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JEANINE MAZAK-KAHNE

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BIRTHPLACE OF ALUMINUM, CRADLE OF CRIME: SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN THE DEINDUSTRIALIZATION OF NEW KENSINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 1930-1970

VOLUME I

By

Jeanine Mazak-Kahne

A DISSERTATION

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

History

2009

ABSTRACT

BIRTHPLACE OF ALUMINUM, CRADLE OF CRIME:
SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN THE DEINDUSTRIALIZATION OF NEW KENSINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 1930-1970

By

Jeanine Mazak-Kahne

This dissertation uses a community study of New Kensington, Pennsylvania to explore the importance of deindustrialization in smaller mill towns, a gradual process that occurred long before the major shifts in big industry in the 1970s. The three most important institutions in New Kensington - the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa), the Aluminum Workers of America, and the Mannarino organized crime family - shaped local politics and community identity in a manner which affected the city's response to deindustrialization.

New Kensington was not a single-industry town; however, it was dominated from its origins by Alcoa. Its workers and the community benefited from Alcoa's welfare capitalism – good wages and benefits pumped revenue into the town's economy. Cost sharing practices between Alcoa and the city built needed infrastructure. The rise of industrial unionism in the 1930s did not dramatically change labor-capital relations or change New Kensington into a "workers' town." However, the partnership between labor and government did secure necessary state and federal funds to improve city living conditions through slum clearance and low-cost housing programs. While New Kensington always had a presence of illegal enterprise and related government corruption, the underground economy – controlled by the Mannarino crime family – found its rhythm in the 1940s and continued as a strong presence through the early 1960s.

With local government's protection the Mannarino Organization's illegal gambling enterprise pumped revenue into the town's economy.

Because of its industrial and organized crime interests New Kensington had a dual identity: "Aluminum City" and "Racket City." Over the years it struggled to hold on to one identity while shed the other. Consequently, Alcoa's capital flight and the Mannarino Organization's very public troubles with the federal government are often blamed for the town's sudden failings in the early 1970s. But the problems were not sudden, as both Alcoa and the Mannarino Organization began to decline years before. The problem was not solely with this decline, but also with local government's inability to shed itself of corporate and criminal influence and plan for a post-industrial, post-organized crime future. Part of this future depended upon cooperation, and quite possibly consolidation, with two small neighboring communities. Since its inception New Kensington had difficulty negotiating these relationships, partially due to Alcoa and Mannarino influence in city hall.

The story of New Kensington is not one of a single-industry town affected by straight corporate flight, changing corporate ownership, planned obsolescence, or a community stunned by a sudden pull-out. Deindustrialization in New Kensington was complicated by other institutions – in this case organized crime – and city government's relationship to industry and labor. City government was not a victim surprised by a change of events; it was an active agent in the entire process.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to many people for their guidance and support over the life of this project. Foremost my thanks to my committee: chair Mark Kornbluh, Christine Daniels, Kirsten Fermaglich and Dean Rehberger. I feel very fortunate to have had this committee as they have been extremely patient and exceptionally kind. Hopefully I will be a better scholar and teacher because of their influence.

I wish to thank the many professionals who provided more than just access to research materials, the archivists and librarians at: the National Archives and Records Administration; the Pennsylvania State University; the library and archives at the Senator John Heinz III History Center; the Archives of Industrial Society at the University of Pittsburgh; the Alcoa corporate library; and, the Michigan State University Libraries. Thanks also to various faculty members and fellow graduate students who suggested secondary works along the way – there have been so many over the years I can not begin to list them all by name.

I am also appreciative of the assistance given to me by many people at local and county offices, especially in New Kensington city hall. I am also thankful for the numerous citizens of New Kensington, Arnold and Lower Burrell who did much for me during my research. While I am far from able to include all that I have learned from the individuals I met along the way, I am pleased to have been given their time and knowledge of the region's past.

Many thanks go to the Mazak and Kuchta families. I have been blessed to be a part of these families and receive their unconditional support over the years. Thanks to my uncle Tom Kuchta for introducing me to a number of really interesting characters and

driving me around to explore many places and buildings I probably should not have. I have a greater understanding of the region's past because of his efforts. Also thanks to my mom, Margaret Kuchta-Mazak, for all of her help over the years. I am also grateful for the support of my late father, Charles Mazak. Sullivan, Stella and Nora also provided much needed time away from research, writing, and teaching.

Finally I am thankful for my husband and best friend, Shannon James Kahne. I can think of no greater expression of love than that of a spouse who would use a two week vacation to spend eight-hour days sweating over a photocopier at the National Archives.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Aluminum City Terrace
AFL	American Federation of Labor
Alcoa	Aluminum Company of America
ASC	Aluminum Seal Company
AVCLU	Allegheny Valley Central Labor Union
AVIUC	Allegheny Valley Industrial Union Council
AWA	Aluminum Workers of America
AWA 2	Aluminum Workers of America Local 2
AWPA	Aluminum Workers' Protective Association
BIC	Burrell Improvement Company
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FHA	Federal Housing Authority
HSWP	Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
IWW	International Workers of the World
JFK NARA	John F. Kennedy Assassination Collection, National Archives and Records Administration
NIRA	National Industrial Recovery Act
PPG	Pittsburgh Plate Glass
PHA	Public Housing Authority
PRC	Pittsburgh Reduction Company

PSU	Pennsylvania State University
PSNK	Pennsylvania State University New Kensington campus
RDA	Redevelopment Authority of New Kensington
USHA	United States Housing Authority
USWA	United Steel Workers of America
USWA 302	United Steel Workers of America Local 302
TACU	The Aluminum Cooking Utensil Company
VGG	Volunteers for Good Government
WCCC	Westmoreland County Community College
WCHA	Westmoreland County Housing Authority

INTRODUCTION

New Kensington, Pennsylvania is a small town eighteeen miles northeast of Pittsburgh whose best days – depending on who you ask - have long since passed. This dissertation is a community study of that town. In this work I examine the three most important institutions in New Kensington - the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa), the Aluminum Workers of America, and the Mannarino organized crime family – and their impact on the community. I want to understand how these three institutions shaped the political economy of New Kensington during the time period 1930-1970. Each of these institutions shaped local politics and community identity in a manner which complicated the city's response to deindustrialization. My study seeks to contribute to the growing scholarship which emphasizes the importance of deindustrialization in smaller mill towns as a gradual process that occurred long before the major shifts in big industry in the 1970s. I also hope that it serves as an introduction to small town organized crime as opposed to current emphasis on those larger crime syndicates in big cities.

New Kensington, Pennsylvania was not a single-industry town; however, Alcoa dominated the community from its beginnings. Alcoa's workers and the community benefited from the company's welfare capitalism – good wages and benefits pumped revenue into the town's economy. Cost sharing practices between Alcoa and the city built needed infrastructure. The rise of industrial unionism in the 1930s did not dramatically alter labor-capital relations or change New Kensington into a "workers' town." However, the partnership between organized labor and local government did

secure necessary state and federal funds to improve city living conditions through slum clearance and low-cost housing programs. Government corruption and illegal enterprise were always present in New Kensington; however, its underground economy – controlled by the Mannarino crime family – found its rhythm in the 1940s and continued as a strong presence through the early 1960s. Protected by local government, the Mannarino Organization's illegal gambling enterprise pumped revenue into the town's economy.

As a result of its industrial and organized crime interests New Kensington had a dual identity: "Aluminum City" and "Racket City." Over the years it struggled to hold on to one identity while shed the other. Consequently Alcoa's capital flight and the Mannarino Organization's very public troubles with the federal government were blamed for the town's sudden failings in the early 1970s. But the problems were not sudden, as both Alcoa and the Mannarino Organization began to decline years before. The problem was not solely with this decline, but also with local government's inability to shed itself of corporate and criminal influence and plan for a post-industrial, post-organized crime future. Part of this future depended upon cooperation, and quite possibly consolidation, with two small neighboring communities. Partially due to corporate and criminal influence in city hall, New Kensington had difficulty negotiating these relationships since the towns' beginnings.

By the mid-1970s New Kensington was a failing community. Alcoa's departure set off a domino effect with the town's smaller industries. The criminal void left by the Mannarino Organization's departure was exacerbated by the trappings of post-industrial crime and poverty. Organized labor, what little of it still existed, was significantly weakened. The three institutions which had contributed to the city's well-being in

several ways no longer existed. What remained were their legacies - empty factories, high unemployment, increased crime, empty lots and public housing projects.

New Kensington is reflective of larger national trends, just played out on a micro-level. At its least, this work is another community study that illustrates the uneven deindustrialization process. It explores the complexities of intra-union relations in the context of city politics, as well as workers' contributions to the larger community. Finally, it documents the existence of smaller organized crime syndicates in smaller industrial communities. At its best, this work is a contribution to western Pennsylvania history that moves beyond Pittsburgh.

Edward K. Muller emphasizes the fact that the majority of scholarship on western Pennsylvania centers on Pittsburgh.[1] However, he points out that Pittsburgh is part of a larger industrial region comprised of numerous small industrial communities – many of which have direct connections to the city. Muller explains that Pittsburgh industries such as Carnegie Steel, Pittsburgh Plate Glass and Alcoa largely drove the industrial development of the region. Consequently, the corporate power centered in Pittsburgh shaped the lives of those in the hinterlands. Among other things, Muller calls for further study of western Pennsylvanian industrial development and the exploration of communities' relationships with Pittsburgh.[2] In some ways this dissertation is a move in that direction.

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[1] Edward K. Muller, "Metropolis and Region: A Framework for Enquiry Into Western Pennsylvania," in *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989): 181-212.

[2] Ibid., 193-194.

Alcoa's corporate decisions certainly affected the lives of those in New Kensington as well as those in the neighboring town of Arnold. Alcoa's public record hinders an exploration of how decisions were made in the corporate boardroom. However, some of their reasons behind and the effects of their decision to leave New Kensington is readily documented through their late 1940s public relations campaign created to justify their capital flight. Industrial decentralization occurred in the hinterlands far before it hit the big city. Furthermore, this response served as an indicator to some of what Pittsburgh's response to corporate decisions in the late 1960s and early 1970s should have been. Because of this serious consideration must be given to the community's reaction to Alcoa's actions.

Aside from its contribution to regional history, this work is valuable as an act of local and public history.[3] While I have tried to broadly place this in a larger historical context, this work remains intensely location specific. It is my hope that at its worst it reflects more curiosity than sentimentality and that it is more documentary than commemorative admiration. My interest in this community is also intensely personal, as New Kensington is my home town. I am part of the first generation born after Alcoa, American Saint-Gobain, Union Spring, and others packed up and left town. Growing up I never thought much of the empty store fronts and public housing projects which dominated the downtown. It was not until I returned to pursue doctoral study in history and read a number of works on deindustrialization, urban decline, union activism and labor-management relations that I truly began to question my understanding of my

[3] My initial pursuit of doctoral study was to further my career as a public historian.

hometown's past as reflected in its present. It is answering the question, "What happened here?" that has driven the research behind this dissertation.

Public history as a concept, methodology, field of study and profession has been and continues to be interpreted and defined in many ways. I am certain that as I further develop as a public historian and as educator of future public history professionals, my definition of the field will evolve. But for this purpose I am concerned with what public history does. David Glassberg states simply what others have noted in various ways - "Public histories provide meaning to places."[4] In his discussion of public history as "place consciousness" Glassberg explains that "Historical consciousness and place consciousness are inextricably intertwined; we attach histories to places, and the environmental value we attach to a place comes largely through the memories and historical associations we have with it."[5]

While we all have personal memories of place, it is fair to assume that the collective history and the historical consciousness which can be attached to New Kensington are fleeting. It is being lost with every building torn down and each generation that passes. In a way this work is a preservation of that past. I hope that drawing together those sources which remain largely unexploited – FBI files, union records, council minutes, defunct newspapers – will have value to those who might do future research in this region. I also hope that it serves as a resource for those in my generation and younger who have chosen to stay in the region and who are now becoming involved in local politics and regional development groups. One use of public

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[4] David Glassberg, "Public History and the Study of Memory," *The Public Historian* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 17.

[5] Ibid.

history is to help shape public policy. For those who know little to nothing of the city's past – for example, why it has historically be unable to cooperate with its neighbors – work such as this may enable them to restructure the present and plan for the future in a different, hopefully more productive manner.

The public record during the period studied creates for New Kensington the dual identity of "Aluminum City" and "Racket City."[6] However, contemporary New Kensington imagines itself as "The Birthplace of the Aluminum Industry." The community wishes to emphasize the glory of its industrial past and its loose corporate associations. To allow this identity to predominate is to ignore the contribution of other entities – namely organized crime and organized labor. The existence of these other two institutions have not been forgotten, they have just been set aside. In drawing them together I hope to give a broader meaning to the city than just that which celebrates its corporate industrial past.[7] What those who reside in New Kensington or who may study the region choose to do with this meaning is left to be seen.

Brief Historiographies: Organized Crime and Deindustrialization

Organized Crime

The majority of the most substantial work on organized crime has fallen to sociologists, criminologists, government entities and law enforcement agencies. By far

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[6] In this sense the community and its institutions have created an "imagined community." Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991): 6.

[7] Glassberg notes that as a byproduct of managing cultural resources public historians, "manage the multiplicity of environmental perceptions, values, and meanings attached to a place" and in essence decide what "version of community, place, and character will prevail." Ibid., 19. I am certain that the meaning I give to New Kensington in this work will change as it moves beyond the dissertation.

the most voluminous body of literature has fallen to crime beat reporters as well as those who seek to sensationalize organized crime. Historians' attention to the subject is just beginning to develop. For the purposes of this work I am bypassing the work of journalists and those who seek to sensationalize organized crime. I am also being highly selective of the massive body of work done by sociologists, criminologists and others.

Sociologist William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* was published in 1943.[8] Whyte's study concerns the social structure of a neighborhood in the Italian South Philadelphia. Incorporated into his observance of and participation in this culture is an understanding of the importance of racketeers to the social and political structure of the community. Whyte gives considerable weight to the criminal syndicate run by Tony Catado, not only in its organization but also its influence in local politics. The study shows a relationship of mutual reciprocity between racketeer and politician – the racketeer operates without interference from the politician(s) he helped elect. Whyte's study is important for its placement of a criminal syndicate within the context of a larger community as well as the connectivity of crime and politics. It is a comprehensive site-specific study. While not specifically focused on organized crime, the subject is deeply embedded into an understanding of South Philadelphia as a social community.

The study of organized crime gained momentum in the post-war period as a result of the Kefauver Committee hearings, officially known as the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce. From 1950 through 1951, the Committee traveled to fourteen cities across the United States and called over 500 witnesses, many

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[8] Willam Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* 4th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

of them alleged crime bosses. Televised, the hearings sought to call America's attention to a menace just as threatening as Communism - a national crime syndicate.

The first significant scholarly article to follow Kefauver was sociologist Daniel Bell's "Crime as an American Way of Life."[9] It is the foundational work which set the base for framing organized crime in terms of markets, ethnic social mobility (which he calls a "queer ladder"), and politics. Bell argues that to fully understand America one must consider the importance of organized gambling in a post-war "mass consumption economy"; the importance of ethnic succession in "marginal business and crime"; and, organized crime's influence on the "changing character of urban political machines."[10] Illegal gambling casinos, such as those operated by the Mannarinos, were certainly reflective of a mass consumption underground economy in post-war New Kensington.

Following Kefauver a number of events focused public, scholarly and Congressional attention on organized crime. Beginning in 1957 the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor-Management Field, also known as the McClellan hearings, sought to root out Mob influence and corruption in unions, though the Committee's scope widened over the years. In 1958 the hearing incorporated testimony concerning the November 14, 1957 meeting of alleged Mafia leaders in Apalachin, New York; and, in 1963 it included the testimony of convicted drug trafficker Joseph Valachi. Over the years scholars have questioned the value of Valachi's testimony; however, it is important to note as it did push forward study of organized crime in this period. In 1967 President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the Commission on

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[9] Daniel Bell, "Crime as an American Way of Life," 13, no. 2 *The Antioch Review* (Summer 1953): 131-154.

[10] Ibid., 133.

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice's Task Force on Organized Crime which influenced a new round of scholarship.

In addition to drawing scholarly attention to the subject, these investigations and panels shaped law enforcement's approach to organized crime investigation. The Apalachin incident forced FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who had long denied the Mafia's existence, to create a task force on organized crime.[11] In response the FBI instituted the Top Hoodlum Program which required all field offices to maintain surveillance on their region's "top ten hoodlums."[12] The FBI files used in this dissertation are an outgrowth of this shift in law enforcement practices.

The work of John A. Gardiner and Donald Cressey also stems from 1960s investigations into organized crime. John Gardiner's case study of the fictional "Wincanton" (Reading, Pennsylvania) explores a particular criminal syndicate's social, economic and political control over that town.[13] Gardiner describes a public attitude towards corruption as a combination of apathy and fatalism. In profiling the community and detailing the Stern syndicates' operations Gardiner seeks to provide a model for law enforcement to utilize in their fight against organized crime. Donald Cressey's *Theft of the Nation* was born of the President's 1967 Commission on Law Enforcement and

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[11] The agency's concerns were largely directed towards counterintelligence and other related Cold War activities.

[12] Athan G. Theoharis, Tony G. Proveda, Susan Rosenfeld and Richard Gid Powers, eds., *The FBI: A Comprehensive Reference Guide* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2000): 35-36. The Pittsburgh field office covers twenty-five counties in Pennsylvania and all of West Virginia and included Sam and Gabe among their top ten.

[13] John A. Gardiner, "Public Attitudes Toward Gambling and Corruption," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 274 (November 1967): 123-134 and Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption: Organized Crime in an American City* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970).

Administration of Justice.[14] A revision of his Commission report for mass consumption, Cressey's work seeks to raise a popular awareness of an organization which threatened to destroy America. Cressey clearly outlines the structure, size, scope and operations (legitimate and illegal) of organized crime, which he characterizes as an Italian operation.

Organized crime scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s predominately remained the work of sociologists, criminologists and law enforcement agencies. These individuals debated and developed a definition of organized crime as well as sought to develop an understanding of its structure and attributes. A concise foundational textbook used in criminology courses which reflects this scholarship is Howard Abadinsky's *Organizing Crime*.[15] Abadinsky defines organized crime as having the following attributes: "[it] is nonideological ... is hierarchical ... has limited or exclusive membership ... perpetuates itself ... exhibits a willingness to use illegal violence and bribery ... demonstrates specialization/division of labor ... is monopolistic ... [and] is governed by explicit rules and regulations."[16] These attributes were (and continue to be) guides for assessing criminal syndicates that extend beyond the Italian gangster.

Much like Daniel Bell did for sociologists, Mark Haller set the foundational work for the historian's study of organized crime. Beginning in 1971 and following for the next thirty years Haller's work has been broad in its coverage. In "Organized Crime and Urban Society" Haller uses a study of Chicago to explore three interrelated, key concepts:

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[14] Donald R. Cressey, *Theft of the Nation: The Structure and Operations of Organized Crime in America* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969).

[15] Howard Abadinsky, *Organized Crime*, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2000).

[16] Ibid., chapter one.

organized crime as a social world which enabled for social mobility within and out of the immigrant ghetto; ethnic succession and inter-ethnic collaboration; and, the tremendous influence of organized crime in the urban neighborhood.[17] Haller's work is reminiscent of Bell's in that it explores ethnicity and political influence. However, Haller shifts chronology to the pre-war period, emphasizing the 1920s and 1930s. Among other things, Haller's work is important for his discussion of the influence of crime in a given community. He not only lays out the structure and personnel needed to operate a syndicate's concern like numbers play, but also he notes the economic impact on the community – such as the retailer's benefit to his legitimate business for selling numbers on the side.

