets and other service shops could be found here. Travel for several

blocks was needed to get to a place for food and drink. The only things conveniently located here were the railroad lines and furniture factories.

This discussion of home-ownership and dispersion around the city among Grand Rapids' major ethnic groups holds several important points, not merely for an understanding of that city in the Progressive Era, but for many other industrial centers across the country at that time. The first point to consider is that the crowded, multifamily dwellings, so often portrayed as typical of the turn-of-the-century cities, was not the norm.

In a pioneer essay, Robert Barrows has shown that important regional differences existed in the type and quantity of housing available in major urban centers. Once outside the busy commercial and financial hubs of the eastern seaboard, especially New York and Boston, construction of single-family dwellings accounted for the overwhelming proportion of residential construction in the years after 1890.⁵³ Local economic conditions, especially the growth of manufacturing, made steady wages and low levels of capital accumulation possible for the first step of acquiring mortgaged property. While manufacturing occurred in the areas surrounding Boston and New York, workers could rarely afford to locate in costly commercial and financial districts. Competition for the needed land came with smaller nonindustrial institutions in the countryside. In the Midwest, the corridor of industrial cities stretching from New York to Chicago, abundant unoccupied land existed in the incorporated municipalities for expansion, providing advantages of city services and centrality of location with access to rail and communication lines. Wage earners in this industrial region of

the country could depend on more reliable wages and place them in savings accounts, where they might then find their way into the capital pool to be used as local lending institutions saw fit. Barrows described the close correlation, on the national level, with home-ownership and the percentage of families borrowing from these institutions. Grand Rapids stands as a case study in this general investigation. Although Barrows did not explore the particular distribution of this widespread homeownership phenomenon among any special immigrant groups, Carolyn and Gordon Kirk did.

The Kirks found that in medium-sized industrial cities, the rates of home-ownership among the immigrant population consistently exceeded that of native born Americans.⁵⁴ The Polish families of Grand Rapids were no different than their counterparts in Milwaukee, another closely examined city, in their purchase of single family dwellings. While the Kirks differed from Barrows in their emphasis on manufacturing in the local economy as a key to home-ownership, they agreed that city size and geographical location were important variables. They stressed that the type and price of housing came to be chief factors in the acquisition of housing. Again, Grand Rapids conforms to this general pattern with the large numbers of small, inexpensive, single family homes that covered the city in the years after 1890. In accounting for the high rate of home-ownership among immigrants, the Kirks also stressed that buying a home was a response by people who had been denied social mobility in search of some way to solidify their "precarious economic status." By the same token, the energies devoted to home-ownership gave immigrants some "marginal control over their social and economic environment."⁵⁵ Home-ownership provided some edge against the caprices of landlords' search for profits and eviction in the days before tenants' rights existed. Olivier Zunz

concurred with the Kirks, in his study of Detroit, that workers and their families frequently postponed the installation of city services to keep costs stable and inhibit the rise of property taxes.⁵⁶

Finally, Richard Bernard and Bradley Rice have offered some insight into the political implications of home-ownership in the Progressive Era. Bernard and Rice sought some connection between socio-economic environment and the adoption of progressive reform in nearly 156 cities across the United States.⁵⁷ Testing nine variables in their model, they found that for the Midwest, the age of cities and the rates of home-ownership correlated highly with the adoption of some kind of Progressive municipal reform. Newer cities with a high degree of owner-occupied homes were more likely to opt for some sort of serious change in their governments. Grand Rapids satisfies these general arguments of Bernard and Rice, being a relatively young city, incorporated in 1850. While there was significant crowding along the West Side and along Grandville Avenue, much of the city's Southeast Side remained undeveloped even as the working-class North End was sparsely populated, leaving room for continued home building.

Haywood's particular insights to Grand Rapids workers anticipated much of recent scholarship. The large numbers of low-paying, but steady, industrial jobs produced a class of wage earners anxious to secure the traditional rewards of home-ownership, family and church life, rather than question the conditions under which these gains had been granted. Yet were the city's residents all that passive, as Haywood argued, and were employers quite so powerful? Certainly diversity of ethnicity and religion may have inhibited a sustained class-conscious movement for the long run, but in the short term battles for political power, wage earners in the city

may have been able to assert more control than Haywood and others anticipated. Working-class conservatism may have served to resist change from the advocates of total structural reform in municipal government as readily as it defeated the profound changes urged by the Industrial Workers of the World.

CHAPTER II

Endnotes

1. Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York, 1955); Daniel Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics (New York, 1955); Stephen Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress (Boston, 1966); Jeremy Brecher, Strike (Boston, 1977); David Brody, Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era (New York, 1960); John Bodnar, The Transplanted (Bloomington, 1985); For a fuller view of the literature on class consciousness in the United States since the turn of the century, see Aileen Kraditor, The Radical Persuasion: 1890-1917 (Baton Rouge, 1981).
2. Solidarity, October 4, 1913, p. 1. Haywood wrote the article, taking up nearly the entire first page, under the pseudonym O.L. Wakeup. For a more complete description of the Industrial Workers of the World's efforts to organize skilled workers across America, see Melvin Dubovsky, We Shall Be All.
3. Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, "Political Environment and the Adoption of Municipal Reform," Journal of Urban History 1 (February, 1975), pp. 149-174; for a discussion of growth patterns in city size distinguished by regions and its effect on long term city size rankings, see David Ward, Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth Century America (New York, 1971), esp. p. 61, tables 2, 3, 4.
4. Ward, op. cit., pp. 77-81; F.J. Warne, The Tide of Immigration (New York, 1916), pp. 220-225.
5. Solidarity, p. 1.
6. David G. Vanderstel, "The Dutch of Grand Rapids, Michigan 1848-1900: Immigrant Neighborhoods and Community Development in a Nineteenth Century City" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1983).
7. Howard P. Chudacoff, "A New Look at Ethnic Neighborhoods: Residential Dispersion and the Concept of Visibility in a Medium Sized City," Journal of American History 60 (June, 1973), pp. 76-93; Olivier Zunz, the Changing Face of Inequality (Chicago, 1982). ✓
8. Vanderstel, op. cit., p. 410; Reports of the Immigration Commission (Washington, D.C., 1911), v. 15, p. 513.
9. Ibid.
10. The most complete research for the Dutch Reformed Church in the Progressive Era was done by Henry Zwaanstra, Reformed Thought and Experience in a New World (Amsterdam, 1973) and an older work, less detailed, but nonetheless valuable, John Kromminga, the Christian Reformed Church (Grand Rapids, 1949).

CHAPTER II
Endnotes, continued

11. Kromminga, op. cit., p. 93.
12. Vanderstel, Kromminga, Zwaanstra,
13. Vanderstel, p. 470; Z.Z. Lydens, The Story of Grand Rapids (Grand Rapids, 1966), p. 22.
14. Vanderstel, pp. 466, 514; Kromminga, p. 104-5.
15. Civic News, June 17, 1905, p. 3, 6.
16. Ibid.
17. Immigration Commission, p. 480.
18. Federal Census of 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910; Michigan State Census, 1894, 1900, 1904.
19. John McGee, The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley (Lansing, 1950); National Cyclopedia of Biography.
20. Edward Skendzl, "Polonian Musings," v. 2, pp. 406-410.
21. Harold Abramson, "Ethnic Diversity within Catholicism," Journal of Social History 4 (1971), pp. 359-488, and Eduard Skendzl, "Polonian Musings" (photocopied typescript in the Grand Rapids Special Collections of the Library), v. 2, pp. 406-410. Despite the informal presentation of this source, it is an excellent piece of local research on ethnic groups in Michigan, with access to numerous primary sources in private collections in both English and Polish. ✓
22. The struggle between Richter and Pognis symbolized the larger stresses within the Catholic Church as it confronted the diverse waves of immigrants after 1880, especially when complicated by the growth of nationalism among many eastern Europeans. For a detailed case study, see Victor Greene, For God and Country: The Rise of Polish and Lithuanian Ethnic Consciousness in America 1860-1910 (Madison, 1975), chapter 7, pp. 122-142. ✓
23. Skendzl, op. cit., p. 410.
24. The only documented example of ethnic animosity is a taunt exchanged on the West Side between Calvinist and Catholic children, "When the angel rings the bell, Polaks, Polaks go to hell," in Lydens, op. cit., p. 21.

CHAPTER II
Endnotes, continued

25. Laurence A. Glasco, "The Life Cycles and Household Structure of American Ethnic Groups: Irish, Germans, and Native-born Whites in Buffalo, New York, 1855," Journal of Urban History 1 (May, 1975), pp. 339-364.
26. U.S. Immigration Commission, op. cit., p. 493, table 25.
27. Peter J. Hill, "Relative Skill and Income Levels of Native and Foreign Born Workers in the United States," Explorations in Economic History 12 (1975), pp. 47-60; Hill does note that discrimination did follow non-white workers in contrast to various immigrant ethnic groups; and Robert Higgs, "Race, Skills, and Earnings: American Immigrants in 1909," Journal of Economic History 31 (June, 1971), pp. 420-428.
28. Thernstrom, op. cit., and Josef Barton, Peasants and Strangers (Cambridge, 1975); Zunz, op. cit.; Matthew Edel, et al., Shaky Palaces (New York, 1984).
29. U.S. Immigration Commission, op. cit., p. 493, table 25.
30. Ibid., pp. 500 ff.
31. Ibid., pp. 502-503, tables 34, 38.
32. Ibid., p. 517, table 54.
33. Zunz, op. cit., see Chapter VI, "Neighborhoods, Homes and the Dual Housing Market," pp. 129-176.
34. Bureau of the Census, Mortgage Report; Dorau and Hinman, Urban Land Economics (New York, 1928).
35. Immigration Report, p. 531.
36. This idea has been developed more fully with its political implications by Michael E. Stone, "Housing, Mortgage Lending and the Contradictions of Capitalism," in Tabb and Sawers, Marxism and the Metropolis (New York, 1978), pp. 179-207; Matthew Edel, et al., op. cit., chapters 4 and 5, pp. 134-194.
37. National Housing Association, Housing Problems in America (Cambridge, 1913), v. 2, p. 283.
38. Bureau of Census, Mortgage Report; Dorau and Hinman, op. cit.
39. Edith Abbott, The Tenements of Chicago 1908-1936 (Chicago, 1936), pp. 379-382; Carolyn Kirk and Gordon Kirk, "Impact of the City on Home Ownership," Journal of Urban History 7 (August, 1981), p. 474.

CHAPTER II
Endnotes, continued

40. Zunz, op. cit.
41. Bureau of Census, Mortgage Report.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz, A Monetary History of the United States 1867-1960 (Princeton, 1962).
45. Frederic Engels, The Housing Problem (New York, n.d.), p. 35.
46. National Housing Association, op. cit., pp. 281-282.
47. Frederic Howe, Privilege and Democracy (New York, 1910), pp. 80-81.
48. City directory listings of all apartments, flats, boarding houses and lodgings, and hotels for 1911, Grand Rapids City Directory of 1912.
49. Ward 3, book 1, pp. 62-72; Ward 10, book 1, pp. 62-66; Ward 11, book 2, pp. 73-77, Ward 11, book 3, pp. 1-54; all tax records drawn from volumes dated 1909-1912. Moving southward along Madison Street from the Hilltop precincts, average home values proceed as follows: \$7,400, \$9,450, \$5,572, \$2,985, \$2,225, \$2,014, \$1,081, \$1,500.
50. Federal Census 1910, v. 2, p. 954, table V.
51. Based on analysis of city tax records cited in note 49.
52. See city tax records for 1909-1912, Ward 6, book 2, pp. 65-67; among leading citizens speculating in Davis Street lots were the Hollisters, Norris, Harrison, and McPhersons.
53. Robert G. Barrows, "Beyond the Tenement: Patterns of American Urban Housing, 1870-1930," Journal of Urban History 9 (August, 1983), pp. 395-420.
54. Carolyn Kirk and Gordon Kirk, op. cit., pp. 471-498.
55. Ibid., p. 473.
56. Zunz, op. cit., pp. 129-161.
57. Bradley and Rice, op. cit.

CHAPTER III

SELECTING MAYOR AND MINISTER: COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN TRANSITION, 1906

The mayoral election of 1906 changed the political landscape of Grand Rapids. For the first time in a generation, two new groups competed for control of the city government. The new industrial elite of furniture manufacturers and bankers challenged the various ethnic and working-class voters for command of City Hall. They remained unable to elect their candidates for a decade. These political contests illustrated the difficult ascent facing the new elites in manufacturing and finance to a formal exercise of city-wide political power. As Herbert Gutman has shown for Paterson, New Jersey, the close fit of status and economic influence did not automatically create unchallenged social authority. Samuel Hays also noted the increasing influence played by different economic leaders of industrial cities in transition; both men recognized the symbolic contest in the Progressive Era of changing perception of rulers and ruled.¹

This confrontation between employers and wage earners at first assumed a political character due to local conditions. The older governing leadership had been discredited in a recent city-wide scandal, creating a chance for new political figures to emerge. The "Water Scandal" of 1900 involved every level of city rule, including the mayor and most of the aldermen, where a calculated fraud was practiced on the city with the knowing complicity of the government. Bonds for a water treatment plan had been overissued and the difference shared among the various culprits.

Exposed by the newspapers and probed by a grand jury, those guilty retired to disgrace, but not to jail. The respectable merchant classes entrusted with guarding the city's best interests had failed. This did not occur in a vacuum either, since involvement in the "Water Scandal" had been preceded by a series of financial irregularities involving city treasurers. Corruption in office became compounded by the questionable handling of emergency procedures and relief efforts during the flood of 1904.²

Given this opportunity, George Ellis built a fragile coalition of working and middle-class voters, holding on to the mayor's office for a decade.³ Over time, his skills as campaigner, conciliator and administrator broadened his appeal, closing the many deep seated ethnic and religious differences among residents at election time. His victories did not mean that class-consciousness had swept standing animosities aside and replaced them with a cohesive political response. Instead it was the deft leadership of Ellis combined with the manufacturers' political weakness, rather than working-class strength, that kept the industrialists and bankers at ward level influence.

Despite their economic strength and cohesion in business matters, as a political force, the furniture manufacturers and bankers found it difficult to agree upon a single approach. The vagaries of local issues created no clearly defined agenda for reform that distinguished them from George Ellis. They were inexperienced and naive about the give and take of ward level politics, unable to organize drive for voter registration, unwilling to visit pool halls and saloons in search of support. More importantly, they lacked centralized leadership. The furniture manufacturers and their allies continually divided over support for mayoral candidates, a factor that permitted Ellis to make the most of his various working-class and ethnic

groups spread around the city. Nor did they establish a strong party organization that might enable them to reach effectively into all portions of the city in search of support.⁴ Rather, they created the Grand Rapids Good Government League, more an association of like-minded moralists than vehicle to achieve political power.

The League contained mostly lawyers, businessmen and industrialists living in the Hilltop neighborhood and spent its rage on moral corruption plaguing the city.⁵ Of utmost importance was the saloon issue. For years they worked to introduce zoning ordinances that would create special corridors for the beer halls. This would have concentrated the saloons into smaller, more easily patrolled areas, but, by the same token, would have reduced the number of locations available while increasing the cost of doing business. Competition for the few authorized spots would drive up the rental charges. The saloon issue typified the League's approach to political problem solving. Conceivably, support might be found among all elements of the population who desired peace and orderly conduct. No one advocated drunken brawls and fist fights. Yet rather than work towards a compromise solution in the city council, the League offered heavy handed moralizing combined with permanent changes that promised to bring order at the expense of pleasure. Driving up the cost of doing a beer-hall business was the first step to driving it out of town.⁶

In contrast, the Republican Party of Michigan stood at the heights of its organizational strength. Under the direction of United States Senator James McMillan and his adroit use of patronage, the Republican "machine" secured a variety of offices from governor on down.⁷ In western Michigan this brought William Alden Smith to power as a state senator, who then bought the Grand Rapids Herald in 1906 to assure himself and his party

uncritical support, appointing Arthur Vandenberg editor.⁸ Both Smith and Vandenberg worked with the Republican mayoral candidate that year, George Ellis. Thus Ellis' own political acuity was bolstered by an established organization.

However, George Ellis become more than a partisan opponent to the League. Like many of the prominent manufacturers and businessmen, he had come to Grand Rapids early in his professional career, but Ellis always remained an outsider. Part of the reason was social, the other economic. Leading a comfortable life and occupying one of the more expensive homes in the city, the source of his money and leisure time associations continually skirted the bounds of respectability. To the group of lawyers, merchants and manufacturers who were his neighbors, Ellis never quite rose above the smell of a smoke-filled back room, despite a personal abstention from alcohol and tobacco that had earned him the sobriquet "Deacon Ellis" in the daily papers.⁹

The source of Ellis' income was never clearly established as illegal. Yet it provoked a scandal, for the civic reformers wanted to suggest a more subtle personal corruption than might be evinced by the "Deacon's" personal rectitude. Ellis and his supporters claimed that he ran a stock and grain brokerage business in Grand Rapids. His local detractors, along with the Chicago Board of Trade and Illinois State Supreme Court, argued that Ellis ran a "bucket shop" or the commodities equivalent of a bookmaking operation.¹⁰ In the mayoral contest of 1906, Ellis' ties to a series of bucket shops around the city became the focus of the civic reformers' attacks.

The bucket shop operations became synonymous with gambling, which in fact, is what they were. Ellis' defenders argued that in the put-and-call

transactions of these office front operations the small-time speculator in commodities could stake a claim that ordinarily went only to the professional investor. Ellis' detractors said that he was guilty of "duping" the ignorant public regarding how small their chances were for gain. The Chicago Board of Trade charged him with the unauthorized use of private services by tapping into telegraphic lines carrying commodities information.¹¹ In short, the civic reformers had some basis for calling Ellis a liar, cheat and scoundrel.

The operation of bucket shops was simple enough. Outside several "brokerage" offices operated by Ellis were posted the daily prices of various commodities: oats, corn, wheat. Someone wishing to play the market put forward his bid "on margin" to Ellis and waited for the change in price by a given future date. In theory, it was no different than the "legitimate" operations of a commodities exchange, except that no actual orders left the "brokerage office" for Chicago, nor was possession of the commodities ever taken. Rather, the anticipated gains or resultant losses were settled between the "speculator" and his "broker," within the confines of the office. League members argued that Ellis knew far more than the small-time speculator ever could and that by offering his services to the common man to get in on the action, he knowingly engaged in fraud.¹²

However, Ellis claimed that it was precisely to enable the common man to enter into the exclusive world of the elite investor that he offered his services as "broker." There is no evidence that many, or any, felt resentment towards Ellis. On the contrary, he gave someone with a few dollars to burn something other than cards or dice, something perhaps more "ritzy" that could dominate discussion in the corner tavern. The workingman might sit over a few beers and talk about the beating he had

taken in the market even as the city's elite gathered at the exclusive Peninsular Club and shared their stories of the commodities exchange.

Ellis' political opponents claimed that he exploited the misguided wage earner, that he pandered to unwholesome entertainment frequently separating the honest worker from his money. Time and again, his detractors raised the spectre of Ellis' endorsement and sponsorship of questionable sporting activities.¹³ He had helped to organize the old Western Baseball League in 1894, purchasing the franchise of the Grand Rapids team, and he had been a dominant factor in forming the old Atlantic Baseball League, operating the Newark, New Jersey, franchise for two years.¹⁴

Here was more proof of Ellis' long career in rubbing elbows with a growing city's worst elements. Reformers charged that baseball lured roughnecks and lowlifes together, where drinking, cursing and gambling took place openly. Sandlot baseball might be proper diversion for children, but "professional" baseball's appeal to the unrefined elements of society only reinforced arguments about Ellis' moral standing. Not only was the conduct of spectators and players a moral issue, but the habit of playing Sunday games lent another volatile aspect to the political mix.

Editorials from the Civic News, official paper of Grand Rapids' Good Government League, thundered against Ellis in his attempts to run for mayor. "There is no reason," ran a story on page one, "why a city in its right mind should add another daub to its smirched [sic] reputation."¹⁵ Efforts to criticize him by the regular press paled in the light of vindictive rhetoric cast by the Civic News. This weekly was more than the work of a few isolated extremists. Rather, the News was produced by Grand Rapids' social elite and eventually consolidated efforts with the Detroit Reform

League in a statewide effort to promote reform. Eventually, opposition to Ellis became part of a statewide perception of eliminating political undesirables.

The Civic News spent its righteous anger on Ellis in a special issue prior to the April election. Ignoring the great popularity that had brought Ellis a seat in the State House of Representatives in 1904, his close ties with State Representative Gerritt Diekema and State Senator William Alden Smith, the News listed reason after reason on the front page for not electing Ellis mayor. All the reasons depicted Ellis as a morally reprehensible human being. This vile corrupter, once in power, would lure the children into gambling, speculation and betting. These self-same children would then think it fine for a college-educated man, one smarter than most, to get rich by "preying upon the weaknesses of his fellow man."¹⁶

Ellis' involvement in real estate, bucket shops and baseball remained at the heart of the reformers' charges. A man such as he, who has never "turned his hand to honest labor or engaged in a productive business, is no friend of the working man," warned the Civic News. With a final blast, the trumpet of civic pride appealed to every lover of "decency and order" not to support a thief.¹⁷

Ellis, in contrast, was a man of few words. He accepted the argument that the time had come for reform, and whether government would be controlled by "the people or by the special interests." However, he saw "the people" as the wage earners, not the industrialists; it was the high-minded boosters and wealthy factory-owners who represented the "special interests," not the bucket-shop clientele or baseball fans. When he spoke, Ellis made it plain that his support of the common man was based on

keeping the wealthy men of the community in line with their numbers and limiting their economic influence.

At the start of his campaign, Ellis outlined four major charges against the "special interests." First, they had corrupted the government by demanding and receiving special treatment in the payment of property taxes. Unfair tax assessment would be a key issue in the election. Second, these interests wielded undue influence in the city hall. Appointments to city service boards came to men who would never be chosen if "left to the people." Third, they had overdeveloped riverfront property, especially on the West Bank, rendering the channel narrow and susceptible to easy flooding. These greedy industrialists thus threatened life and property in pursuit of profit; given the devastation of the flood in 1904, this charge assumed more than rhetorical proportions. Finally, the liquor laws were enforced unequally, discriminating against the poor man's saloon without troubling the upper-class private clubs.¹⁸

Ellis' claim of preferential treatment at the hands of city tax assessors was not an idle charge. Physical expansion of the city could be seen by anybody who bothered to look. Yet the growth had not been evenly distributed, either in terms of industrial development or residential property. The recipients of boom-like proportions had been the already prosperous Second Ward, and to a lesser degree the neighboring Third, followed by the promising Tenth and Eleventh Wards. Conversely, the entire West Side made only modest advances in the appreciation of property values, the northeastern Fifth Ward actually declining.¹⁹ Not only did it appear that the rich were getting away with less taxes, but in a paradoxical way, underassessment of other locations acted to depress residential development at the expense of industrial expansion. Prime

residential lands of the South East Side of the city would never be reasonably priced for any new industrial plants coming into the expanding city. The low rates determined for the Fifth Ward on the North End and the entire West Side all made them the logical points for investment by men interested in paying the least possible for plant expansion while causing the least possible damage to neighborhood market values.