Many scholars (namely sociologists and historians) who have approached organized crime studies from a historical perspective focus on the Progressive Era through the 1940s. They follow Haller's efforts to broaden the ethnic and gendered scope of the subject. For example, Alan Block has studied on the importance of an ethically diverse group women entrepreneurs in Progressive Era New York; and, in doing so made the claim that organized crime was neither "ethnically unique, neither was it sexually segregated."[18] Others, such as Alfred Fried, Jenna Weissman Joselit, and Michael Alexander examine Jewish organized crime groups in New York City.[19]

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[17] Mark H. Haller, "Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Social History* 5 (Winter 1971-1972): 210.

[18] Alan A. Block, "'Aw! Your Mother's in the Mafia': Women Criminals in Progressive New York," *Contemporary Crises*, 1, no. 1 (January 1977): 5-22.

[19] Albert Fried, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Gangster in America* (New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1980); Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community,*

However, in the case of Joselit and Alexander, organized crime is a component part of a larger work examining shifts in Jewish-American culture over time. Studies of larger cities such as New York and Chicago benefit from a wide range of source material generated from Progressive Era reform movements and organizations, immigrant aid society records, and extensive open court records and investigative materials.

In his study of New York's criminal underworld during the period 1930-1950 Alan Block follows Haller's 1971 model for examining urban organized crime, picking up on the need to view organized crime as a social world. Block argues that organized crime is "both a social system and a social world."[20] Block demonstrates that the social world of organized crime is explained by a series of interconnected relationships – between criminals and politicians, law enforcement, and "various entrepreneurs." The social system of organized crime is marked by continuity while the social world is violent and chaotic. Embedded in this social structure are two forms of criminal syndicates: enterprise and power. An enterprise syndicate focuses solely on the mechanics of "illicit" enterprise – for example activities like gambling and prostitution. The power syndicate can operate within an enterprise syndicate or outside of it, and is characterized by characterized by extortion or force.

Twenty years after his initial work, Mark Haller stepped in to build upon his and Alan Block's work. In "Illegal Enterprise: A Theoretical and Historical Interpretation," Haller reframes organized criminal activities as "illegal enterprise" and the organized

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1900-1940 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); Michael Alexander, *Jazz Age Jews* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[20] Alan Block, *East Side, West Side: Organizing Crime in New York, 1930-1950*, 5th ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005).

criminal as illegal entrepreneur.[21] He argues that illegal entrepreneurship involves three key elements: systematic corruption, partnerships for the creation and maintenance of illegal business, and the economic structure and operation of illegal business. Again, Haller makes his argument using Chicago as an example. Through this work Haller suggests that a solid study of organized crime must cover: political and police corruption; the structure and organization of illegal activities, such as gambling; the business partnerships created in the pursuit of illegal enterprise; the role of violence in the maintenance activity; and, the social impact of illegal enterprise and its key players in a given environment.

This dissertation is representative of this body of scholarship. It does not have the benefit of the rich large city sources that Haller, Block, Joselit and others do. My use of FBI files patterns the Mannarino Organization in a similar fashion as Cressey and Gardiner found; consequently, many of Abadinsky's attributes are apparent. Ethnic succession is implied in this work in the shift from the Greek crime boss Mike Zervos to the Italian Sam Mannarino. However, the transfer was not achieved through inter-ethnic collaboration. My discussion of individual numbers operators and card dealer demonstrates the ethnic, racial and gender diversity in the Mannarino Organization.

Evidence of Block's enterprise and power syndicates are apparent in the Organization's gambling operations as well as its coercive practices in its "legitimate" businesses. The Mannarino brothers did use crime as a "queer ladder" of social mobility out of New Kensington's ethnic ghetto, though my emphasis on social mobility centers

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[21] Mark H. Haller, "Illegal Enterprise: A Theoretical and Historical Interpretation," *Criminology* 28, no. 2 (1990): 207-235.

on their relationships with local businessmen. Finally, police and political corruption are discussed; however, it is not solely in regards to the Mannarino Organization – there is a history of political corruption before the Mannarinos come to power.

This study is significant because it looks at the importance of organized crime in a small community. In terms of my work being local and regional history – there is much to say about small twentieth-century industrial towns like New Kensington, Braddock, Johnstown, Monessen and the like that goes beyond the story of capital, organized labor and industrial decline. For better or worse, organized crime was an important social and political force in these communities – and this deserves further exploration. This study is the groundwork for my future scholarship which will more deeply explore organized crime (African-American, Greek and Italian) and its effects on such communities. There is a need for more historical study of this subject to compliment the social science approaches and counter the romance of crime often put forth in popular literature and film.

Deindustrialization

Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison laid the foundation for the study of deindustrialization in their 1982 work *The Deindustrialization of America.*[22] They define deindustrialization as "the widespread, systematic disinvestment in the nation's basic productive capacity" which began in the early 1970s and continued steadily through the decade.[23] Bluestone and Harrison outline several factors in this process including:

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[22] Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982).

corporate mergers and acquisitions, foreign investment, planned obsolescence and corporate difficulties in keeping pace with a highly competitive global economy. Among other subjects the authors explore corporations' inability or unwillingness to keep up their end of the post-war labor social contract as their profits declined. Consequently capital flight became a tool "to 'discipline' labor and to assure itself of a favorable business climate wherever it set up operations."[24] If labor did not acquiesce to their wishes it was more cost effective to close a factory and open a more modern one employed by cheaper labor elsewhere.

Bluestone and Harrison's work is important for raising some critical observations on deindustrialization for scholars of labor and business history at a critical period where a number of industries – from steel production to automotive manufacturing – were undergoing the process. However, it is not the first work to raise questions for contemporary contemplation. One earlier such work is economist Charles Rumford Walker's 1950 study, *Steeltown: An Industrial Case History of the Conflict Between Progress and Security.*[25] Walker's case study chronicles the 1940s decentralization process of the National Tube Company, a U.S. Steel subsidiary, based in the western Pennsylvania town of Ellwood City. In 1946 National Tube announced that by 1949 production would be relocated to Gary, Indiana. Walker covers the process as it unfolds

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[23] Ibid., 6.

[24] Ibid., 16-17, 35.

[25] Charles R. Walker, *Steeltown: An Industrial Case History of the Conflict Between Progress and Security* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1950).

during 1946-1947, presenting the perspectives of management, organized labor and the community.

Walker's methodology involves surveys, interviews, and reporting of various meetings - methods which were used by scholars in the 1980s and beyond when covering deindustrialization in communities and industries.[26] In his presentation of management's viewpoints, Walker outlines many of the arguments Bluestone and Harrison observed in the 1970s – from increased competition to technological obsolescence. Furthermore, Walker anticipated increased decentralization in American industry and the capital flight of industry to other sections of the country. Walker's is an important work for what it says about the post-war decentralization of industry in western Pennsylvania.

Most scholars, however, engage Bluestone and Harrison. Many apply their framework to various industries and note how the process of deindustrialization unfolds in a given community. The majority, if not all, find familiar patterns – planned obsolescence, tense labor-management relations, global competition, the ill effects of conglomeration, the after-effects of community abandonment. The variance in this scholarship is an effort to alter the timeline of the deindustrialization process. Scholars note that deindustrialization is an uneven process where the pace varies from industry to community. The reasons are not always the same, and the response of and effects on the workers and their communities differ.

Laurence Gross resets the chronology of decentralization and deindustrialization back to the turn of the twentieth century. In his 1993 work *The Course of Industrial*

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[26] For example see: Ruth Milkman, *Farewell to the Factory: Autoworkers in the Late Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

Decline Gross argues that the planned obsolescence of Lowell, Massachusetts Boott cotton mills began in the 1910s.[27] While the owners put profit above all and invested their resources into new factories in the South, the workers and the managers of the Lowell mill worked collaboratively on dated equipment to keep the factory working until 1954. Gross's study highlights planned obsolescence and industrial decentralization to the cheaper South. What is notable is the labor-management collaboration which keep the mills operational despite corporate neglect.

In his 1996 work *Origins of the Urban Crisis* Thomas Sugrue argues that in Detroit deindustrialization, as well as the marginalization of that city's urban poor, started before the 1960s.[28] Sugrue explains that industrial Detroit peaked in the 1940s and 1950s, and that post-war corporate practices of workforce reductions and speed-up policies signaled the beginning of the end. He also emphasizes worker response to Ford's decentralization plans through the activism of UAW Local 600. This activism - which largely questioned what the company owed to its workforce and the city - brought the local at odds with the UAW International, who had been the forerunners in negotiating a labor-management accord in the post-war period.

In *Capital Moves* Jefferson Cowie tracks RCA's movement across the United States and abroad in search of cheaper labor and increased profit. Cowie argues that deindustrialization is a gradual process – in RCA's case lasting over seventy years – and consequently RCA's movement from city to city and country to country can not be

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[27] Laurence F. Gross, *The Course of Industrial Decline: The Boott Cotton Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1835-1955* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

[28] Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

considered the actions of a runaway shop.[29] He notes that much of RCA's actions were designed to combat workers' sense of entitlement. But, he situates his work in the context of a changing television industry over time, therefore illustrating a number of factors driving decentralization. He explains that there is a tendency to equate deindustrialization with runaway shops because many people tend to only notice the final shutdown, but often overlook the gradual job loss, transference of production to other plants and so forth.

Globalization plays a role in Cowie's study as RCA moved production to the less expensive Mexico. Elizabeth Chiang's work on Indiana County, Pennsylvania's coal mining industry explores the effects of globalization on that industry.[30] She posits that coal companies colonized the region in the late nineteenth century. As colonizers the emphasis was never about sustainability – just exploitive profit. Her work is also notable for the mining industry's connection to other industries such as steel and energy production. Chiang explains that the impact of such industrial changes on mining was tremendous. For example, as steel production deindustrialized and globalized the need for Indiana County coal declined. Furthermore, changes in the way energy was produced – the shift to "clean" coal technology – caused a decline in the bituminous coal market. Finally, Chiang's work is also notable for her discussion of labor – from the deunionization process to community perception of unionized workforce as lazy and greedy and consequently the cause of capital flight.

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[29] Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[30] Elizabeth Chiang, "The Great Storm that Swept Through: The Effects of Globalization on Indiana County," *Pennsylvania History* 71, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 165-190.

In her study of Yonkers, New York Tami Friedman considers more than one industry in the deindustrialization of that town.[31] Her emphasis is primarily on the Alexander Smith rug company, though she incorporates the corporate decisions of other companies like Otis Elevator to leave Yonkers. Friedman marks the deindustrialization process beginning with the rug company's threat to leave town in 1929. This threat led to other coercive corporate tactics such as asking for concessions from workers and community in order for the company to modernize equipment and other investments to keep the Yonkers plant viable. Friedman also chronicles various practices such as productivity demands and operations reorganization as decisions which enabled the company to get the most that they could from worker and community before leaving for greener pastures.

Howard Gillette Jr. moves from a discussion of the process of industrial decline to the effect capital flight had on Camden, New Jersey. A complimentary piece to Cowie's work, Gillette argues that local government was slow to react to RCA's and Campbell Soup's departure because of "traditionally patronage-based brand of ethnic politics."[32] Coupled with this were the growth of the suburbs and the resultant competing ideas of how the city should re-invent itself. Consequently post-industrial decline continued through the 1970s. Gillette explains that the city's investment in Great Society programs

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[31] Tami J. Friedman, "'A Trail of Ghost Towns across Our Land' The Decline of Manufacturing in Yonkers, New York," in Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, eds. *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca: ILR Press, Cornell University Press, 2003): 19-43.

[32] Howard Gillette Jr., "The Wages of Disinvestment: How Money and Politics Aided the Decline of Camden, New Jersey," in Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, eds. *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca: ILR Press, Cornell University Press, 2003): 139-158; Howard Gillette Jr., *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

of the 1960s turned out to be an unsuccessful stop gap measure that fell apart during the 1980s.

Thomas Dublin's and Walter Licht's study of decline in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania spans an eighty-year period, with the coal industry peaking during World War I. To support their argument that "economic decline is not a uniform, abstract process," the authors focus on a number of companies and communities.[33] They demonstrate that variance is based on a number of circumstances such as: the type of company, the nature of the community, how the company leaves, and the attitude of the workforce. Dublin and Licht cover a wide range of factors in the deindustrialization process. For example, they discuss how certain companies diversified into other industries like textiles and toy manufacturing, or were bought out by out of state investors and how as a consequence the mining industry suffered.[34] Furthermore, they examine various communities' attempts to attract new industry, with varying degrees of success. One of the more interesting revelations is workers' dissatisfaction with business unionism in the post-war period. Dublin and Licht explain how the union's business structure alienated workers from union staff and as a result killed union militancy.

The story of New Kensington is not one of a single-industry town affected by straight corporate flight, changing corporate ownership, planned obsolescence, or a community stunned by a sudden pull-out. As with other studies, this work seeks to shift the period of the deindustrialization process. Furthermore, like other communities the

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[33] Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht, *The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2005).

[34] Lisa Fine gives considerable weight to similar circumstances at the REO car company in *The Story of Reo Joe: Work, Kin and Community in Autotown, U.S.A.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

deindustrialization of New Kensington was a gradual process spanning decades. The groundwork was laid in the late 1930s, intensified in the post-war period and eventually ended in the early 1970s. Alcoa coerced its workers to acquiesce to its speed-up policy and changed work rules or face the loss of their plant. Workers attempted to protest the action; however, the tight relationship between the union leadership and Alcoa, coupled with intra-union conflict, killed any sustained rank-and-file movements. The workers, and the community, made numerous concessions. Despite this Alcoa continued its gradual pull-out. A political system which catered to not only Alcoa but also the Mannarino Organization prevented New Kensington city government and civic leaders from strategizing for a post-Alcoa, post-industrial future.

Dissertation Organization

This work is organized in a predominately thematic manner, with chronological discussion under each theme. Chapters three, four and five are devoted to a closer examination of the aluminum workers union, Alcoa, and the Mannarino Organization respectively. However, these institutions are carried through to varying degrees in chapters one, two and six.

Chapter one focuses on the developmental history of New Kensington and the neighboring communities of Parnassus and Arnold. New Kensington was essentially founded by Pittsburgh industrialists and financial investors as an industrial community. The chapter traces the early growth of Alcoa in the community. Finally, it explores early tri-borough relations.

Chapter two examines three major community concerns during the period 1918-1942: community morals and the criminal underworld; tri-borough consolidation and governmental reform; and, the city's participation in New Deal Era slum clearance and low-cost housing programs. Evidence suggests that New Kensington's organized criminal activity and government corruption pre-dated the Mannarino Organization. While those residents affected by criminal activity agitated for governmental reform, civic leaders pushed ahead with efforts to consolidate the tri-boroughs. Some speculated that consolidation movements failed as a result of individual community identity and fear of New Kensington's criminal element. Continued industrial growth crowded the city's urban core, creating troublesome living conditions. New Deal housing programs, championed by organized labor, appeared to be the answer to the city's problems.

Chapter three is primarily concerned with the influence of the aluminum worker in community affairs. As citizens, individual aluminum workers were active in the community as they served in elected offices and on appointed boards. Organized labor's greatest contribution was its drive to secure the agencies and funding necessary for securing affordable housing for its membership. However, the aluminum workers union had a history of intra-union conflict which prevented it from being a sustaining force in the community. These troubles may have reflected tensions in local government, as well that between union officials and Alcoa.

Chapter four chronicles Alcoa's growth and presence in the community from 1930 through its final days of operation in 1971. Because of its experimental origins, Alcoa's New Kensington Works was a proving ground for production and manufacturing. As processes were refined most were shipped to newer facilities across the country. I

argue that that major restructuring in the 1930s actually laid the groundwork for justification of corporate flight which accelerated in the post-war period. In order to maintain its identity as the Aluminum City, the community rallied behind the company's twenty-year campaign for increased worker productivity.

Chapter five is devoted to the life-span of the Mannarino Organized crime family. Organized crime was an important underground economy for the city and Mannarino influence over city government in the 1950s and 1960s allowed them to operate without interference or concern for minor reform movements. The Organization's health was tied to the community's industrial success. But early 1960s federal law enforcement pressure, coupled with a declining manufacturing base, forced the Organization to seek other markets.

In chapter six I return to the topics of crime, consolidation and housing. City government's pursuit of tri-city consolidation, as well as public housing and urban renewal programs were some of the ways leaders sought to combat industrial decline. The community appeared to be split between retaining an old vision of manufacturing and a new one emphasizing research and development and higher education. By locating its new research and development facility on the periphery, as well as donating nearby land to Pennsylvania State University, Alcoa prevented the one vision from becoming a reality in the city center. The changing economy did not allow for the industrial one. What remained were empty lots and public housing projects. Tri-city consolidation, desperately needed to face economic change, again failed due to New Kensington's devastated industrial base and its reputation as crime-infested.

A Note on Sources

City council records, Alcoa's public papers, the Aluminum Workers of America records and FBI files on the Mannarino organized crime family are the base upon this work is built. Oral histories, local newspapers, labor trade journals, commemorative histories, and in-house Alcoa publications are used to fill out detail.

Thanks to a 1930s city council resolution, borough council minutes (and quite possibly those of Parnassus) were lost to a good old fashioned house cleaning. The Alcoa collection at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania broadly covers its entire operations and by its donation is what the corporation wants to present to the public for research use. The records specific to New Kensington are far from comprehensive. Records specific to operations and closure of the New Kensington Works are still held by the corporation and according to Alcoa's librarian are not open for research use.

The Aluminum Workers of America collection is a rich source, but at times reflects the chaos of its internal struggles. In some cases it appears that what was saved of intra-union conflict depended upon who was the dominant party in the local at that time. Documentation concerning some intra-union conflict, such as the Frank Hill executive board affair, was confirmed through both *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* articles and also the electrical workers papers at the University of Pittsburgh's Archives of Industrial Society.

The FBI files used are part of the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection at the National Archives and Records Administration. Athan Theoharis has done considerable work on the problems inherent in using FBI files, most notably how

Bureau records' destruction practices shape an understanding of FBI operations.[35] The nature of these FBI files as part of the JFK assassination investigation complicates their research use. It is not too much to assume that any original order maintained by the Bureau was long since destroyed by investigative committee research handling. Furthermore, redacted information prevents a clearer understanding of not only Organization operations but also town politics.[36]

Several interviews were conducted for this work. They have been used somewhat sparingly; and, those that are used are representative of a multiplicity of voices, both recorded and not. One of the greatest frustrations in conducting research for this project was the inability to get more individuals commit to be interviewed. I spent many hours at one of New Kensington's senior centers (in the old aluminum workers' union hall) listening to a seemingly endless number of people tell me stories of their lives, their work, Alcoa and other industries, and the Mannarinos. But they refused to be officially interviewed. Many dismissed it as insignificant events "that happened in the past" which is "not very important now." Tried as I may I could not convince them that what they considered to be insignificant mattered very much and needed to be preserved.[37]

I have tried to construct a narrative of New Kensington from these various and fragmented sources of evidence. I have done my best to corroborate the information as

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[35] For example see: Athan G. Theoharis, "Secrecy and Power: Unanticipated Problems in Researching FBI Files," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 2 (2004):270-290.

[36] There were a couple of cases where I found duplicate records (presumably pulled from different offices) where one set of information was redacted but in the other it was not. In those instances the revelations did nothing to shift my perspective. However, such perspective-changing possibilities exist in that vast collection.

[37] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991): viii.

much as possible. There is still much to be learned from these collections and it is my intent to mine them further in future research. Any errors in this work are my own.

CHAPTER ONE

Beginnings: New Kensington, Alcoa and Tri-Borough Relations

New Kensington, Pennsylvania developed in the 1890s as an industrial town. It can be considered an "instant city" – one which "came into existence suddenly and flourished immediately."[1] But it was a small city whose dominant industry soon became aluminum manufacturing. Because of this New Kensington is considered the birthplace of the aluminum industry and known as "The Aluminum City." Its neighboring communities of Parnassus and Arnold were long established prior to New Kensington's growth as the Alle-Kiski Valley's regional hub. The three communities evolved along different lines, but they quickly found themselves intertwined as corporate expansion led to shared industry and infrastructure. Furthermore, ideological differences and socio-economic diversity significantly impacted tri-borough relations.

This chapter briefly traces the developmental history of the immediate region, New Kensington's founding, the early days of the Aluminum Company of America, and initial tri-borough relations.

Geographical Location and Resources

New Kensington sits eighteen miles northeast of Pittsburgh along the Allegheny River and is positioned in both the Allegheny and Allegheny-Kiskimenitas river valleys. The Allegheny River Valley comprises most of western Pennsylvania and extends slightly into western upstate New York to the north and into the Monongahela Valley to

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[1] Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975): preface.

the south. It touches the Ohio-West Virginia border and pushes eastward through the Allegheny National Forest. New Kensington is situated within the lower of the Allegheny Valley's three regions. The Allegheny-Kiskiminetas Valley - locally referred to as the Alle-Kiski Valley - is formed where the Kiskiminetas River joins the Allegheny River seventeen miles upstream from New Kensington. (See Appendix A for map) New Kensington sits in the lower western portion of the Alle-Kiski Valley in the northwest corner of Westmoreland County. It was the Alle-Kiski Valley's center city for the majority of the twentieth century.

Historically both the Allegheny and Alle-Kiski valleys' natural resources made them attractive to the fur trapping and timber industries. From 1830 to 1860 the northern and central Allegheny Valley went through a period of industrial development with the discoveries of petroleum, iron ore, timber and limestone. Development was hampered by rough navigation on Allegheny River which made it difficult to ship resources and goods to markets. Furthermore, the boom was short-lived as the region's natural resources were largely depleted by 1870. In comparison, the Allegheny Valley's southern neighbor, the Monongahela Valley, was rich in coal and became the focus of national interest in waterway improvement just as the use of the Allegheny for transportation declined. Consequently the central and upper Allegheny Valley developed slowly in relation to the Monongahela Valley.[2]

Unlike the upper two regions, by the 1870s the Allegheny Valley's lower region found its stride and became its most industrially developed section. Because of its proximity to industrializing Pittsburgh, the lower valley's population grew as people

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[2] E. Willard Miller, "The Industrial Development of the Allegheny Valley of Western Pennsylvania," *Economic Geography* 19 (October 1943): 388, 391.

started to exploit the region's bituminous coal and salt mines.[3] Open land and ready access to Pittsburgh's markets encouraged the development of glass, iron, steel, and aluminum manufacturing. The birth of communities like New Kensington reflected the movement of capital and industry from Pittsburgh's crowded industrial core to the more pastoral, resource rich, periphery.

Early Settlement and Economic Development of the Region

New Kensington developed rapidly as it moved from farmland to city in the space of a year. Its bordering neighbors – Parnassus and Arnold – developed in slightly different ways and over a greater period of time. Of the three communities discussed in this work, Parnassus was the oldest and was followed by Arnold while New Kensington remained farmland dividing the two. Parnassus developed from a frontier outpost into a retreat for the comfortable while Arnold's development was tied to its natural resources. New Kensington developed out of Pittsburgh's industrial expansion.

In the eighteenth century the lands upon which Parnassus, Arnold and New Kensington developed were predominately forest and were included in the sparsely populated Washington Township.[4] In April 1769 John Little paid the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania $181.76 for a 300-acre parcel which he named Parnassus. This land

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[3] Coal was imperative to American industrialization as it was necessary for the powering of manufacturing facilities and machinery.

[4] Today the area of Washington Township comprises the communities of Upper Burrell, Allegheny, Washington and Bell. The city of Lower Burrell is situated adjacent to New Kensington and is part of the Tri-Cities – New Kensington, Arnold, and Lower Burrell. Allegheny, Washington and Bell are more rural outlying areas.

remained largely undeveloped save for the frontier outpost Fort Crawford.[5] In 1781 Benjamin Armitage purchased a similar tract of land to Parnassus' north which he named Hermitage. Robert McCrea followed suit and took land next to Hermitage which he named Resolution. Resolution became Arnold, a town bordered by Hermitage on three sides and the Allegheny River on the fourth. Hermitage remained undisturbed farmland for over a century before becoming the core of New Kensington.[6]

Of the three tracts of land, Parnassus developed first and eventually its citizens were influential in founding neighboring New Kensington. In April 1803 Alexander Logan took possession of Parnassus and slowly developed it into a village. At first the Logan farm and a few others were established in cleared land, but with no roads or bridges Parnassus remained relatively isolated. This was despite the Pennsylvania canal system's Philadelphia to Pittsburgh route which passed Parnassus as it wound through the Alle-Kiski Valley.[7] By the 1840s railroads replaced canal service in the valley; and, when the Allegheny Valley Railroad Company reached Parnassus in 1855-1856 the three

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[5] Named for Colonel William Crawford, this fort stood from 1778 until 1793. It was one of three forts along the Allegheny and Kiskiminetas rivers north of Fort Pitt. The other two forts to follow to the north were Fort Hand, in North Washington, and Fort Kittaning, in Kittaning. Kittaning and Parnassus (New Kensington) developed industrially while North Washington remained predominately rural.

[6] Woman's Club of New Kensington (WCNK), *Lore of Yore: A History of Parnassus, New Kensington, Arnold, and Lower Burrell* (New Kensington: The Woman's Club of New Kensington, 1986), 10-11. For more on eighteenth-century history of the region see: Luella Rodgers Frazier, "The Early Years," in Elizabeth Blissell, ed., *Celebrating A Century: New Kensington, 1891-1991, A Century of Progress* (New Kensington, 1991), 8-10.

[7] The village's Logan Inn served travelers along the canal route and can be considered the area's earliest commercial center. For more on canal history and Pennsylvania's canal system see: Ronald E. Shaw, *Canals For a Nation: The Canal Era in the United States, 1790-1860* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1990); William H. Shank, *The Amazing Pennsylvania Canals* (York, PA: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1965, reprint 1997); *The Evolution of Transportation in western Pennsylvania* (Denver, CO: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, Denver Service Center, 1994). For a history of canal workers see Peter Way, *Common Labour: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

farms had been joined by the Parnassus Presbyterian Church and the Logan Inn which served the region's scattered settlers.

It was a decade before Logan's heir, John W., partitioned the Logan Farm into lots for auction. As a result of the auction in 1867 Parnassus comprised a train station and roughly thirty buildings, including houses, a few stores, and the Presbyterian church. By 1872 Parnassus had grown to such an extent that it was incorporated into a borough of Westmoreland County's Burrell Township. While the rest of the region remained largely rural and agricultural, Parnassus became a destination for Pittsburgh's elite. These people either moved permanently to or built vacation homes and small farms along the Allegheny.[8] Pittsburgh migrants established various institutions in Parnassus including a bank, a newspaper and the Parnassus Yacht Club. As a result Parnassus became the commercial center along the region's south side of the Allegheny River.

In 1852 Major Andrew Arnold settled in Resolution and it is after him that Resolution's name was changed to Arnold. This area comprised residences and farms, but Arnold's further development was based on natural resources. The Allegheny Valley Railroad's station in Arnold was used not only by passengers but it also exported salt, coal and oil from Arnold's mines and refinery. Arnold's population jumped when the James Chambers family, who were part owners of a successful glass factory in nearby Jeannette, chose Arnold as a site for a new glassworks. By 1896 Chambers Glass was supposedly the most modern glassworks in the country and employment opportunities brought skilled Belgian, English and German immigrants to the community. Because of

[8] A few of these farms and homes were established in Arnold as well.

this Arnold was established as an ethnic enclave organized around the glass industry.[9]

A wooded area to the north of Arnold was developed into a retreat by a group of Pittsburgh Methodists. In 1850 they formed the Tarentum Camp Meeting Association, named for its location on the northern side of the Allegheny River slightly northeast of Arnold. Annual camp meetings attracted worshipers from Pittsburgh and across the Alle-Kiski Valley; and, the Association thrived until 1876 when a fire destroyed camp property. In 1878 the Methodists purchased thirty-eight acres across the river on land accessible to the Allegheny Valley Railroad and renamed their group the Allegheny Valley Camp Meeting Association.[10] On Sundays the railroad offered reduced fares, and frequent trips to Camp Station from Pittsburgh to Kittanning drew many non-Presbyterian visitors to the site. But as industrial development in Arnold encroached on the Camp's border it went into decline.

Founding New Kensington

By 1890 Parnassus and Arnold were well known to Pittsburghers as well as

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[9] WCNK, 36, 78, 86; Arnold Centennial Committee, *City of Arnold: A Proud City of Proud People, 100 Years*, (Arnold Centennial Committee: 1996): 6. Pittsburgh was initially known as a glass town. Discussion of James Chambers' glass plants in Jeanette and Arnold can be found in Ken Fones-Wolf, *Glass Towns: Industry, Labor and Political Economy in Appalachia, 1890s-1930s* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007): chapters two and three. On page 37 Fones-Wolf situates his discussion of the Arnold plant in the context of how new technologies changed the workforce. He explains that the skilled laborers in the Arnold plant were Belgian, English, and German immigrants but over 600 unskilled laborers were American, indicating that it was a sizeable plant for the location. This remained the case until New Kensington's tin mills opened in 1900. At this point American workers left and were replaced by Italian immigrants. Technological change lessened the demand for skilled labor and so Belgians and others left to find work in less advanced mills in the Midwest so that by 1909 only five percent of the workforce was Belgian, English or German with forty percent American and fifty-five percent a mix of southern and eastern Europeans.

[10] People occupied the grounds immediately, building an auditorium with seating for 3000, a hotel, stores, and a stable. They also laid out 250 lots for cottages.

residents of more remote places in the Alle-Kiski Valley. Day trippers to Valley Camp, laborers in Arnold's salt and coal mines, and residents and vacationers in Parnassus brought a mix of people to the region. In the center of this activity sat Hermitage. Prior to 1890 Hermitage's two major landholders were brothers Alexander and Stephen Young, who each owned 400-acre farms.[11] But thriving next door was Parnassus, which grew from a population of 516 in 1890 to 1,791 in 1900.[12] Parnassus' population increase was largely due to the work of the Burrell Improvement Company (BIC) which was a real estate firm formed by Pittsburgh capitalists.[13] The majority owners were members of the Mellon family of T. Mellon and Sons, a prominent Pittsburgh banking firm.[14] In 1890 the BIC purchased the Hermitage farmlands from the Young brothers at $500-600 an acre and named the land Kensington.[15] Kensington's flatlands along the Allegheny River provided not only enough room for the construction of industrial complexes, but also access to markets throughout the Allegheny and Alle-Kiski valleys via river and rail

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[11] A third landholder, Captain R.P. Crawford, owned the Bear Creek Refining Company near the salt works in Arnold.

[12] WCNK, 15-19, 23, 30. U.S. Census Office, *Population Part I, Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Census Office, 1901).

[13] For a more detailed discussion of how a speculators/boosters promoted the development of a community see William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: Norton and Company, 1991): 31-34. Much like with Chicago, New Kensington's BIC promoted resources and transportation routes/access to markets.

[14] The Mellon family held interest in Westmoreland County for some time – Thomas Mellon left the family's Westmoreland County farm in the 1820s for education and employment in Pittsburgh before founding a successful banking house. Several biographies of the Mellon family have been written over the years. Some notable ones include: Burton Hersh, *The Mellon Family: A Fortune in History* (New York: Morrow, 1978); Thomas Mellon's autobiography *Thomas Mellon and His Times*, ed. Mary Louise Briscoe (Pittsburgh, 1885; repr., Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1994); David E. Koskoff, *The Mellons: The Chronicle of America's Richest Family* (New York: Crowell, 1978).

[15] WCNK, 34. I have been unable to locate the records of the Burrell Improvement Company.

transportation.

The BIC laid Kensington out along the riverside flats in a grid pattern with the streets numbered in ascending order parallel to the railroad and the river. Lots from Second Avenue to the Allegheny River were set aside for development as an industrial district, while the BIC intended the area south of Second Avenue for mixed commercial and residential use.[16] The main commercial district was bordered by Ninth and Tenth Streets to the west and east and Fourth and Fifth Avenues to the north and south. The Burrell Improvement Company advertised these lots in the Pittsburgh newspapers and promised train fare to prospective buyers who attended the three-day land auction from June 10-12, 1891. About 15,000 people made the trip and purchased 500 lots ranging in price from $30-$300 for a total of $135,000.[17] Within a year Kensington was incorporated as the borough of New Kensington.[18]

Driven by a need for expansion and lured by the availability of cheap land and

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[16] Stanton Ave. was eventually named Constitution Blvd.

[17] WCNK, 34.

[18] New Kensington was incorporated as a borough of Westmoreland County in November 1892. It was first named Kensington, after prosperous industrial suburb of London. A post office was already established in Kensington, PA – the Philadelphia suburb – so the prefix "New" was added. A. W. Grotefend, "New Kensington," 1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (hereinafter HSWP).

Pittsburgh investors and the Burrell Improvement Company continued to maintain a financial interest in the community after the initial land sale. The Mellons also expanded their interests in the tri-borough area. A group of such men including Andrew Mellon, Logan heir A.W. Logan and Pittsburgh Reduction Company official Arthur V. Davis and Thomas Mellon were among a group of men who organized the New Kensington Bank, later named Logan Trust, which eventually became a branch of Mellon Bank. In 1896 A.W. Mellon paid $476,000 for the Burrell Improvement Company's holdings and in doing so took control of the Burrell Water Company. Shortly thereafter Andrew Mellon succeeded in preventing Parnassus from developing its own water plant and after a three-year battle Parnassus was forced to contract the services of the Burrell Water Company (renamed New Kensington Water Company). WCNK, 24, 35; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

natural resources, Pittsburgh industries quickly moved into the area. New Kensington rapidly fell into the category of what Edward Muller calls the "third setting of industrialization." This setting is characterized by rapidly growing small urban areas of 10,000 people or more with a dominant industry, but with other opportunities not had in smaller towns.[19] New Kensington was not designed to be a one-industry town but rather a mosaic of industries which emphasized glass and metals fabrication. New Kensington's development affected its neighbors; and, within four months of the initial 1891 BIC land auction, Parnassus, New Kensington and Arnold integrated a dozen industries including: B.F. Rynd Planing Mills, Bradley Stove Works, Brownsville Plate Glass Company, Chambers Glass Company, Kensington Chilled Steel Company, Kensington Roller Process Flouring Company, Kensington Tube Works, Logan and Sons Planing Mills, New York Piano and Organ Factory, Pittsburgh Reduction Company, Pittsburgh Tin Plate Company, and the Rolled Wheel Steel Company.

Industries continued to locate in the tri-borough area and by 1900 it was home to nearly 8,000 residents and additional industries including: Excelsior Flint Glass Works, Kensington Brick Works, Kensington Enameling Works, Kensington Stove Works, and Sterling White Lead Works.[20] Metal and glass production and fabrication dominated tri-borough industry from the start and would do so through the 1970s. This reflected

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[19] Edward K. Muller, "Metropolis and Region: A Framework for Enquiry Into Western Pennsylvania" in Samuel P. Hays, ed., *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh University Press, 1989): 196.

[20] U.S. Census Office, *Population Part I, Volume I* (Washington, D.C.: United States Census Office, 1901). Populations for 1900: Arnold, 1426; New Kensington, 4665, Parnassus, 1791.

broader industrial interests in the Alle-Kiski Valley.[21] But in the 1890s aluminum manufacturing quickly became New Kensington's leading industry.

The Aluminum Company of America

In 1886 Charles Martin Hall discovered a method of reducing aluminum oxide to aluminum metal through the electrolytic process.[22] Hall then looked for investors whom he found in Pittsburgh when he met Captain Alfred E. Hunt. In 1888 Hunt and associates raised $20,000 to establish a small aluminum reduction plant on Smallman Street in Pittsburgh's Strip District. This venture was named the Pittsburgh Reduction Company (PRC).[23] While the initial capital investment was sufficient for start up it could not maintain long-term production; therefore, the company sought financing from other Pittsburgh interests, including the T. Mellon and Sons Banking House, managed by brothers Richard B. and Andrew W. Mellon.[24] Like other major investors the Mellons

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[21] WCNK, 35; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[22] For more on the science behind Hall's work see: Margaret B.W. Graham and Bettye H. Pruitt, *R&D for Industry: A Century of Technological Innovation at Alcoa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[23] The Pittsburgh Reduction Company changed its name to the Aluminum Company of America in 1907. The company acronym was ACOA. According to George David Smith, the common usage of "Alcoa" started with the wife of a company official in regards to a company town in eastern Tennessee. See: George David Smith, *From Monopoly to Competition: The Transformation of Alcoa, 1888-1986.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), xxxiii.

[24] Andrew W. Mellon provided a $25,000 loan to the Pittsburgh Reduction Company. They continued to hold an interest in the PRC for decades to come. *Alcoa at New Kensington*, c.1950s-1960s, box 16 folder 4, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. For more information on the early beginnings of the company see two corporate histories: Charles C. Carr, *ALCOA: An American Enterprise* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1952), 1-49; and Smith, 1-76. The founders also discussed relocating to Scranton, Pennsylvania, with plans to finance the move by selling $100,000 worth of stock. Charles Martin Hall, Pittsburgh, to Julia Hall, Oberlin, 10 May 1891 [typescript of original], box 84 folder 3, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

received stock but also seats on the board of directors.[25] The PRC was just one of the many entities in which the Mellons had an interest. Others included Henry Clay Frick's coke enterprises in Westmoreland County, U.S. Steel and Pittsburgh Plate Glass.[26]

The PRC's Strip District operation was small but promising and demonstrated the rapid advance of technology and its impact on industry.[27] Their main goal was to develop and refine aluminum for mass commercial use; though in 1888 the company not only struggled to produce fifty pounds of aluminum per day (which sold for eight dollars a pound) but also to find buyers for the product.[28] By 1889 Hall and his assistant, Arthur V. Davis, were experimenting with aluminum reduction processes until they were able to meet their fifty pound per day quota and lower the price of their product to five dollars per pound. By the close of the year the Smallman Street plant generated 475 pounds of aluminum per day which sold at two dollars per pound.[29] At this point the founders realized they needed to expand their facilities and this prompted them to relocate from a highly industrialized Pittsburgh.

The Mellon connection was most beneficial to the young company when they used their financial interest in the Burrell Improvement Company to secure the Pittsburgh

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[25] *Smith,* 29-32. Smith devotes considerable space to the Mellons' involvement in Alcoa – both in terms of family interests as well as individual family members. According to Carr, by 1920 the Mellons owned roughly one-third of Alcoa's total stock. Carr, 44.

[26] For more on the Mellons' interest in Pittsburgh companies also see Smith, 47-48.

[27] From 1888-1891, its workforce grew from five to fifty. "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[28] Carr, 37; Smith, 27.

[29] Smith, 29-30.