In terms of governmental reform itself, Ellis pledged a program true to Progressivism: civil service examinations for office holders and citywide adoption of initiative, recall and referendum. To balance out the older pattern of appointments "made up from the aristocratic classes and worn-out politicians who could not be elected to office by the people," Ellis guaranteed the appointment of working men. Wage earners would be given a share in running the city, and after the election Ellis was as good as his word. "There is no demand for bosses," stated Ellis in his inaugural, "who profess to know more about the needs of a municipality than does the combined intelligence of its citizens."²⁰

The issue of flood control also came directly to the matter of riverfront development. Throughout the campaign, Ellis' remarks about the exposed West Side could only bring support from that part of the city. No other politician in the campaign said so frequently or bluntly "let's protect the West Side and not talk about it for a couple of years." Yet his appeal went beyond local concerns to embrace the larger issue of class conflict. Encroachment by rich factory-owners, carelessly at best and unlawfully at worst, of the river channel was only the most visible sign of special interests confronting the people. "The rich men have stolen property on both sides of the river," said Ellis, making the channel too narrow, so that

flooding could occur any time. "The men who have stolen this land should give it back to the city."²¹

By the same token, Ellis appealed to a variety of ethnic workers and neighborhoods in his promise to promote equal enforcement of the liquor laws. The hot topic had focused on illegal Sunday drinking, where the alley door or back door of a saloon might be open despite the propriety of a shuttered front entrance. Knowing patrons would slip into the barroom, occasionally interrupted by some overly zealous novice on the police force. Yet the exclusive Peninsular Club and other private clubs made no pretense of the fact that they served alcohol to members on Sunday. They saw it as a difference between public and private drinking, but Ellis assailed this attitude by calling for "high-toned hotels and low grade grog shops" to share in the spirit of the law, not merely the letter.²²

A period of tension in the campaign for civic reformers came in the primaries. For the first time in the city's history, the recent charter provided for the direct election of candidates in a run off primary by registered voters.²³ The party caucus was dead. This new technique of campaigning down among the Hustings would not only prove how well Ellis was loved, but also how much support this "false friend" of the working man could muster. The voice of the Civic News hoped the people would repudiate Ellis and nominate a "responsible" Republican standard bearer, but here it was that Ellis showed his command of the new electoral system. His mastery of its parts would promote him to victory in the primary and final election for more than a decade.

Instrumental in Ellis' success was his membership in a wide range of working class fraternal organizations throughout the city. They ran the gamut from the upper stratum of the Masons to the Knights of Pythias.

This extensive network of working class clubs wound its way to the Loyal Order of Moose, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Woodmen of the World, and the Order of the Eastern Star. In later campaigns, the civic reformers would bemoan Ellis' alliances with so many "fraternal assemblies."²⁵ Even so, Ellis' connections could not have won over so much of the popular vote. Part of the answer also lies in his campaign techniques, organization, and skill as a stump speaker.

On the weekend before the primary election, 120 newsboys, ten in each ward, distributed copies of Ellis' platform along with his photograph. By the end of that Saturday, an estimated 20,000 copies of his pamphlets spread around town.²⁶ In the campaign for mayor following the primary election, Ellis turned a personal slight to victory. In speaking before a well-attended lunch-time rally at the Bissell Carpet Company, the manager did not provide Ellis with either a speaking platform or introduction as he had for the other "respectable" candidates. Grabbing hold of a packing crate, Ellis stood up and said, "you know me---not them---they need an introduction," and then launched into his campaign talk, receiving an enthusiastic response.²⁷

Ellis also benefited from the recent "mass meeting craze" in which hundreds of men came to hear the mayoral candidates. At all the major neighborhood meeting halls, Ellis appeared two or three times in the course of the campaign. The direct vote certainly stimulated voter curiosity, and it also provided more work for all political campaigns. The normally unenthusiastic Herald reported a recent wave of registration, generally among men previously ignored. The new political supports were usually recruited while lounging in a barroom, rooming house, or other areas.²⁸

And the approach bore fruit. The turnout in 1906 was the largest ever recorded in the city's history.

Opposition from the incumbent mayor was significant in numbers, but too localized to do any harm to Ellis. Edwin F. Sweet, running in 1906 as an Independent, had been elected in 1904 in response to the water scandal, perhaps more because he had been an "outsider" to the proceedings than due to any strong personal following. Sweet came to Grand Rapids at a young age, practiced law and gained admission to the Michigan Bar. He married well, taking a daughter of the prominent Fuller family in the city. His later record of public service was marked with distinction, serving as a representative in the sixty-second Congress, and as a city commissioner after 1926, rising eventually to become Assistant Secretary of Commerce under Hoover.²⁹ In 1906, he was an advocate of civic reform running on a non-partisan ticket. Sweet claimed that choice should be for the best man; partisan allegiances only perpetuated corruption, "deals" and special interests.

Charles R. Sligh ran on the Democratic party ticket, also espousing a range of social and municipal reforms. Sligh had also come to Grand Rapids as a young man, but not to practice law. The son of Scottish immigrants, Sligh worked his way up the corporate ladder to become a principal sales agent for the huge Berkey and Gay Furniture Company. His ascent led to the creation of his own firm that became the largest producer of bedroom furniture in the nation. Sligh owned more than a billion board feet of raw timber in forest reserves in Oregon and Washington. His second marriage was to the daughter of a prominent Grand Rapids family, the Clarks, whose success in the wholesale grocery concern helped Charles

and his father-in-law to form the Clark Iron Company, where assets exceeded \$2 million worth of iron deposits in the Mesabe Range.³⁰

Added to Sligh's diverse economic holdings was his own local political and economic influence, dating from before the turn of the century. Sligh had served as president of the Grand Rapids Furniture Manufacturers Association and the Board of Trade, as well as the director of several major banks. Yet he had a statewide reputation also, for in 1896 he joined the fusion ticket of Democrats, Silver Republicans, and Populists to run for governor. He was defeated by Hazen S. Pingree but remained active and prominent in political affairs, accepting appointment by Governor Charles Osborn to help author one of the nation's first workman's compensation laws.³¹ Sligh would edge very close to Ellis' lead in 1908, but for now, he had to share a distant second place with Edwin F. Sweet.

The perception of Sweet and Sligh as members of the ruling elite did not endear them to the great numbers of wage earners, although their stance on liquor control did help among some of the Dutch Calvinist voters. They also lacked the common touch and connections wielded by Ellis. Neither apparently had extensive fraternal connections beyond the walls of the Peninsular or Kent Country Clubs.³² Nor did they go beyond the staged lunch time rallies to register new voters or hand out literature as did Ellis. This patrician campaign style, moral reform platforms and class affiliation affected the response by the electorate.

The emphasis on personality, political connections and the issue of liquor control placed Ellis far in advance of both his opponents on election day.³³ He carried every ward west of the river and on the East Side, north and south of the Hilltop and business districts. Ethnic and class support fell clearly into precinct lines, as lower-income wage earners and

predominantly Polish neighborhoods joined in support for Ellis. The ethnically mixed Fifth Ward, mostly native, Canadian and British immigrants but poorer laborers, swung heavily for Ellis, as did the Brickyard Poles. The only serious contest in a working-class or ethnic precinct came in the fourth precinct of the First Ward, whose mix of Dutch Reformed and German Catholic votes gave Ellis a three vote victory over Charles Sligh.³⁴

Edwin Sweet and Charles Sligh had respectable showings, but by the new conditions of direct primary and subsequent enthusiasm evinced in the final voter turnout, they did poorly, each pulling half the votes that Ellis did. Edwin Sweet carried the Third Ward, Ellis' home territory occupied by professionals and industrialists. He split support with Charles Sligh in the prosperous Second and Tenth Wards, leaving the way open for Ellis to carry away the remaining majority of votes. In the Second, Third and Tenth Wards, Sweet and Sligh's support was concentrated along the edge of city limits, where the second-generation Dutch, respectable small businessmen and middle-class salaried workers had begun to develop new residential neighborhoods.³⁵

Analysts then and since argued that the bloc of Polish votes was central to Ellis' victory.³⁶ Estimates varied from a total of 1,500 to 2,000 votes were polled from this ethnic community. The fact that two of Ellis' personal secretaries throughout his political life, Stanley Jackowski and Roman Glocheski, were from St. Adelbert's parish and remained by his side, undoubtedly provide some concrete links with a conscious attempt to build up the Polish vote as part of his West Side coalition. Nor could Ellis' stand on the question of saloons have hurt him, especially given the high proportion of Polish saloon-owners. In fact, Poles were overrepresented

among saloon-owners in the city.³⁷ Such made sense as an easy way to get ahead: self-employment, prestige, and minimal capital or skills. Mostly an aspiring saloon keeper needed political clout to get the license. Retaining this bloc of votes would be critical to Ellis if the manufacturers ever managed to organize a successful political campaign and erode some of the other ethnic working-class votes.

Here was a visible expression of working-class conservatism and the ambiguities of Progressive Era reform. The main issues in the 1906 campaign had been protection of private property coupled with the desire for an honest and open city administration. As shaped by Ellis, this became protection of residential property from flooding caused by industrial overdevelopment along the river banks and safeguarding property values by promised reassessment of tax burdens. His pledge of an honest and open administration meant the appointment of industrial workers to service boards and longer office hours for the mayor. Anything beyond this was rejected. Efforts by Ellis in 1906 and after to promote initiative, recall and referendum failed, always repudiated by the same voters who had put Ellis in office. The majority of wage-earning men in Grand Rapids did not want their city government changed in any way.

It was the Hilltop elite of manufacturers and bankers who wanted deep seated changes in the government, but who could never get beyond the ward level in exercising political power. Part of their problem was the lack of a spokesman with the appeal and abilities commanded by George Ellis. Without someone to carry their message to a city-wide audience, the new industrialists might never find enough support to capture City Hall. Yet it became their good fortune to find such an articulate and sympathetic figure almost by accident.

That summer of 1906, the Fountain Street Baptist Church sought a replacement for their retiring minister. A search committee was sent to find an appropriate candidate to lead one of the city's most prestigious congregations.³⁸ This four-man team was headed by William Gay, the prominent industrialist and founder of the Grand Rapids Furniture Manufacturers Association. He was joined by other respected businessmen, including Charles Hamilton, sales manager for the Berkey-Gay Furniture company; Frank Leonard, president of the prestigious H. Leonard and Sons, whose business was importing "fancy crockery, crystal and household furnishing"; and James Hawkins, City Treasurer.³⁹

The reputable men of the Fountain Street Church knew what sort of leader their congregation required. They were not blind to the changes taking place around them. It was not merely the shift in the city's economy that placed furniture manufacturing at the apogee, but also the change in the city's ethnic and religious structure. They saw that George Ellis had drawn unflagging and essential support from the Polish Catholic population on the West Side. In searching for a man to lead both the church and its membership to continued prominence, a pastor interested in reform, familiar with the industrial conditions and the varieties of religious experience flooding America became paramount.

Gay and his committee found their man in Alfred Wesley Wishart, a graduate of the Rockefeller-endowed University of Chicago Divinity School. Wishart had worked since his ordination in 1895 through 1906 as a minister at the Baptist Central Church of Trenton, New Jersey. There he established a regional reputation, bringing the religious and secular spheres closer together by creating the first of several "civic revivals" and editing one of the city's daily papers for three years. Putting morality into

practice, he founded the Anti-Bribery Society of Mercer County. His concern for the working class gained national recognition when, in the wake of the 1902 silk workers strike in Paterson, he defended Englishman William MacQueen against charges of inciting riots. Wishart prepared an elaborate thirty-eight page brief in defense of MacQueen, whose case had become an international cause celebre, bringing in such notables to his defense as Lyman Abbott and H. G. Wells.⁴⁰

Alfred Wishart always thought of himself as a disciple of the Social Gospel, keenly aware of the need for the church to become involved in the issues of secular society. As for many caught up in the Social Gospel of the Progressive Era, he emphasized the new problems of city life, especially those created by industrialization and the new immigrant labor force.⁴¹ Wishart repeatedly addressed critics of the Social Gospel in his sermons who wished a return to the days when preachers asked men only to care for the state of their own souls, rather than the conditions surrounding their fellow man.

By training and temperament, Wishart was a member of the "conservative" school of the Social Gospel, which was no less complex in its shading than the Progressive Movement. Members of this wing tended to be born after the Civil War and trained in the Midwest, less liberal than Easterners in their attitudes towards immigrants, unions and government regulation of business.⁴² While Wishart championed the role of religion in providing a strong moral basis to reform the living and working conditions created by the new urban industrial environment, he felt that the initiative belonged to the local business elites to correct community conditions. In this regard he was closer to William Graham Sumner than Washington Gladden.

Wishart's attitudes towards the current problems of the day fit into that opinion shared by the Grand Rapids business community. His anti-Catholic, anti-union sentiments were complemented by his support of new industrial management techniques that stressed concentration of power into the hands of professional managers and efficiency experts. Wishart's criticisms of the Catholic Church and unions stemmed from the same concern: loyalties would be diverted to larger "outside" institutions, sapping community cohesion. Wishart denied the importance of class identity for the same reason. Community fragmentation impaired productivity and generated discord, both ultimately harming the prospects for democratic society. All these topics echoed concerns through every major city in America at this time: not only New York and Chicago, but dozens of lesser industrial centers such as Paterson, Trenton, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Cleveland and Milwaukee. Wishart asserted that these new economic conditions and populations must be confronted and controlled, and it was his advocacy of control that placed him at the heart of conservative reform in the Progressive Era.⁴³

In one of the earliest surviving sermons preached and published in Grand Rapids, Wishart attacked the interference of the wrong kind of religion in politics, Roman Catholicism. While he qualified the difference between two kinds of Roman Catholicism, the "good, true" religion and the "religion deformed by jesuitism," he left no doubt that both nationally and locally, the United States was beset by Catholicism as "the religion of interference; the religion whose visible organ on earth is the Pope, with absolute authority to rule the consciences of followers of the cross...", the "enemy of the true soul of liberty."⁴⁴

The danger of blind obedience to Rome was not only ideological, but also economic. Drawing upon the Reformation and contemporary France, Wishart asserted that "all kinds of superstitious practices and pilgrimages have been encouraged by the French clergy for the purposes of building up the power of Rome and adding to her revenues."⁴⁵ Absolute rule by the Pope, who commanded "the unthinking loyalty of the masses to the church of Rome," was the fundamental issue: the imperialism of the papacy versus the genuine democracy of the state. "Did you ever stop to think that the Roman Catholic carries in his mind two different, irreconcilable ideals?" Wishart then added a call for American Catholics to topple this "idol of the Vatican" and pave the way for true democracy.

Reverend Wishart pursued the need for political reform by linking the Catholic Church with other "special interests" that threatened the welfare of the people. The Vatican was symptomatic of other corporate ills of the day. Wishart denounced the Roman Catholic Church as a "monstrous Politico-Religious Trust" that dominated the religious marketplace.⁴⁶ It would be the moral influence of the small, decentralized Protestant congregations that would exert a benign reforming influence. Voluntary cooperation among the many, small congregations was superior to the massive, centrally run church hierarchy of Rome. The Social Gospel provided a vehicle for ministers and others concerned with the salvation of society to intervene and arrest the corruption evident in mortal man. The Protestant churches were concerned with a "this-world goodness" not "another-world goodness" and current trends towards social reform provided the chance for "applied Christianity."

Wishart presented his audience with another set of points about proper issues of reform and how to achieve them. The question was not if

the church had a social mission, but what that mission was. The greatest challenge was inducing "good citizenship" among the population: to become involved in civic affairs bringing the private morality from the church into daily life. "It is the bad citizenship of otherwise good men," asserted Wishart, "that delays the suppression of many civic evils and hinders the progress of society."⁴⁷ In part, progress involved recognition of the new economic conditions; Wishart fully endorsed the 1908 Federal Council of Churches of Christ Report on the Church and Modern Industry, calling it an important step away from the "narrow evangelism" of the past.

The problems of this new economic order needed to be solved on a "scientific" basis, for "as a consequence of scientific inquiry, the new view of charity insists that there are social as well as individual causes of poverty, sickness and crime." However, scientific or not, it was chiefly through the cooperation of public and private spheres that lasting reform could occur. In this understanding of the world, local government began to assume paramount importance. The basis for tenement reform, factory safety and pure food all rested on the relations "between corrupt or inefficient government and the social welfare."⁴⁸

The problem of "corrupt" or "inefficient" government could not be ignored. While believing that "it is the social mission of the church to encourage the people to do more and more for themselves," Wishart also urged greater government involvement, "for by public taxation needed social enterprises can be conducted on a much broader scale and far more effectively than by the church." The recent past has shown a tendency in modern democracy "toward a government paternal or fraternal, at any rate a government that is daily extending its care over the young, the poor, the sick, the defective and delinquents." Such developments were good,

according to Reverend Wishart, not a bad trend as charged by those "blinded by prejudice and medieval dogmas."⁴⁹

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges confronting the church in its social mission was bridging the gap between the classes. Wishart argued that the church possessed the means of bringing all classes together, "no institution on earth has such inherent, democratic possibilities, or possess such a brotherly philosophy of life as the Christian Church." The rich and the poor, employer and wage earner, could come together under the banner of God. Truly, the peaceable kingdom was at hand. Yet achieving progress towards this secular millennium would be difficult, especially due to the new economic order's offspring: the labor movement.

"The labor movement," wrote Wishart, "requires a fresh adjustment of the church's methods and ideas to be changed, and changing conditions." His own experience in Trenton had shown him the volatility of the industrial wage earner. The rise of the American Federation of Labor offended many industrialists. The challenge afforded by "Big Bill" Haywood and the Industrial Workers of the World frightened them. Both the AFL and IWW had been active in New Jersey at the time of Wishart's tenure there and made an appearance during the silk workers' strike. Little wonder that such a view prompted him to say that "the working class are feverish, restless, pushing forward under strange standards, inspired by ideals and led by men outside the church to which many of them are indifferent or hostile."⁵⁰

In Grand Rapids, Wishart let the influential members of the Fountain Street Church know the path they had adopted in dealing with their economic and political matters was morally correct. "Society," he told the congregation, "is not wrong in looking to its industrial leaders" for the

solution of industrial problems. He also recognized the growing contest between employer and wage earner for power in this new arena. "Modern democracy tends inevitable toward an increase in the economic wants of the masses and their desire for a larger share in the control of industrial, social and political conditions." The furniture manufacturers had taken steps in the right direction, by cooperating with each other to promote hometown stability. The FMA and Employers Association were two steps that had been taken "to eliminate waste in production and distribution, to lessen the evils of competition...."⁵¹

What the Federal Trade Commission would see as an illegal conspiracy to fix prices in the furniture trust, Wishart saw as a laudable effort "to maintain just prices" and avoid the "dishonorable practices" of price cutting. When Wishart spoke of cooperation to promote social harmony, he meant cooperation among employers "to work unselfishly together...through organized effort." The pursuit of stability and profit went hand in glove, since "economic efficiency," lectured Wishart, "is absolutely essential to the well being of individuals and the best interest of society. Hence every manufacturer should be a special student of all those plans classed under the title of 'scientific management.'"⁵²

Wishart championed the efforts of Frederick Winslow Taylor and all efficiency experts, for "scientific management" was not only a "device to secure increased production," but was "a method in industry which is bound to be followed by industrial and social results of vast importance...." It was scientific management and not the work of unionization that brought progress. "Why, Friends," beseeched Wishart, "organized labor has very little...to do with the general advance of human beings in this country." The small number of unionized workers and not their conditions was the

critical factor for Wishart, and it was only for these "limited number of workers" that there was any improvement. Organized labor was "not the cause for the economic advance of the American people."

Clearly the efforts of management, and all members of the business community, were in conflict with the ideals of cooperation among workers, even to the degree that wage earners could participate in decision making. "Jesus taught the stewardship of wealth," continued the Fountain Street Pastor, "that all men have obligations." Some men were to lead and others to follow, some to disburse the fruits of the stewardship and others to benefit. Collective action by workers was at best negligible, at worst totally disruptive of the process by which wealth was created and distributed. Labor unions could only produce disruption that "breeds poverty."

Economic progress was tied directly to the new industrial system, and this new system demanded subordination. Any sort of collective action by workers threatened this emerging order. His praises for scientific management were not merely attempts to laud the most recent developments in managerial theory. He understood clearly that Taylorism was a tool to stop unionization before it started, especially in older productive processes, such as furniture manufacturing, that were making the shift towards greater dependence on machinists and mass production. Wishart clearly saw the nature of change taking place in American society. Scientific management was "another step in the direction of elimination of the old craftsmanship from industry," he told the Baptist Congregation, "and towards specialized workmanship which gives all students of society so much concern and which is rapidly creating for mankind a new set of social problems."⁵³

Alfred Wishart acted on his beliefs regarding clerical involvement in civic affairs. From the time of his arrival in 1906 until his death in 1933, Wishart served the business community in a capacity unmatched by any other clergyman in Grand Rapids. His work for the Board of Trade carried him far beyond the traditional breakfast prayer or brief service on the Speakers Board assumed by many ministers. Chairing the Committee on Social Affairs, he led the movement for playground and park expansion, and after 1917, the drive to Americanize immigrants. Motivated to refute charges in the daily papers that the Board of Trade conspired to oust the Brunswick-Balke Company from Grand Rapids, he inaugurated an investigation to prove the Brunswick-Balke firm relocated for selfish reasons, selling out to the highest municipal bidder. Wishart also played a key role on the Municipal Committee's search for administrative fraud in city government in 1914-1915. This work led to a new charter commission and eventually a new city government.⁵⁴

With time, Wishart's reputation spread beyond the city to a regional and national level. The Ramona Theater in Grand Rapids filled to capacity on Sundays, as nearly two thousand people turned out to hear his sermons on current social topics. These sermons and other comments appeared in the regionally important business journal, Michigan Investor, suggesting that this brand of the Social Gospel appealed to many outside the Grand Rapids Board of Trade. Finally, Wishart's national reputation became apparent when Clarence Darrow traveled to Grand Rapids to debate Wishart on "The Meaning of Life" in 1928. And at his death in 1933, Wishart received tribute from Harry Emerson Fosdick, nationally acknowledged leader of the Social Gospel Movement in America, who

called Wishart, "a devoted Christian, a great preacher, a fearless liberal, and intelligent and forward looking citizen."⁵⁵

The election of George Ellis and the arrival of Alfred Wishart helped to polarize Grand Rapids in the years after 1906. Built upon a fragile coalition of middle- and working-class neighborhoods, Catholic and Protestant, Ellis came to rely upon the decisive impact of bloc voting from the city's West Side. Attacks on the selfish rich and efforts to steer a moderate middle ground through the moral issues of saloon control and Sunday Theatre closings drew increasing wrath from the city's business leaders and self-styled reformers. Ellis' ties to the Polish Catholic community by the appointment of Stanley Jackowski, and then Roman Glocheski as personal secretary, exacerbated the difference between this "Boss" and Grand Rapids' "respectable" citizens.

While Alfred Wishart spoke formally for the Baptist Church of Fountain Street he addressed the concerns of progressive men everywhere on the city's East Side. His attitudes towards unions, Catholicism and industrial management served as the locus for a growing party of discontent with the new economic and political world of the industrial city.

Two different approaches to reform emerged in Grand Rapids in the years after 1906, divided along the ends they sought to achieve and how they should be achieved. For the first group, centered around George Ellis and the Republican Party, the agenda was a Pingree-like program of social justice, where the wage-earning population might have a more direct say in the operation of city government, and the established political machinery

was good enough to redress the issues of unequal property assessment and riverfront development.⁵⁶ In the decade he held power after 1906, Ellis would move towards reform measures that included housing codes, eight hour days for city employees and wider representation by working class men on municipal boards. However, the conservative nature of this coalition, made up of home owning wage earners, balked at any deep-seated change in the structure of city government, defeating a proposed charter alternative in 1912 and abandoning Ellis in the mayoral contest that year because of his endorsement of that new charter.

The second reform coalition lacked the effective political leadership and cohesion of Ellis and the Republican Party. The Hilltop elite skittered about, flailing at Ellis' presumed moral corruption, occasionally pulling in support from the middle-class neighborhoods to the south by pressing concrete issues such as saloon licensing and Sunday theatre closings. However, their candidates never quite grasped the importance of widespread political support at the local ward level, or engaged in the sort of face to face politicking that Ellis did so well. More importantly, an appeal to structural reform separated them from the first group. Their insistence that moral reform could come about only through fundamental changes in the city government through legally binding ordinances set them apart. Saloon licenses must be regulated by the exercise of the law; limits on numbers must be drawn up, districts designated and patrolled. This stood in contrast to Ellis' attitude of compromise in the city council, where give and take among aldermen might best secure the needs of their wards.