Reduction Company a prime industrial site in New Kensington.[30] In May of 1891 Charles Hall wrote to his sister Julia and told her of his travels to the proposed three and a half acre New Kensington site where he had discovered that the "place is a very good one for our purpose. We can get coal there for about 30 or 40 cents a ton. We have got to use coal anyway, as the natural gas is too expensive." He noted that the company owners could "have all the land we want for nothing, and also water for nothing; no taxes or rent. Altogether we could save probably $15,000 or $20,000 a year there – perhaps not so much but a good deal over the present manufacturing expenses in Pittsburgh and have plenty of room to enlarge."[31]

New Kensington was favorable for many of the reasons industry leaves crowded industrial centers - the promise of cheap land and resources coupled with tax breaks. It also possessed many of the advantages of being so close to a large urban center – such as access to credit and a growing immigrant labor pool – without the expense of being in the city.[32] Because of this New Kensington became the satellite city of Pittsburgh that served as the center city for the predominately rural Alle-Kiski Valley. Simply stated, Pittsburgh capitalists created New Kensington. Edward Muller explains that corporate power was concentrated in Pittsburgh and as these companies developed industrial

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[30] Carr, 42-43. Hall and associates were offered $10,000 to move to New Kensington. Charles Martin Hall, Pittsburgh, to Julia Hall, Oberlin, 10 May 1891 [typescript of original], box 84 folder 3, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[31] Charles Martin Hall, Pittsburgh, to Julia Hall, Oberlin, 10 May 1891, [typescript of original], box 84 folder 3, HSWP. As Hall noted, natural resources beneficial to the company were abundant. Easily accessible were the necessary quantities of alumina (aluminum oxide) from the Pennsylvania Salt Works across the river in Natrona. Natrona is a community located four miles northeast of New Kensington on the opposite side of the Allegheny River.

[32] Walter Licht, *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 125-128.

facilities in the region they came to control the communities in which they operated.[33] In essence the other business interests of the Pittsburgh backed BIC laid down the features of industry-community relations that consequently set the tone for the PRC's relationship with the borough's government and its citizens.[34] Because of the Mellons, the PRC was essentially established as the industry of privilege in the community.

In this setting the PRC thrived and production expanded enough to drive down the price of aluminum to $1.21 per pound. Yet the primary markets for aluminum were not for mass commercial use but rather in the production of novelties and steel fabrication, while still others purchased aluminum for experimental purposes. At this point the steel industry was the company's largest buyer since producers discovered that when small quantities of aluminum were added to molten metal it prevented "blow holes" in steel ingots.[35] The shop grew to house ten to twenty aluminum reduction pots that were needed as the reduction of aluminum to create aluminum ingots required a facility that included a pot room, a separate calcinating house, and a remelting facility.[36] At this point the New Kensington Works employed roughly fifty men; and, coupled with expanded production facilities and lower operating costs the company was able to manufacture 1,000 pounds of aluminum per day in 1893 compared to 4,000 pounds a

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[33] Muller, 193-194.

[34] In this regard, New Kensington developed as another community, like Blawnox or Tarentum, growing northward along the banks of the Allegheny River, and assisted by the efforts of land speculators and capitalists who saw potential profit in these outlying rural areas.

[35] Smith, 33.

[36] New Kensington Works is the name given to the New Kensington plant, even to those facilities located in Arnold. "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

month in 1891. By 1892 the cost of aluminum decreased to eighty-five cents per pound, and sales increased from 58,604 pounds to 138,307 pounds.[37]

As noted, this initial growth was linked to easy access to plentiful, cheap coal and natural gas. But this lasted only a time as technological changes in the aluminum reduction process required stronger sources of electrical power. The search for cheap electricity took the company to Niagara Falls, New York, where in 1893 the PRC signed a contract with the Niagara Falls Power Company for future benefit. By 1895 the Pittsburgh Reduction Company built a plant at the Niagara site and in 1896 aluminum manufacturing moved from New Kensington to Niagara Falls.[38] Rather than abandon the relatively small site, the New Kensington Works was reorganized into a fabricating plant that produced aluminum sheet and tubing. This happened to coincide with increased market demand for finished aluminum. A large share of finished aluminum was used by companies - including the PRC - to manufacture cookware.[39] By the mid-1890s New Kensington Works began to evolve into a center of aluminum utensil and cookware production.

The production of aluminum sheet for utensil manufacture comprised 52.6% of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company's business in 1895.[40] Early customers of aluminum

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37 Smith, 80.

38 Carr, 88-91; Smith, 80-81; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

39 While in their Strip District facility, Hall and Davis experimented with fabrication including utensils and tea pots. Smith, 34.

40 Smith, 85; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

for use in manufacturing cooking utensils included the Illinois Pure Aluminum Company of Lamont, Illinois, and the Hill, Whitney and Wood Company of Massachusetts.[41] At some point between 1899 and 1901, Hill, Whitney and Wood went bankrupt and the Pittsburgh Reduction Company acquired the business and transferred its machinery to the New Kensington Works.[42] The PRC hired former owner John H. Wilson to oversee cookware production in New Kensington and in 1900 the PRC organized its first wholly owned subsidiary - The Aluminum Cooking Utensil Company (TACU).

Although the New Kensington Works' interests were heavily influenced by cookware production, it was not its only concern. Diversified manufacturing interests grew with the increased and varied use of aluminum and aluminum products. In 1898 the PRC won its first defense contract to make torpedo boats for the Spanish-American War. In 1900 the Works produced aluminum ingots, sheets and cooking utensils; and, by 1902 the company property expanded to fifteen acres while the factory itself expanded to 173,000 square feet and the workforce to 300 men. The company continued to make ingots, sheet, cooking utensils, castings, rods, bars, wire, special alloys, and job shop pieces.[43] As the PRC grew, a pattern developed whereby certain products and their specific manufacturing processes were initially developed at New Kensington and then moved to new production facilities across the United States. For example, stranded cable

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[41] Hill, Whitney and Wood crafted a heavy, high grade, "thickware" utensil.

[42] Dates conflict between the Smith and "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry" sources.

[43] "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP; WCNK, 62. A job shop is a factory or department within a factory that produces small quantities of goods. Often these are specially ordered custom made products. New Kensington Works had a job shop throughout its tenure in New Kensington and was one of the last departments to close down.

and wire were initially crafted in New Kensington but in 1904 production was transferred to a new plant in Massena, New York.[44]

Early Labor Relations

Corporate biographer George David Smith has little to say about labor relations at Alcoa prior to the national resurgence of union activity in the 1930s. He does note that before this time the company's managerial practices were similar to those in other industries – largely arbitrary, with the foreman setting wages and determining who was hired, fired, promoted and how workers were treated.[45] Not surprisingly, as the labor force expanded over a thirty year period the labor-management relationship changed from that of the Strip District's tightly-knit workshop and experimental laboratory to a modern factory. With this growth came the potential for conflict, although pre-1920s labor troubles at the New Kensington Works were more isolated events rather than the product of a sustained craft union movement. Overall, labor relations were mostly quiet and emphasized management's dominance over its workforce.

The PRC workers' struggles during this period were undoubtedly reflective of national labor struggles during the period of economic instability in the four years which followed the 1893 Depression. In the 1890s wage demands were the focus of between forty and sixty percent of all strikes, followed by demands for union recognition and

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[44] Smith, 91; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP; WCNK, 62.

[45] Smith, 70-71.

grievances over work rules.[46] According to Walter Licht, strikes lasted about fifteen days and workers were nearly fifty-percent successful in achieving their aims. It appears that New Kensington's aluminum workers fell into the thirty-nine percent who lost their battles, but if one characterizes wage increases as a corporate concession then from time to time they fell into the fourteen-percent of the strikes that ended in compromise.[47]

While wages were certainly a concern for PRC employees, it appears as though aluminum workers did not form alliances based on job, company, or "neighborhood solidarities." Nor did it appear that the PRC shaped any harsh managerial policies to respond to workplace unrest. While David Montgomery explains that worker solidarities in this period did not last in the face of company opposition there may have been other factors at work during the PRC's earliest years.[48] New Kensington was by no means a rural industrial town like nearby Vandergrift or Apollo, but it was still a small enough community that the town's spatial relations encouraged intra-class mixing in social settings such as church attendance.[49] Furthermore, at this time the company's movement towards bureaucratic management on the shop floor was slow.[50] A number of the men

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[46] David Montgomery, *Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): introduction.

[47] Licht, 174.

[48] Montgomery, introduction. Montgomery also speaks to organization based on ethnicity. I have found no indication of such organization during that period in my sources.

[49] Lisa Fine discusses spatial relations and intra-class mixing based on racial similarities and other factors in *The Story of Reo Joe: Work, Kin and Community in Autotown, U.S.A.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press): chapter one.

[50] See Smith, 55-60 for a discussion of this slow progression. Smith explains that Alcoa was organized by a select group of men in the "entrepreneurial, owner-managed venture" where a significant number of the early corporate owners managed the shop floor directly for years.

who went on to executive positions in the PRC, like Alfred E. Hunt, had managed the New Kensington Works in its early days. The work environment fostered by working alongside the plant superintendent perhaps set a tone of peer relationships in the workers' minds. But workers had their limits.

In the context of the economic depression of 1893 the PRC asked employees to take a temporary wage cut until it could dispose of small aluminum stockpiles created by slow market conditions; but, two years later the promise to restore these wages was unfulfilled. On September 5, 1895 a committee of forty-seven employees submitted a petition to Works' superintendent Arthur V. Davis which requested a meeting to discuss wages and working conditions. The laborers claimed to be the area's poorest paid and those skilled workmen who signed the petition requested a higher wage than what was paid to the "roustabouts" in the factory.[51] While there is no clear indication as to who these "roustabouts" were it can be speculated that they might have been of an increasing number of immigrants in the town who quite possibly might have taken the growing number of unskilled jobs in the factory. If this is the case then one can apply Herbert Gutman's assertion of historically existing differences in native white and immigrant work habits that resulted in tension between the two parties. This tension might have culminated in protest on the part of the native American workers.[52] These men could also have been temporary laborers, as the term "roustabout" can imply. Such laborers

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[51] Pittsburgh Reduction Company Workers' Petition to Arthur V. Davis, 5 September 1895, box 16 folder 7, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[52] Herbert Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," *American Historical Review*, v. 78 no. 3 (June 1973): 13, 22, 24. Gutman's work covers industrialization and the diversity of workers over space and time. He explains that by 1910 two-thirds of workers in major industries came from southern and eastern Europe. He contrasts the work and social habits of Slavic and Italian immigrants to those of native Americans in the industrial workplace after 1893.

might have had contrasting work habits.

Regardless, this action appeared to be in no way affiliated with an organized labor movement and did not represent the same sort of labor troubles had with steel workers in nearby Homestead in 1892.[53] The way in which the PRC resolved this matter is unclear but it spoke to concerns that resurfaced in 1900 when New Kensington's aluminum workers went on their first strike.

In March 1900 thirty-seven wire mill workers went on strike in demand of a wage increase and a shortened work day. They rejected a company counterproposal of a ten-cent per hour raise. Other Works' employees joined in a sympathy strike which resulted in about 100 workers joining the American Federation of Labor (chartered as AFL Local 8261).[54] It was an uneventful conflict due to efforts of local officials and the newspaper to maintain the peace. The strike ended a month later and the workers received a twelve-percent pay raise and reduced Sunday work hours.[55] The PRC recognized the AFL for the duration of an eight-year labor agreement; and, the company's relationship with labor

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[53] These defeats were seen as part of a series of blows to the AFL during the 1890s. James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998): 32-33. It is surprising that the AFL maintained a local at the PRC, though it is evident that this was a weak union at best.

[54] They wanted a wage increase from $1.50 to $1.75 and a 10-hour day. The employment numbers supplied by Alcoa do not give me figures for this period. One internal history in the Alcoa Papers notes that 800 men were employed in 1907. For more on the AFL see: Stuart Kaufman, *Samuel Gompers and the Origins of the American Federation of Labor, 1848-1896* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973); and, Julie Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics: The American Federation of Labor and Political Activism, 1881-1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[55] Carl I. Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa: The Aluminum Workers' Union in Pennsylvania's Allegheny Valley, 1900-1971," *Pennsylvania History* 3 (July 1981): 195; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

remained relatively calm until June 1907 when the AFL called a general strike.[56]

During this period larger corporations such as U.S. Steel had been successful in shutting down the AFL. Because of this the union shifted its efforts to smaller craft-dominated companies in communities they believed were sympathetic to labor.[57] Consequently there was potential for building momentum in the union movement with a successful strike at a smaller plant like the New Kensington Works. However, an open shop movement followed U.S. Steel's 1901 victory over organized labor and employers sought to disband already established unions in their companies and prevent future organizing.[58] Add on to this an economic downturn in 1907 and in retrospect the aluminum workers' strike was bound to fail.

The company, which by this point had changed its name to the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa), locked out the machinists who demanded a wage increase and reduced work hours.[59] The economic downturn was excuse enough for Alcoa to temporarily close the plant. Eight months later in January 1908, the plant reopened and took many of the old workers back on the condition that the Works operate as a non-union shop. The workers voted unanimously to rescind their AFL charter and returned to

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[56] The AFL agreement with the company expired January 21, 1908.

[57] Green, 33. For more on the troubles of steelworkers during this period see David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). Brody focuses on labor relations in the period from 1890 through the 1920s and emphasizes corporate control of labor through the deskilling of labor, use of immigrant labor, the open shop movement. He also covers the 1919 Steel Strike.

[58] Green, 62. The open shop movement started around 1903. Between 1904 and 1909 Green notes that the AFL won only thirty-two percent of their strikes.

[59] They wanted a ten percent wage increase with a minimum rate of forty cents per hours and a fifty-hour work week. New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

work.[60] It is apparent that the ideology of craft union solidarity was a distant second to steady employment. Such actions matched the general labor climate in the Alle-Kiski Valley, which was known as the "Black Valley" for the inability of organized labor to affect lasting change in the region.[61] Alcoa's action of locking out the machinists kept in line with other managerial practices in handling labor disputes, but it was mild for a period characterized as the "age of industrial violence."[62] The lack of violence and the workers' willingness to acquiesce to Alcoa's wishes here is indicative of future worker-management relations.

With minor labor issues seemingly in the past, Alcoa continued to grow at a rapid pace. In 1910 the New Kensington Works employed 1,000 workers and grew to 4,000 by the decade's end. From 1912 to 1920 production and fabrication expanded to include foil, castings, seals, tubes, bronze powder, moulding, sheet alloys, and miscellaneous jobbing items. In 1912 Alcoa expanded beyond New Kensington's borders when it acquired twenty-four acres of adjacent riverfront property in Arnold from the Burrell Improvement Company. Alcoa continued to expand and in 1913 it acquired an additional four acres in Arnold on which it built a new plant. By 1913 the New Kensington Works had grown to thirteen acres with a yearly payroll of one million dollars. A new foil mill

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[60] Ibid.; Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 196.

[61] For example, in 1900 the Glass Cutters' League unsuccessfully struck at the American Window Glass (formerly Chambers Glass) plant in Arnold, which resulted in the firing and blacklisting of some workers. In 1901, the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company ended a union campaign of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers through the use of scab labor and a threat of plant closure. This is, perhaps, reflective of the managerial practices of Pittsburgh industrialists who relocated to New Kensington. Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 196, also 195-220 *passim*: Carl I. Meyerhuber, *Less Than Forever: The Rise and Decline of Union Solidarity in Western Pennsylvania, 1914-1948* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1987); Carl I. Meyerhuber, "Black Valley: Pennsylvania's Alle-Kiski and the Great Strike of 1919," *Pennsylvania History* 3 (July 1979): 251-266.

[62] Green, 88. This period spans 1903-1912.

and machine shop opened in 1914, the new tube mill opened in 1915, and the foil mill expanded in 1916 and again in 1919. Around 1916 Alcoa began operating a coal mine in Kinloch, an area adjacent to Parnassus. After a 1917 aluminum powder explosion at the Works, Alcoa purchased land in Logans Ferry (also adjacent to Parnassus) and constructed a powder plant a safe distance from the population.[63]

During this period labor relations remained relatively calm. One minor incident came in 1913 when, allegedly prompted by an International Worker of the World (IWW or Wobblies) organizer, one hundred polishing department men walked off the job. The strike lasted for one week in March and fell apart with the organizer's arrest.[64] This IWW defeat is typical of their losses that year in other industries around the country.[65]

A second incident in May 1916 involved a machinists' walk-out where twenty-eight hundred men and women joined them in a two-week general strike demanding higher wages, better working conditions, shorter hours and overtime.[66] As they had dealt with labor trouble in the past, Alcoa rejected the workers' petition by citing a slack market for aluminum products. The strike ended after New Kensington's burgess

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[63] "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. WCNK, 86. See Appendix B for map noting location of Logans Ferry and Kinloch.

[64] Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 197. Why the IWW was in New Kensington is unclear. They may have been in the area since 1909 when the IWW successfully organized immigrant steel workers in McKees Rocks (though in a bitter and violent strike). The potential of organizing New Kensington's immigrant workforce may have drawn them there. Green, 67-69. For more on the Wobblies see Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the International Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969).

[65] In 1913 the IWW lost strikes in a number of cities and industries such as silk workers in Patterson, NJ; robber workers in Akron, Ohio; and, autoworkers in Detroit, Michigan. Green, 88.

[66] They wanted an eight hour with ten hours pay, overtime and Sunday double-time, plus better working conditions, especially improved ventilation systems. "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP; Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 198.

convinced the workers that Alcoa would treat them fairly.[67] It was common during this period for communities to strongly support labor; but, while the actions of local officials were not antagonistic towards the workers, it is apparent they did not fully support them. Instead it appears as though the borough leadership was more of a company intermediary.[68]

It should be noted that labor relations during the Progressive Era varied. Some progressive businessmen believed that the closed shop "violated individual rights" and some employers believed it was their responsibility to settle labor disputes – specifically those focusing on working conditions and wages. Others, according to Robert Wiebe, viewed labor as a commodity and practiced a benevolent capitalism to protect their interests. Alcoa appears to have engaged in a sort of "open shop paternalism" whereby they achieved their ends by a "carefully blended coercion, inducement and public relations."[69] From its beginnings Alcoa did not handle labor issues as many regional coal and steel companies did by importing large numbers of scab laborers or hiring company police. Throughout its tenure in New Kensington Alcoa relied on fiscal arguments supported by market trends to negotiate concessions from its workforce. Alcoa waited for strikes to collapse on their own and when necessary to end labor unrest gave workers limited - though often generous - economic concessions. Alcoa's actions did more to cultivate an image of being a fair employer than anything else. But through the 1910s

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[67] A burgess is an elected official in the borough with duties similar to that of magistrate and mayor.

[68] Licht, 174-175.

[69] Robert Wiebe, *Businessmen and Reform: A Study of the Progressive Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962): chapter 7. Wiebe gives the example of U.S. Steel in his discussion of "open shop paternalism."

and 1920s, neither the bi-annual regional coal strikes nor the Great Strike of 1919 affected labor-management relations at Alcoa.[70] Aluminum workers did not begin a drive to organize until the early 1930s, keeping with the national Depression-Era resurgence of organized labor.