Both groups competed for control of the city government after 1906 and shared the belief that the older mercantile leadership had passed from the scene; both groups pressed for a variety of reforms. Yet in the

following decade two things happened to shift power into the hands of the structural reformers. The strike of 1911 proved to many wavering middle-class residents that the Hilltop elite were right. The city government could not be trusted to act impartially in times of industrial crisis. Ellis' thoroughgoing support for the workers made him anathema, and since he could not be removed under the established political system, that system itself must be changed. Second, the same decade saw an increasing rate of home-ownership in the city coupled with the proportionate decline of workers engaged in the furniture industry.⁵⁷ As fewer workers shared common employment problems, ethnic and religious differences assumed more importance. The principal bridge among wage earners became not class consciousness as workers, but class consciousness as home-owners. During the strike and afterwards, Wishart's brand of Social Gospel wedded to Scientific Management would provide the philosophical focus that the structural reformers' political efforts lacked.

CHAPTER III

Endnotes

1. Samuel P. Hays, "The Changing Political Structure of the City in Industrial America," Journal of Urban History 1 (November, 1974), pp. 6-38; Herbert Gutman, "Class, Status and Community Power in Nineteenth Century Industrial Cities: Paterson, New Jersey: A Case Study" in Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America (New York, 1976), pp. 234-259; Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order (New York, 1967).
2. Z.Z. Lydens, The Story of Grand Rapids (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966).
3. Anthony R. Travis, "Mayor George Ellis: Grand Rapids Political Boss and Progressive Reformer," Michigan History 58 (Spring, 1974), pp. 101-130.
4. For a comparison of other efforts at municipal reform and their limitations, see: Raymond R. Fragnoli, "Progressive Coalition and Municipal Reform: Charter Revision in Detroit 1912-1918," Detroit in Perspective: A Journal of Regional History 4 (Spring, 1980), pp. 118-142; Jack D. Elenbaas, "The Boss of the Better Class: Henry Leland and the Detroit Citizens League, 1912-1924," Michigan History 58 (Spring, 1974), pp. 131-145; Thomas A. Scott, "The Diffusion of Urban Governmental Forms as a Case Study of Social Learning," Journal of Politics 30 (1968), pp. 1091-1108; Bradley R. Rice, Progressive Cities: The Commission Government Movement in America 1901-1920 (Austin, 1977).
5. See Civic News reports on the City Council meetings, May through June, 1906, plus records of the City Council.
6. Ibid.
7. Arthur C. Millspaugh, Party Organization and Machinery in Michigan Since 1890 (Baltimore, 1917) and Stephen B. and Vera H. Sarasohn, Political Parties in Michigan (Detroit, 1957), pp. 8-19.
8. Lydens, op. cit., p. 520.
9. Travis, op. cit.
10. Civic News, December 16, 1905, pp. 1-3; "Bucket Shop Department Store," pamphlet published by the Good Government League of Grand Rapids (n.p., n.d.); Cedric Cowing, Populists, Plungers and Progressives: A Social History of Stock and Commodity Speculation (Princeton, 1969).
11. Civic News, ibid., p. 1.

CHAPTER III
Endnotes, continued

12. "Bucket Shop Department Store," pamphlet published by the Good Government League of Grand Rapids (n.p., n.d.).
13. Civic News, December 1, 1906.
14. (National Cyclopedia of Biography)
15. Civic News, March 3, 1906, p. 1.
16. Civic News, March 30, 1906, p. 1.; Civic News, April 1, 1906, p. 1., see also the Michigan Tradesman for March 23, 1910, as an example of the continued villification of Ellis, e.g. "Practically every dollar of his fortune is 'tainted money' representing, as it does, the sufferings of little children and the agony of despairing women." Similar sentiments were voiced by Edwin Sweet's supporters in the Herald, March 16, 1906.
17. Civic News, April 1, 1906, p. 1.
18. Herald, April 20, 1906, p. 1.
19. Herald, April 20, 1906, p. 6.
20. Civic News, May 12, 1906, p. 1; Herald, May 8, 1906, p. 5.
21. Herald, April 1, 1906, p. 2.
22. Herald, March 9, 1906, p. 6.
23. City Charter of the City of Grand Rapids, 1905.
24. National Cyclopedia of Biography.
25. "Some Racy Reading," published by the Good Government League of Grand Rapids (n.p., 1914), p. 2, damns Ellis for trying to "work the fraternal racket."
26. Herald, March 11, 1906, p. 6.
27. Herald, March 30, 1906, p. 5.
28. Lynn Mapes, "Flamboyant Mayor George Ellis," Grand Rapids Magazine (January, 1976), p. 24.
29. National Cyclopedia of Biography.
30. Ibid.

CHAPTER III
Endnotes, continued

31. National Cyclopedia of Biography.
32. Dau's Blue Book and Social Reporter for Grand Rapids (Chicago, 1906).
33. Herald, April 7, 1906, p. 1.
34. Herald, April 7, 1906, p. 2; Election results of April 7, 1906, in Herald, Evening Press and Evening News. The newspapers remain the only sources of final results since much original material was destroyed with the old City Hall in 1967.
35. Ibid.
36. Mapes, op. cit.; Travis, op. cit.; Herald.
37. In Grand Rapids nearly 15% of all 133 saloons were owned by Poles, a trend followed by other Polish immigrants around the country, see Edward Pinkowski, "The Great Influx of Polish Immigrants and the Industries They Entered" in Frank Mocha, ed., Poles in America: Bicentennial Essays (Stevens Point, 1978), pp. 303-370. Michigan had the fifth largest Polish population in the United States in 1910.
38. Register of members and pew rentals for 1906 show a high percentage of Hilltop addresses, and members of the new industrial elite, such as William Gay and Robert Irwin.
39. Herald, May 7, 1906.
40. Who Was Who, v. 1.
41. Henry L. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York, 1949); Ronald C. White and C. Howard Hopkins, The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America (Philadelphia, 1976).
42. May, op. cit.; Ferenc Szaz, "Protestantism and the Search for Stability: Liberal and Conservative Quests for a Christian America, 1875-1925" in Jerry Israel, ed., Building the Organizational Society (New York, 1970); William R. Hutchinson, "Cultural Strain and Protestant Liberalism," American Historical Review 76 (April, 1971), pp. 386-411; Ralph E. Luker, "The Social Gospel and the Failure of Radical Reform, 1877-1898," Church History 46 (March, 1977), pp. 80-99.

CHAPTER III
Endnotes

43. For instance see Gerd Korman, Industrialization, Immigrants and Americanizers: The View from Milwaukee, 1866-1921 (Madison, 1967); Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Staus Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana, 1966); John Higham, Strangers in the Land (New York, 1972).
44. Alfred W. Wishart, "Sermon Preached January 13, 1907" (n.p., n.d.), p.1.
45. Ibid., p. 8.
46. Ibid., p. 21.
47. Alfred W. Wishart, "The Social Mission of the Church" (n.p., 1909), published by the American Baptist Social Service Commission of the Northern Baptist Convention, p. 15.
48. Ibid., p. 17.
49. Ibid., pp. 40-41.
50. Ibid., p. 47.
51. Alfred Wishart, "Industrial Democracy: An Address Delivered before the National Furniture Manufacturers Association in Grand Rapids, December 1, 1915" (n.p., n.d.), p. 11.
52. Ibid., p. 13.
53. Ibid., p. 14.
54. Based on Minutes of the Board of Directors, Board of Trade of Grand Rapids, an analysis of committee assignments, members and reports 1908-1933.
55. Evening Press, April 26, 1933, p. 1.
56. Melvin Holli, Reform in Detroit (New York, 1967); for a review of the literature see Michael Frisch, "Oyez, Oyez, Oyez: The Recurring Case of Plunkett v. Steffens," Journal of Urban History 7 (February, 1981), pp. 205-218.
57. Figures based on Michigan Department of Labor, Reports for 1906-1918, and the Fourteenth Federal Census. Furniture workers fell from nearly 34% of the total work force in 1910 to less than 25% by 1920.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT STRIKE: CONFRONTATION AND THE FAILURE OF ORGANIZED LABOR 1911

The mayoral election of 1906 had been the first expression of a contest between manufacturers and the new labor force for control of the city. The strike by workers extended this struggle to the factory, an area that manufacturers considered to be their exclusive domain. Forced to share power in the city council chambers, industrialists refused to surrender their managerial autonomy by conceding that workers had the right to initiate discussions about wages or hours. With the strike of 1911, the struggle for control moved out of the political and into the economic arena.

The strike began in April, and ended in August with the total defeat of the strikers. The intervening five months brought Grand Rapids the greatest civil disruption in its recent history. Sporadic violence meant to intimidate nonstriking workers erupted into a full-scale riot on May 15. Nearly two thousand people smashed factory windows on the city's West Side, protesting the intransigence of manufacturers who refused to negotiate with striking workers. The crowd's action, along with limited suppression of peaceful demonstrations, polarized the city, with frequently bitter exchanges between Mayor Ellis and Reverend Wishart. Ellis defended the striking wage earners while Wishart assailed both the wage earners and Ellis' defense of them. Thereafter, the success of

manufacturers during the Buyers Show in July followed by the withdrawal of union funding, doomed the workers' cause. Secure in their control of economic matters, manufacturers once again turned to the political arena in attempts to extend their influence.

The strike began over the issue of wages. As early as November, 1909, three men from the Oriel plant formed a committee to ask for wage increases to cover the increased cost of living.¹ The committee represented only forty-five skilled cabinet makers out of a workforce exceeding three hundred. Honoring a request by Oriel management to postpone discussions until after the busy season, they returned in January, 1910, to find themselves dismissed as "agitators."² Such might have been the case if their demands for a ten percent increase did not rest with the need to keep up with increased living costs, but it did. Grand Rapids newspapers noted the fact that meat and other food prices had climbed dramatically in the preceding year. Alderman Connelly even suggested a boycott to force price reductions and began circulating petitions.³ One sign of rising food costs was an end to the popular fifteen-cent dinner served around town.⁴

The refusal to grant any concession under these circumstances to workers in the city's chief industry aroused anger. The Evening News complained that wage rates in Grand Rapids were notoriously low, where factory workers earned "less than the city of Detroit pays per day to newly arrived Polish and Italian immigrants for work on the streets and sewers."⁵ Observers of national trends in wages for the furniture industry noted the

general impression that Grand Rapids manufacturers "were able to get a high grade of labor at a price rather below that paid in other furniture centers." Indeed, it appeared that "the South is the only part of the country where wages are as low as they are in Grand Rapids."⁶

Shortly after the dismissal of Oriel cabinet makers in January, 1910, workers acted to secure a stronger position in dealing with the manufacturers. Wage earners from several factories organized a local chapter of the national carpenters union, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and at the end of a five-month drive, sent a committee to meet with the Grand Rapids Furniture Manufacturers Association.⁷ This July discussion brought new demands of reduced hours in addition to better pay. The FMA responded with a plea for recess until after the summer Buyers Show had passed, implying that once national orders had been secured, then discussion might resume. The workers acceded, waited, and then returned in August only to be told that no collective bargaining would take place under any circumstances. The committee of organized laborers was told that only individual workers in each factory might deal with his respective employer over the issues of hours and wages.⁸ Turning from the FMA, workers then turned to the Employers Association in an attempt to get a hearing for their demands. The Employers Association ignored their requests for negotiations.

An entire year, from January, 1910, to January, 1911, had been spent by skilled cabinet makers trying to better their working conditions. Only after all avenues on the local level had been exhausted did they contact the national council of the UBCJ for help. In February, the national council wrote to members of the FMA and offered its help in resolving the differences between employers and employees.⁹ In their letter to

manufacturers, the Carpenters Union included an end to the piece rate system as an additional, negotiable demand along with hours and wages. For the first time, the possibility of a strike was mentioned. The FMA did not ignore the national council as it had the local chapter.¹⁰

Twice before, manufacturers had responded to requests for discussion with organized workers with delay and then refusal. This time they acted and addressed the entire labor force. In a letter distributed to all wage earners employed in FMA factories, the FMA declared that there was no place for organized labor in their industry. No organization had any right to "confer with us about the management of our business," stated the FMA, asserting that individual employees had always been treated fairly on the basis of ability.¹¹ Ignoring the power wielded by the Employers Association to monitor wages, the letter further claimed that each company in town had "always recognized the liberty of every man to sell his labor freely, independently, and at the best price obtainable."¹² Outraged, Thomas Garrett, manager of the Michigan Chair Company, publicly declared that "nobody" could "dictate labor policy" to him.¹³

From the beginning, manufacturers defined unionization, rather than working conditions, as the key issue. The issues of managerial autonomy and complete control of the workplace shaped manufacturers' response from the very beginning. Denying that local conditions might be involved, factory-owners announced that trouble stemmed from a group of "self-serving agitators" who were part of "a deliberately planned attempt by the American Federation of Labor to unionize the chief industry" of Grand Rapids.¹⁴ John Linton, President of the National Association of Manufacturers, echoed the FMA's sentiments. It was only a handful of "union agitators" who confronted the Grand Rapids industrialists, and

unless stopped, unionization would "sweep across the nation" and affect "every community engaged in this manufacture."¹⁵

Alarmed at the increasing bitterness between workers and manufacturers, city newspapers voiced fears of the disruptive consequences that a possible strike entailed. Social order and economic stability must come before confrontation was allowed to occur, stated the Grand Rapids Evening Press, urging workers to modify wage demands and manufacturers to accept fewer hours. The paper intoned that "the welfare of society, as well as economic production, is dependent upon the vitality of the workers. The happiness of the homes and well-being of the family are affected by the hours of labor."¹⁶ The Evening News noted that "the interests of the people of every municipality are interdependent," especially so in a city dominated by a single industry.¹⁷ The economic repercussions went beyond the wage levels of individual workers to affect the entire community, for "as the purchasing power of the great wage-earning classes increases or lessens...so must wax or wane the prosperity of the business classes generally."¹⁸ Even though privately owned, the furniture factories had become of public concern, noted the Evening Press. Citing the industry's rapid growth of the past decade, the Press then declared "that attitude as to WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS AND WHAT IS OUR BUSINESS has altered. The conclusion has been reached that anything which affects our safety, our happiness and our pocketbooks, like a strike, is very much the public business."¹⁹

Indeed, the issue of public safety was on the minds of many city officials. Police Commissioner Weston proudly stated that "the workingmen of Grand Rapids are not the type to cause lawlessness or disorder," adding hopefully, "and we expect none."²⁰ Mayor Ellis voiced a

bit more caution. Fearing that so many men given the chance for so much idle time would be tempted to spend it drinking, he "requested" that all saloons close their doors on Sunday in the case of a strike.²¹ As an incentive to stay away from the bars, arrangements were made with the armory located on the West Side to schedule a series of indoor baseball games during the spring.²² Battalion headquarters would provide hospitable refuge from the temptations of drink. Amateur baseball during the afternoon was "wholesome amusement" granting the benefits of "exercise" while filling the idle hours.²³ Confident in the restraint of workingmen and an endorsement received from the city saloon-owners association, Ellis refused to arm extra policemen.²⁴ Influential lawyer and member of the Board of Trade Stuart Knappen agreed that "law and order must be maintained in this community."²⁵

How then to reconcile manufacturers and workers, thereby preserving the peace? From the pulpit, editorial page and City Hall came the call for some form of arbitration. The Reverend F. R. Godolphin of Grace Congregational Church spoke out, basing his appeals on Washington Gladden's articles in The Outlook. Noting that the employer was usually a corporation which could not actually bargain individually, Godolphin argued that "trade unionism" did not violate the older forms of social and economic relations favored by the manufacturers. It stood for "paternalism: a fair reciprocal contract between workman and employer, the employer not conferring a benefit nor the workman a favor. In short, self-respecting and mutually respecting parties freely contracting with each other."²⁶

The Evening News agreed that collective bargaining and compulsory arbitration could prevent a strike. Such procedures were necessary to

eliminate the chance for trouble arising from the "cut-throat competition" induced by wage reductions. The system of "collective contracts" assured the "only safeguard against this conceded industrial evil."²⁷ Noting the power of the FMA, the News concluded that it was "the meanest employer in any line of business that fixes the standard of wages in that particular industry."

In a public letter, Mayor Ellis urged reconciliation before the debate became more heated. In the same letter, sent privately to Charles Waters, president of the district council of furniture workers, and John Mowat of the Employers Association, Ellis stated that he would be happy to appoint a committee of disinterested "professional men" and clergy to examine thoughtfully the issues at stake.²⁸ Ellis, like the newspapers and clergy suggested that the whole city stood to suffer in the wake of labor difficulties, no matter how brief. Thus divided, the city waited for something to happen as sentiment built among the workers for some form of direct action.

Then, at the beginning of April, Mayor Ellis announced the formation of a Citizen's Committee. Negotiating behind the scenes, Ellis had created a five-man committee to forestall confrontation, yet there was no clearly stated limits to the committee's powers. Union organizers assumed the committee was the first step towards arbitration of workers' demands. Manufacturers saw the board as a group of citizens making an inquiry into the state of industrial conditions, without the power to act on its findings. The manufacturers knew more than the union men, because the composition of the committee favored the factory-owners. Headed by the Reverend Alfred Wishart, two other men making up the controlling faction were Heber Knott and Sydney Stevens, both of the Board of Trade. Only

Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Schrembs could be counted on to guard wage earners' interests with any consistency.²⁹

The committee's very ambiguous nature translated into the daily papers as hope for a speedy settlement. Without any evidence that the committee would actually do anything other than record testimony offered by workers and manufacturers, a sense of optimism suddenly emerged. By mid-April, on the Monday before Easter, Grand Rapids residents learned that the bulk of evidence had been gathered. The FMA's private response to the committee had been received shortly after a week of public testimony offered by dozens of wage earners. The Evening News, Evening Press and Herald all intimated that compromise was not far away. Popular support for the workingmen and fear of disruption had combined to create an expectation that crisis could be avoided. The only discordant note came from an independent, weekly neighborhood newspaper that circulated in the northern portion of the city. Not waiting for release of official findings, the Creston News decried them as a foregone defense of the FMA by citing that three of the five committee members were "by association, education, occupation and instinct absolutely warped on the side of the employers."³⁰

While not so blatantly slanted as the Creston News promised, the Citizen's Committee did support manufacturers' arguments that any sort of compromise on the issues of wages or hours was impossible. Denying any domination of local or national markets, the FMA claimed that all "deserving" workers earned their worth in the shop, and that fixed costs could not justify across-the-board increases.³¹ Reverend Wishart, who had drafted and submitted the committee report, followed up the report's conclusions with an open letter to wage earners. Published in the Evening Press, Wishart asserted that "the people of this city will demand that

people who want to work shall have the right to work." Any resistance by striking was futile, argued Wishart, since the manufacturers would not settle with the union under any conditions. Protests would only "kill the goose that lays the golden egg."³²

Workers had shown a great deal of patience as the manufacturers pushed for delays to any confrontation. From February until April, the Carpenters Union counseled restraint in the face of FMA refusals to negotiate, postponing a strike vote in hopes that the Citizen's Committee might reach a conciliatory position in the entire affair. A vote among more than 3,000 workers on March 25 revealed a near unanimous consent to walk out unless a new wage schedule could be secured for all workers;³³ no mention was made of union recognition, no challenge offered to manufacturers' managerial autonomy except the desire to keep pace with the cost of living. Wage earners' forbearance with the factory owners broke in the face of the Citizen's Committee's endorsement of the manufacturers. The day after the report appeared in public, April 19, more than 3,000 workers walked off the job, eventually joined by another thousand within days.³⁴ By Friday, April 21, virtually every major furniture plant in Grand Rapids had ceased operating.³⁵

Even with this show of strength, the nearly five thousand workers on strike left almost three thousand more who had not joined their ranks. Undoubtedly, many of the remaining labor force came from the ranks of foremen and other "straw bosses" who kept the machines running with the help of a few skilled men, as was the case at the Michigan Chair Company

where twenty men returned to the shop floor out of nearly four hundred.³⁶ A problem now emerged as how to keep these and any other nonstriking workers from coming back to the factories. Without a critical display of solidarity, the caution exerted by union leadership might be viewed as weakness by manufacturers and wage earners alike.

Union pickets at the factory gates made no attempt other than verbal suasion to inhibit men wanting to enter. The Carpenters Union advocated the ideals of law and order while explicitly repudiating any signs of militancy. Designed to imbue organized labor with middle-class respectability, the tactic did little to discourage workers from breaking ranks with the strikers. Given this failing the initiative for enforcing discipline fell to elements of the working class who felt that victory and economic survival were more important than decorum. All through the first month of the strike, from mid-April to mid-May, isolated episodes of violence occurred in efforts to discourage laborers as they entered and left the factories.

Unauthorized militancy among striking workers increased dramatically in the weeks after the walk-out. Isolated incidents suggested a growing frustration among strikers as more and more wage earners drifted back, undeterred by polite arguments of placards. Victor Marek, a striking worker at the Luce Factory, tried to stop a fellow laborer from going into the plant by telling him, "if you don't quit work, I'll kill you."³⁷ Death may have been an exaggeration, but the hostility against nonstrikers could be seen as strikers began to arm themselves to reduce traffic through factory doors. John Wechiniski was arrested as he paced outside the Gunn Company for concealing a two-pound rock in his handkerchief.³⁸ On another occasion, five men chased a nonstriking worker home and into his

house, retreating only after the man's family helped to fend off the attackers.³⁹

Manufacturers and their managers were not exempt from the growing tensions. Police grabbed a club from Luce manager John Hoult, who had climbed into his car, swinging the club around as he drove through a crowd gathered at the firm's gates. An employee of the American Chair Company stood by the door of one workshop while waving a large target pistol at the gathered crowd, shouting orders to leave.⁴⁰ "The attitude of the man and his orders to the crowd angered peaceable men," reported the Evening News, and soon as he tried to leave the plant, hundreds of angry men, women and children chased him down the street.⁴¹

The response by the crowd at the American Chair Company showed another pattern that had emerged as union tactics and factory-owner intransigence promised only continued stalemate. Larger and larger numbers of people were gathering around the furniture factories, especially those on the city's West Side. Strikers were joined by their families who appreciated both the risk and importance of the struggle undertaken. Such tactics appeared as entire neighborhoods organized to ambush strikebreakers on their way home from the Harry Widdicomb factory near Fifth and Davis Streets. The attack worked, too, for where once more than one hundred men had returned to Widdicomb's the day before the ambushade, only about twenty-five came back the day after.⁴² However, nonstrikers resisted, and two days after the attack, fifty wage earners showed up at the Widdicomb factory, running a gauntlet of stones that had been placed there in anticipation of their arrival.⁴³

Into this tense environment the FMA announced to its members that the strike had been broken and that work would resume on May 15. This

notice gained city-wide circulation when it appeared in the Evening Press on May 13. Adding insult to injury, the paper also reported that the Show Case Company had subcontracted over \$50,000 worth of work outside Grand Rapids to ensure enough samples for the July Buyers Show.⁴⁴ Company treasurer Samuel Young said, "Yes, we rather hate to place our work outside of the city, but I guess the boys here don't want to work." He continued in a sarcastic vein as he remarked that the workers evidently "want a little vacation, and I guess we will let them have one."⁴⁵

The self-proclaimed deadline of May 15, along with taunts by men such as Young and the apparent inability of the Carpenters Union to achieve results, congealed to produce an explosive mixture. The crowded West Side erupted into a full scale attack on factories in the Davis Street areas.⁴⁶ But unlike the sporadic localized harassment that had grown to involve hundreds of people, more than two thousand men, women and children poured into the streets to demonstrate the solidarity and direct action they felt was needed to press the strike towards some sort of conclusion.