Alcoa – Research and Development

Alcoa's development during its first decade was rapid, yet it was still a young company. Patents secured its primacy as the nation's aluminum producer. At the turn of the twentieth century Alcoa did not face the same pressures – such as challenges from other smaller firms or how to handle a massive overproduction of goods – that other corporations like U.S. Steel did and consequently found itself in a monopoly position.[71]

From the start Alcoa can also be considered what David Noble called a "modern science-based industry" which developed in the late nineteenth century. Alcoa emphasized scientific inquiry for the benefit of production, and consequently competitive

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[70] For more on labor unrest in Alle-Kiski coal communities see: Carl I. Meyerhuber, "The Alle-Kiski Coal Wars, 1913-1919," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* vol. 36 no. 3 (July 1980): 197-213. Focusing on Alle-Kiski community of Russelton but during the 1927-1928 coal strike is R.S. Suckle's *Bucket of Blood: The Ragman's War* (New York: IUniverse, 2004). For background on unionization activities in the anthracite coal fields of northeastern Pennsylvania see: Victor R. Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1968); Perry Blatz, *Democratic Miners: Work and Labor Relations in Anthracite Coal Industry, 1875-1925* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). For more on the Great Strike of 1919 and steel worker involvement see: Meyerhuber, "Black Valley"; David Brody, *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965; repr., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike of 1919 and Its Lessons* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1920; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969); Melvyn Dubovsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Company, 1977).

[71] Licht, 155.

advantage – or in Alcoa's case the preservation of an industrial monopoly.[72] According to Smith, Alcoa's success came through its ability to seek and control new markets and resources as well as actively promote distribution of its products.[73] To do this it structured itself as an efficient bureaucracy expertly staffed by professional managers who oversaw the company's growing number of products. To stay innovative the company invested in scientists, research, and facilities.[74] Alcoa knew early on that research and development was essential to fuel their drive to become a leading metals production industry. The constant search for higher quality materials for use in streamlined, diversified and cost effective means of production supported the growth of the creation of aluminum and the fabrication of aluminum products.

Charles Martin Hall built the New Kensington Works' first laboratory in 1896 with the primary aim to gauge the tempering of aluminum as well as its practical applications in manufacturing. The initial lab employed one chemist and two assistants; but, by 1906 the New Kensington laboratory was staffed by six chemists as well as a chief chemist and metallurgist. During that year the New Kensington laboratory became the central lab for Alcoa's operations and eventually its flagship for research and development. Other plants, like those in Massena, New York and East St. Louis, Illinois, had smaller on-site laboratories, but major research and development occurred at New

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[72] David F. Noble, *America By Design: Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism* (New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 1982): 5-6.

[73] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution In American Business* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977). Chandler argues that the "visible hand" of business management replaces Adam Smith's "invisible hand" of market forces – the market may dictate demand for goods and services; however, modern business management dictated the flow of these goods and services. This was certainly the case with Alcoa.

[74] Smith, 43.

Kensington. In 1918 the laboratories consolidated as Alcoa Research Laboratories; and, in 1929 Alcoa became the nation's leader in metallurgical research and development with the largest aluminum research center in the U.S. based in New Kensington.[75]

New Kensington's laboratory facilities brought researchers from across the United States to live and work in the borough, and these men and their wives became leaders of social and civic organizations. As Alcoa's oldest and largest facility the New Kensington Works was also the training ground for many of Alcoa's managers – plant superintendents, accountants, and foremen.[76] Some spent only a brief time in New Kensington as they were trained while others remained longer to work in the laboratory and at TACU. Alcoa built the Aluminum Club House in 1915 to house the newly arrived (as well as those temporarily in town for training) and provide a space for recreational activities. Situated on farmland atop the hill from the commercial and industrial district, the Aluminum Club House was the preserve of white collar workers.[77]

The Aluminum Club House was the first Alcoa structure built beyond the industrial flats and was followed by the lab a little more than a decade later. The neighborhood in which the two buildings were situated developed as a community for

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[75] In 1920 the directors created the Technical Direction Department at the New Kensington Works. This department supervised analytical and physical laboratories, processes and products and was also responsible for inspecting incoming materials. Graham and Pruitt, 45-46, 52, 111-112; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP; Corporate Press Release, May 2, 1957, box 187 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[76] "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. This statement is echoed throughout the Alcoa papers over the duration of its existence in New Kensington. Later publications would highlight that Alcoa's top ranking executives, specifically Arthur V. Davis and Roy A. Hunt, were men who gained the experience which made them experts in the aluminum field while at New Kensington Works.

[77] It also served as a meeting place for various clubs and numerous banquets.

business and civic leaders, industries' executive management, and research scientists. Alcoa's decision to build on the periphery inadvertently demarcated the boundaries between the company's laboring and professional classes. At this point one group lived within the confines of an urban industrial setting while the other one more pastoral (though only a little over a mile's walk from the factory). The intimate Strip District shop and collaborative work effort between management and labor, by this time, was no more.

Alcoa – City Government Relations

Alcoa's management found that as the company expanded it needed assistance from the borough, which by this time had a governing structure more removed from BIC influence. When Alcoa expanded its Works' operations into Arnold in 1912 it also purchased property in downtown New Kensington for the offices of The Aluminum Cooking Utensil Company (TACU). Alcoa sought to purchase several lots between Fourth and Fifth Avenues from property owners whose asking prices were nearly double what they had originally paid. While Alcoa's managers worked through a third party to keep their identity concealed (and selling prices from further increase), they conceded that they would not be able to purchase property at a reasonable price in the vicinity as property values would inflate once they erected the TACU office building.[78] By this point the community, as reflected in increased property values, understood the significance of this industry in the town. Alcoa may have secured the property necessary for office expansion but it still needed concessions from the borough before it could

[78] Memo, Roy A. Hunt to R.E. Withers, 19 December 1913, box 17 folder 3, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

build.

Alcoa worked collaboratively with the borough to craft an ordinance granting the company a section of Pink Alley in order to join its recently purchased properties and construct the TACU office building. In the draft ordinance Alcoa committed to erect a building valued no less than $50,000 within six months of acquisition of the Pink Alley property or forfeit $1,000 to the borough.[79] In this contract Alcoa also assumed responsibility for moving and installing utilities, sewers and other improvements, as well as agreed to pave a throughway to compensate for the closed section of Pink Alley.[80] This arrangement signaled the start of an independent and cooperative relationship with elected officials; and, it reflected a willingness on the part of local government to accommodate expanding industries - and to privilege Alcoa over others. In the end Alcoa got what it wanted and in kind the borough received infrastructure improvements it could not afford on its own.

The Aluminum Cooking Utensil office building (later renamed the Wear-Ever Building after its successful cookware line) was an impressive, well-maintained building within short walking distance of the New Kensington Works. Alcoa's dealings with the borough on this issue marked one aspect of the company's growing influence in the community. Another marker can be seen in the August 1915 correspondence between Arthur V. Davis, by then an Alcoa corporate executive, and Roy A. Hunt, superintendent

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79 Draft ordinance, no date or number, box 17 folder 3, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The records of the New Kensington Borough/City Council are scattered at this time. Due to a house-keeping measure, meeting minutes and other materials prior to 1917 were discarded.

80 The office building covered an entire block bounded by Fourth and Fifth Avenues and Eleventh Street and a section of Pink Alley. Statement [possibly press release], no date, box 17 folder 3, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

of the New Kensington Works.[81] These letters concerned the proposed sale of Alcoa land holdings in Arnold to a new company which intended to manufacture steel car castings. Hunt explained the proposal to Davis and suggested that real estate values did not allow them to sell the property for more than $2,000 an acre. Hunt noted that "the New Kensington Board of Trade is very anxious to get other manufactories in the town and it would appear as if we were hampering them somewhat if we did not make them a price. There is really not very much other available property in the town suitable for manufacturing purposes."[82] Davis replied that they should not sell the property as "We are growing fast and the Town ought to be glad to let us grow and hunt other sites for new people."[83] From this correspondence it can be asserted that Alcoa's leadership viewed aluminum manufacturing as *the* dominant industry in the community which should be favored over all others. Furthermore, it is an indication that room for industrial development was limited by this time. The reference to plant expansion indicates, perhaps, Alcoa's intent to make New Kensington and Arnold something close to a company town. It also alludes to the company's power and its determination to dictate the actions of the borough's booster organization – the Board of Trade.

As evidenced from Alcoa's public records, the borough's Board of Trade envisioned New Kensington as a mosaic of industry rather than a company town.

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81 This was Captain Alfred E. Hunt's son.

82 Memo, Roy A. Hunt, New Kensington, to Arthur V. Davis, New York, 17 August 1915, box 15 folder 4, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The concerns, however, are not with tax assessment as the Arnold assessor is an Alcoa employee, notes Hunt.

83 Arthur V. Davis, Hyannis Port, Mass. to Roy A. Hunt, New Kensington, 20 August 1915, box 15 folder 4, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

Formed in 1899, the nine-member board was a development of New Kensington borough council's intent to bring more industry to the tri-borough area and "assist generally in the upward development of the community."[84] Unlike booster organizations in other communities which also focused their attention on increasing commercial growth or shaping the social landscape of a community, the Board of Trade focused solely on diversifying the tri-borough's industrial base.[85] For example, in 1915 it encouraged a group of individuals concerned with the industrial future of Parnassus, New Kensington and Arnold, to form the Industrial Development Company, Limited. All profits from land sales were to be reinvested to promote the industrial growth of the area.[86] The Board of Trade's and the Industrial Development Company's existence speak to tri-borough community leaders' concerns that the area would become a one-industry town whose economic stability would be held hostage to that company's fortunes. To prevent this they promoted actions to encourage an economic diversity that would provide a more balanced economic base. However, if one takes the Davis-Hunt correspondence to be any indication of Alcoa's intentions, a more balanced economic base was not in the tri-boroughs' future.

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84 WCNK, 37.

85 Fine, chapter one. She discusses the importance of booster organizations in the development of Lansing, Michigan such as the Lansing Improvement Company and the Chamber of Commerce in shaping the social and economic landscape of that community. She emphasizes Lansing's homogeneous population in its early years and the organizations' efforts in promoting this ideal. For more on town boosters focusing on commercial business improvement see Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

86 All activity was to be forwarded by the group's Board of Managers to the Board of Directors of the Board of Trade of New Kensington and Vicinity, which approved all transactions. "Synopsis of The Industrial Development Company, Limited," 16 November 1915, box 15 folder 4, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

Parnassus – New Kensington – Arnold Tri-Borough Relations

The Board of Trade's activities reflect the tri-boroughs' willingness to work collaboratively to grow the region's economic base. In regards to other matters there were times when they realized common problems and shared interests such as cost effective ways to build needed infrastructure. For example, the communities came together to build bridges and hospitals. However, each still maintained separate identities which were in conflict more often than not. Because of this the three communities were unable to carry through successful consolidation campaigns.

When New Kensington was incorporated as a borough in 1892, Arnold was designated as its Second Ward. The 1893 election of New Kensington borough officers intensified existing political factions between the local Citizens' and Peoples' parties. The Peoples' party won the election; however, the elections board issued false certificates of election to Citizens' Party candidates. While a county judge ruled in favor of the Peoples' Party, the incident intensified existing ill-will between the two. This antagonism sparked a movement for the incorporation of the Second Ward as its own borough, which succeeded in 1896.[87] From this point on Arnold's citizens worked to keep their community as a separate borough though it was inextricably linked to New Kensington by geography and industrial development.[88]

The tri-boroughs' successful development depended upon regional access to their

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87 "Arnold," c.1913, box 15 folder 4, Alcoa Papers, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.; Arnold Centennial Committee, 6-7.; WCNK, 78; *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 12 July 12, 1952; "Arnold Secedes from New Kensington" [typeset reprint of the Arnold Borough Incorporation Decree, August 1895] Blissell, 17.

88 In 1894-1895, Pittsburgh industrialists led a campaign to incorporate boroughs outside Pittsburgh's city limits. The proposed boundaries of "Greater Pittsburgh" were set with New Kensington as the northeastern border, Sewickley the western border, and McKeesport the southern border. WCNK, 24, 36.

retail businesses and industrial employment opportunities. Although the Pennsylvania Railroad (which replaced the Allegheny Valley Railroad) ran through the communities at the turn of the century they still remained largely isolated from towns on the northern side of the river, namely Springdale and Tarentum. Local politics on both sides of the river focused on the need for a bridge to connect these communities and there was much debate over the location of a proposed bridge. Tarentum and Arnold pushed for a bridge to be located in Valley Camp while Parnassus, New Kensington, and Springdale wanted the bridge located near New Kensington's Ninth Street. The political alliance of New Kensington and Parnassus resulted in the construction of the Ninth Street Bridge. The bridge opened in the summer of 1900, and in 1902 a street car line connected New Kensington to Springdale, Tarentum and their surrounding communities.[89] This not only opened up these communities as a labor pool for growing New Kensington industries but it also helped establish New Kensington as a commercial center in the Alle-Kiski Valley.

The resulting growth of the community called for an expansion of services as roughly 25,000 people lived within a seven-mile radius of downtown New Kensington.[90] Residents built several cultural institutions including opera houses and a YMCA which drew in visitors to the business district, but the town did not have essential services like a hospital until 1912 when two nurses established one in the old Logan Home along Sixth Avenue in Parnassus.

This small hospital was overburdened from its beginnings and almost immediately a group of supporters organized to promote its expansion from a small

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89 WCNK, 37-38.

90 U.S. Census Office, *Population Part I, Volume I*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Census Office, 1901).

private facility known as Trinity Hospital to a large public institution known as Citizens' General Hospital. Community leaders and their wives, including Alcoa officials, comprised the Citizens' Hospital Association and raised substantial funds for the expansion and maintenance of the hospital facility. In 1914 Alcoa donated a parcel of land valued at $9,500 for use by the Association.[91] Evidence suggests this was Alcoa's first large contribution – a very visible symbol of Alcoa's investment in the community beyond its industrial concerns. Taking into consideration the Works, TACU office building, Aluminum Club House and research laboratories, Alcoa can be characterized as a community-based, community-minded manufacturer. The physical structures bearing the Alcoa name defined the community as an industrial center – the "Aluminum City." The hospital land gift cultivated an identity of a benevolent corporation and root for a belief of concern for the whole community, not just its source of profits.[92]

The hospital served the region with continued community and Alcoa support. The cooperation of board members from various communities ensured the continued success of the hospital. And although the facility was located in Parnassus, residents of New Kensington and Arnold also claimed ownership of the institution. In one sense the hospital's success reflected the sometimes blurred borders and cooperative spirit between Parnassus, New Kensington and Arnold. Tri-borough consolidation and land annexation, however, spoke to a more complicated relationship between the three communities.

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91 "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

92 Licht, 128; Wiebe, chapters one and two. During this period so it would not be considered uncommon for corporate leadership to be engaged in such civic reforms. It can be asserted that in the early years Alcoa management were close to Wiebe's model of the businessman who identified with his "immediate environment." Wiebe explains that it was not uncommon for businessmen to be engaged in organizations and civic reforms and trade associations.

Consolidation and annexation movements were common during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[93] These movements were intended to expand cities and provide services for those living on the periphery. Kenneth Jackson notes that there were many reasons behind the push for consolidation and some of these reasons, specifically power and control, will be discussed in later chapters. However, during this period in tri-borough relations, it appears that the reasoning behind consolidation and annexation were two-fold. First, consolidation efforts were supported by those seeking a more efficient government, streamlined services, and greater potential for economic growth. Second, annexation came at the request of those living in outlying areas who wanted city services.

In 1909 New Kensington's Pennsylvania State Representative Daniel B. Sullivan initially put forth an issue which became a recurring theme of tri-borough relations – borough consolidation. Sullivan's first proposal focused on joining Parnassus and New Kensington, and debate among residents continued for a number of years with various unsuccessful votes on the issue.[94] The next campaign occurred in 1913 and sought to consolidate Parnassus, New Kensington and Arnold. It failed, but the debate continued as New Kensington and Arnold put forth another consolidation resolution to which the Parnassus council did not respond. In 1917 a committee comprised of representatives

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[93] The definitions of annexation and consolidation come from Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985): 141. According to Jackson annexation is the "addition of unincorporated land to the city" and consolidation is the "absorption of one municipal government by another, usually adjacent."

[94] Sullivan's annexation bill (named the Sullivan Bill) went to the state senate and was passed by a twenty-nine to four vote. Jackson notes that in the nineteenth century legislative approval was usually the driving force behind such actions. He explains that states change the boundaries of communities with often little concern for the wishes of the lands and people involved. State government here, for unknown reasons, does not seem to carry that same weight. Jackson, 147,

from all three boroughs sought a merger resolution.[95] And it looked like it might work until a 1919 vote put the consolidation issue to rest for a number of years. New Kensington's voters overwhelmingly passed the consolidation resolution, while Parnassus and Arnold combined to defeat the resolution by a 308-vote margin. That same year Parnassus annexed the rapidly growing neighborhood of Mt. Vernon which was home to a growing number of white collar workers.[96]

Consolidation efforts and New Kensington's push for this measure reflected the sometimes contentious relationship between the tri-boroughs. Each town's personality influenced its interaction with its neighbors. Parnassus's population was comprised of white, mostly Protestant business and managerial classes, plus transplanted Pittsburgh elites. New Kensington was an industrial community with a growing immigrant population and civic leaders who were extremely sensitive to its industrial base, namely Alcoa. Though Arnold was largely identified as a glass town, in the 1910s it was acutely aware of Alcoa's growing presence. But the political differences that encouraged Arnold to secede from New Kensington in 1896 undoubtedly influenced future attitudes towards consolidation.

Consolidation was also complicated by the rapid expansion of each borough. While Parnassus annexed Mt. Vernon, New Kensington and Arnold were undergoing

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[95] WCNK, 24-25, 41; "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Minutes of the New Kensington Borough Council for 1917 referred an ordinance "authorizing an agreement between New Kensington and Arnold Borough's [sic] for consolidation" which was referred to the Ordinance Committee for investigation. This ordinance wended through various committees before being passed a month later. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (July 17, 1917).

[96] "New Kensington and the Aluminum Industry," c.1921, box 16 folder 11, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

rapid building campaigns to meet the needs of their growing populations.[97] The first days of the Burrell Improvement Company's 1892 land sale comprised a few hundred lots in New Kensington's flats; but, by the 1910s more expensive lots were becoming available in the New Kensington Park Plan, which slowly developed up the hillside on Ridge and Taylor Avenues and Locust Street.[98] By 1914 New Kensington's residential expansion came to include five more neighborhoods: Overbrook Plan (Charles Ave.), Walley Plan (McCargo and Highland Aves.), McKean Farm Plan, East Kensington and Kensington Extended. These communities eventually surrounded Arnold and Parnassus. From 1900 on New Kensington's population dwarfed that of Parnassus and Arnold combined and so reflected its prominence as the industrial urban center of the tri-borough area.[99]

While available sources do not give any indication as to the reasons behind individual communities' attitudes towards consolidation movements, some speculation can be made. Land was needed for the rapidly growing New Kensington. Furthermore, it was bearing the duty of maintaining shared services such as water, electricity and sewage.[100] Parnassus, perhaps in response to the demographic changes taking place in

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[97] Arnold neighborhoods developed around the initial company housing built for the Chambers Glass Company's immigrant workers Chambers Glass Works sold housing lots at $400 for 49x120 ft. parcels. WCNK, 86.

[98] WCNK, 36-41.

[99] In 1910 the populations were: New Kensington, 7,707; Arnold, 1,818; Parnassus, 2,578. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Volume I: General Report and Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913).

[100] New Kensington was the center of services such as water and electricity. Perhaps consolidation for New Kensington with Parnassus and/or Arnold would be like Cleveland's consolidation with Ohio City whereby Cleveland supplied the money and Ohio City the site for the waterworks. Jackson, 144.