Gathering in the factory district around Fifth and Davis Streets on the evening of May 15, striking workers, their wives and even some small children showered nonstriking workers with stones as policemen and fire companies tried to disperse the crowd. The greatest violence occurred around the Widdicomb factories. Both William and Harry Widdicomb had been especially provocative in the weeks preceding the riot. Captain of the pickets J. P. Steen, blamed William Widdicomb as the first man to display firearms during the week of May 7, when he walked around the factory district waving a revolver in the air. "No one else had shown any

weapons or acted if he wanted trouble," stated the picket.⁴⁷ Nor had Harry been faultless in stirring up animosity. From the strike's inception, Harry Widdicomb had driven scabbing employees to and from work in his car, often exchanging unkind words with pickets and bystanders. This evening began no differently, except that the words were more hostile than usual and the number of people gathered far in excess of the usual numbers.⁴⁸

One of these routine verbal exchanges set off the violence that night. Several hundred people attacked Widdicomb's car as he tried to drive out of the factory gates. Women formed the front ranks of the rioters, some with children in their arms, creating a wall behind which irate strikers tossed stones and debris. Several women offered their shoes in the absence of bricks. Pistol shots, their source never identified, had no effect on the crowd except to move them closer towards the factory gates. When the police finally arrived in response to the fracas, one angry mother dropped her child to pick up a club and swing it at the officers.⁴⁹

The riot began around five-thirty and within an hour fire engines appeared, turning hoses on the crowds in an attempt to break up the ranks of women and men. Unsuccessful, the engines returned to their respective stations. Shortly thereafter, Mayor Ellis arrived, hoping that a personal appeal to the rioters would dampen their resolve more fully than the fire companies. His popularity in the West Side was an important consideration in the decision, especially since he had successfully dispersed crowds before and hoped to repeat the earlier appeals to reason.⁵⁰ But the large number of people, combined with the animosity generated by Harry Widdicomb, and the public statements by other manufacturers, only vitiated the Mayor's plea.

The principal response to Ellis' appearance was enthusiastic. The crowd cheered as he walked through the people into the factory to discover what had happened. When he returned and raised his hands in a call for silence, "the crowd came forward, like an orderly audience." "We'll believe Ellis anytime," cried one man, drawing cheers, "but we won't let these 'coppers' come around here bossing us."⁵¹ Faced with a receptive and apparently disciplined gathering, Ellis pleaded for peace, and then left. However, they renewed the attack after the Mayor had gone. Harry Widdicomb tried again to retreat from the factory, guarded by three policemen. The crowd spotted him and rushed in with a volley of stones, drawing back only after the police had raised their guns into the air.⁵²

The fire engines reappeared and turned their hoses on the crowd again. "Hundreds were drenched, but they retreated reluctantly and their mood was ugly."⁵³ During the lull, five or six workingmen who had been at the heart of the fracas were removed from the factory and taken home by Harry Widdicomb under the care of policemen who stood with drawn revolvers on the car's running boards.⁵⁴ Midway through the melee, police had taken a few rioters as prisoners and began to retreat towards the bridge, firing volleys as they went. Using their prisoners as shields, the policemen worked their way easterly on Fifth Street until running out of ammunition. Confronted then by overwhelming numbers, hand to hand fighting took place and in the confusion, one prisoner escaped.⁵⁵

Despite the arrival of more policemen, the fighting continued until "the street was filled with madly running and cursing men and women." Renewed firing by the police drove the crowd into retreat, and as one woman's husband was wounded by the volley, another group of women attacked a police officer trying to get away. In a final display of fury, the

largest body of rioters lined Davis Street and began a fusillade of rocks, bricks, and boards of the Harry Widdicomb factory, shattering every window in the building. With the departure of Widdicomb and nonstriking workers, there seemed no reason to stay; the strikers and their families headed home around midnight.

The next morning, Mayor Ellis issued a proclamation urging restraint and cooperation with the police.⁵⁶ An editorial in the Evening Press summed up other statements in the daily papers by calling the incident "an intolerable situation" and demanding sterner measures to supplant this "anarchy pure and simple."⁵⁷ Kent County Sheriff Hurley voiced the latent hostility that the manufacturing interests felt toward the city government. "What is needed," claimed Hurley, "is to take Mayor Ellis by the nape of the neck and the seat of his pants and throw him off the Board of Police" so that the strike might be properly handled.⁵⁸ This desire to separate the mayor from any further exercise of civil power would find fuller expression in the reforms of 1916, but for now they remained angry words about his lax attitudes towards dangerous people.

Despite the initial appearance of harsh words condemning the violence, the Press diluted its editorial anger by spreading the blame for the extreme measures to the manufacturers in general and Harry Widdicomb in particular. Both Widdicombs had "fanned the flames" of discontent by openly antagonizing workers with public displays of contempt.⁵⁹ Letters to the editor in the papers underscored the mixed sentiments in the city. An angry letter from one workingwoman saved her harshest words for Reverend Wishart, who earlier in the strike had declared himself "a friend of the workingman." If he had indeed decided "to join the masses" she wrote, then perhaps he would join them permanently "with the

complacent hope that when he reaches the height of skill, he will be able to command \$12 per week." Doubtless "the conditions of bending every energy of mind, soul and body over a whirring machine for ten hours, five and a half days a week, for the munificent sum to support his family, his car and his club luxuries were so ideal" that wage earners could look forward to his enlistment in their ranks.⁶⁰ Tensions increased dramatically in other ways as gun sales increased across the city.

Mayor Ellis acted to curb the growing alarm by appointing a special police force to patrol the city's various factory districts. This special "peace patrol" was armed with night sticks. Numbering less than one hundred men, this corps of peace keepers allowed Ellis to extend greater powers of self-government to strikers, since strikers filled the ranks of this emergency contingent.⁶¹ Economic necessity along with the desire to demonstrate responsibility compelled volunteers for the job. Strike benefits paid by the Carpenters Union brought less than half the weekly wage earned, not the touted 75%; any way to supplement this meager income was welcomed.⁶² The workers patrols allowed Ellis to extend municipal authority without engendering suspicion among wage earners throughout the city. In time, this "workingman's militia" would command praise from Theodore Roosevelt in The Outlook even as the FMA lashed out at Ellis in their trade journal.⁶³

Condemnation of the rioters came from another quarter, too. The Carpenters Union issued a public statement the next day affirming their belief in "law and order" and deeply deploring "all acts of violence, and if in any way we can avoid such actions we will gladly assist the authorities in so doing."⁶⁴ This commitment to peace and propriety led the national organizer for the Carpenters Union in Grand Rapids, William Macfarlane,

to notify the police in time to prevent a threatened attack on another factory.⁶⁵ This repudiation by the strike leadership pointed to larger problems within the working-class community and craft unionism itself.

The issue of union militancy versus union accommodation was one of the major divisions among strikers. Unable to curb isolated attacks on strikebreakers or nonstriking workers, the union moved to rein in any attempts to step outside the larger strategy of wearing down the factory-owners. This brought them into direct conflict with a considerable body of workers who wanted more action, the Poles. Most of the sporadic violence and the entire riot took place in the predominantly Polish neighborhoods of the city's West Side. Factories and railyards stood at their doorsteps, and wage earners in the furniture industry virtually filled their ranks. The Poles had long been ignored by the city's economic and ecclesiastical leaders, and only recently mobilized by Ellis' political machine. The papers mistook their violence for ignorance; yet it was chiefly among the Polish workers that women and families appeared in the streets to give support to their striking husbands, demonstrating that they, more than the Dutch, realized that a strong sense of community cohesion would be required to outlast the manufacturers in a confrontation.⁶⁶ Only by keeping up the pressure on factories located in their neighborhood could any sort of total work stoppage be achieved.

Part of the division separating Polish from Dutch workers may have come from differences of language, religion and family cycles that created another set of perceptions; but such strident militancy appeared among Polish working communities across the country, not merely Grand Rapids. The events of the strike summer in 1911 pointed to larger cultural patterns that fragmented working-class efforts to create a class conscious

movement of any longevity. That is not to attribute mindless passivity to Dutch and other workers, either nationally or in Grand Rapids. Theirs was dissent of another kind. Deliberately violating orders from union leadership to keep away from factory sites unless serving as pickets, Dutch workers demonstrated with placards, repeatedly facing arrest by police and going to court rather than stop.⁶⁷ Although orderly, it still represented a rejection of the restrained pickets standing by factory gates urging nonstriking workers to join their ranks and the sit-and-wait approach supported by a pittance in weekly strike pay.

Another source of divisiveness among workers was religion. The spiritual and doctrinal walls between the Dutch and Polish wage earners appeared in the various church teachings on labor. The Poles, although militant, found comfort that collective action was sanctioned. Their violence, though intimidating, remained directed and limited. Both these aspects of their behavior conformed with Catholic doctrine expressed in the declarations of Leo XIII, who issued the encyclical Rerum Novarum in 1891.⁶⁸ The Pope addressed "the condition of the working class" and their struggles in the new industrial order, offering outlines for settling the dispute between capital and labor.

The encyclical pronounced the sanctity of private property and recognized that workers had every right to obtain it. Assailing socialism as "theft," Rerum Novarum asserted that wage earners should act in their own best interest to preserve gains made from their labor. "It is surely undeniable that, when a man engages in remunerative labor, the impelling reason and motive of his work is to obtain property, and thereafter to hold it as his very own," ran the argument, and therefore workers had every right to protect it.⁶⁹ In Grand Rapids, the high rate of home-ownership

was the most visible form of property acquired among Polish workers. The existence of an inelastic wage in a period of rising costs threatened that property, and laborers responded accordingly. The vehicle for such a response was a labor union. The Pope endorsed the organization of workingmen into associations that would help them "to obtain fitting and profitable employment" assuring that "the bishops, on their part, bestow their ready good will and support."⁷⁰ Auxiliary Bishop Schrembs echoed these sentiments praised the Carpenters Union, saying that "had it not been for the labor unions we still would have the conditions that shamed men and women one or two generations ago."⁷¹ However his insistence on compulsory arbitration only fueled the manufacturers' apprehensions that their managerial autonomy was at stake.

The Dutch Reformed Church, on the other hand, refused to sanction the association of wage earners in secular unions. From the beginning of the strike, the church synod undertook an investigation of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, announcing its findings in early August. Membership with the Carpenters Union and the Reformed Church were incompatible due to the fact that the union was "not based on the brotherhood of man, but is for material purposes only."⁷² Its dedication towards the material advancement of members ignored divine law, according to the synod, its principles based "merely...on humanity and earthly welfare without recognizing God in any respect." Essentially the union sought only "human good" and "no more." Pleased with the synod's findings, manufacturers offered to publish the report and distribute it, an offer declined by the Church.⁷³

The synod represented about seventeen churches with a membership approaching nearly eight thousand. Its decision affected almost a thousand

men who remained out on strike by summer's end. Reticence among other Dutch Reformed believers to walk out in April or return soon afterwards was attributed by the city's papers to this deep seated doctrinal concern even before it was formally discussed by the Church. Such nonstriking workers did so "because of conscientious scruples. Their religious beliefs on the subject are such as to make them view affiliation with a union" as onerous as a "Catholic might view consolidation with a Protestant Church," lectured the Evening Press.⁷⁴ For many, a man's relation to his God and conscience took precedence over class interests, something that was especially true for the Dutch Reformed who fled Holland in the mid-nineteenth century to pursue a "pure" church. Compliance by seven hundred strikers with the synod's decision reflected its enormous power in a community of workshoppers with a concern for too much "worldliness."

A third distinction between the striking Dutch and Polish workers was how long they had been in the United States. While both groups who composed virtually all the furniture workers tended to be recent immigrants, the Dutch had generally been in Grand Rapids five years longer. This made a modest difference in wage scales between the two immigrant groups and it may have had some influence on behavior during the strike. Time of arrival for some immigrant groups became a distinguishing feature among the strikers at Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912.⁷⁵ The issue at Lawrence centered around wages rather than unionization and, like Grand Rapids, was organized along ethnic lines. Italian strikers remained the most violent, providing leadership in machine wrecking and urging continuation of the struggle at all costs. They and the Poles were the backbone of the strike and, along with a sizeable group of Franco-Belgians, the most recent arrivals. Germans, Canadians and

English immigrants gave lukewarm support through the early stages of protest, abandoning fellow laborers after the decision to send children out of town. Finally, native-born Americans and the oldest group of immigrants, the Irish, stood firmly against the strike from the first, the Irish Catholic priest having had difficulty in dealing with his Italian and Polish charges from their arrival.⁷⁶

Unlike Grand Rapids, the Lawrence strikers faced harsher living conditions in a city that had the lowest rate of owner-occupied homes for city that size.⁷⁷ Newspapers and an earlier report by the Russell Sage Foundation highlighted the steep rents and squalid living conditions endured by workers. If there was more violence and greater solidarity among strikers in Lawrence, then they had less to lose in a walkout and confrontation with employers. In addition, wage earners in Lawrence may have been forced to more dramatic actions than their Grand Rapids counterparts due to the strike's timing. The walkout took place in January and February, with demands for coal and wood at the height. While pressures of mortgage payments, taxes and insurance could be forestalled by the many home-owning workers in Grand Rapids, the warmth provided by summer no doubt enhanced the appeal of conservative trade union tactics. And it was these tactics that failed Grand Rapids strikers in the end.

Obsessed with respectability, the Carpenters Union strove to maintain restraint. At the strike's beginning, pickets around the factories stood sentinel-like by the main gates, quietly urging nonstrikers to join their ranks. The weather had not yet warmed enough to force them to remove their derbies, coats or ties. They sported no signs, brickbats, or indeed anything to distinguish themselves as striking workers, a problem discussed

by union leadership and eventually solved by issuing all pickets a small badge worn on the lapel. Unlike the efforts to intimidate workers tried sporadically around town, even after the riot of May 15, the Carpenters Union sponsored rallies, picnics and parades. The most notable demonstration came in July as 3,000 strikers and sympathizers marched down the center of the business district with huge banners reiterating their modest demands of suitable wages. They hoped there would be "no prospect of eating snowballs in winter" even though the "Manufacturers Wish-Hart for Us to Give In." The peaceful march culminated in a meeting at Fulton Park, where Mayor Ellis was joined by Emmett Flood, a national organizer for the American Federation of Labor, in addressing the crowd.⁷⁸

The majority of strikers conformed with the union's demand for orderly display, and a key to eliciting this compliance rested with the union's exclusive control over the strike funds. Unable to get any support from the community, striking wage earners in Grand Rapids relied entirely on the money provided by the Carpenters Union. However overdependence on a single source of money proved to be an ever greater detriment than the restrained tactics of pickets and parades. The strike had been recognized by the national council belatedly, and money did not begin to arrive until May. Promising eighty percent their weekly wage, the union eventually sent less than half by mid-July.⁷⁹ By that time, nearly a thousand cabinet makers had left the city in search of jobs elsewhere.

All through May and June, manufacturers never departed from their assertion that unionization was the main issue, even though five companies had settled without any union recognition involved. The industrialists' hatred of collective bargaining and any form of arbitration followed from

their insistence on unrestricted rights to manage their own businesses. Had factory-owners been concerned only with profits, then they would have settled and prevented disruption in production created by the strike, especially with the pressures created by a summer retailers exhibit. Despite the powerful pressures of public opinion and the marketplace, manufacturers stood firm in their resolve to wear down and defeat the union. From the start, the FMA declared that it would hold out against the workers, even if the strike lasted until the following year, warning that "every man should understand that proposition, first, last and all of the time."⁸⁰

From the start, the Carpenters Union had been in no position to undertake the protracted battle in Grand Rapids. The UBCJ was passing through a series of organization crises at the very time workers in Grand Rapids needed full support. All through the spring and summer of 1911 a battle for control of union leadership erupted, dividing the national council into two contending factions.⁸¹ Were this internal bickering not enough, economic resources fell in the face of declining membership and increased litigation expenses.⁸² Since February, the Carpenters Union had assumed most of the costs in a suit brought by the Mill Owners Association. The Mill Owners protested the Carpenters use of an extended boycott of Mill Owners' products to compel union recognition, citing the union in violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Hoping to avoid a judgement like the one handed down in the Danbury Hatters case, the Carpenters Union soon assumed the entire costs of litigation, all the way through to the Supreme Court.⁸³ Given the pressures, the union withdrew support from Grand Rapids on August 1, and the strike collapsed on the nineteenth.⁸⁴

However, manufacturers had never taken victory for granted, whatever their rhetoric may have been. They could only guess at how much support the union gave to strikers and its reliability. Nor could they feel safe with Ellis as mayor and his reluctance to repress public displays by wage earners. The manufacturers, too, worried about the best way to survive the confrontation in progress.

Foremost among the fears voiced by manufacturers was the safety of private property. Otto Wernicke, owner of the Macey Company employing three hundred men, sent a blustery ultimatum to Mayor Ellis demanding police protection for all of the city's furniture factories.⁸⁵ As taxpayers and citizens of the city, factory-owners had every right to have their property protected in the face of enormous unrest. If the city did not provide the necessary measures to ensure safety of the factories, Wernicke promised to hold the city legally responsible and sue for all damages. These anxieties seemed justified when William Haywood, organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World, came to Grand Rapids hoping to galvanize a class-conscious response among wage earners. They were borne out by the riot of May 15 where every window in the Harry Widdicomb factory was shattered. Unless given ample protection immediately, the manufacturers would be obliged "in self-defense to obtain such aid and protection through such other lawful sources as are open to us."⁸⁶ Enraged when Ellis enlarged the police force with striking workers and refused to call in the state militia, they turned to Kent County Sheriff Hurley, who began deputizing nonstriking workers. While not the clear display of force they had hoped for, deputized men were better than none and did have the option to arm themselves legally.

As production losses mounted, the factory-owners moved to import strikebreakers in greater haste than previously. At the end of May, the Show Case Company set up dormitory facilities to house 150 workers from Pullman, Illinois.⁸⁷ The Pullman Company had recently shifted to the construction of steel and iron cars, thereby throwing large numbers of skilled woodworkers into the labor market. In a desperate attempt to augment the ranks of scab laborers from Pullman, factory-owners began recruiting unskilled help from Ionia County, about fifty miles east of Grand Rapids. This practice halted abruptly as soon as the city physician announced that these men were infected with small-pox and an undetermined number had entered the city undetected.⁸⁸

Such actions compelled the usually faction-ridden city council to act in unison. Adopting a resolution condemning the importation of strikebreakers, aldermen regretted the inability to intervene directly in the conflict, stating that the manufacturers had overstepped the bounds of propriety, jeopardizing the welfare of the entire community to very selfish ends. The indiscriminate enlistment of vagrant labor "cannot but have a serious effect upon the social conditions in the city," stated the resolution, forcing continued unemployment to long-time residents and "bringing in men of questionable character."⁸⁹ Once the strike was over and these drifters were no longer needed, such men "being thrown on their own resources" would prove detrimental to the "peace and safety" of the city. The daily papers added to this official pronouncement in the editorial pages. The Evening News lambasted the manufacturers and their "public be damned attitude." In the strongest language used by a Grand Rapids paper during the strike, the Evening News questioned the value of the furniture industry, "The thought is rapidly gaining ground that Grand

Rapids can ill afford to remain subjective [sic] to any industry which can be so conducted or manipulated that the whole welfare of the city may be crippled."⁹⁰

With the city government and newspapers openly against them, the factory-owners had to contend with keeping discipline within their own ranks. In May, several firms had decided that neither the demands of workers nor loss of productivity were worth fighting about. Several smaller firms that were not members of the FMA settled with strikers and granted increased wages with shorter hours. David Uhl of the Fancy Furniture Company noted that "not being a member of the Employers Association I am at perfect liberty to use my own judgement in making any settlements that I might desire."⁹¹ Most of the firms settling with workers, like Uhl's, were small, employing less than one hundred men. However, at the beginning of June, the seven-hundred employee American Seating Company gave in to strikers' demands for wages and hours without union recognition.⁹² American Seating differed from the other firms that had negotiated with wage earners not only in its size, but also by being a member of the FMA. The manufacturers assailed this move in their professional journals, asserting that because American Seating was part of the larger "seating trust" owned out of Chicago, it could afford to be generous; they were among the favored few who dominated a specialized sector of the market and could carry on without fear of national competition.

The American Seating Company's return to production was compounded by another threat to Grand Rapids manufacturers by "outsiders." Businessmen from Buffalo, New York, had sent a representative from their Board of Trade to talk with some Grand Rapids

furniture men about relocating. The Buffalo board members presented their city as a haven from trouble-making workers with a city government sympathetic to manufacturing interests.⁹³ Nothing came from the attempt except harsh words in the daily papers about the efforts of Buffalo to "plunder" the Grand Rapids furniture industry. Yet it pointed to a larger unspoken issue. Any serious consideration given to relocation would only prove Ellis' claim that the factory-owners were not concerned with the welfare of the community but only wished to maintain an inexpensive pool of skilled labor. The manufacturers' own logic suggested that migrating to Buffalo would not solve any problems because workers would strike there as well. Industry-wide unionization was a threat that would appear anywhere in the country, and the fight against loss of absolute control might as well be fought in Grand Rapids.

Demonstrating that it could enforce some sort of discipline among its members, the FMA ousted the Nachteggall Company from its ranks for settling independently with its workers. Once excluded from the FMA, Nachteggall lost important advantages provided by the efforts of the Furniture City Car Loading Company to secure favorable freight rates. Such actions clearly were meant as a signal to any other major companies thinking about deserting the struggle not to set out on their own. The ejection of Nachteggall came when it did, late May, not only because of American Seating's actions or Buffalo's advances, but due to the Summer Buyers Show in July.

The July Buyers Show would test the endurance of the manufacturers and the extent of the strikers' hold on the city. Buyers from around the country would attend the exhibition and of those who came, the type and size of orders placed would demonstrate the confidence retained in

factory-owners. It would also prove a test of industry-wide cooperation. Should Grand Rapids factories be unable to fill orders, then the degree to which other manufacturers would take advantage of the strike to take away business, or buyer be willing to settle for substitutes from inventory, would demonstrate the degree of industrialist solidarity. Indeed, there was extensive cooperation at the summer show, suggesting that the Grand Rapids manufacturers' claims to be vanguards against unionization had been taken seriously.

Buyers cooperated with manufacturers at the Summer Show. Accepting substitutes from inventory, limitations in styles and last year's patterns, retailers reduced the volume of their demands, easing pressure on production lost due to the strike. John S. Linton of the National Association of Manufacturers Association appeared pleased. He noted that wider industrial cooperation among manufacturers across the country had been prompted by fear of spreading unionization. Many of the disgruntled workers had not been hired away "from Grand Rapids by outsiders as is usual," stated Linton, many did not want "disruptive influences introduced" into their workforce.⁹⁴

Grand Rapids furniture manufacturers had help from larger developments, too. A sudden and deep recession had begun early in 1910; by 1911 it had spread from coast to coast. Rapid expansion and speculation in the wake of the 1906-1907 panic created a miniature boom that could not be supported by inadequate bank reserves.⁹⁵ It was this same boom that brought increased living costs to wage earners in 1908 and 1909, prompting the demands that in turn led to the strike. That boom had collapsed just as furniture workers began to organize and reached its worst stage during the Buyers Show. A depressed national economy provided the

right environment for cooperation by retailers and other furniture manufacturers. Unfortunately for the strikers, it proved to be a fatal combination. The factory-owners had emerged successful from the critical test of their ability to survive without dissenting workers.

After the strike, manufacturers and their sympathizers directed blame for the past four months at the mayor and aldermen. Early on in the strike, Reverend Wishart alluded to the need of bringing in a private army of Pinkertons unless Ellis increased the size of the police force. Wishart declared the gathering of workers by factory gates "unlawful" and asserted that "if the city authorities do not disperse the crowds, other means must be used to preserve order."⁹⁶ He warned Ellis that "politics may let confusion go on for a while, but politics will have to get out of the way."⁹⁷ The manufacturers were reasonable men, argued Wishart, always willing to meet with their employees. To the Baptist minister, it was labor that suffered more from "designing demagogues' injudicious methods and false economic principles" than "unscrupulous employers."⁹⁸

The Employers Association took aim at Ellis and the city council, saying that "there was the best of feeling and good will between the manufacturers and...to the time when their minds were poisoned by the present Mayor, who showed no hesitancy to gain political ends by denouncing" the innocent manufacturers. If anybody was conducting a campaign of disruption, it was "the authorities who have refused to show that life and property are safe in this city." Ellis never missed an opportunity to "handicap and hamper the manufacturers in this fight."⁹⁹

The Board of Trade also damned the mayor. At a farewell banquet for an outgoing member of the Board, the evening's major speaker, secretary Carroll F. Sweet, presented an address on "Citizenship." In his discussion of civic virtue, Sweet asserted that the Board was the best vehicle for expressing good citizenship, since it was the good citizen who brought business into the town. But such growth could not occur without a good executive for the city and reliable men on the municipal boards. Unless caution were exercised the city would be saddled with men "who would sign away their birthright to retain office."¹⁰⁰ Reverend Wishart, also present at the banquet, concurred in his comments, stressing the virtues of good citizenship against the demagogue in politics.