New Kensington, found that annexing Mt. Vernon (which had a like demographic) ensured its homogeneous population and grew its strength to fight consolidation. In *Crabgrass Frontier* Kenneth Jackson puts forth the example of Brookline's rejection of Boston's 1874 consolidation attempt based on class and ethnic difference. Perhaps Parnassus' residents (comparable to Brookline's higher socio-economic class) were "expressing a determination to control the physical and social environment in which they lived."[101] Arnold may have sought to exert control over its environment as well, but it is far more likely that residents were still motivated by political differences that pushed for secession in 1896.

Despite diversities in population base and geographic size, the boroughs shared common utilities and negotiated the cost of various city services from sidewalk construction and lighting installation to garbage removal and sewage plant maintenance. Shared maintenance costs and the placement of city improvements, such as sewer and street car lines, became a staple of New Kensington borough council discussions – notably where these services would be centered, how the cost would be divided, and who was responsible for maintaining them. The burden was often carried by New Kensington and doubtlessly explains why New Kensington was the greatest proponent of consolidation. It stood to gain more in taxes from the other communities to support these services as their needs grew. [102]

By the 1910s New Kensington was a solidly established industrial community. By 1920 Alcoa established itself as the dominant industry in New Kensington and was

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[101] Jackson, 147, 149.

[102] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (1917-1919).

well on its way to doing the same in Arnold. New Kensington's relationship with Parnassus and Arnold centered on a shared industrial economy. As the communities continued to grow, they would find themselves with a need to work in a more cooperative manner. However, individual community identities would prevent a harmonious working arrangement between the three. What came to complicate this tri-borough relationship further was New Kensington's growing illegal enterprise.

CHAPTER TWO

Crime, Consolidation and Housing, 1918-1944

New Kensington industries continued to grow through the 1910s. The results of such growth was similar to that in larger cities – an influx of immigrants to work in the mills and corresponding residential overcrowding near the industrial core. Responses to these changes were in tune with that of the Progressive Era – such as increased Nativism and a drive for a variety of urban reforms.[1] Who led these reforms varied – from the immigrant community to businessmen to organized labor. In many cases the reforms were more an immediate reaction to a circumstance rather than a designed component of a larger reform agenda. What is noteworthy is that rather than during the Progressive Era, many reform impulses took hold during its waning years and carried through the 1920s. The focus of reform efforts in New Kensington, as with other cities, changed with the onset of the Great Depression.

New Kensington residents, most notably those in the flats, found themselves dealing with vice and an early organized crime syndicate. Alleged political corruption set the tone for how local government would respond to citizen's concerns over the moral conditions in their neighborhoods for much of the twentieth century. Criminal activity might also have played a role in continued failed attempts at tri-borough consolidation. Finally, urban growth brought residential crowding in the city's flats which quickly became problematic.

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[1] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963); Arthur S. Line and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983).

This chapter focuses on three major community concerns during the period 1918-1942: community morals and the criminal underworld; tri-borough consolidation and governmental reform; and, the foray into low-cost housing during the New Deal.

Community Morals and the Criminal Underworld

During the 1910s New Kensington's flats was home to an ethnically and racially diverse, predominately immigrant community. The city's size did not allow room for distinct ethnic neighborhoods. Nor was there space for a clearly defined red light district. The flats mixed together local government, industry, commerce, residences, ethnic social institutions and vice spots. Two points of concern during 1918-1919 were activities in disorderly houses and Greek coffeehouses.[2] Disorderly house investigations highlighted the lax attitude of the burgess and police force. Coffeehouse investigations illuminated cultural misunderstandings and cultural tensions in the borough. Flats' residents, rather than outside middle-class reformers, were most active in the drive for moral reform. Investigations into the flats' vice conditions prove the existence of a vibrant underworld and a local government ambiguous to associated affairs. Finally, evidence indicates that by the late 1920s a more organized, violent, criminal underworld had developed in New Kensington.

For most of the 1910s police response to disorderly house activities included an occasional raid which resulted in prostitutes, gamblers and other patrons paying a fine

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[2] In some *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* articles the terms "sporting houses" and "disorderly houses" are used frequently, and at times, interchangeably. In others they are used independently of one another. When they are used separately, sporting houses refer to houses of prostitution; disorderly houses refer to those houses where multiple activities occur – prostitution, drinking and gambling (combination of two or more).

and returning to their business.[3] The burgess' and police responses were not necessarily uncommon for the period. As in other communities, prior to municipal and civil service reforms New Kensington's policemen were elected by council and the burgess. It appears that the burgess directed the police force. In addition, the burgess served in a capacity similar to that of magistrate and consequently presided over local court proceedings.

New Kensington's police force and local criminal justice system appears to have paralleled that of Chicago during the same period. According to Mark Haller, policemen received no substantive training and the force's organization was fluid. Policemen were attached in various ways to the neighborhoods which they patrolled. Policemen's attitudes often reflected the values of the community; and, their actions were largely directed by local politics. Efforts to make changes in the force and how they policed were dependent upon civic outrage, and even then responses were largely temporary.[4]

There does not appear to have been a strong group of "urban moralistic reformers" in the borough nor do councilmen appear motivated by a reform impulse. Councilmanic pursuit of moral reform was the result of pressure brought down upon them by the *Dispatch* and the flats' residents.[5] More than any other group the *Dispatch* was a driving voice against vice and crime. This is not to say that there were not middle-

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[3] These places were located in the vicinity of Second to Fourth Avenues in between Tenth and Thirteenth Streets. This bordered the business district, was a short walk from the industrial district, and blended into Arnold's section of the flats. Most fines were between five and twenty-five dollars, with prostitutes on the low end and operators of disorderly and sporting houses at the high end. Representative of the standard press coverage can be found: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 15 February 1918 and 10 May 1918.

[4] Mark Haller, "Historical Roots of Police Behavior: Chicago, 1890-1925," *Law and Society Review* v. 10 n. 2 Essays in Honor of J. Willard Hurst: Part Two (Winter 1976): 303-304.

[5] Haller, 312, 314.

class women involved in reform-type activities. Women's civic groups concerned themselves with matters such as improved sanitation and borough beautification drives.[6] At this time there just did not appear to be middle-class social reform movements targeting the vice conditions in the flats. The push for reform came from the "bottom-up" – from the immigrant ethnic and racial minority residents of the flats.

As evidenced through *Dispatch* reporting there were ethnic, gender and racial undercurrents to the Morals Investigation. Accounts of disorderly house and coffeehouse raids were clear to note who was behind the enterprise – most often Greek, African Americans, Poles, Jews, Italians and women.[7] For example, the *Dispatch* noted that of the three disorderly houses, one was operated for the benefit of the Polish community and another by African-Americans.[8] But these were the same people lodging complaints and who testified that beat cops ignored their complaints.[9] Mrs. Alex Sarra, a local Italian merchant, complained that illegal activities in the area – including those allegedly taking place in coffeehouses - were ruining her grocery business. She also speculated that

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[6] The Women's Civic Club was typical of women's clubs at the time in their request of council to sponsor a borough-wide Clean Up Day, the purpose of which was community beautification. In at least one case council politely ignored their request. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (May 7, 1918).

[7] There are very few occasions where no racial, ethnic or gender based descriptions are given. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 15 February 1918, 10 May 1918. For an example of scholarship exploring women illegal enterprise entrepreneurs see: Alan A. Block, "'Aw! Your Mother's in the Mafia': Women Criminals in Progressive New York," *Contemporary Crisis* 1, vol. 1 (January 1977): 5-22.

[8] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 16 July 1918.

[9] Witnesses testified that they had seen the young women employed in the houses socializing with children on the school playground. Another claimed that Greek men attempted to take young girls, not over the age of fourteen, to ice cream stores.

citizen concerns went unaddressed because of the ethnicity of those making the complaints.[10]

As a result of council pressure, in April 1918 newly appointed police chief J.B. McDonald began a campaign to eliminate all kinds of "illegal and immoral practices" in the flats.[11] The campaign went on for two months with mixed results. Consequently council, who believed that the burgess should be responsible for directing the clean up, passed a motion for the solicitor to present the burgess with a resolution that emphasized "... a general cleaning up of all matters requiring the attention as covered by the various ordinances of the Borough pertaining to the Police and Health Departments of the Borough."[12] Council could not direct him to take charge and clean up the town – they could only exert pressure through the passage of a public resolution. It undoubtedly demonstrated to complaining residents that they were taking action to remedy the situation.

Furthermore, placing the matter in the hands of the burgess freed council from the responsibility of the clean-up campaign's success or failure. This fostered a closer working relationship between the burgess and the police force. In this case Haller's assertion that police actions were directed by local politics – in this case the burgess' -

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[10] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 July 1918.

[11] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 26 April 1918. Of particular concern was punch-board gambling that was prevalent in not only disorderly houses but corner stores and which were alleged to have been played by children and adults alike. The use of "punch boards" was a game of note in the article. Punch boards, also called sales boards, have been in use in the United States since roughly 1795, but became prevalent in the 1910s, with their peak in the late 1930s. Punch boards are raffle-style gambling devices. Individuals buy a chance to "punch out" a number that corresponds to a given prize. John Scarne, *Scarne's New Complete Guide to Gambling*, revised, expanded, updated edition. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 795-797.

[12] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (July 8, 1918).

can be applied. The resulting activities were indicative of the burgess' attitudes towards the situation, with periodic raids more of a show and reaction to councilmanic and public pressure than a concerted effort to clean up the flats.[13] For example, in one evening police raided three disorderly houses and arrested forty-seven people in what was considered the largest police raid to date.[14] But for the most part police activities moved at a slow pace.

Among those arrested was disorderly house proprietor Dave Slobodsky who made public statements regarding police's and the burgess' misconduct. In response council held a closed special session which resulted in the launching of a council-directed "investigation into the moral conditions of the borough.[15] The measure passed in an eight to three vote with Burgess McGeary among those opposed to the investigation. He believed it would bring more trouble to the community.[16] But it is apparent that the council believed that the burgess was incapable of handling the matter on his own.

The primary purpose of the investigation was to gather testimony from residents and officials relative to vice activities, but what council proposed to do with the testimony is unclear. The *Dispatch* and borough councilmen promised the public that the investigation testimony would expose not only corruption at all levels of city

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[13] Haller, 312. Such raids were typical for the period.

[14] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 16 July 1918. In Haller' Chicago, night court was an opportunity for both the police and court official to earn extra income. Haller explains that police often took and "overtime" payment by retaining a portion of fines and court officials took a set amount from defendant bond payment and fines. Haller, 308-310.

[15] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (July 22, 1918). Three members were appointed to the interrogation committee which scheduled nine special sessions from late July through August. Slobodsky's name is spelled a variety of ways in the *Dispatch*.

[16] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 19 July 1918.

government, but also disclose the names and activities of "business men and prominent private citizens." During July and August the newspaper's sensational reporting chronicled the testimony of council members, beat cops, physicians, residents, and a significant number of female disorderly house and Greek coffeehouse workers. Yet on numerous occasions the newspaper admitted that the testimony produced no solid evidence. The fantastic tales of vice conditions and corrupt borough employees no doubt painted an unflattering, but certainly exciting, picture of the town. But the reporting also brought the living conditions of the immigrant and African-American residents into the lives of the paper's readership, which extended beyond the borough's boundaries.

Neighborhood women unaffiliated with illegal activities used the forum to air grievances. They complained that city officials, namely the police chief and the burgess, ignored their pleas to shut down these houses.[17] Furthermore, residents were not only concerned with the effects of these institutions on the moral climate of the neighborhood, but also the depreciation of property values. These were not slum dwellers in a red light district. These were active, angry people not content with local government's attitudes towards their neighborhood and of them.

Community activism garnered little space compared to allegations of McGeary's and the police's misconduct. Police testimony revealed that officers fielded numerous resident complaints but were hamstrung as they operated under the orders of former police chief H.K. Caldwell and McGeary.[18] While they were not ordered to ignore illegal

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[17] Dave Slobodsky's tales of speakeasy, sporting and gambling/disorderly houses dominated the testimony. This included Testimony included accusations against officials and policemen for taking graft money and visiting these places for recreational purposes. He claimed to have compiled a list of every one of these institutions and have turned it over to the police chief for use in conducting raids but that nothing came of it. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 July 1918, 30 July 1918, 12 August 1918, 3 September 1918.

activities, a number of the officers claimed that Caldwell advised them to "go slow" with making raids and arrests. Some officers complained that such arrests were a waste of time since the burgess merely fined and released people.[19] One councilman, along with some police officers, alleged that Caldwell and McGeary assessed fines but did not put them on the books.[20] Chief McDonald also claimed to have been held back by McGeary, noting that he could clean up the town on twenty-four hours notice if allowed.[21] Such testimony underscores the notion that police action was reflective of local politics. McDonald's testimony is an indication that his appointment was perhaps a response to community agitation and not truly desired by the burgess, who appears to have been the dominant political force in the community.

Aside from consuming several months of council's time in special meetings, the Morals Investigation did little more than entertain the community and sling around a variety of accusations. To the chagrin of reporters, the much anticipated testimony of female disorderly house operators never materialized as they all conveniently went "away for their health" during proceedings.[22] Following the investigation, weekend raids were

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[19] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 August 1918. The perpetrators, and in some cases confiscated gambling contraband, returned to the same location to continue business as usual. A couple officers testified that during various raids punchboards and slot machines were confiscated and locked up in the police station. It was unknown as to who was responsible for the action, but the gambling devices were returned to each establishment.

[20] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 August 1918.

[21] Ibid., 19 July 1918.

[22] Ibid., 6 August 1918. A number of these disorderly houses had cigar store fronts. It was reported that widows from Pittsburgh had been brought in to run the stores in the operators' absence at a rate of $7/week plus profit from store sales. The testimony of these women was reflective of the very little information they were given by the house owners. Borough Council minutes chronicle the stages of the investigation, though they give no detail on the testimony, New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (September 3 and September 17, 1918) and (October 4, 1918 and October 8, 1918). S.J. Kleinberg

conducted through the rest of the year. McGeary opened the new city hall's court room with several of the resultant cases with a few even sent to county court. *The Dispatch* took pains to report that many of the raids were the burgess' direct order; and, McDonald's multiple appeals to the community for assistance to raise the moral conditions of the town received equal coverage.[23] Not much changed despite the suspension of a few officers and temporarily increased efforts to disrupt disorderly house activities.

Not enough had changed for McDonald as nine months into his tenure he resigned.[24] In his formal resignation before council, McDonald claimed that he had been unable to accomplish anything due to the "lack of harmony" in city government and that the Morals Investigation consumed his brief tenure. He also claimed that his election to the post was "displeasing" to some of the councilmen and insinuated that these were possible roadblocks to his work. At this same meeting, a number of long time officers suspected of wrongdoing were re-appointed.[25] This demonstrates a conflict between the new chief's moral impulse, McGeary's and some councilmen's value system, and the attitudes of the police force over which it appears McDonald had little control.

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discusses "cigar store front-brothel back combinations in Pittsburgh. Some owners were noted to be widows so it is not a stretch to speculate that disorderly house owners in New Kensington and Pittsburgh had loose associations. S.J. Kleinberg, *The Shadow of the Mills: Working-Class Families in Pittsburgh, 1870-1907* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989): 166-169.

[23] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 10 September 1918, 17 September 1918, 29 October 1918, 10 December 1918, for example.

[24] It is difficult to note how long tenure/appointments were supposed to be. In some instances it appears that appointments were made on a monthly basis.

[25] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 10 January 1919, 17 January 1919.

According to Mark Haller, some Chicago officers were appointed based on ethnicity and race to patrol for "ethnicity-based" crimes. For example, Italians were appointed to Italian neighborhoods. He notes that police also became attached to the specific areas they patrolled as they frequented "neighborhood centers" (a bar, grocery store, gambling establishment, etc.) and socialized with citizens. Since the force itself did not have strong supervision, it was easy for policemen to "reflect the values of those members of the neighborhood with whom" they interacted on a regular basis.[26] It is not unreasonable to assume that because of New Kensington's size, its officers may have been related to or resided in the same neighborhoods they patrolled. For example, one police officer accused of associating with a disorderly house operator claimed that his wife knew her though Polish community activities.[27]

In the summer of 1919 misconduct rumors dogged the police force. Citizens complained of policemen's recreational associations with various establishments as well as their negligence in handling night disturbances. Council fielded citizen complaints that police were derelict in their duties because they were engaging in nighttime joy rides with female companions. If these allegations were true, and significant citizen complaints suggest that they were, then this is an example of Haller's claim that police response could be reflective of their personal attitudes towards vice. Some may have patronized such establishments. Others, as Haller notes, may have viewed prostitution

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[26] Haller, 308.

[27] In one case, residents testified that Officer Spisak was seen bringing flowers to Mrs. Naggie, alleged sporting house operator. Spisak explained that his wife and Mrs. Naggie casually knew one another from Polish community activities. Allegedly, at one event Mrs. Naggie complimented Mrs. Spisak's floral arrangements and Mrs. Spisak offered to send along flowers, which she did through her husband. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 August 1918.

and gambling as facts of life and sought to contain such activities to a certain area rather than allow it to spill into more "respectable" sections of town.[28] If the latter is true, then through their actions – or lack of – the police and certain borough officials were responsible for maintaining the flats as *the* location of such activity.

This time council pursued police misconduct investigations on their own time and at their own expense. They took to the streets, interviewing potential witnesses and taking down license numbers and names of taxi drivers. Instead of formal testimony, councilmen collected affidavits from taxi drivers and residents to make judgments of innocence or guilt. Apparently at odds with the council, the majority of the force responded to their findings by quitting in protest. Like the Morals Investigation little (if any) credible evidence was produced and after a month of investigation the accused policemen were exonerated and the matter was dropped.[29]

It is evident that the investigations of 1918-1919 were not part of a sustained drive to improve social conditions in the crowded, predominately immigrant community. There does not appear to be a corresponding community effort to elect reform-minded leadership. Because of this it can be said that at this point New Kensington was developing into a "wide-open town" – a place where illegal activities were tolerated as long as they were kept in their place. But this did not mean an end of the flats' residents'

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[28] Haller, 316.

[29] *New Kensington Daily* Dispatch, 18 July 1919, 22 July 1919, 1 August 1919, 8 August 1919, 22 August 1919; New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (August 5, 1919). One driver's affidavit was published in the Dispatch. He claims to have taken two police officers and three female companions for a three hour joyride but would not name the officers. When the officers abruptly quit, on a weekend night, two councilmen and some firefighters served in an auxiliary capacity. A number of citizens, it was reported, believed the officers to have gone on strike and would not serve as auxiliary officers. This suggests that despite the non-union workforce at the city's largest employer, a climate favorable to unions existed in the community.

protest. They took enough complaints to county authorities to warrant the Westmoreland county district attorney to direct and promote the shut down of disorderly houses.[30] But without the sustained support of local government and law enforcement these efforts were fruitless.

A secondary issue raised during the investigations was the existence of and activities within Greek coffeehouses. All parties were united in their concern over the coffeehouses' moral impact on the community. Concerns were raised about the number of houses and their proximity to schools. The illegal sale of alcohol and gambling activities were problematic; but also disturbing was the houses' employment of American women.[31]

The Morals Investigation came at a time of nationally renewed Nativist sentiment spurred on by fears of radicalized foreigners following World War I.[32] Greeks were subject to the same harassment other immigrant groups faced during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Some concerns over Greek community activities are certainly the results of Nativist fears and cultural misunderstandings.[33] Other concerns were the result of the legitimate existence of illegal activities at a minority of establishments. It is

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[30] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 20 June 1919.