Manufacturers sought a larger audience in their vituperation of Ellis and turned to the national trade journal to carry their message. In a report of the strike in the Furniture Manufacturer and Artisan, Grand Rapids industrialists asserted that Ellis encouraged strikers and rioters in a pursuit of disorder as part of a larger political maneuver to keep office. Ellis had never been elected by the majority of the city's decent citizens, claimed the Artisan, for it was only with a plurality of the Polish votes garnered in a bloc that he managed to "slip in" time and again. Noting the immigrant neighborhood surrounding the Widdicomb factory and the riot of May 15, the national journal denounced "the hopelessly ignorant and lawless Poles" who stopped "in their frenzied defiance of law, order and authority only long enough to cheer Mayor Ellis." It was the Poles who were "most responsible for the strike, for all the disturbances, the rioting, the intimidation, the lawlessness," and in short, every direct challenge to the manufacturers' claim to unstrained authority. Ellis did not interfere

because he needed their votes, exclaimed the Artisan; "truly the mayor and the Poles work well in double harness."¹⁰¹

These strong sentiments by members of the new industrial leadership did not escape notice from city residents. The most articulate among those answering the manufacturers' apportioning of blame and political corruption was Viva Flaherty, herself a member of the prestigious Fountain Street Baptist Church. As the secretary of social services for the church, she dealt with both the working-class families served by the congregation and the manufacturers who worshipped there. Flaherty answered the industrialists' charges of political corruption with accusations of their own selfish search for power in a "suppressed" history of the furniture workers strike.

Published privately in Grand Rapids two months after the strike, portions had been written intentionally for national circulation in the Survey. According to Flaherty, it was at the behest "of a citizen" that the article was not published because it "might only tend to prolong and keep alive enmities that could not in any way help the industry of Grand Rapids." She assailed this as a selfish attitude. Grand Rapids was more than the furniture industry and Board of Trade, she declared, and the people "should know all the inside facts...so that they may know whom to distrust and whose shoulders rests the blame for a nineteen weeks' strike." In part, she wanted to dispel the image of the Fountain Street Church as a "class institution, the furniture manufacturers' church, or the rich men's club" that had characterized the church in recent years.¹⁰³ But she also wanted to warn citizens of greater ambitions harbored by these men.

Flaherty noted the extensive organizational strength that the manufacturers had built up in order to protect their industrial interests

from local and national competition. She pointed to the importance of the Employers Association as the group most directly affecting workers in Grand Rapids, monitoring wages and jobs. However, she also referred to the Association's constitution that promised to "protect its members and associates in such a manner as may be deemed expedient and proper against legislative, municipal and other political encroachments." Taken with the standing committee on legal action and legislation, and the committee on police, Flaherty said it looked as if the businessmen "were getting ready to take civil government into their own hands."¹⁰⁴

When Flaherty wrote this history of the strike in 1911, she made no mention of the current charter commission that had been formed in 1910. Headed by furniture manufacturer and member of the Fountain Street Church Robert Irwin, the commission had been concerned with solving problems created by the uncoordinated growth in Grand Rapids in the preceding years. It made no attempts to restructure the government to suit the interests of manufacturers; when presented at the polls for ratification in 1912, it failed. However, the drive for municipal reform did not end in 1912. Two years later the Board of Trade took the initiative in a series of investigations of administrative inefficiency under Ellis' continued rule with the aim of establishing more sweeping changes in the city government. The product of this effort was the charter reform commission of 1915-1916.

The charter created by the new commission of 1915-1916 reflected the manufacturers' experience in the strike of 1911 and their belief that exercising political power was imperative to their survival. The hostility towards Ellis and the aldermen expressed in the wake of the summer-long protest took form in a charter that proposed entirely eliminating the

mayor's power and subverting local representative government on the aldermanic level by creating a highly centralized municipal administration. Opposition to the charter reflected workers' experience from the strike and their fears that the manufacturers would exercise too much power in the only avenue left for the wage-earning voter, the city government. However, opposition against the charter failed. The enormous disruption and, for Grand Rapids, violence rooted in the strike prompted enough working-class voters to question Ellis' ability to maintain order; that these working-class votes came from the East Side also suggested that increasing numbers of residents also agreed with manufacturers that Poles exercised too much political influence. In the end, ethnic differences made more pronounced by the strike helped to defeat any broadly based class resistance to the manufacturers and their political ambitions.

CHAPTER IV

Endnotes

1. Viva Flaherty, "History of the Grand Rapids Furniture Strike" (n.p., 1911), p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Grand Rapids Evening Press, January 22, 1910, p. 7.
4. Evening Press, July 26, 1910, p. 8.
5. Grand Rapids Evening News, May 1, 1911, p. 4.
6. Evening News, May 10, 1911, p. 8.
7. Flaherty, op. cit., p. 9.
8. Ibid., p. 10.
9. Ibid.
10. Evening Press, March 1, 1911, p. 1.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Evening Press, April 27, 1911, p. 4.
14. Furniture Manufacturers and Artisan 63 (August 19, 1911), p. 424.
15. Evening Press, April 27, 1911, p. 1.
16. Evening Press, April 29, 1911, p. 1.
17. Evening News, March 25, 1911, p. 4.
18. Evening News, March 15, 1911, p. 4.
19. Evening Press, March 30, 1911, p. 4.
20. Evening News, April 19, 1911, p. 12.
21. Evening News, April 20, 1911, p. 1.
22. Evening Press, April 20, 1911, p. 10; Evening News, April 21, 1911, p. 2.; Detroit Free Press, April 25, 1911, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV
Endnotes, continued

23. Ibid.
24. Evening Press, April 25, 1911, p. 9.
25. Evening News, May 12, 1911, p. 3.
26. Evening Press, March 13, 1911, p. 2.
27. Evening News, March 6, 1911, p. 4.
28. Evening Press, March 17, 1911, p. 13.
29. Evening Press, April 6, 1911, p. 1.
30. Creston News, April 18, 1911, p. 2.
31. Evening Press, April 19, 1911, p. 1.
32. Evening Press, May 6, 1911, p. 2.
33. Evening Press, March 27, 1911, p. 1.
34. Evening Press, April 19, 1911, p. 1.
35. Evening Press, April 22, 1911, p. 1.
36. Evening News, April 26, 1911, p. 1.
37. Evening Press, May 9, 1911, p. 11.
38. Evening News, April 26, 1911, p. 3.
39. Evening Press, May 17, 1911, p. 14.
40. Evening News, May 10, 1911, p. 6.
41. Evening News, May 13, 1911, p. 11.
42. The Observer, May 1, 1911, p. 2.
43. Evening News, May 1, 1911, p. 4.
44. Evening Press, May 13, 1911, p. 1.
45. Evening Press, May 15, 1911, pp. 1, 8.

CHAPTER IV
Endnotes

46. Evening Press, Herald, Evening News, May 16, 1911, p. 1.
47. Evening News, May 16, 1911, p. 1.
48. Ibid., p. 2.
49. Evening News, May 16, 1911, p. 2.
50. Ibid.
51. Evening Press, May 16, 1911, p. 1.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Evening News, May 17, 1911, p. 1.
57. Evening Press, May 17, 1911, p. 1.
58. Evening News, May 16, 1911, p. 1.
59. Evening Press, May 16, 1911, p. 1.
60. Ibid., p. 6.
61. Evening Press, May 17, 1911, p. 1.
62. The Carpenter 31 (August, 1911), p. 20., shows that funding had already decreased by 5%.
63. The Outlook (June 17, 1911), p. 326.
64. Flaherty, op. cit., p. 11.
65. Ibid.

CHAPTER IV
Endnotes

66. For the consistency of union militancy among Poles see: Peter Friedlander, The Emergence of a UAW Local (New York, 1975); J. David Greenstone, "Ethnicity, Class and Discontent: The Case of Polish Peasant Immigrants," Ethnicity 2 (March, 1975), pp. 1-9; Ralph Janis, "Ethnic Mixture and the Persistence of Cultural Pluralism in the Church Communities of Detroit, 1880-1940," Mid-America 61 (April/July, 1979), pp. 99-115; Raymond A. Mohl, "The Immigrant Church in Gary, Indiana: Religious Adjustment and Cultural Defense," Ethnicity 8 (March, 1981), pp. 1-17; John Bodnar, Workers' World: Kinship, Community and Protest in an Industrial Society 1900-1940 (Baltimore, 1982); John T. Cumbler, "The City and Community: The Impact of Urban Forces on Working-Class Behavior," Journal of Urban History 3 (August, 1977), pp. 427-442.
67. Evening News, June 30, 1911, p. 2; Evening Press, July 19, 1911, p. 1.
68. Aaron I. Abell, "The American Catholic Response to Industrial Conflict: The Arbitral Process 1885-1900," Catholic Historical Review 46 (January, 1959), pp. 385-407; Aaron I. Abell, ed., American Catholic Thought on Social Questions (Indianapolis, 1968), esp. pp. 325 ff.
69. Rerum Novarum, section no. 5.
70. Ibid., section no. 55.
71. Evening Press, May 4, 1911, p. 11.
72. News, August 9, 1911, p. 6; for a more complete analysis of the classis' criticism of trade unionism and the eventual response by Christian Reformed workers within the guidelines prescribed the Dutch Reformed Church, see Robert F. Repas, "The Christian Labor Association" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Michigan State University, 1963).
73. Ibid.
74. Evening Press, June 15, 1911, p. 6.
75. Donald B. Cole, Immigrant City: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1845-1921 (Chapel Hill, 1963), p. 184 ff.
76. Ibid.
77. Bureau of Census, Mortgages on Homes in the United States (Washington, D.C., 1923), p. 142.

CHAPTER IV
Endnotes, continued

78. Evening News, July 15, 1911, p. 1.
79. Evening Press, May 30, 1911; This decline in active membership could be seen in the reduction of strike funds, totalling nearly 20% by the first week of June, where only \$8,800 was sent, The Carpenter 31 (August, 1911), p. 21.
80. Evening Press, July 7, 1911, p. 2.
81. Morris Horowitz, The Structure and Government of the Carpenters' Union (New York, 1962), pp. 3, 74; Thomas Brooks, The Road to Dignity (New York, 1981), pp. 54-90.
82. Robert Christie, Empire in Wood (Ithaca, 1956), pp. 148-154, 165.
83. Ibid.
84. The weekly meetings of the Carpenters' Union Executive Council are summarized in The Carpenter 31 (August, 1911), pp. 15-43. The entire year of 1911 pressed the resources of the Union in support of strikes around the country, although the greatest amount had been spent in Grand Rapids. For the strikes supported see as follows:

Grand Rapids, Michigan	\$86,180
St. Louis, Missouri	\$10,468
Los Angeles, California	\$ 9,328
Vancouver, British Columbia	\$ 7,295
Minneapolis, Minnesota	\$ 6,948
St. Paul, Minnesota	\$ 6,880
85. Evening News, April 28, 1911, p. 1.
86. Ibid.
87. Evening News, May 20, 1911, p. 1.
88. Evening News, July 27, 1911, p. 1.
89. Evening News, July 26, 1911, p. 1.
90. Ibid.
91. Evening Press, July 21, 1911, p. 11.
92. Evening Press, May 26, 1911, p. 1.

CHAPTER IV
Endnotes, continued

93. Evening News, May 25, 1911, p. 1.
94. Evening Press, July 7, 1911, p. 2.
95. William Schluter, The Pre-War Business Cycle 1907-1914 (New York, 1923).
96. Evening Press, May 11, 1911, p. 1.
97. Ibid.
98. Evening Press, July 10, 1911, p. 3.
99. Evening News, May 19, 1911, p. 1.
100. Ibid.
101. Evening News, June 7, 1911, p. 2.
102. Flaherty, op. cit., p. 1.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid., p. 105.

CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE FOR REFORM: A CENTRALIZED BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

1912 - 1916

The furniture strike of 1911 left a city sorely divided. Manufacturers were not alone in their denunciation of the "lawless Poles" who attacked strikebreakers and rioted in protest, smashing factory windows. Newspaper editorials also betrayed alarm that violence could appear so quickly among the city's working-class population. Furniture manufacturers found Ellis especially onerous, the epitome of an opportunistic politician who took advantage of the strike to "play up" to the wage-earning voters. "He became the chief speaker at most of the gatherings of the men on strike," villifying the factory-owners, never missing the chance to "array capital against labor."¹ The manufacturers blamed the aldermen too, citing their unanimous resolution condemning the importation of strikebreakers. The strike had been a "hard fought controversy of great bitterness"² according to the industrialists, where workers had been "misled by the labor leaders and the politicians."³

Their failure to control the city government only increased the furniture manufacturers' appreciation of how lucky they had been to defeat the strikers. Success had come more from worker weaknesses than their own strength. The FMA had been unable to keep several employers from settling with wage earners; only a downturn in the economy that depressed demand reduced the impact of production lost by the walk-out. The summer Buyers Show reflected this economic trend, but retailers also

cooperated with manufacturers by accepting many goods already in stock. Thankful that Ellis had been unable to intervene directly through compulsory arbitration, manufacturers were angered when the mayor refused to request the militia in repressing strikers and instead created a special police force from the ranks of striking workers. Despite their extensive economic power the strike led furniture manufacturers to believe that political control was not merely desirable, but necessary.

In Grand Rapids, the tripartite division of the city along lines of ethnicity, religion and geography granted much of the political initiative to the business elite on the Hilltop. After several failures, East Side industrialists succeeded in refashioning the city government in their own image. They worked to change not only the form but the structure of municipal administration, reflecting their admiration of the highly centralized decision-making process of the modern corporation. They saw the government as a corporate hierarchy dominated by a board of directors rather than a democratic polity. In their view expert managers instead of vote-oriented politicians should execute policy formed by the chief administrators.⁴

The object of structural governmental reform, as embodied in the commission-manager system and as practiced in Grand Rapids, was to remove the electorate from direct control of the city's administration. A critical break with older American political tradition came with the at-large election of all city representatives, rather than their election on the local level as ward representatives. Small, effective bloc voting among the community's various ethnic constituencies, religious interests, or geographic groups could thus be diluted. Rather than gerrymander special precincts to promote a clear partisan advantage or racial candidacy, the

reformers in Grand Rapids opted for a "non-partisan" approach to the problem and simply changed the electoral structure making the city a single political unit. In Grand Rapids this meant eliminating twenty-four posts based on twelve wards, to seven positions voted on by the entire city.⁵

A Charter Reform Committee had begun work early in 1910, headed by furniture industrialist Robert Irwin, a man whose influence on the Board of Trade and city banks has already been discussed. The committee itself was not an especially distinguished creation. It had been put together to try and create a stronger and more responsive administration of the city's affairs prompted by the rapid growth. The principal feature of this proposed charter was the enhanced power of appointment it gave the mayor and the consolidation of miscellaneous services under extant boards such as Fire and Police. This was known as a "strong mayor" form of government.⁶ Every newspaper, every business group, and even Ellis himself endorsed the reform, but they did so for a variety of reasons. For the business community, consolidating power in the mayor's hands would permit Ellis no excuses in the face of failures. It would be hard to conceal any irregularities in government or political bargaining, and therefore easier to discredit him in the next election. Ellis wanted to assure that major services fell into clearly defined departmental jurisdictions after decades of improvisation prompted by rapid growth. The proposed charter was enough of a departure to arouse suspicion from people, but not different enough to excite support.

Despite the Herald's plea that "all is virtue in pro-charter arguments" the voters turned down the proposed instrument in 1912 by a margin exceeding 10%.⁷ The strongest opposition to the charter came from two areas in the city. The first stood in the northwest corner of the Sixth Ward: these two precincts had been hardest hit by both the strike and riot, home to many furniture workers especially Dutch and Polish immigrants. Conversely, the greatest support for the charter came from the center of economic power on the Hilltop and the East Side precincts clustered around it. The Second, Third, and Tenth Wards all went overwhelmingly for the new charter. These areas were home to the industrial elite of bankers, lawyers and factory-owners, Ellis' traditional opposition. Some support came from the Eleventh Ward precincts composed of accountants, salesmen and small businessmen, notably old-stock American or second-generation Dutch. Yet their limited numbers failed to carry the day.

Even the normally astute Ellis machine had misjudged the extent of discontent in the city with the proposed change. Mayor's secretary Roman Glocheski had wagered "an odd nickel's worth of cigars" that the charter would be approved on the West Side.⁸ Ellis himself briefly voiced disappointment but the loss fell quietly and without comment throughout the city. Both the mayor and voters had to turn immediately to the municipal elections taking place barely a month away.

The charter campaign had been waged in the newspapers but for a very short time. It lacked the intensity and personal impact the following mayoral race promised. Ellis launched his campaign for a third term on Washington's Birthday at the Lincoln Club, ever aware of the political symbols provided by both names.⁹ Immediately after his announcement the Good Government League reissued pamphlets that attested to Ellis'

personal moral corruption.¹⁰ Unable to mount a candidate of its own, the "goo goos" sat sullenly as the mayoral contest unfolded with the spring rains.

This campaign brought two new changes that nearly unseated Ellis: a competent Democratic challenger and a serious candidate from the Socialist camp. The Democrat, George Perry, defined the issues of the election and eventually made decisive inroads into Ellis' area of support on the city's West Side, as did the Socialist spokesman, Edward Kosten. They combined to take a clear majority away from Ellis, but Kosten gained votes at the expense of Perry, thus leaving Ellis with a clear plurality and the mayor's office.

George Perry charged that Ellis was no friend of the workingman. In a twofold attack, Perry argued that Ellis had shown no sympathy for the wage earner when workers needed broad and sweeping support, claiming only symbolic support during the furniture workers' strike.¹¹ Actual cases of direct mayoral action were scarce, complained Ellis' Democratic opponent. The Mayor defended himself against this charge by pointing to several instances where he had acted to restore pension benefits to injured fire fighters and their widows. Perry also asserted that Ellis deliberately limited the numbers of saloons. However, the second charge was not so easily refuted. George Ellis did seem more bluenosed than his rhetoric might suggest; the record clearly showed that he had worked, quietly and with the help of the city council, to reduce the number of saloons in the city and their operating hours.¹²

This reduction was both absolute and relative. Not only had the total been reduced from 193 in 1910 to 160 two years later, but coupled with the population growth the ratio became 1:800 where it had been 1:600, one of

the lowest in the state.¹³ Perry's strategy worked well enough, polling well above the average number of votes in those precincts with the heaviest concentration of saloons. Ironically, Ellis now found his strongest support among his most vociferous opponents in the Second, Third, and Tenth Wards. The only "traditional" Ellis support remaining came from the Dutch immigrant community along Grandville Avenue in the Twelfth Ward.

The revealed record of moderation on the ever volatile saloon issue plus the success with which Ellis had kept violence down after the riot in May, 1911, helped him to present himself as the defender of private property. However much the Good Government League or industrialists in their trade journals might have blustered against Ellis, when faced with the prospect of Perry in office and the specter of an open Socialist revolt, they stood behind a predictable, if unloved, opponent.¹⁴ Yet this raises the question of support for the Socialist candidate. Edward Kosten polled more than 2,000 votes. While he did nothing more than play spoiler to Perry and Ellis, his total revealed a remarkable change, since the Socialist candidate in 1910 had not succeeded in getting more than 500 votes.¹⁵

Once again the local political situation helped to explain the turnout on behalf of Edward Kosten. His greatest support came in the northeastern quarter of the city, along with a sliver of residents in the riverside precincts on the city's Northwest Side. While Kosten's city-wide support might have come as a vote against both Ellis and Perry (these men had each endorsed Kosten as the only alternative to their own candidacies) the North Side's genuine enthusiasm for the Socialist candidate rested on some common ground of class interest.¹⁶

The Socialist platform had promised ownership of the city's utilities by the workingman, redistribution of the wealth and a host of general

industrial reforms.¹⁷ It remained effectively unchanged from the Socialist mayoral pledges of the preceding elections, lacking any direct reference to the strike; only the results offered any dramatic departures from the past. Kosten's supporters were not discernibly of any single ethnic or religious composition. If anything, they were an amalgam of native Protestants bound together by working-class status.¹⁸ Diverse in employment, they were wage earners from a variety of posts. Among them furniture work was not important either by its absence or dominance. Their property holdings in home-ownership were neither poor nor rich, but safely in the middle to lower third of the city-wide range.¹⁹

The key to understanding the strength of the Socialist protest vote rests on the rate of economic growth experienced by the northeastern part of the city. As a modest area of blue-collar home-owners, it had been passed by in terms of industrial and residential development; it remained sparsely developed; and it was not promised much in the future either. Rates of lot subdivision and utilization ran far ahead in the city's newly annexed Southwest Side. Even the fringes of the city's West Side developed more quickly than in the northern neighborhoods.²⁰ Here was a "forgotten" quarter of the city, not bound by any common ethnic ties or religious body.

Nor was political dissent limited to the outpouring of Socialist support of the mayoral campaign. November's Presidential election also warned of changes in the wind. Normally a Republican stronghold in a Republican state, Grand Rapids returned a strong vote for Woodrow Wilson.²¹ This vote was not evenly dispersed around the city either, but was instead concentrated in the West Side precincts. Apparently not divorced from the mayoral banter of liquor and labor, residents of the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Wards had begun to abandon the man and party

in Grand Rapids they had supported since 1906. The strongholds gathered by Perry in 1912 in select precincts of the Seventh and Eighth Wards had blossomed into a full scale revolt against the Republican machine in Grand Rapids.

This extensive test of the political current was the first after the preceding summer's upheaval and suggested several important trends to would-be leaders and reformers. For George Ellis, it became obvious that the ethnic working class he had courted so intensely had minds of their own. Their repudiation of him and his endorsed charter reform sent a message of independence. An alliance with the West Side voters needed to be built anew, even with Ellis' reputation as a friend of the wage earner. His moderate stand on the saloon issue had touched a raw nerve, doubtless intensified by his seeming compliance in centralizing authority under the proposed charter. While the strong show of Democratic support in behalf of Perry might be explained in regards to these points in April, they could not show how Democratic support had spread so quickly and securely over so broad a base on the West Side for Wilson.

For members of the reform constituency, the lessons came just as plainly. Halfway measures were not enough to rouse the support necessary to push through long lasting change. The proposed charter of 1912 had been the product of compromise and moderation. It still left a strong mayor in charge of a traditional governing body, whose aldermanic politics might yet wreck the gains of a centralized administrative board. What was even worse, the mayoral position could fall into the hands of someone less moderate than Ellis, who would "open up" the town to the saloon interests once again. Had it not been for Kosten, Perry would surely have assumed power.

Economic hardship returned with the recession of 1913-1914. As part of an unofficial relief program to help increasing numbers of unemployed workers, Ellis used the city's resources to create jobs, even while maintaining established levels of service to keep city employees in the payroll.²² He did this through interfund borrowing, taking the allocated but unused portions of some departmental budgets and dispersing them elsewhere, notably parks and street repair.²³ While such procedures anticipated strategies adopted by state and federal governments in the Depression, many contemporary critics viewed it as irresponsible behavior.²⁴ In Grand Rapids wanted to know why City Comptroller George P. Tilma and Mayor Ellis could not agree about the financial state of the treasury.²⁵ Furniture manufacturers and other businessmen saw strictly controlled budgets as an important element of efficient city administration and fiscal responsibility.

Towards the end of 1914, the Association of Commerce launched an investigation of the various city departments to determine sources of mismanagement and inefficiency.²⁶ The Reverend Alfred Wishart spearheaded this campaign to root out waste in municipal government; his long-standing service to the Board of Trade (the Association of Commerce by another name) made him a valuable asset to the manufacturers. Wishart's committee provided a list of recommendations, many of which were eventually adopted by the city government. Nonetheless, in January of 1915, the Board of Directors of the Board of Trade suggested that extensive charter reform was necessary and that the needed changes involved "no piecemeal revision."²⁷ The next step was to create a new charter commission and the Board tendered its "facilities" in "bringing this before the voters."²⁸

The selection of the 1915 charter commission revealed an important difference from its predecessor. The role of Grand Rapids' economic leadership was more subtle, but no less evident in its influence, for even from the nominally working class Fifth and Fourth Wards, conservative professionals represented class rather than neighborhood interests. They were the lawyer William J. Landman, Secretary of the Michigan State Bar Association and member of the 1912 charter commission; and Claude O. Taylor, who owned the Taylor Printing and Publishing Company, one of the first unionized shops in the city. These men joined the ranks of Charles Sligh, Jacob Steketee, Oscar Kilstrom, Henry Jewell, George Perry, and W. Millard Palmer. Perry and Palmer were former mayors and avid haters of George Ellis. Sligh, Steketee and Jewell all resided as Hilltop elites, holding sway in furniture manufacturing, retail merchandizing and the Bench,²⁹ and were active members of the Board of Trade. Joining them was William Oltman from the Sixth Ward, owner of the Oltman Shoe Company. Oltman and Kilstrom not only served on the Board of Trade, but along with Jewell worked on the Board's committees for municipal and legislative reform. These seven men would consistently oppose West Side representatives in their proposed reconstruction of the city government.

The charter committee first met in April and began to work systematically on the problem of municipal reform. Members wanted an established model to follow, and endorsed the Dayton plan.³⁰ Even though they were setting out to create a new form of governance for the city, motivated by local political concerns, the committee members did not want to stray from acceptable procedures. The process would be conducted strictly along Robert's Rules of Order, although their results would be the abolition of the city government.

The attempt to modify city government along the lines of the Dayton Plan was novel. Neither the city-manager nor commissioner form had been tried extensively for more than a decade, neither applied to so large an industrial city.³¹ Members of the reform committee quite consciously approached the affairs of administration with an eye towards the hazards of innovation.

Within a week of the first meeting, the charter committee adopted the basic form for the city government. Although a host of variations had been proposed, ranging from manager-mayor system with increased aldermen to the reduction in number of alderman and elimination of the mayor, George Perry's proposal guided the ensuing ten month's debate. Perry had suggested the "elimination of ward lines, the abolishing of the office of mayor, aldermen and all appointive boards, and substituting therefore, the division of the city into three districts."³² Originally tabled at the end of April, Perry's suggestion returned to dominate all discussion by the beginning of June.

The committee pursued this approach. An unsolicited suggestion presented before the charter committee by lawyer Edgar A. Maher urged the council to consider a manager form of government, to be composed of at least three and not five members elected at-large. These men would serve as both administrative and legislative bodies to the city government. Blurring the traditional separation of powers was by no means a bad thing in Maher's view. "I believe that the election of commissioners by the city at large would tend to broader views regarding the municipal welfare and progress," said Maher, "than would their selection from different districts or sections within the city."³³

Lawyer Maher had voiced the most frequently cited criticism of the established mayoral system in many large cities. Dominance of local ward of neighborhood issues sorely inhibited effective government. A strong centralized authority with the power to treat problems affecting the entire city, allocating resources and services with the view towards its broad picture would reach beyond the petty squabbles that consumed the alderman's time. Commissioners elected at large, argued Maher, would have "a sense of responsibility" that "would be more definite with regard to matters affecting both the general and local interests of the city."³⁴ Certainly in the context of Grand Rapids' immediate past this appeal made sense. The future of the city lay in the annexed and as yet undeveloped Southwest Side, predominantly in the Eleventh Ward.

Who could guarantee that the current political concerns of West and North Side residents might not continue to plague efforts by the city's far-sighted citizens to extend services to the growing portion of the city? The West Side was hemmed in by steep hillsides that made further growth difficult, if not unthinkable. The gently rolling slopes of the Eleventh Ward, however, promised easy access by bus and motor car to hundreds of planned, but as yet unrealized, single family homes.³⁵ Indeed, the southwestern part of the city had the most to gain by taking a "broad view" towards the problem of municipal government and development. It was the periphery of the Third, Second, and Tenth Wards along with much of the Eleventh that dominated the platted, but as yet unutilized, lands in the city. Much money had been invested that was not doing any work.³⁶

The development of the city's Southwest Side had been the focus of as yet unreturned investment.³⁷ Streets had been created, sewer and water lines laid. Growth had occurred. Two new precincts had been

formed in the past year alone to accommodate the increasing population.³⁸ Created primarily as a residential area free from any factories (or foreigners), the Eleventh Ward might yield wonderful returns to the city's reputation and tax rolls if only a broader perspective could be adopted, and the limited concerns of the already developed "local interests" be put into perspective.

The drive for centralized authority increased as the judiciary committee reported its interpretation of Michigan's Home Rule Act. The charter committee wanted to know if a mayor was legally required at all, and even if needed, must he be popularly elected? The subcommittee's report suggested that any new municipal charter should provide for the election of a mayor "either by a direct vote of the people or by a body of representative chosen by the people."³⁹ Here was the first explicit attack on Ellis by the business community.

The opportunity to elect the mayor not by "direct vote of the people" but by a "body of representatives chosen by the people" opened the door to the unlimited potential of a commission form of government.⁴⁰ Once authority had been vested in this representative body of the city, it could act upon the people's best interests by electing the new mayor. For commission members, it need not matter if the post of mayor remained important, or, as would be the case, strictly ceremonial; the voters of the city would have no direct say in the formal leadership of their community. The power of such a commission to subdue the mayor to a creature of their own making would be enhanced if the commission were small enough and composed of three to five like-minded men who took seriously their charge to look after the welfare of the entire community.

Satisfied of the legality in removing the mayor from popular election, the reform committee then moved on to deal with a position of some substantial administrative power. The administrative subcommittee accepted committee member Landman's proposal that the new charter provide for the selection of a city manager by the same body of commissioners who presumably had selected the mayor. This city manager would have "all power and responsibilities not repugnant to the laws and constitution of Michigan."⁴¹ This key maneuver allowed the still theoretical, and somewhat amorphous city commissioners to take two critical executive posts and render them creations of the commission. The newly proposed city manager would clearly become the office of any executive significance, but what would become of the mayor? It remained to reconcile these two executive positions within the growing debate over the new city charter.

Even though the substance of the new city charter remained clouded, its purpose shined through in the adoption of a preamble to the as yet unwritten document. The various propositions of this prefatory statement sounded high administrative ideals. Declaring that "we the people of Grand Rapids...in order to perfect a municipal government" dedicated to "economic and efficient administration," the "security of persons and property" and "encourage municipal cooperation among the cities of the state" and finally "preserve...the privilege of local self-government do ordain and establish this charter."⁴² In fact, the language employed was as firmly rooted in the city's immediate political past as any abstract notions of perfect municipal government.

In the wake of the riot during the summer of 1911, the issue of security of person, and even more of property, had made regular

appearances in the professional furniture journals, mayoral campaigns and Good Government League literature. The sight of a city exposed to anarchists and unruly foreign elements preyed on the minds of industrialists and bankers. The only time that Vandenberg's Herald, indeed any newspaper in the city, was applauded by the furniture manufacturers came with an editorial demanding law and order above all else.⁴³ Nor could the dramatic showing by a Socialist mayoral candidate and election of Socialist aldermen, however fleeting, be absent from the concerns of responsible citizens. No doubt Ellis' appointment of striking workers as special policemen also rankled representatives of the city's propertied interests.

There had been no complaints, even from Ellis' harshest critics, regarding the fiscal administration of the city. Taxes were steady, bond issues limited to the conservative uses of sewers and schools improvements, while Moody's continued to rate the city as AAA.⁴⁴ No scandals of misplaced funds, overpriced purchases or shoddy construction came to the newspapers. Nothing even approaching the disgraceful water scandal of 1901 tainted Ellis' administration as the charter was being drafted. Rather, the statement was a coded way of decrying the local interests that dominated aldermanic politics. There had been, however, much ink spilled over the issue of security of persons and property.

Finally, the call for intermunicipal cooperation covered more than one point of view. On one hand, in the contest of progressive administrative reform this was a response to emerging strategies regarding the purchase of materials and bidding for improvements.⁴⁵ A municipal league could buy in volume and help regulate the cost of government. On the other hand, cooperation among urban reformers, at least in Grand Rapids, had been aimed at securing a new Home Rule Charter and

obtaining a consensus for dealing with moral issues and immoral politicians. The Grand Rapids Good Government League had joined its efforts with the Detroit chapter and merged in the publication of a single newspaper by 1906.⁴⁶

Once the declarations of principle passed muster, debate resumed on the substance of the charter. The practice of patronage in its most significant form that had helped Ellis and other "bosses" hold power was attacked.⁴⁷ No longer would common labor be handed out to the needy or indigent residents as political favors, as had been the case in 1914. This mainstay of the wardheelers would be eliminated; the safety valve of the unemployed to find temporary work on the city payroll in the days before formal relief efforts was to be regulated. "By a system of registration and otherwise, the Commissioners shall make rules and regulations concerning the employment of common laborers which shall require...such employment to originate on merit and to continue during good behavior." This in itself may not have proven deleterious to the mayor's and alderman's political clout had it not also gone on to "give preference to residents of the city who are citizens of the United States." The majority of immigrants would be cut off at once, and for some time following, from these city-based jobs.⁴⁸

By the qualification of United States citizenship, the charter committee effectively struck at patronage that had supported the West Side in times of crisis, or even during periods of normal growth. Even without the intimate knowledge of those wards, or the general impressions

gathered by living in Grand Rapids, the 1910 census showed a high concentration of foreign-born residents and an even higher proportion of immigrants who had not become citizens.⁴⁹ What may have been common knowledge at the time, and was spelled out in detail by the census, was that the highest rate of non-naturalized residents occurred among the Poles, who were also most likely to live on the West Side and hold employment in unskilled jobs.

This attack on the non-naturalized immigrant took shape at the same time the plans appeared for rearranging the city's internal boundaries. The charter committee accepted, virtually without debate, the reduction of the number of wards from twelve to three.⁵⁰ By so doing, they not only streamlined diverse populations into three numerically equal camps, but also camps of unequal influence. The entire West Side was melded into a single ward, effectively diluting whatever electoral clout had been given to the Dutch and Poles of the sixth and seventh wards. On the east side of the river, a new ward created by the consolidation of the Wealthy Street area and northward divided the East Side into two wards. The Second and Third Wards became the centers of elite control of their subsequent wards, with leadership split on the East Side with the Hilltop dividing two new wards north and south.

While the Third and Tenth Wards also became part of a separate ward, members of the Hilltop community of the Third Ward could now exercise greater political leadership among the intransigent Netherlanders on Grandville Avenue, and look simultaneously after the affairs of the Eleventh Ward. The Second Ward could now try to lead the affairs of blue collar residents in the city's north end. In this way, if carefully managed, the east side of the river might effectively lead the commission in

legislative initiatives and administrative decision should the west side prove troublesome. The consolidation and reduction of wards was a critical first step to the consolidation of power in the hands of an, as yet, unformulated commission. Two members from each ward would give weight to the East Side, and their optimistic assumptions in guiding selection of the seventh at-large commissioners all but guaranteed possession of a working majority in every debatable issue.⁵¹ Reducing the number of local political units proved to be critical in the concentration of power.

The next step was to solve the problem of executive office within the new administrative structure and place the power in the hands of a city manager at the expense of the mayor. By summer's end, the charter committee (by no means unanimously) had decided to do away with the mayor as anything other than a figurehead.⁵² Complying with the letter, but perhaps not the spirit of the law, that charter reform committee urged that "insofar as required by law, and for all ceremonial purposes, the mayor shall be recognized as the executive head of the city."⁵³ Were the loss of power not enough, the mayor as cypher was granted the privilege of voting in commission meetings, but no accorded the traditional power of executive veto.

The charter committee pronounced the mayor to be a creature solely of the city commissioners, saying "he shall exercise only such powers as the state laws, this Charter, or the City Commission specifically confer upon him."⁵⁴ Having elevated the city manager to chief executive officer, subject to executing only those orders determined by the Commission, and insured that the existence of the mayor was required by law (no matter how elected or appointed), the reform board set to work to eviscerate any

remaining hope of political offices independent of commission approval. Debate would later erupt over whether the commission could assume both legislative and executive functions at the expense of the city manager, but for the moment traditional mayoral leadership lay doomed.

The extent of power that the unborn commissioners hoped to wield appeared only briefly before it was removed from the debate. In that section of the charter dealing with execution of the laws, a Department of Public Safety had been created. Not content to let such a policing agency exercise conventional functions, some members of the committee proposed to enhance the powers of the police. These suggestions came clearly from the experience of the violence and long duration of the strike in 1911, and were aimed at forever squelching organized resistance to municipal rule.

Once it was established that ultimate powers rested with the centralized commission, the Department of Public Safety became the tool for commissioners to use against threatened disruption. "In that event that any city commissioner shall determine that riot, public danger or emergency is imminent or exists, he shall himself or through the City Clerk issue a call for the assembling of the city Commission within six hours of issuing the call."⁵⁵ Clearly the appeal to riot, present or imminent, and the general terms of danger suggest that the anticipated disturbances would come from within the city. An invasion from Canada seemed rather remote.

The commission alone would determine what measures to take. Yet there was no need for any sort of quorum of the seven to handicap direct action by the city government in times of crisis. Democratic theory and parliamentary protocol gave way in face of the statement that "any member or members of the City Commission who meet in response to such

a call shall constitute a quorum." They alone may decide what "constitutes a riot, public danger or emergency."⁵⁶ In short, there would be no repetition of Ellis' dawdling over the violence on the West Side, no chance for strikers to intimidate scabs at the railroad depot or chase strikebreakers home through the streets. Scenes of the late summer, 1911, would not be repeated, "special interests" of organized labor would not jeopardize the welfare of "the people."

Although they had attacked Ellis' use of patronage in support of unskilled and non-naturalized residents, the reformers' claims to promote efficient government through the creation of competitive exams essentially replaced one pool of favored recipients with another.⁵⁷ That portion of the charter dealing with Civil Service created two categories of jobs: unclassified and classified. The unclassified posts were all elected officials, the city manager, heads of departments and appointed boards, the city managers' staff. Professional competence presumably preceded appointment, perhaps to fledgling law students working for the city attorney or under the leadership of various departments. The sons of industrialists, bankers and lawyers rather than factory workers could now look for some chance of employment in city service.⁵⁸

The creation of the classified service simply referred to "all positions not specifically included in this charter in the unclassified service." These posts fell into three categories: competitive, noncompetitive, and labor. Having assured that only meritorious citizens received work for the city paving streets and digging sewerlines, the competitive class covered

generally as possible all positions where "it is practicable to determine the merit and fitness of applicants by competitive exam."⁵⁹ The pool for this job-seeking group would naturally favor children with skills in mathematics and familiarity with English. The children of immigrants might aspire to these posts, but only the educated might compete.

An appearance of fairness created by the large pool of civil-service jobs was belied by the noncompetitive class, for what the competitive class gave to the commissioners as general patronage posts for the educated of the city, the noncompetitive class enlarged. Reserved for the commissioners to dispense at their discretion were all positions "requiring peculiar and exceptional qualifications of a scientific, managerial, professional or educational character as may be determined by the rules of the Board" granting the job. Service Board members were appointed by the commissioners and automatically exempt from any sort of competitive exams.⁶⁰

The aegis of civil service reform actually centralized bureaucratic patronage in the hands of the city commissioners, who might then wield power through direct appointment or removal of city officers. Nowhere was it stated clearly what sort of staff limits might be placed on the key service boards, nor what proportion of posts within each department were competitive or noncompetitive. The creation of civil service reform may have brought more literate candidates into municipal administration, but probably changed the pool of acceptable patronage recipients. Rather than the brokering between the mayor and aldermen over appointments for city hall and the labor force, civil service theoretically made the Commission alone ultimate dispensers of city work.

Only one unfinished point remained before the charter could be presented to the people of Grand Rapids. Given the central importance of the newly defined city commissioners and their possession of both legislative and administrative power, it was unclear how these commissioners were to be nominated and elected. As it stood in the charter, commissioners could be nominated at large, but voted for only by their respective wards. Even though nominations for this important post might come from a city-wide group, ultimate selection rested within the local ward. The judiciary sub-committee reported protests over this procedure, claiming that it limited the electors' choices and was therefore unconstitutional. "These charter provisions," reported the judiciary subcommittee, "abridge the right of the elective franchise in that they restrict the voters of the city at large in their choice of their representatives..."⁶¹

In other words, the subcommittee continued, "the elector may think that four or five candidates who live in one ward would be the most desirable officials and yet he is restricted to his voting to two because not more than two can be elected from any one ward."⁶² The voice of protest came from the very people who sought to limit centralization of power and enhance what was left of representative government; dissenters on the committee who raised this point included Stanley Jackowski, formerly Mayor Ellis' personal secretary, and Daniel Kelley, a printer working for the Grand Rapids Evening Press. Ironically, by raising the thorny constitutional issue of mixed nominating and voting conditions, the judiciary subcommittee helped those advocates of at-large election get a hearing. The subcommittee argued that the election and nomination of commissioners must be all one thing or all the other, entirely local or

completely at-large. The subcommittee was composed of four men who had fought the most against reducing the mayor to figurehead and enhancing the post of city manager. They evidently hoped that raising the legality of mixed electoral procedures to retain some power among ward residents.

The issue came down to a direct vote that split the Charter Committee, and carried in favor of the completely at-large interpretation by a single vote.⁶³ The battle to circumscribe the nearly centralized government did not end there, however, as the judiciary subcommittee once again raised a legal argument about the combination of legislative and administrative functions in the single body of the City Commission. Fred Geib, Stanley Jackowsky and Daniel Kelley all complained that making the city manager chief executive as a creature of the Commission, appointed by them and subject to removal by them, violated the separation of powers. The mayor, they argued, as elected by all the people, would be the executive and the commission should reserve its right to act in a legislative capacity.

However, a minority report of the judiciary subcommittee filed by Henry Jewell, argued against any conflict between the state's constitution, Home Rule Act, and nonseparation of powers. Jewell asserted that the analogy itself was all wrong. "The proposed charter provides for a system of city government," he wrote, "similar to the system of management of well organized business corporations."⁶⁴ His co-author, cigar manufacturer William Hensler, concurred, "There is nothing incongruous or conflicting in the provisions made for in this system..."⁶⁵ The city council would merely act as a board of directors, creating policy, guiding growth and managing the corporate resources. For the majority of Charter

Commissioners, they saw a government for corporate control, not a means to resolve social dispute. Corporation rather than community guided their reform efforts.

The contest for adoption of the proposed charter did not become public until late summer. Springtime brought mayoral politics to the fore in 1916. Ellis lost his seat for the first time in a decade after the closest contest in the city's history. The morning after the polls closed, Ellis trailed by less than 200 votes out of more than 19,000 cast.⁶⁶ In a bipartisan contest Democrat George P. Tilma, the former city comptroller who had argued with Ellis in 1914 over interfund borrowing, polled strong support from West Side constituents and emerged victorious. Decisive votes came from the expanding Eleventh Ward on the city's Southeast Side,⁶⁷ dominated by second-generation Dutch and middle-class wage earners.

Ellis' popularity had been slipping ever since the decisive Democratic inroads of 1912. What should have been an easy win for him in 1914 proved to be a race to the wire against a candidate with scant support. In that year, Malcolm Sinclair, a nonpartisan candidate sponsored by the Morals Efficiency Commission, edged out George Perry in the Democratic primary. Sinclair's basic stand was prohibition, reduced taxes, and an end to Ellis' "arraying of class against class" to keep power. Foreshadowing reform trends of the 1915 charter committee, he asserted that "municipal government is a business, not politics" implying that disruption in society was as costly as conflict in the workplace.⁶⁸

Ellis countered the attack of the bluenosed retrenchment with evidence of his "progressive" concern for the average workingman. Once again his moderate stand on alcohol (enhanced by buying a round for the

house when visiting saloons) was coupled with effective reform measures, housing codes and an eight hour work day for city employees. Gentle reminders of jobs created by diverting city funds into park and other public works during the downturn in 1913-1914 also brought many back to the fold. For middle-class supporters, he reassured them of his financial responsibility by continuing his campaign to subject private utilities to municipal regulation.⁶⁹

However, his past efforts did not avail George Ellis in 1916. His opponent and issues proved to be too volatile when set against the rising resentment Ellis had incurred by taking advantage of the city's ethnic and geographical divisions. Tilma denied charges that he would impose Sunday blue laws closing the theaters or push through prohibitionist ordinances, forever closing the saloons. Rather, he aimed "to tear down class prejudices built up to further political aspirations" of George Ellis. "We have had too much of this arraying labor against capital," said Tilma, sounding a familiar note, he pleaded for a united Grand Rapids under a sound "business administration, guided by nonpartisan principles."⁷⁰ In the end Tilma's Dutch ancestry gave him the edge throughout the city, where the Dutch immigrant population had continued to increase faster than any other group.⁷¹

Even the Evening Press, usually a strong advocate of Ellis' men and measures, chided the former mayor for his many "stupid acts" while in office. "The harm he has caused has been due to the fact that he has never scrupled to array citizen against citizen, faction against faction, and class against class whenever it suited his personal ambition," thundered an editorial, "the bitterness and dissension he engendered has more than balanced his public service as an administrator."⁷²

With all the city's papers turned against him, Ellis became desperate. He felt sure that defeat came only at the price of fair play, and he urged repeal of the injunction that prevented a lame-duck council from either conducting a recount or invalidating the election.⁷³ Ellis eventually charged the administration of Calvin College with registering its students to vote, a rather unlikely possibility since that school was the seat of the highly scrupulous and conspicuously ineffective Dutch Political Society, Fas et Jus. For nearly two months Ellis fought with the council, city clerk and newspapers over the issue of recount and voter invalidation. Charges of fraud were only part of the acrimonious debate in council chambers. Finally at the end of May, Ellis withdrew his appeals from state courts and conceded defeat to George P. Tilma.⁷⁴

The storm of mayoral politics had barely spent its force when city hall again became the focus of news stories. City treasurer James Hawkins emerged as the principal suspect in abuse of office. Charges ranged from embezzlement to the illegal sale of tax-distressed properties. The council authorized the city attorney to proceed with impeachment proceedings, and for the rest of the summer the Hawkins investigation popped up in the daily papers. Legal ground blurred when it became uncertain whether the council members or a grand jury should swear out a charge of impeachment. The image continued of a municipal government best by incompetence and confusion, if not outright fraud. The affair ended in September when, with Hawkins' illness, the council let him retire gracefully from the scene.⁷⁵

Yet the aura of governmental corruption came in the midst of another local crisis. All that summer an "arson trust" menaced a variety of public and private property in Grand Rapids. More than trash cans in alley

ways burned that summer. By the beginning of August, twenty fires of suspicious origin had exacted damages exceeding \$300,000. The Imperial Furniture Company alone had sustained damage on three separate occasions, both its warehouse and dry lumber sheds being fired at various times. The Valley City Chair Company's main plant was set ablaze at an estimated loss of \$125,000. These two huge concerns were not the only targets. The downtown Ashton Building, an office complex, suffered extensive damages of \$75,000.⁷⁶

While not so disruptive as the furniture workers' strike five years back, the combination of arson and political haggling created an environment conducive to reform. The campaign for acceptance of the new charter appeared in early August amidst these crises, and after a slow economic recovery in 1915. While all the newspapers endorsed it, Vandenberg's Herald ran a series of articles exploring the new instrument section by section, explaining the virtues of centralized government. Frank M. Sparks, now political correspondent for the Herald, argued in his first installment that the narrow defeat of the charter in 1912 proved that there was a mandate for continued change, and that the new charter would provide it for the citizens of Grand Rapids.