[31] Council appeared particularly concerned with four coffeehouses operating close to city hall and twelve in the proximity of a school. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 19 July 1918, 23 July 1918.

[32] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1955).

[33] Helen Papanikolas, *An Amulet of Greek Earth: Generations of Immigrant Folk Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002): 156, 161. The author gives an example of the Ku Klux Klan driving a Greek community out of Great Rapids, Michigan which forced them to flee to the Greek community in Grand Rapids. She also explains how Greeks in the West were despised by some for their IWW and union activities as well as their use as strikebreakers.

apparent that fear of Greeks in New Kensington was driven by cultural misunderstandings and anti-immigrant sentiment, though there was also minority activity which caused problems for the majority.

New Kensington officials' concerns over Greek coffeehouses were most likely complicated by cultural misunderstanding over the gender segregated environment within the Greek community. The coffeehouse was the most important institution in the Greek community followed by Greek language newspapers and the church.[34] In his study of Greek communities in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania and Warren, Ohio, James Kiriazis notes that the coffeehouse was a headquarters of sorts where people received news from home, read Greek newspapers, listened to the radio and gossiped. They served as banks and often had upstairs accommodations that provided lodging for newly arrived single men. At coffeehouses men could play cards and informally gamble and drink a variety of beverages from Turkish coffee to ouzo to soda.[35] They were almost constantly open as men gathered there after their shifts in the factory.[36]

Coffeehouses were transplanted institutions. In Greece, several houses were located in close proximity. Therefore the existence of a handful in a town the size of New Kensington would not be unusual. What was unusual is the employment of American women in a predominately immigrant male environment. Council, the police,

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[34] James Kiriazis, *Children of the Colossus: The Rhodian Greek Immigrants in the United States* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989): 68; Papanikolas, 73; Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 162; Marios Stephanides, *The Greeks in Detroit: Authoritarianism: A Critical Analysis of Greek Culture, Personality, Attitudes and Behavior* Saratoga, CA: R and E Research Associates, 1975): 39-40.

[35] Kiriazis, 68-71.

[36] According to Gunther Peck, coffeehouses were also places where men could discuss "job conditions and grievances." Peck, 162.

and a number of witnesses feared the influence that male Greek proprietors had over American girls. Council and the *Dispatch* appeared to have an almost obsessive interest in the work of female coffeehouse employees, which was not so much a concern of disorderly house investigations. Consequently dancing and the character of female employees became problematic.[37]

Greek men did not fit into native American constructions of "whiteness" and these racialized fears at times manifest itself in gendered terms. In *Reinventing Free Labor*, Gunther Peck provides an example of how some believed that "Greek men were 'stealing' white women" and as a consequence a number of Greek Salt Lake City businessmen were prosecuted as white slavers.[38] For its part the *Dispatch* stoked interest by giving considerable space to the testimony of witnesses appalled by the sight of "girls doing oriental dances with the body movements."[39] In defense, an "American" woman who had worked in a couple of the coffeehouses testified that one proprietor brought in professional Greek dance troupes.[40] It was common for proprietors to bring in traveling puppet shows and dance troupes for both adult and family audiences. While a

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[37] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 15 February 1918, 26 April 1918, 10 May 1918. Prostitution activities certainly occurred at some of these houses, though it is not explicitly stated in witness testimony. This is in contrast to the testimony given for disorderly and gaming houses. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 30 July 1918.

[38] Papanikolas, 103; Peck, 167. He explained that they passed laws which forbade American women's employment in Greek establishments. The Salt Lake City activities occurred in 1908.

[39] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 30 July 1918 and 23 August 1918.

[40] The young woman also testified that she worked upwards of 80 hours a week. While council made note that this was a violation of labor laws, they did not pursue investigation on this issue. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 13 August 1918.

predominately male institution, the coffeehouse did serve the broader Greek immigrant community as a space for dances, weddings, and baptismal celebrations.[41]

Publicity over coffeehouse affairs was problematic for Greek immigrants who raised concern over the damage done to their community. In his study of the Greek community in New York, Michael Contopolous explains that Greek immigrants were "overly sensitive to American public opinion" and concerned that the actions of the minority would be seen as "a possible smear against the Greek community and nation."[42] In two open letters published in the *Dispatch*, the Greek community argued that of the fourteen "Greek" coffeehouses in town only four were owned and operated by law abiding members of their community. They claimed that coffeehouses engaging in illegal enterprise were operated by Turkish and Syrian immigrants. Furthermore, they stated that their "race has been ridiculed and dishonored long enough by people of Syrian and Turkish nationality, representing themselves as Greeks."[43] A series of conflicts between the ethnic groups in Europe - from the Greek War for Independence in 1832 to

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[41] Wedding and baptismal ceremonies were held in the coffeehouse when churches were non-existent or unavailable. Some of the wedding celebrations held in coffeehouses were receptions. Some of the puppet shows were more political in nature and thus geared toward an adult audience. Kiriazis, 82-83; Papanikolas, 73; Peck, 162

[42] Michael Contopoulos, *The Greek Community of New York City: Early Years to 1910* (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas Publisher, 1992): 74.

[43] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2 August 1918, 17 December 1918. The testimony of the young woman working 80 hours a week corroborates that not all of the Greek coffeehouses were owned by Greeks. Her employment at that time was at a Syrian run coffeehouse that did little trade in coffee, but largely pop and Sryrian candies. One of the open letters appeared on the front page, the second on the editorial page.

their involvement in World War I - was transplanted to immigrant communities in the United States.[44]

The open letter from the Greek community, as well as through complaints like Mrs. Sarra's mentioned earlier, illustrates the tensions between the various immigrant communities residing in the town's flats. It also underscores fears of and tensions between the native American community and a growing immigrant population, with one interesting exception. People all around found the coffeehouses (or at least certain ones) to be a disgrace for various reasons as well as a blemish on New Kensington's reputation as a "growing industrial community and a good place to live." But one police officer testified that "he thought coffeehouses were a good thing in a way that they keep these many nationalities off the streets; that if they would only keep American girls out of them there would be no harm done."[45]

While many scholars claim that Greek immigrants were largely law abiding citizens, they also note that there were minority members who engaged in illegal activities such as gambling, prostitution and illegal alcohol brewing.[46] In some cases

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[44] Tensions between Greek and Turkish communities had been as long standing as Greece's inclusion in the Ottoman Empire. Greece fought for and won its independence in 1832; and Greeks fought again in 1897 for Crete's independence. The Greek government recalled immigrants to fight in the Balkan War of 1912. Finally, during World War I Greece sided with The Triple Entente against the Central Powers, with whom Turkey was allied. Eruption in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922 between Greece and Turkish National Movement which eventually ended in the creation of the Republic of Turkey. Greek immigrants and Greek Americans were incredibly tied to their homelands during all of these conflicts. Contopoulos, 85; Kopan, 298; Peck, 221-222.

[45] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 August 1918. This testimony came from Officer Fichthorn, one of the officers accused of misconduct. Aside from alleged wrongdoings while on the job, in his off time Fichthorn ran a taxi service. In that capacity he was accused of transporting sporting/disorderly house employees as well as individuals who had traveled from Pittsburgh by train to various disorderly houses.

[46] Stephanides, 48. It can be interpreted that this type of gambling activity in Greek Town goes beyond the casual card games frequently played in Greek coffeehouses. James W. Kiriazis discusses illegal alcohol and mentions the occasional instance of children shoplifting. The other type of criminal activity often cited

gambling and the sale of alcohol were solely the product of custom. In other cases, as can be inferred by the concerns of New Kensington's Greek community, they were part of a criminal underworld. For another decade, Greek coffeehouses and their proprietors would be associated with not only prostitution and gambling, but also other illegal enterprise, including morphine trafficking.[47]

New Kensington evidently had a growing drug problem. On October 18, 1921 police chief Dan Zeloyle reported to council that "dope joints [had been] cleaned out," though there was no mention of specific "snow pads" or opium dens or suggestion that drugs were sold at disorderly houses.[48] But this was not the case as for much of the decade trafficking accusations centered around the alleged criminal activity of Mike Zervos, a Fourth Avenue coffeehouse co-owner.[49]

Available evidence gives little indication as to the extent of Zervos' operations. He could very well have followed a path similar to Greeks involved in 1917 New York City's drug trade. Alan Block and William J. Chambliss discovered that in the drug trafficking hierarchy among ethnic immigrants, Greeks were at the lower end – retailers

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is Greek peddlers' failure to obtain a peddler's license. Andre T. Kopan, "Greek Survival in Chicago," in Melvin G. Holli and Peter d' A. Jones, eds. *Ethnic Chicago: A Multicultural Portrait* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994): 277-279; Contoplous, 73. In his study of illegal enterprise in 1920s Chicago, Mark Haller notes the existence of Greek pimps. They were certainly in the minority – of 300 identified pimps, twenty-six were identified as Greek. Mark H. Haller, "Organized Crime in Urban Society," *Journal of Social History* 5 (Winter 1971-1972): 220-221.

[47] Illegal gambling had long been a concern. During the Morals Investigation, one witness testified that the average weekly income gambling activity generated was between $3,000 and $3,500. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 3 September 1918.

[48] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (October 18, 1921).

[49] The *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* gives three spellings of his last name – Zervos, Zervis, Zerves. FBI files use Zervos. For this dissertation I will use Zervos. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961 report of SA Thomas Forsyth III on Samuel Mannarino.

who sold drugs out of Greek-owned restaurants. They also noted that those involved in the drug trade may have also been involved in collateral criminal occupations such as prostitution and gambling.[50] Zervos' collateral occupation appears to have been gambling. FBI files indicate that he was the leading "racket and gambling figure" in New Kensington through the 1920s.[51]

Zervos' hold on New Kensington's underworld began to unravel in March 1928 when Zervos and two associates were charged with conspiracy to indict in relation to the arrest and prosecution of coffeehouse owner and Zervos' competitor Nick Levadis. In 1927 Levadis owned the shop next door and accused Zervos and his associates of planting morphine at his restaurant with the intent of having him arrested for possession.[52] According to newspaper accounts, by March 1928 an informant claimed that Zervos told him he planted the morphine to eliminate competition.[53] Consequently Zervos and his associates were charged with conspiracy and released on $1,000 bond.

In late August 1928 Zervos and several others were arrested on charges of assault, battery and disorderly conduct. Zervos was among five men accused of stabbing and

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[50] Alan A. Block and William J. Chambliss, "Organizing the Cocaine Trade," in *Organizing Crime* (New York: Elsener, 1981): 47-48. Their work emphasizes the role of immigrant Jews in the cocaine trade in NYC's Lower East Side. See also, Joseph Spillane, "The Making of an Underground Drug Market: Drug Selling in Chicago, 1900-1940," *Journal of Social History* (Fall 1998): 36.

[51] JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961 report of SA Thomas Forsyth III on Samuel Mannarino.

[52] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 27 March 1928 and 30 March 1928. Newspaper accounts list the competitor's name as both Nick Levadis and Stephen Levick. Stephen Levadis is used more often in reports. There is a possibility that they are two separate men, co-owners of the coffee shop in question.

[53] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 March 1928. The *Dispatch* article notes the informant's name as Spiras Fellias. The paper reports, quite possibly through the word of Fellias, that in 1927 Nick Levadis received a loaf of bread containing morphine delivered from New York City where Zervos was coincidentally at the time.

severely beating Christos "Tomatoes" Stamateo. Police believed that the attack, witnessed by "hundreds" of spectators, was part of a "factional war" among certain Greek coffeehouse owners.[54] Since this type of violence is considered contrary to the traditional role of coffeehouses it most likely indicates the existence of criminal organization occupying the flats. It is highly likely that certain coffeehouses served as headquarters for rival organizations and perhaps were locations of criminal activities. This would substantiate Moral Investigation witness' claims of illegal activities at coffeehouses.

Despite the arrests, the factional violence continued into October with the murder of Sam Fillis, which the *Dispatch* reported was tied to coffeehouse rivalries.[55] According to the victim's brother Fillis was to testify against Zervos in upcoming court proceedings.[56] Over the following weeks the *Dispatch* reported on a Pennsylvania State Police manhunt for several unnamed but well-known men believed associated with the murder.[57] At this time Zervos and his associates failed to appear in court in the matter of

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[54] The altercation began at Fourth Avenue and Ninth Street and traveled along Fourth Avenue for a block before police broke up the crowd and made arrests. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch,* 23 August 1928, 24 August 1928 and 27 August 1928. Zervos, aged 25, was the youngest of the five individuals arrested. The rest were in their 30s and 40s. The victim, Zervis and two of the arrested lived in the flats area between 4th Ave and 11th St. The two others arrested were from out of town – Clairton, Pennsylvania and Canton, Ohio.

[55] Fillis was murdered on Serpentine Road going towards Vandergrift. The victim was beaten with a shovel, thrown in the back seat of his car, and the car was then pushed over a hillside into a ravine. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 October 1928.

[56] It is unclear as to what events Fillis would testify. However, Tom Fillis alleged that his brother, who was another coffeehouse employee, was approached by two Greek men and offered a $500 bribe. In an October 8 *Dispatch* article, it was reported that Tom Fillis claimed that his brother was witness to the Stamateo stabbing. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 9 and 10 October 1928.

[57] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 10 October 1928. The *Dispatch* reported on the investigation – analysis of evidence, coroner's inquest, etc. – in the October 11, 12 and 15, 1928 editions.

the Stamateo attack which caused further speculation as to their involvement in Fillis' murder.[58] In 1928 Zervos was eventually brought to trial, was convicted of Fillis' murder, and sentenced to life in prison.[59]

By 1930 New Kensington's flats was well known as an illegal enterprise zone run by organized syndicates and independent operators alike. Whether it was gambling, prostitution, drug trafficking or factional violence, New Kensington was moving towards a reputation as a crime-ridden community. When Mike Zervos went to prison for Sam Fillis' murder, it created a vacuum in the community's underworld. As will be explored in chapter five, a young man by the name of Samuel Mannarino stepped in during the 1930s to consolidate power and change the nature of illegal enterprise in New Kensington.

Tri-Borough Relations and Consolidation Revisited

Criminal activity may have been a hindrance to smooth tri-borough relations during this period. As introduced in chapter one, New Kensington, Arnold, and Parnassus had mutual interests – shared city services and an industrial base. As previously noted, their socio-economic bases were somewhat different. Beginning in 1909 the tri-boroughs debated consolidating their communities while New Kensington and Parnassus continued to grow through annexation of sections of Lower Burrell

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[58] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 8 November 1928.

[59] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 8 January 1936. Zervos' name is spelled Zervas in this article, in which he files for a clemency hearing. Witnesses at the trial testified that they saw Fillis get into a car with Zervos the night he was murdered. Zervos was represented by Charles J. Margiotti, who was Pennsylvania's Attorney General by 1936. He was to remove himself from Zervos' clemency hearing. The *Dispatch* reports that both the murder and the trial took place in 1929. This is not the case.

Township. The three communities continued their debates over equitable distribution of costs for shared services and worked collaboratively to meet common goals such as the construction of a sewage plant or joined together for common causes such as in protest against natural gas rate hikes.[60]

Chapter one concluded with a discussion of a third failed tri-borough consolidation attempt. This attempt warrants a closer look in order to explore civic organizations' role and the possible impact of New Kensington's dubious moral climate on tri-borough relations. Furthermore, consolidation movements highlighted for some a need to reform local government's structure. This reform came in the push for third-class city status. From 1919 through 1932 New Kensington, Arnold, and Parnassus civic organizations and government leaders debated the value of consolidation and city reform, though the final decision was in the hands of the electorate.

New Kensington's Board of Trade appears to have been the driving force behind the 1919 consolidation movement. As noted in chapter one, the Board of Trade appeared

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[60] The 1918 and 1919 minute subjects are dominated by the cost sharing issues for sewer lines, street car service, and garbage removal. In February 1919, Arnold Council approached New Kensington Council to join them in a fight against Peoples' Gas rate hike. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 8 February 1918. Improvements included laying the sewer lines as well as paving and grading the street. In addition to the regular business of Council, special meetings on this issue were held. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 7 and 19 February 1919; New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (4 April 1919). Garbage collection was a tri-borough service maintained by New Kensington. New Kensington had regular issues with the other two boroughs concerning garbage removal. The 1918 council minutes document a disagreement between New Kensington and Arnold over Arnold residents mixing ashes in with other waste. New Kensington's garbage haulers refused to pick up Arnold refuse. As the tri-boroughs expanded New Kensington became overburdened with rising costs and although they continued to negotiate with various communities using their service they were ultimately bound by already established contracts. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 September 1919. In February 1918, the tri-boroughs formed a committee to investigate the benefits of a joint sewage disposal plant. The committee logically argued that it was more cost effective to build a shared plant than separate plants for each borough. Parnassus took the lead on this issue, securing a potential site on its southern border. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (February 5, 1918); *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 8 March 1918. While it was not necessarily a movement towards consolidation it did represent a partnership for the communities' mutual benefit. This is like Kenneth Jackson's example of Cleveland's financial backing of a waterworks built in Ohio City. Jackson, 144.

second only to Alcoa in terms of the influence it had on the community. The Board of Trade and other civic groups behind these consolidation reform drives appear similar to those behind some Progressive Era municipal political reform movements.[61] Samuel Hays explains that as businessmen themselves moved away they looked for new ways to remain influential in the city center. They understood that a healthy city government was essential for economic growth and their own financial well-being.[62] For New Kensington businessmen it is apparent that the chance to drive economic growth was through tri-borough consolidation.

Hays also argues that the success that these men had was often dependent on the community's size. He explains that in smaller communities these men "could easily exercise a dominant influence ... Their close ties readily enabled them to shape informal political power that they could transform into formal political power."[63] This is certainly evident in New Kensington's case as the Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, and various businessmen-led organizations were often the most vocal proponent of reform measures. This informal political power was evident in their ability to revive the idea of consolidation and broker tentative plans between the three boroughs. However, they could not fully transform this informal power into formal power as the will of the people ultimately decided the outcome. Consequently in New Kensington's case business and

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[61] Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (October 1964): 157-169. In this case municipal reform included the "centralization of administration and representation" in city government.

[62] Ibid., 162, 166.

[63] Ibid., 165.

professional groups were not successful in many of their attempts to transform municipal government for their benefit.

The Board of Trade approached council at a May 1919 meeting and requested that they appoint a consolidation committee, whose authority (according to state law) was necessary to move forward. After this the Board organized a meeting which was attended by consolidation finance committees from Arnold and Parnassus as well as representatives from the communities' governing bodies. The existence of consolidation finance committees denotes the three communities' anticipation of eventual merger. The meeting's purpose was to review the feasibility of consolidation, "assist in the preparation of the agreement and the proposed disposition of indebtedness of the three boroughs."[64] It was characterized as "very enthusiastic and harmonious" with all present anxious to "reach an agreement that would be fair to each borough." As they drafted a tentative structure of a new borough council they discovered that the indebtedness of the three boroughs was roughly the same and overall insignificant. This made financial opposition to consolidation unlikely; and, they therefore ascertained that the financial situation at that moment was the best chance the communities would have to consolidate.[65]

With the exception of Arnold's burgess, the three borough councils supported the

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[64] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 9 May 1919.