Sparks also emphasized those parts of the charter that dealt with taxation, public and special improvement, municipal franchises to utilities and the sinking fund. It was these areas of rather technical and somewhat obtuse language beyond the average reader, where the proposed charter offered "distinct and radical departures...from our present Charter."⁷⁷ Little was offered in regard to the near absolute exercise of power that would be given to the seven reigning city commissioners. Rather, Sparks'

explanation fit snugly into the endorsement offered by Harry D. Jewell, of the Association of Commerce, and the Good Government League.

For those whose concerns centered along moral rather than fiscal questions, Sparks promised a double-edged sword to protect extant saloon-owners while curbing any future growth of that leisure industry. "Under the proposed new charter, the city will still continue to be conservative in the number of licenses to be granted," he assured readers. But unlike the present where "we are conservative by action of the council only," the new charter would see that "conservatism is made mandatory," not subject to partisan politics that had been so divisive in the city's past.⁷⁸ Rather clearly stated, objective principles would guide the saloon issue in Grand Rapids. The new charter would keep the ratio of saloons to residents at 1:700, not quite the 1:500 as prescribed by state law, but even with population growth, the ratio would diminish to 1:800 by 1920.⁷⁹

The only consistent and vocal opposition to the new charter came from Fred Geib, the third member of the judiciary subcommittee who had tried to prevent complete centralization of power by arguing against the at-large election of commissioners. In a lengthy statement on why he opposed the charter, Geib argued that the intense concentration of power opened the door to easy abuse of all public services: gas, water and rail. The new charter did not "protect the people against a corrupted city commission and a misled electorate with reference to the enormous values in the streets of the city, which I claim inherently belong to the community," stormed Geib. The "people who create the values" of these public properties would be easily exploited by "special interests" without any safeguard to stop it.⁸⁰ Few thoughtful men like Fred Geib saw the issue as clearly as one of enhanced privilege centered into fewer hands,

subject to less checks and balances than the older mayoral system had provided. The community could only suffer in the hands of a corporate leadership.

Thus voters went to the polls knowing very little about the nature of the proposed charter. Reading the papers they saw only promises of efficient government and detailed discussion on bonding procedures. Unless they had actually read the document in detail, then they could not have known about the immense concentration of power in the commission's hands and the latitude given for its use. Where the arguments favoring ratification of the new instrument appeared daily in all the papers, Geib's rather abstract attack on the new government showed up only once in the Herald. Even so, the final vote was very close.

The charter won acceptance by less than five percent of the total votes cast⁸¹ and the business community wasted no time boasting of its role in securing the winning margin. Asserting that the Association of Commerce, as a rule, never got involved in politics, "securing a new charter for the city was a matter of business and not politics."⁸² Proclaiming that they had been a part of the reform movement from the very beginning in 1915, the Association noted the help it gave "to secure the approval of the voters to have a charter commission authorized"⁸³ and then continued its work through the explicitly political Good Government League.⁸⁴ It was the League's activities, "largely financed by the members of the Association of Commerce," that ultimately secured adoption of the new charter.⁸⁵ Trying to avoid the label of a "special interest," the Association argued that it was "merely a group of citizens" involved in the city's welfare who helped promote the change. However, a closer look at the ward and precinct voting patterns told a different story.

The Second, Third and Tenth Wards provided enthusiastic support for the proposed changes. Here lived the corporate officers, lawyers and bankers who dominated Grand Rapids' economic life. They formed the leadership of the Furniture Manufacturers Association, Employers Association and the Association of Commerce. These men shared social and business connections informally through the Kent County Club and the Peninsular Club. Many were members of the Fountain Street Baptist Church where Reverend Wishart lectured on the wisdom of industrial leadership in politics and the evils of unionization. Fountain Street congregants included Robert Irwin, William Gay and John Covode, Jr., all of whom were active in the network of interlocking directorates between furniture factories and banks, all of whom had been active in the charter reform drives of 1912 and 1916.

The Fifth, Fourth and Eleventh Wards along the East Side filled out the pro-charter support. Canadian, American and second-generation Dutch lived in this part of the city. Some worked for the furniture factories, but most worked in the other industries around town. Many in the southeastern Eleventh Ward were clerks, salesmen or small businessmen. While these voters did not display the enthusiasm of their neighbors in the Hilltop precincts, turning out in proportionately fewer numbers, they did endorse the charter, and their endorsement pointed to larger ethnic and class divisions that appeared in the charter vote.

The immigrant and working-class West Side voted almost to a precinct against the sweeping changes, joined by the Twelfth Ward on the city's Southwest Side. The strong ethnic and class dimensions that shaped this geographical pattern appeared again along the city's eastern edge. Poles from the brickyard neighborhood and immigrant Dutch in the Second

Ward registered their dissent at the ballot boxes. The most intense repudiation of the proposed charter came from the Sixth and Seventh Wards in the northwestern corner of Grand Rapids. This part of the city held the largest concentration of Polish and second greatest group of Dutch immigrants. Most were wage earners in the furniture factories and had been the backbone of the strike in 1911. It was here that most of the sporadic violence against non-striking workers occurred and it was in the Seventh Ward along Davis and Fifth Streets that the May fifteenth riot took place. Homes stood crowded together, providing cramped quarters for families who took in boarders to supplement income from wages. Many were owner-occupied homes, heavily encumbered with mortgages held by banks interlocked with furniture factories.

After a decade of struggle, the furniture manufacturers and other economic leaders of the new industrial city finally controlled the government. Nor was Grand Rapids an isolated case. Samuel Hays and James Weinstein noted national trends when they cited that the centralized municipal administration was favored by businessmen and the prominent role assumed by business associations in adopting these new governmental forms.⁸⁶ Herbert Gutman pointed out that workers did not sit quietly by as the new industrialists tried to reshape the city in their own image.⁸⁷ Through strikes and votes, working-class residents refused to surrender their influence in the shop or at the polls. The contest to reform city rule took on aspects of class-based confrontation. Given their numerical strength and earlier successes rebuffing efforts by the new industrialists to impose reform, why did working-class voters fail to prevent changes in city government time and again in the decades after 1900?

The case of Grand Rapids holds some answers to the issue of why workers failed to prevent the sweeping structural changes in the city government favored by the new industrialists. Undoubtedly the role of fragmentation along the lines of ethnicity and religion worked to splinter working-class cohesion. The number and diversity of immigrants to the industrial city was at its height in the years after 1900, across the country as well as in Grand Rapids.⁸⁸ At times, workers literally did not speak the same language. The Dutch Calvinists' experience suggested that even where immigrants shared a common language, provincial rivalries and theological disputes could tear apart an ethnic community. Diverse religious loyalties tore at the Germans of Pittsburgh and provincial differences divided Italian immigrants in Cleveland.⁸⁹ Neither the Dutch nor Grand Rapids was unique. Successful efforts at municipal reform came at the time when this diversity among workers was most pronounced.

However, fragmentation along ethnic and religious lines cannot entirely explain the success of charter reform in Grand Rapids or elsewhere. Manufacturers had to convince a majority of voters that reform was in their best interest, and find enough support from working-class neighborhoods to forge this majority. Contributing to endorsement of reform by wage-earners was the high degree of propertied mobility, usually in the form of home-ownership. Grand Rapids was unusual only in the degree to which owner-occupied housing existed. Across the country, medium-sized and smaller cities registered increases in owner-occupied homes after 1900.⁹⁰

Richard Sennett noted that the commitment to home-ownership in Chicago, and family life it represented, created an exaggerated fear of disruption.⁹¹ While the strike and attendant violence reconfirmed the

unreliability of George Ellis to manufacturers in Grand Rapids, their alternative to mayoral rule stressed a promise of stability through efficient administration. By accepting this emphasis on the security of property, working-class home-owners found common cause with the new industrialists.

The commitment to private property, combined with religious and ethnic fragmentation, divided the working class in Grand Rapids. Dutch and Polish immigrant wage earners struck in 1911 as an affirmation of their power to respond in the workplace; similarly, they repudiated Ellis in 1912 and demonstrated their political independence. Although the dominant element of the city's principal industry, these immigrants formed a smaller portion of the larger community. Their strike seriously disrupted this larger community which was composed of other working-class home-owners no less dedicated to propertied mobility and political independence. The unrelieved disruption in the years after 1910 only exacerbated these divisions. Given the context of local politics, the manufacturers' program of reform presented workers with an alternate strategy for preserving their material gains while participating in the political process. The irony in this was that workers failed to see they contributed to their own political exclusion by voting for the new commission-manager government.

CHAPTER V

ENDNOTES

1. Furniture Manufacturer and Artisan 63 (August, 19, 1911), p. 424.
2. Michigan Tradesman 50 (April 26, 1933), p. 24.
3. Furniture Manufacturer and Artisan, op. cit., p. 426.
4. Frank M. Sparks, The Business of Government Municipal (Chicago, 1916). Frank M. Sparks, political correspondent for Arthur Vandenberg's Herald and champion of reform in Grand Rapids put it all in his book, Municipal Reform, where he saw parallels between developments in business and government. Sparks wrote that just as ownership in the modern corporation had been divorced from management, so too must the individual citizen let professionals guide the direction of municipal life. The analogue of stockholders and citizens surrendering their direct control in the corporation came to Sparks as he elaborated the rationale for substantial government reform. In the modern business corporation, stockholders voted on the general issues, leaving the major policy decisions to men hired to guide the company, the Board of Directors, who in turn hired and fired the major managers of the enterprise. So too must citizens, all shareholders in the modern municipal corporation, surrender direct control of policy to men who would serve as a Board of Directors, who in turn hired and fired professional managers to assure most effective municipal governance.
5. Grand Rapids City Charter of 1916.
6. Martin J. Schiesl, The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America 1880-1920 (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 46-67.
7. Grand Rapids Evening Press, February 21, 1912, p. 6; Grand Rapids Herald, February 20, 1912, p. 4.
8. Herald, February 20, 1912, p. 6.
9. Herald, February 22, 1912, p. 3.
10. Anthony Travis, "Mayor George Ellis: Grand Rapids' Political Boss and Progressive Reformer," Michigan History 58 (Spring, 1974), pp. 101-130; "Sidelights on George Ellis," and "George Ellis as Juggler," and "Repudiated by Republicans: Ellis Has Never Received the Full Vote of the Party" published in Grand Rapids by the Good Government League, 1914-1916.
11. Herald, March 30, 1912, p. 6.

CHAPTER V
Endnotes, continued

12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Travis, op. cit., election returns in Herald, April 2, 1912, p. 6.
15. Herald, April 2, 1912, p. 6.
16. See Chapter II for a fuller description of the North End neighborhoods.
17. Herald, February 12, 1912, p. 3.
18. Nationally, members of the Socialist Party were drawn from native-born Americans, a fact mirrored in the 1912 mayoral election. See Gerald Rosenblum, Immigrant Workers: Their Impact on American Labor Radicalism (New York, 1973), especially pp. 151-153 in the chapter "The Myth of Immigrant Radicalism." Also useful is Nathan Fine, Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States (New York, 1928), and John S. MacDonald, "Urbanization, Ethnic Groups and Social Segmentation," Social Research 29 (Winter, 1962), p. 434.
19. Analysis of city-wide data based on tax books, 1909-1912, and Supplement to the 1920 Federal Census.
20. Ernest M. Fisher and Raymond F. Smith, "Land Subdividing and the Rate of Utilization," Michigan Business Studies 4 (1932), pp. 454-532.
21. Herald, November 6, 1912, p. 1. Wilson received a plurality, while Taft and Roosevelt split the remaining votes unequally in half, Roosevelt taking a slightly larger share. No votes for Debs appeared in the paper.
22. Travis, op. cit., p. 121.
23. "George Ellis as Juggler" published by the Grand Rapids Good Government League (n.p., n.d.); on the debate about accounting procedures, see Schiesl, op. cit., pp. 88-110; Herbert Stein, The Fiscal Revolution in America (Chicago, 1969), pp. 6-38; Men like Ellis operated proto-public works programs on the local level, and many working-class constituents knew how it was financed and endorsed it. The best account is John D. Buenker, Urban Liberation and Progressive Reform (New York, 1973).
24. Schiesl, op. cit., pp. 88-110.
25. Grand Rapids Progress 5 (October, 1916), p. 16.

CHAPTER V
Endnotes, continued

26. Minutes of the Board of Directors, Grand Rapids Board of Trade, January 12, 1915, p. 8.
27. Grand Rapids Progress 4 (January, 1915), p. 14.
28. Minutes of the Board of Trade, January 12, 1915, p. 8.
29. City Directory of Grand Rapids, 1912, and residential property taxes in city tax books.
30. Minutes of the Charter Commission, City of Grand Rapids, 1915, bound carbon copy of typescript original in Michigan Room at the Grand Rapids Public Library.
31. Minutes, April 20, 1915, p. 1.
32. Minutes, April 27, 1915, p. 16.
33. Minutes, May 5, 1915, pp. 25-26.
34. Ibid., p. 26.
35. Fisher and Smith, op. cit., pp. 493-507.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Comparison of mayoral election returns on the precinct levels in the Herald for 1912 and 1914.
39. Minutes, May 11, 1915, p. 32.
40. Ibid.
41. Minutes, May 25, 1915, p. 48.
42. Minutes, June 1, 1915, pp. 57-58.
43. Herald, May 16, 1911, p. 4.
44. Moody's Manual of Municipal Bonds, 1922.
45. Schiesl, op. cit.; Rice, op. cit.

CHAPTER V
Endnotes, continued

46. Raymond Fragnoli, "Progressive Coalitions and Municipal Reform: Charter Revision in Detroit 1912-1918, " Detroit in Perspective 4 (Spring, 1980), pp. 119-142.
47. Schiesl, op. cit.; Rice, op. cit.; Minutes, June 2, 1915, p. 63.
48. Minutes, June 2, 1915, p. 63.
49. Fourteenth United States Census, v2, table 14.
50. Minutes, June 15, 1915, p. 73-74.
51. See Chapter II for particular ethnic, religious and class divisions of the city.
52. Minutes, August 31, 1915, p. 105.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., p. 109.
56. Ibid.
57. Minutes, September 7, 1915, pp. 115-122; Schiesl, op. cit.
58. From 1916-1934, City Commissioners also served as examining members of the Civil Service Board, Frank J. Schulte, Municipal Personnel Administration: City of Grand Rapids, a privately bound typescript history of civil service in Grand Rapids by its former director, dated 1970. The few competitive exams given in the years 1916-1934 were the Army Alpha Tests that discriminated against immigrants and others who had not been educated in the Anglo-American tradition. For a popular history of the intelligence tests of the Progressive Era see Stephen Jay Gould, The Mismeasure of Man (New York, 1982).
59. Minutes, September 7, 1915, p. 122.
60. Ibid.
61. Minutes, January 12, 1916, pp. 388-389.
62. Ibid., p. 389.

CHAPTER V
Endnotes, continued

63. Minutes, January 19, 1916, p. 392.
64. Minutes, January 25, 1916, p. 398.
65. Ibid.
66. Herald, April 4, 1916, pp. 1-2; Travis, op. cit., pp. 120-122.
67. Herald, April 4, 1916, p. 6.
68. Travis, op. cit., p. 123.
69. Ibid.
70. Herald, April 4, 1916, p. 2.
71. Travis, op. cit., p. 129.
72. Grand Rapids Evening Press, April 4, 1916, p. 6.
73. Press, April 8, 1916, p. 1.
74. Press, May 30, 1916, p. 14.
75. Z.Z. Lydens, op. cit., p. 68.
76. Herald, August 6, 1916, p. 1.
77. Herald, August 19, 1916, p. 5.
78. Herald, August 20, 1916, p. 4.
79. Ibid.
80. Herald, August 27, 1916, p. 4.
81. Herald, August 20, 1916, p. 1.
82. Grand Rapids Progress 5 (October, 1916), p. 16.
83. Ibid.
84. Grand Rapids Progress 6 (May, 1917), p. 15.
85. Ibid.

CHAPTER V
Endnotes, continued

86. Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era" in American Political History as Social Analysis (Knoxville, 1980), pp. 205-233.
87. Herbert Gutman, Work Culture and Society in Industrializing America (New York, 1977).
88. David Ward, Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth Century (New York, 1971).
89. Josef Bartow, Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American City (Cambridge, 1975); Nora Faires, "Ethnicity in Evolution: The German Community in Pittsburgh and Allegheny City, Pennsylvania 1845-1885" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1981).
90. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census, Mortgages on Homes (Washington, D.C., 1923).
91. Richard Sennett, Families Against the City: Middle-Class Homes of Industrial Chicago: 1872-1890 (Cambridge, 1970).

CONCLUSION

This study of Grand Rapids at the turn of the century helps illustrate the major arguments made by Samuel Hays and Herbert Gutman about the deeper structural changes in municipal government.¹ These historians saw Progressive Era reform on the local level in terms of a conflict between workers and factory-owners to control political power. Both historians assumed that the rise of an industrial society brought two new groups into this contest for political control within the rapidly growing city, yet neither group was able to secure total control of local government. Members of the newly rich strove to achieve acceptance with the established elites and the community at large, while wage earners remained divided along occupational, ethnic and religious lines that seriously inhibited collective action. Factory-owners responded to the inaccessibility of political power by launching a crusade for reform, trying to enlist the support of voters with the vision of the city as a well managed community. Under the banner of reform, government became centralized and hierarchical, and as Samuel Hays noted, "the model of the efficient business enterprise...rather than the New England town meeting provided the positive inspiration for the municipal reformer."

As a group rising in power and influence in the years after the Civil War, these new industrialists demanded to be heard, but were frequently ignored. Herbert Gutman argued that factory-owners were seen as disruptive influences whose place in the older community was not yet secure. Representing innovation and departure from an older way of life, industrialists were not seen as legitimate agents of political power. Gutman explored community responses to several industrial strikes during

the 1870's to illustrate his point.² From New Jersey to Missouri, local governments remained friendly to strikers and refused to use constituted police power to protect strikebreakers, disrupt pickets or discourage other forms of protest. In Grand Rapids, we have seen that this pattern of struggle was not confined to the Gilded Age nor the traditionally important heavy industries of railroads or steel. Rather, this case study suggests that such contests occurred in the particular cycle of industrial development of a rapidly growing city and brought forth similar responses. Furniture manufacturers, no less than men in coal or iron, were faced with the same search "for status and unchallenged authority." Unable to find this authority within the established political system, members of this entrepreneurial community moved to change the system itself.

James Weinstein pointed to larger national trends that further supported the arguments by Samuel Hays and Herbert Gutman.³ Weinstein noted that business groups invariably sponsored these reforms, drawing upon their organizational abilities to sway popular opinion. In the most frequently cited cases of Galveston, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, the final push for reform came in the wake of some devastating natural disaster. The history of Grand Rapids suggests that this general pattern presented by Weinstein was correct, but also deepens our understanding of the people who championed this reform and the circumstances that made it possible. While the Board of Trade actively encouraged municipal reform, its strength went beyond an association like minded interests to an elaborate network of interlocking directorates. With the enormous disruption caused by the strike, it became obvious that not all disasters preceding reform were caused by nature. Social upheavals might also create an environment conducive to change.

The strike itself, and the varied responses it evoked, was a symptom of the changing community structure in this industrializing city. Timothy Smith has argued that ethnicity and religion helped to shape perceptions of this change and responses to industrialization.⁴ Smith viewed both church and culture as instruments for adjustment to American society by immigrants, but influences that were in turn shaped by that new environment. Citing the work of Josef Barton and Kathleen Conzens, among others, Smith challenged the assertion of Weber and Parsons who assumed that ethnicity and religion would become anachronistic in modern society, falling away as important reference points until people formed political associations based exclusively on "similar market orientations." Both the Catholic Church and Protestant denominations responded to the conditions of industrial society in a variety of ways. The case of Grand Rapids supports Smith's contention. For the majority of workers, religion dictated the limits of dissent, circumscribing behavior that threatened private property in any form. Calvinists in particular faced stricter inhibitions on collective actions due to their church's emphasis on isolation from worldly affairs, ruling out membership in secular labor unions. Religion reinforced differences, creating a variety of cultural values that redirected goals pursued by ethnic groups in this new industrial society.

Part of these goals included a commitment to the acquisition of property, usually in the form of home-ownership. Stephen Thernstrom's groundbreaking work on Newburyport, Massachusetts demonstrated the gradual growth of propertied mobility among all levels of wage earners.⁵ James Henretta refined Thernstrom's conclusions by pointing out that propertied mobility was not a substitute for occupational mobility, as Thernstrom had suggested, but an end in itself for many immigrant groups.

Grand Rapids typified this drive among all elements of the population, but especially for immigrant laborers. By 1920, Grand Rapids had one of the highest rates of owner-occupied homes in the United States.

Emphasizing the importance of family life, Richard Sennett implicitly pointed out that a certain psychological price was exacted by this dedication to home-ownership.⁶ Members of this propertied class proved more fearful than circumstances warranted at the eruption of any violence in the city and especially susceptible to pleas of stability. The wide degree of home-ownership in Grand Rapids paralleled the emergence of an industrial society and the attendant struggle by manufacturers for political power. Bringing together the arguments by Hays, Smith and Thernstrom helps explain certain features of this struggle that culminated in far-reaching and conservative reform in the city government. Until industrialists could persuade enough voters that their version of efficient government would provide the requisite stability they demanded, the reform movement remained fragmented. Grand Rapids shows that only in the wake of unprecedented disruption posed by the strike did any sort of political cohesion for the reformers' cause emerge. Reformers eventually succeeded by convincing elements of the wage-earning population that their program best served the workers' intense commitment to propertied mobility. Repudiation of the reformers' agenda by workers came because they perceived that such sweeping changes eroded any security to propertied mobility by reducing their power in the control of government. In Grand Rapids, the majority of workers never dissented against capitalism in the debate about reform, only whether fundamental changes were necessary for them to consolidate their gains.

1. Samuel Hays, "the Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era" in American Political History as Social Analysis (Knoxville, 1980); Herbert Gutman, "Class, Status and Community Power in Nineteenth Century American Cities: Paterson, New Jersey, A Case Study" in Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America (New York, 1977).
2. Herbert Gutman, "Trouble on the Railroads in 1873-1874: Prelude to the 1877 Crisis?" in Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America (New York, 1977).
3. James Weinstein, "Organized Business and the Commission Manager Movements," Journal of Southern History 28 (1962), pp. 166-182.
4. Timothy Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," American Historical Review 83 (December, 1978), pp. 1155-1185.
5. Stephen Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (New York, 1975), pp. 117-137.
6. Richard Sennett, "Middle Class Families and Urban Violence: The Experiences of a Chicago Community in the Nineteenth Century" in Thernstrom and Sennett, eds., Nineteenth Century Cities (New Haven, 1969), pp. 386-420.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Directory of Interlocking Directorates among Banks and Major Furniture Factories

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Interlocking Company</u>	<u>Director</u>
Commercial Bank	Fourth National Bank	Anderson, Bertsch, Gay, Graham, Musselman
	People's Savings	Bertsch, Gay, Musselman
	West Side Bldg. and Loan	Gallemyer
	C.S. Paine Furniture Co. Berkey and Gay Furn. Co.	Gay Gay
Fourth National Bank	Commercial Bank	(see above)
	People's	Bertsch, Blodgett, Gay Musselman
	G.R. Clearing House	Caukin
	Berkey and Gay Furn. Co. C.S. Paine Furniture Co.	Gay Gay
People's Savings	Commercial Bank	(see above)
	Fourth National	(see above)
	G.R. Savings	Smith
	Old National Savings	Smith
	G.R. National City Bank	Pantlind
	Berkey and Gay Furn. Co.	Gay
	C.S. Paine Furniture Co.	Gay
Grand Rapids Savings	People's Savings	Smith
	G.R. Clearing House	Coleman
	Old National Bank	Jewell, Smith
	G.R. National City Bank	Rindge
	G.R. Chair Co.	Butterfield
	Imperial Furniture Co.	Butterfield
	Berkey and Gay	Whitworth
	Michigan Desk Co.	Whitworth
Grand Rapids Clearing House	Fourth National Bank	Caukin
	G.R. Savings	Coleman
	Old National	Hollister
	G.R. National City Bank	Waters

APPENDIX A (continued)

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Interlocking Company</u>	<u>Director</u>
Kent State Bank	Old National G.R. National City G.R. Chair Co. Imperial Berkey and Gay Oriel G.R. Furniture Metal Royal Phoenix	Hanchett, Withey White Foote Foote Covode Covode Hompe Hompe Hompe Hompe
West Side Bld. and Loan	Commerical Bank	Gallmeyer
Grand Rapids National City Bank	People's Savings G.R. Savings G.R. Clearing Kent State Bank Mutual Home Bldg. Loan G.R. Mutual Home G.R. Chair Co. G.R. Furniture Royal Phoenix Steel Wm. Widdicomb Co. Macey	Pantlind Rindge Waters White Mowat Wm. Widdicomb Mowat Irwin Irwin Irwin Irwin Wm. Widdicomb Wiley
Old National	People's Savings G.R. Savings G.R. Clearing House Kent State Bank	Smith Jewel, Smith Hollister Hanchett, Withey
Mutual Home Building and Loan	Old National G.R. Chair Co.	Mowat Mowat
Grand Rapids Mutual Building and Loan	G.R. National City Wm. Widdicomb Furniture	Wm. Widdicomb Wm. Widdicomb
Grand Rapids Chair Co.	G.R. Savings Kent State Bank G.R. National Bank Old National City Bank Imperial Furniture Co.	Butterfield Foote Mowat Mowat Butterfield, Foote
Imperial Furniture Co.	G.R. Savings Kent State Bank G.R. Chair Co.	Butterfield Foote Butterfield, Foote

APPENDIX A (continued)

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Interlocking Company</u>	<u>Director</u>
Berkey and Gay Furniture Co.	Commerical Bank	Gay
	Fourth National	Gay
	People's Savings	Gay
	G.R. Savings	Whitworth
	Kent State Bank	Covode
	Oriel	Covode
	C.S. Paine	Gay
	Michigan Desk Co.	Whitworth
Oriel	Kent State Bank	Covode
	Berkey and Gay Furniture	Covode
C.S. Paine	Commercial	Gay
	Fourth National	Gay
	People's Savings	Gay
	Berkey and Gay Furn.	Gay
Grand Rapids Furniture Co.	Kent State Bank	Hompe
	Old National	Irwin
	Metal Furn.	Hompe
	Royal	Irwin, Hompe, Tietsort
	Phoenix Furniture Co.	Hompe, Irwin, Tietsort
	Steel Furniture Co.	Irwin, Tietsort
Metal Furniture Co.	Kent State Bank	Hompe
	G.R. Furniture Co.	Hompe
	Phoenix Furniture Co.	Hompe
	Royal Furniture Co.	Hompe
Royal Furniture Co.	Kent State Bank	Hompe
	G.R. National City Bank	Irwin
	G.R. Furniture Company	Hompe, Irwin, Tietsort
	Metal Furniture Co.	Hompe
	Phoenix	Hompe, Irwin, Tietsort
	Steel Furniture Co.	Irwin, Tietsort
Phoenix Furniture Co.	Kent State Bank	Hompe
	G.R. National City Bank	Irwin
	G.R. Furniture Company	Hompe, Irwin, Tietsort
	Metal Furniture Company	Hompe
	Royal Furniture Company	Hompe, Irwin, Tietsort
	Steel Furniture Company	Irwin, Tietsort

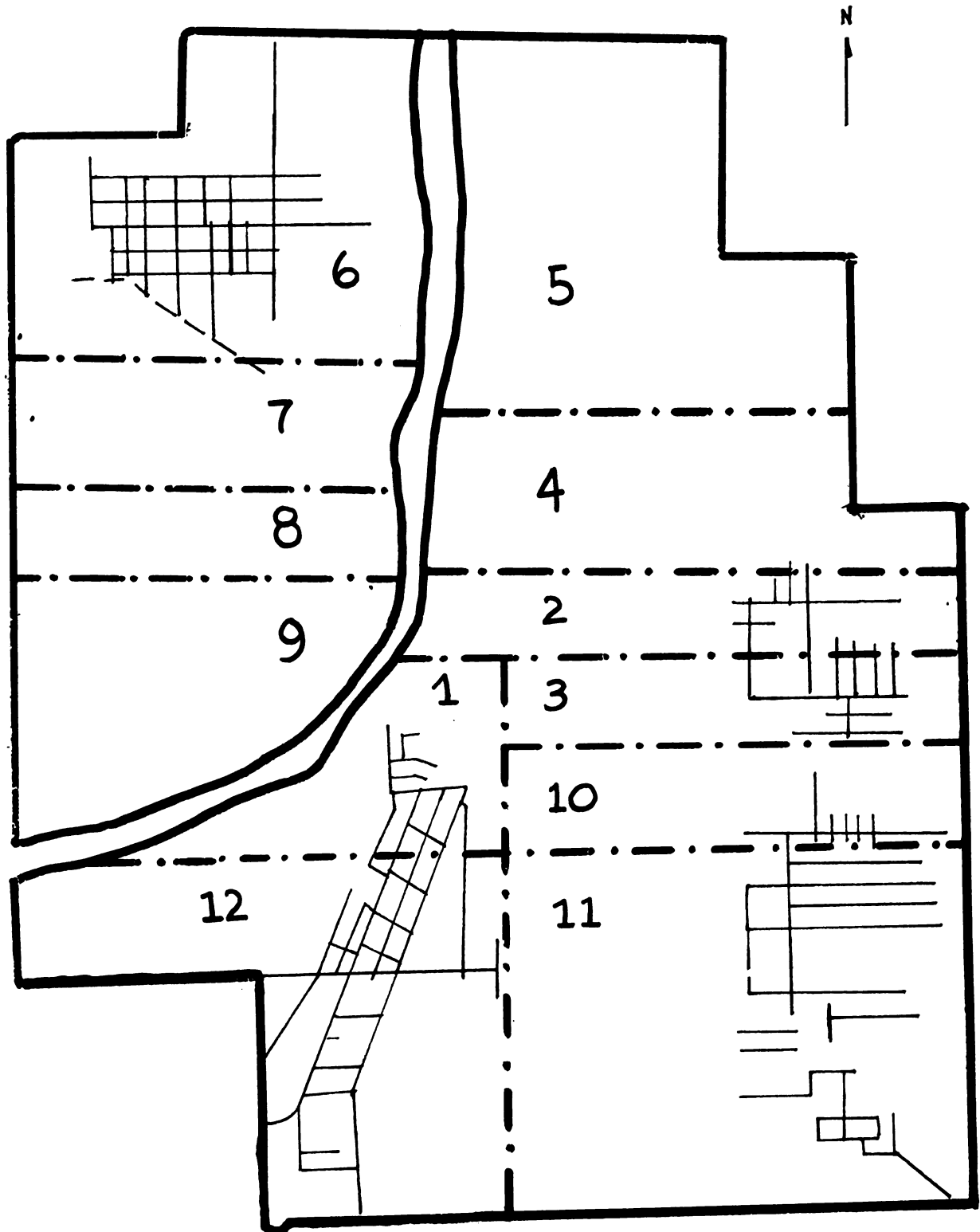
APPENDIX B

Principals of the Banking, Furniture and Social Elite in Grand Rapids, 1911
 Based on the City Directory, Dau's Blue Book, Reports of the Michigan Banking Commission

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BANKING</u>	<u>FURNITURE</u>	<u>OTHER INDUSTRY</u> (in Grand Rapids)	<u>PENINSULAR</u>	<u>KENT COUNTY</u>
William Anderson	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Christian Bertsch	yes	no	yes	no	no
John Blodgett	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Lavant Caukin	yes	no	no	no	no
John Covode Jr.	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Elijah Foote	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
William Gay	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Benjamin Hanchett	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Clay Hollister	yes	no	no	no	yes
Alexander Hompe	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Robert Irwin	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Frank Jewell	yes	no	no	yes	no
John Mowat	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Amos Musselman	yes	no	yes	yes	no
J. Boyd Pantlind	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Lester Rindge	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
William Smith	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Dudley Waters	yes	no	no	yes	yes
Lewis Withey	yes	no	no	yes	yes
T. Stewart White	yes	no	no	yes	yes
William Widdicomb	yes	yes	no	yes	yes

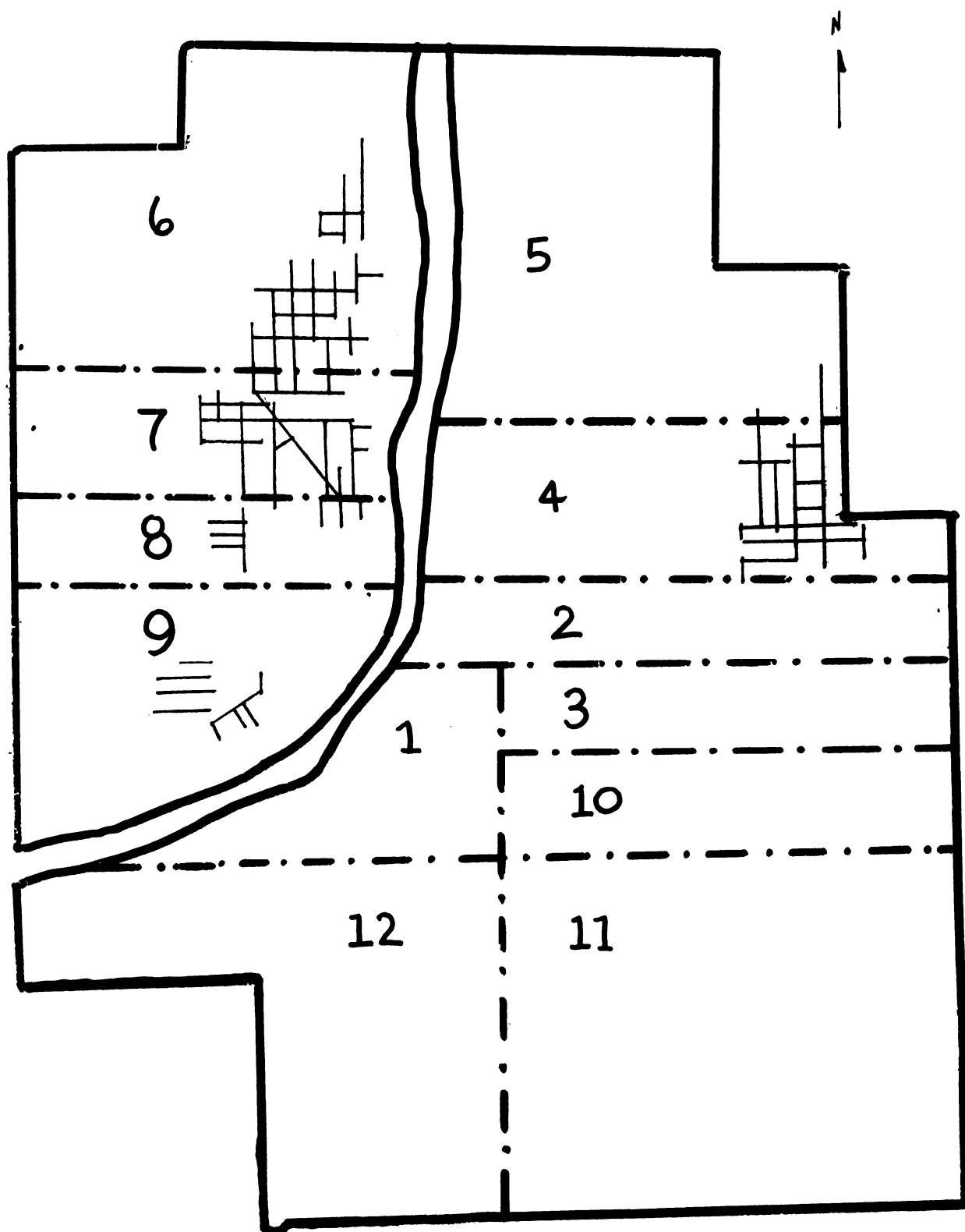
APPENDIX C

MAPS OF GRAND RAPIDS



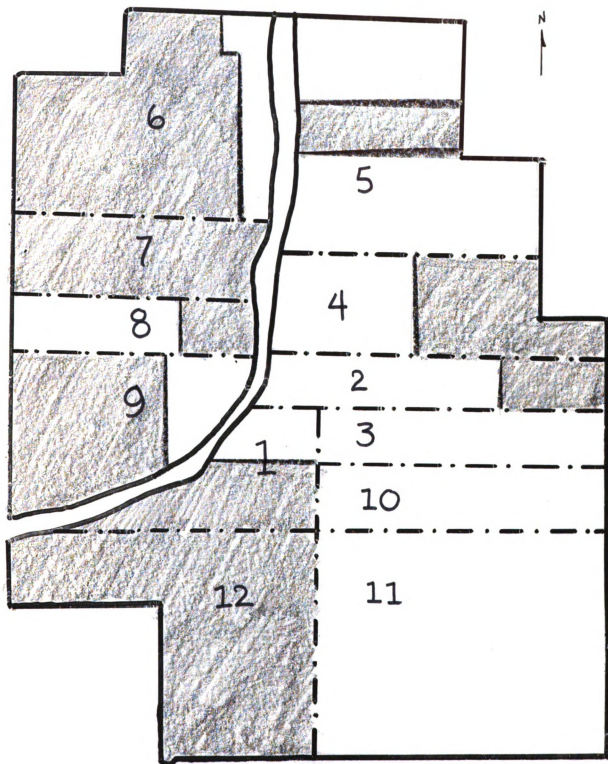
WARDS OF GRAND RAPIDS

Principal Dutch Neighborhoods, 1911



WARDS OF GRAND RAPIDS

Principal Polish Neighborhoods, 1911



Precinct Votes Against 1916 Charter  against

Note: Accepted in Ward 8 by a Single Vote

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Newspapers and Periodicals

Grand Rapids Evening Press

Grand Rapids Evening News

Grand Rapids Herald

Grand Rapids Creston News

Grand Rapids Observer

Grand Rapids Civic News

Grand Rapids Progress

Furniture Manufacturer and Artisan

Michigan Tradesman

Michigan Investor

B. City Records

Minutes, Board of Directors, Board of Trade of Grand Rapids,
1909-1930

Minutes, Grand Rapids Charter Reform Commission, 1910-1911

Minutes, Grand Rapids Charter Reform Commission, 1915-1916

Tax Records, City of Grand Rapids, 1909-1912

Index of Mortgage Grantors, Grand Rapids, 1900-1912

City Directories of Grand Rapids, 1909-1917

Hixsons's Real Estate Atlas of Grand Rapids

Sanborn's Fire Insurance Atlas of Grand Rapids, v. 3

C. Reports

Commissioner of the Banking Department of the State of
Michigan, Annual Reports. 1900-1917

PRIMARY SOURCES, continued

Bureau of the Census, Mortgages on Homes: A Report on the Results of the Inquiry as to the Mortgage Debt on the Homes Other than Farm Homes at the Fourteenth Census (Washington, D.C., 1923).

Immigration Commission, Reports on Immigrants in Industries v. 15 (Washington, D.C., 1911).

Michigan Department of Labor, Annual Reports, 1900-1917

II. SECONDARY SOURCES

Abell, Aaron I., American Catholicism and Social Action: A Search for Social Justice, 1865-1950 (Garden City: ,1960).

, "American Catholic Reaction to Industrial Conflict: The Arbitral Process, 1885-1900," The Catholic Historical Review 41 (January, 1956).

, "The Reception of Leo XIII's Labor Encyclical in America, 1891-1919," Review of Politics 7 (July, 1945).

Abramson, Harold, "Ethnic Diversity within Catholicism," Journal of Social History 4 (Summer, 1971).

Aiken, John R., "Walter Rauschenbusch and Labor Reform: A Social Gospeller's Approach," Labor History 11 (Spring, 1970).

Allen, Michael, "The Structure of Interorganizational Elite Cooptation: Interlocking Directories," American Sociological Review 39 (June, 1974).

Angus, David L., "The Politics of Progressive School Reform: Grand Rapids 1900-1910," Michigan Academician 3 (Winter, 1982).

Barrows, Robert G., "Beyond the Tenement: Patterns of American Urban Housing, 1870-1930," Journal of Urban History 9 (August, 1983).

Barton, Josef, Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American City (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

Behrens, Carl F., Commercial Bank Activities in Urban Mortgage Financing (New York: National Bureau of Research, 1952).

Bernard, Richard M., and Rice, Bradley, "Political Environment and the Adoption of Progressive Municipal Reform," Journal of Urban History 1 (February, 1975).

Brody, David, Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era (New York: Harpers, 1960).

, "The Old Labor History and the New: In Search of an American Working Class," Labor History 20 (Winter, 1979).

Brooks, Thomas, The Road to Dignity (New York: Atheneum, 1981).

Cannon, James G., Clearing Houses (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1900).

Cassity, Michael J., "Modernization and Social Crisis: The Knights of Labor and a Midwest Community 1885-1886," Journal of American History 66 (June, 1979).

Christie, Robert, Empire in Wood (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956).

Chudacoff, Howard P., "A New Look at Ethnic Neighborhoods: Residential Dispersion and the Concept of Visibility in a Medium-Sized City," Journal of American History 60 (June, 1973).

Conzen, Kathleen, Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accomodation and Community in a Frontier City (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

Crooks, James B., Politics and Progress: The Rise of Urban Progressivism in Baltimore, 1895-1911 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968).

Cumbler, John T., Working-Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities, 1880-1930 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979).

Dorau, Herbert B., and Hinman, Albert G., Urban Land Economics (New York: Macmillian Co., 1928).

Dooley, Peter C., "The Interlocking Directorate," American Economic Review 59 (June, 1969).

Dorsett, "The City Boss and the Reformer: A Reappraisal," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 63 (1972).

Douglas, Paul H., Real Wages in the United States, 1890-1926 (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1930).

Edwards, Paul K., Strikes in the United States 1881-1974 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

Ewen, Lynda Ann, Corporate Power and Urban Crisis in Detroit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

- Filene, Peter, "An Obituary for the 'Progressive Movement'," American Quarterly 22 (1970).
- Fisher, Ernest M. and Smith, Raymond F., "Land Subdividing and the Rate of Lot Utilization," Michigan Business Studies 4 (1932).
- Fox, Kenneth, Better City Government: Innovation in America and Urban Politics, 1850-1937 (Philadelphia, 1977).
- Fragoli, Raymond R., "Progressive Coalitions and Municipal Reform: Charter Revision in Detroit, 1912-1918," Detroit in Perspective: A Journal of Regional History 4 (Spring, 1980). ✓
- Glasco, Lawrence, "The Life Cycles and Household Structures of American Ethnic Groups: Irish, Germans, and Native-born White in Buffalo, New York, 1855," Journal of Urban History 1 (May, 1975).
- Grebler, Leo, Blank, David M., and Winnick, Louis, Capital Formation in Residential Real Estate: Trends and Prospects (Princeton: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1956).
- Greene, Victor, The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1968).
- , For God and Country: The Rise of Polish and Lithuanian Ethnic Consciousness in America, 1860-1910 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975).
- Haber, Samuel, Uplift and Efficiency: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Hammack, David, "Problems of Power in the Historical Study of Cities," American Historical Review 83 (April, 1978).
- Harris, Carl V., Political Power in Birmingham, 1871-1921 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977).
- Hays, Samuel P., American Political History as Social Analysis (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980).
- Higgs, Robert, "Race, Skills and Earnings: American Immigrants in 1909," Journal of Economic History 31 (June, 1971).
- Hill, Peter, J., "Relative Skill and Income Levels of Native and Foreign Born Workers in the United States," Explorations in Economic History 12 (January, 1975).
- Holli, Melvin, Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics (New York: Oxford, 1969).

- Hopkins, Charles, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940).
- Horowitz, Morris, The Structure and Government of the Carpenter's Union (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962).
- Ingham, John N., The Iron Barons: A Social Analysis of an American Urban Elite 1874-1965 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978).
- Jaher, Frederick Cople, ed., The Age of Industrialism in America: Essays in Social Structure and Cultural Values (New York: Free Press, 1968).
- James, John A., Money and Capital Markets in Postbellum America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).
- Karson, Marc, American Labor Unions and Politics, 1900-1918 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958).
- Kirk, Carolyn and Kirk, Gordon, Jr., "The Impact of the City on Home Ownership: A Comparison of Immigrants and Native Whites at the Turn of the Century," Journal of Urban History 7 (August, 1981).
- Kolko, Gabriel, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History 1900-1916 (New York: Free Press, 1962).
- Korman, Gerd, Industrialization, Immigrants, and Americanizers: The View from Milwaukee, 1866-1921 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967).
- Kromminga, John, The Christian Reformed Church: A Study in Orthodoxy (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1949).
- Kurzahls, Richard D., "Initial Advantage and Technological Change in Industrial Location: The Furniture Industry of Grand Rapids, Michigan" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1973).
- Lurie, Jonathan, "Private Associations, Internal Regulation and Progressivism: The Chicago Board of Trade 1880-1923 as a Case Study," American Journal of Legal History 16 (1972).
- Lydens, Z.Z., The Story of Grand Rapids (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1966).
- McGee, John W., The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley 1830-1850 (Grand Rapids: n.p., 1950).
- May, Henry F., Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper, 1949).

- Miller, Randall and Marzik, Thomas, eds., Immigrants and Religion in Urban America (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977).
- Miller, Zane, Boss Cox's Cincinnati: Urban Politics in the Progressive Era (New York: Oxford, 1968).
- Millspaugh, Arthur C., Party Organization and Machinery in Michigan Since 1890 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1917).
- Mocha, Frank, ed., Poles in America: Bicentennial Essays (Stevens Point: Worzalla Publishing, 1978).
- Pope, Liston, Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942).
- Ransom, Frank E., The City Built on Wood: A History of the Furniture Industry in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1850-1950 (Ann Arbor: n.p., 1950).
- Rees, Albert, Real Wages in Manufacturing 1890-1914 (Princeton: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1961).
- Repas, Robert F., "The Christian Labor Association" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Michigan State University, 1983).
- Rice, Bradley R., Progressive Cities: The Commission Government Movement in America, 1901-1920 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977).
- Sarasohn, Stephen B., and Vera H., Political Party Patterns in Michigan (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1957).
- Schiesl, Martin, The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America 1880-1920 (Berkeley: Campus Press, 1977).
- Schluter, William Charles, The Pre-Ward Business Cycle, 1907-1914 (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1923).
- Smith, Timothy, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," American Historical Review 83 (December, 1978).
- Szaz, Ferenc, "Protestantism and the Search for Stability: Liberal and Conservative Quests for a Christian America, 1875-1925" in Jerry Israel, ed., Building the Organizational Society (New York: Free Press, 1970).
- Thelen, David P., "Social Tensions and the Origins of Progressivism," Journal of American History 56 (September, 1969).
- Thomas, William I., and Znaniecki, Florian, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918).

Travis, Anthony, "Mayor George Ellis: Grand Rapids Political Boss and Progressive Reformer," Michigan History 1 (Spring, 1974).

Trescott, Paul B., Financing American Enterprise: The Story Commercial Banking (New York: Harper, 1963).

Vanderstel, David Gordon, "The Dutch of Grand Rapids, Michigan: A Study of Social Mobility in a Midwestern Community, 1880-1900" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Kent State University, 1983).

Vecoli, Rudolph, "European Americans: From Immigrants to Ethnic" in William Cartright and Richard Watson, eds., The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture (Washington, D.C.: National Council for Social Studies, 1978).

Weinstein, James W., The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

Wiebe, Robert, Businessmen and Reform: a Study of the Progressive Movement (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

, The Search for Order (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

, The Segmented Society: An Historical Preface to the Meaning of America (New York: Oxford, 1975).

Wyman, Roger, "Middle-Class Voters and Progressive Reform: The Conflict of Class Culture," American Political Science Review 68 (1974).

Yellowitz, Irwin, Labor and the Progressive Movement in New York State 1897-1916 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965).

Zunz, Olivier, The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development and Immigrants in Detroit 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). ✓

Zwannstra, Henry, Reformed Thought and Experience in a New World: A Study of the Christian Reformed Church and Its American Environment, 1890-1918 (The Hague: Amsterdam University Press, 1973).