[65] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 9 May 1919, 13 May 1919. The meeting also compared the numbers of registered voters in each community. Parnassus held 780, Arnold 1,011 and New Kensington 4,240. Parnassus appears to have had significant support for the measure. In its June 6, 1919 coverage of a Parnassus Council meeting, the *Dispatch* reported that 200 citizens presented a petition in favor of the consolidation issue.

consolidation measure and set a general vote for July 22, 1919.[66] Slight resistance to the measure came from Arnold residents who at a June 2, 1919 meeting of Arnold council, presented a petition which requested that officials strike down the consolidation ordinance.[67] In response, two weeks later a group presented council with a petition signed by 128 voters in favor of a consolidation vote. The burgess sided with those residents against consolidation and vetoed the ordinance. Council, however, chose to override his decision and allowed the ballot measure to move forward.[68]

The *Dispatch* actively promoted the consolidation measure and in doing so emphasized the tri-borough's close commercial, educational and industrial ties. It made the costs associated with consolidation clear by breaking down citizens' tax liabilities and cost of government services for each borough. The paper devoted a series of front page editorials promoting the benefits of consolidation in developing a first rate school district of benefit not only to the children within the system, but a source of pride for the larger community.[69] As stated in chapter one, the consolidation vote failed.[70]

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[66] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, multiple meetings from May to July 1919 pertaining to an ordinance calling for a vote on the consolidation measure. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 20 May 1919, 23 May 1919, 3 June 1919, 6 June 1919.

[67] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 3 June 1919. The paper does not give the number of men nor the reasons for their objection.

[68] Ibid., 17 June 1919.

[69] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 24 June 1919, 4 July 1919, 8 July 1919, 11 July 1919, 18 July 1919, 22 July 1919. In these series of articles the *Dispatch* makes some interesting comparisons between the two communities. The numbers show the benefits of consolidation nearly equal, with Arnold and Parnassus having a slight benefit in cost savings from projected county tax increases over the next two years. Parnassus was projected to pay out twice what New Kensington and Arnold would combined.

[70] Fifty-six percent of registered voters went to the polls to defeat the measure 937 to 781. Predictably, New Kensington was in favor of the measure; and, while it was no surprise that the measure failed with Arnold voters; but, given the early support, the nearly three to one vote rejecting consolidation in Parnassus

Burgess' reactions to the defeat were mixed. Parnassus' burgess, who would have become the consolidated borough's first mayor, claimed to have faith in the voters' decision. New Kensington's burgess vowed to continue his efforts to consolidate the three boroughs. Arnold's burgess, surprisingly, stated that his borough's voters' rejection of the consolidation measure was not wise and hoped voters would one day become amenable to the idea.[71] The reasons behind Arnold's and Parnassus' burgesses' turnaround are not noted.

Regardless of the burgesses' responses, the tri-borough citizens' rejection of consolidation during the 1920s was not uncommon. By this time state government which had earlier pushed for legislation that forcibly brought annexation no longer desired to override the will of the people. One example of this is the Pennsylvania legislature's 1928 push for a federated city of Pittsburgh. The state passed legislation supported by city leaders when Pittsburgh sought to annex several communities in Allegheny County. However, when two-thirds of the voters rejected the measure the legislature did not push further.[72] Undoubtedly the smaller communities did not want to be absorbed by Pittsburgh and perhaps Parnassus and Arnold thought New Kensington would swallow them whole. Other speculation as to why the vote failed was noted in chapter one.

A closer look at the *Dispatch*'s post-mortem in the context of social concerns discussed earlier in this chapter provides interesting insight into reasons behind the

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was a surprise. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 July 1919. The published numbers were: New Kensington, pass, 522 to 77; Parnassus, defeat, 410 to 149; Arnold, defeat, 450 to 110. It was reported that residents in Arnold and Parnassus celebrated the defeat of the measure with parades and the blowing of factory whistles.

[71] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 July 1919.

[72] Jackson, 150.

measure's failure. A *Dispatch* editorial examines several possible factors. The editors noted that "Possibly the eyesight of the electors was in many instances clouded by prejudices, and this was no doubt true of both factions."[73] As discussed in chapter one, the political differences between New Kensington and Arnold and the social, ethnic, and class differences between the tri-boroughs undoubtedly played an important role. The paper also speculated that some opposed to the plan did not believe the goals set through consolidation - such as improved city services and school district - could be attained.

Furthermore references were made to unnamed parties' egos and personal agendas, and the editors hinted that this prevented the community from seeing the benefits of consolidation. Perhaps this refers to possible suspicion of the Board of Trade's motives and the potential commercial benefits they would see from consolidation. Kenneth Jackson explains that in some cases business leaders' push for efficiency in government via consolidation/annexation was an attempt at "urban imperialism" or a drive to "exploit and control" the local economy and community.[74] It is difficult to ascertain whether or not this was the case as it is unclear as to how much businessmen would have benefited from consolidation. The benefits must have been significant enough to warrant the Board's constant interest in and support for the various consolidation movements over the years.

But of greater interest is a separate editorial comparing the proposal's defeat to that of a young woman rejecting a marriage proposal. It suggested that New Kensington,

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[73] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 July 1919.

[74] Jackson, 144-145. The editorial board also suggested that the issue was rushed, that consolidation committee meetings were too secretive, and that not enough information was presented to the voters which mapped out benefits specific to each community. This is most certainly odd given the paper's campaign on behalf of consolidation.

the suitor, may in time be able to successfully "invite Arnold and Parnassus into the family." But the paper conceded that perhaps "a little straightening out in certain quarters might be beneficial for New Kensington as well as an aid to becoming desirable in the eyes of our neighbors."[75] It is highly likely that the "straightening out in certain quarters" referred to the recent investigations into the community's moral health.

Kenneth Jackson notes that some proponents of annexation believed that other communities, namely suburbs, could be used as a "moral force" to transform vice conditions of the city.[76] There is no evidence to suggest that this may have been New Kensington's intent, though it would have been one way for council to clean out an allegedly corrupt burgess. But perhaps Arnold's and Parnassus' residents did not want to be affiliated with a politically corrupt and vice-ridden New Kensington. Furthermore, those residents might have feared the spread of such activity into their quarters with a consolidated community.

As predicted by the *Dispatch* in 1919, tri-borough consolidation eventually made a strong return to community debate from 1927 to 1936. From 1927 to 1929 proposals concerning consolidation with Arnold were discussed but ultimately tabled. New Kensington continued to grow as it annexed more of Lower Burrell Township.[77] After

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[75] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 July 1919.

[76] Jackson, 151, 153-155.

[77] Arnold was the first to act, though New Kensington's council rejected their consolidation proposal, choosing to annex certain sections of Lower Burrell Township. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (June 7, 1927). For more discussion on consolidating with Arnold see: New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (August 2 and 8, 1927), (September 6, 1927). In 1928 the Chamber of Commerce requested that council not just revisit the Arnold consolidation issue but place it before voters in the November election. Council debated this issue and then tabled discussion. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (July 7, 1928).

decades of debate over shared services and other matters Parnassus' citizens realized the advantages of consolidating with New Kensington.[78] At the December 17, 1929 meeting council authorized borough officials to work with Parnassus on a formal consolidation agreement.[79] The two boroughs were formally consolidated on December 30, 1930.[80]

Shortly after the Parnassus-New Kensington consolidation, 203 freeholders in Lower Burrell Township petitioned council to annex lands on which they resided. The New Kensington council's Committee on Consolidation and Annexation recommended the council reject the annexation petition based on the argument that current borough debt was heavy and it could not bear the fiscal responsibility of the additional debts brought on by annexation.[81] This falls in line with Kenneth Jackson's observations that at times communities rejected consolidation because consolidation might bring financial instability, which was especially the case during the Great Depression.[82] At this point New Kensington effectively stopped its physical growth for two decades until it annexed a small parcel of Lower Burrell Township in the 1950s.

While New Kensington may have stopped growing in size it continued to evolve.

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[78] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (October 15, 1929).

[79] Ibid., (December 17, 1929).

[80] Ibid., (January 5, 1931). Perhaps motivated by the New Kensington-Parnassus consolidation, Arnold borough secretary M.F. Horne requested a meeting with New Kensington council to discuss consolidation New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (January 20, 1931). A committee of council members discussed the matter at length, but ultimately rejected Arnold's proposed consolidation agreement. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 3, 1931). New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (June 16, 1931). .

[81] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (July 14, 1931); New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (August 4, 1931).

[82] Jackson, 150.

For some time New Kensington had considered petitioning for third-class city status. The increased population brought on by the 1927 annexation of Lower Burrell parcels plus the recent consolidation with Parnassus created a renewed interest in the matter.[83] The matter was put before voters in the November 1932 election; it passed and New Kensington became a third-class city on November 10, 1933.[84]

The shift to third-class city status was important for modernizing local government. Borough government in the nineteenth century was governed by a strong council with far reaching powers and weak mayor.[85] Larger boroughs were divided into wards with between one and two representatives per ward. Councilmen were elected in overlapping four year terms while other elected officials, such as the tax collector, had powers independent of council. Finally, borough council was permitted to appoint numerous other officials and there was consequently the potential for local government to become large and unwieldy.

In contrast, third-class cities are governed by a popularly elected five member commission which includes four council members and a mayor who acts as council president. Council members serve overlapping four year terms as do the controller and treasurer, who are independently elected. City administration is divided into five

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[83] During the August 4, 1925 meeting a petition relative to Third-class city was carried, read, filed and it appears forgotten. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (August 4, 1925).

[84] In March 1932 council received a petition to put the measure on the ballot and approved doing so in April. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 15, 1932) and (April 19, 1932). New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (November 15, 1932). The ballot measure passed as did Council's resolution to file the necessary paperwork with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. On January 1, 1934, Burgess Daniel Burns became the city's first mayor. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (January 1, 1934).

[85] Though it appears that at certain times New Kensington's burgess was more powerful than council when it came to maintaining law and order.

departments, with each member of council overseeing a department.[86] For New Kensington the third-class city form of government streamlined city organization and balanced power between mayor and council. It reduced costs by limiting appointments which, coupled with standardized wages, equaled salary savings.[87]

Consolidation with Parnassus, its new third-class city status, and Alcoa's growth were most definitely signs that New Kensington was straightening out in certain quarters. It is not a leap to suggest that some in Arnold saw the benefits of these changes and consolidation with New Kensington became more appealing. In fact, certain Arnold voters were not willing to drop the consolidation issue, nor were a number satisfied with their own borough system of government.[88] Some members of the community were behind a renewed consolidation movement that eventually became linked with a push for Arnold's own third-class city status.

In July 1936 a group of over 100 voters approached Arnold council with a request to put the third-class city issue on the November ballot.[89] J.E. McLaughlin, an Arnold councilman and organizer of the Arnold Citizens' Consolidation Committee, led those promoting the Third-class city as linked to consolidation. The hope was for Arnold to become a city, streamline government and put financial affairs in order and then seek out

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[86] Other positions are appointed by council. Pennsylvania Manual, v. 117

[87] The Commonwealth's Constitution grants the state authority to create and enforce legislation specific to the function of local government. In 1936 the mayor noted that prior to becoming a Third-class city, New Kensington's tax collector made upwards of $12,000 a year, but the straight city salary standard set the salary at $2,000 a year. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 October 1936.

[88] It appears that concern over Arnold's debt load was a big factor. For more on this see *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 October 1936. The majority of discussion concerning this matter comes from the August – October 1936 editions of the paper.

[89] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 10 July 1936.

a merger with New Kensington.[90] But before this could be done there was a need to more closely examine the issues of city status and the benefits of consolidation.

One of the driving forces involved in the matter was the Arnold Business Men's Association who organized a committee to study the two issues.[91] The committee found that shifting to a city form of government would provide for needed cost savings; however, they noted that additional cost savings might not materialize with consolidation.[92] Such financial considerations became the base for the anti-consolidation camp's arguments. Their three points of contention were that Arnold would have to pay out more for education through taxes; that altered tax structures may prevent new business from locating in the town; and, future consolidation would mean the dissolution of community identity.

But not all Association members were anti-consolidation. For example, Orlando Marini noted that the advantages of consolidation were about more than finances. He argued that consolidation "would unify the people into one community, a solid voting unit, and perhaps lead to more representation ... eliminate bickering between the two towns ... [and] be the only way in which we would ever get a bridge across the

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[90] The Committee canvassed Arnold's neighborhoods to disseminate information regarding the Third-class city issue and answer resident questions. They also began their lobby for consolidation.

[91] The Arnold Business Men's Association often partnered with the Arnold Chamber of Commerce. In one instance they purchased an abandoned lumber yard for future business opportunities. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 24 September 1936.

[92] A point of contention appeared to be the increased costs of teacher and school administrator salaries. The identity issue was tied to fire service but the importance of this identity is not evident. Those opposed to Third-class city/consolidation believed that a consolidated school system would not "develop leaders." *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 and 22 October 1936.

[Allegheny] river here at Eighteenth St."[93] There was power in consolidation – the citizens would benefit from the power and strength a consolidated city would have in brokering for services with county and state government. It also goes without saying that a new bridge could be an economic stimulus.

But the Arnold Businessmen's Association publicly opposed the third-class city measure based largely on possible future consolidation issues. Consequently issues became so intertwined that it was believed a vote cast in favor of a third-class city was a vote in favor of consolidation. Many believed that with the Association's opposition it was almost given that the measure would fail. As election day approached each side canvassed neighborhoods and brought in speakers to support their position.[94] The week before the election organized labor, represented by the Allegheny Valley Central Labor Union, came out to campaign for the measure and quite possibly as a result it passed by a 400 vote margin. If so, this is certainly an indication of union influence among the community's aluminum and glass workers and a rejection of business influence in community and governmental affairs.

Proponents were elated and reiterated the benefits – set salary schedules for cities under 15,000, more structured organization to government that would minimize factional bickering, and eventual consolidation with New Kensington.[95] But opposition did not

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[93] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 October 1936. It was claimed that consolidation would actually raise the salaries of government and school administrators. The increase in school administration/teacher salaries appeared to be of particular concern for those opposing consolidation.

[94] Jeannette was also voting to change from a borough to a Third-class city, and like Arnold, it was a hot issue. New Kensington's Mayor Burns went and spoke to them about the benefits, while Monessen's mayor and a representative from Greensburg came to Arnold to speak in support of the measure. Mayor Burns stressed the salary savings. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 October 1936.

end with the election as within a month a group of opponents filed a petition with the county and asked a judge to set aside the charter election. Groups on each side mobilized for the forthcoming legal battle. Labor's Committee for a Third-Class City aligned with the Arnold Citizen's Consolidation Committee and moved to hire attorneys to defend the vote.[96] Court proceedings carried into 1939 with those opposed fighting the ruling of a judge independently appointed by the State Supreme Court which validated the 1936 election. In August 1939 the state issued Arnold a third-class city charter, while those opposed waged a losing battle all the way to the State Supreme Court.[97] Arnold began operating as a third-class city in 1940.

The final results of the election were a mixed bag. Arnold became a modern, streamlined, third-class city. And, it retained its identity. But, knowingly or not, Arnold cut off any future possibility to grow – geographically or economically. With New Kensington bordering it on three sides and the Allegheny River on the fourth, there were no available lands for Arnold to annex. There was no room for significant commercial or industrial development let alone new housing stock. Arnold still depended upon New Kensington for certain city services. Without consolidation Arnold essentially remained

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[95] The total vote was 1776 to 1312. Voter turn out was exceptionally high for this election, and was attributed to the presidential vote. Congestion at the polls in both New Kensington and Arnold were representative of record-breaking voter turn out in western Pennsylvania. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 3 and 4 November 1936.

[96] Their grievance was based on two claims – that the election ballots were illegal, and that at least 900 to 1000 people were not able to vote due to heavy traffic at the polls. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2, 4, 7, 16, 17 December 1936. Apparently the ballots were labeled "for" and "against" instead of "yes" and "no," and reports of December's court arguments center on the language of the ballots. The *Dispatch* called this issue and vote "one of the most disputed in the borough's long history of political turbulence."

[97] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 12 July and 25 August 1939. It is interesting to note that an article in the September 9, 1939 edition of the *Dispatch* lists the names of the individuals who filed the petition to separate Arnold from New Kensington in 1895. Many business leaders were behind this movement – Chambers Glass Company, Union Supply Company and others.

an island – economically, politically, and socially isolated by voters' own design.

Housing and Slum Clearance

During the twentieth-century, the government's involvement in providing the nation's citizens affordable housing – specifically low-cost public housing – gradually changed from the Progressive Era through the Great Depression. Organizational involvement from local to national levels varied given that organization's interest. Local communities' actions reflected these trends and responded to changes in the federal government's attitude towards public housing. New Kensington's experience is similar to other communities during this time span. But in this community organized labor was the driving force behind New Kensington's push for low-cost public housing. This section will broadly review New Kensington's attitude towards housing in a national context. A more detailed discussion of organized labor's influence will be had in chapter three.

According to Gail Radford, housing development prior to the Great Depression was "very responsive" to market demand. The rate at which it was built and the quality of construction was stimulated by demand brought on increased population, increased wages, and the development of the suburbs. The quality of construction varied upon the shifts in cost of building materials and the availability of commercial loans.[98] With the exception of World War I, the federal government largely stayed out of the low-cost public housing market until the Great Depression. Consequently the matter was left to

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[98] Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): chapter one.

local communities, corporations (i.e. company towns), urban reformers, real estate interests, philanthropic organizations, and/or urban reformers. A belief in American Individualism stressed pride in individual home ownership over European-style communal housing developments touted by low-cost housing proponents.

Industrialization and urbanization created population densities in communities which were unsustainable by existing older housing stock. During the Progressive Era local philanthropic organizations and urban reformers were responsible for agitating for housing codes and the construction of low-cost housing. The emphasis was on tenement housing. Organizations like the Anti-Tuberculosis League based their arguments for ordinances to regulate housing sanitation for health reasons. Ordinances were local and emphasized rent control to keep housing affordable and code compliance to keep it clean and safe. In his study of Cincinnati, Robert Fairbanks explains how in the 1920s reformers had to fight machine politics and slumlords to better the quality of life for those living in tenements but their efforts had unfortunate consequences. Builders and landlords found tenement regulation and city ordinances to be incredibly burdensome and consequently they refused to construct new tenements thus exacerbating housing problems.[99]

Many organizations pressed for housing reforms such as tenement regulations and sanitation ordinances partially out of concern for those living in poor slum conditions, but there were also those motivated by the desire to contain and control the chaos arising out

[99] Fairbanks, 61-69.

of rapid industrialization and urbanization.[100] For example, in Pittsburgh the Kingsley House social settlement partnered with the Civic Club, Chamber Commerce and Civic Commission to address poor housing conditions in the city. Roy Lubove explains that this private, voluntary initiative was viewed by involved business and professional leaders as an opportunity to "exert greater control over the total community environment."[101]

Robert Fairbanks also emphasizes how campaigns to regulate tenements and construct public housing were more of an attempt to create communities complementary to a vision of city planning – one that emphasized neighborhoods. In the 1920s, civic organizations such as the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce advocated city planning and strict tenement regulation to encourage single home ownership in planned communities of low-cost worker housing designed as neighborhood units. In this case there was a drive to have these communities developed on the city's periphery. Such communities happened to be too far physically removed from the workers' factories with rents usually out of financial reach.[102]

A housing shortage during World War I influenced a Congressional appropriation of $110 million to the Labor Department's United States Housing Corporation. This entity initially tried to improve existing housing stock but then shifted to work with local builders to construct war worker housing. Despite the allocation of federal monies this

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[100] Fairbanks, 9-11, chapters one and two; Lawrence J. Vale, *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000): chapter one.

[101] Roy Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: Government, Business and Environmental Change, Vol. I* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969, reprint 1995): 28.

[102] Fairbanks, 42-55.

effort was still largely a private enterprise. Overall it was not as successful a program as had been hoped as only a few projects were developed and most were not completed until after the war.[103] The program's critics believed that the concept of federally funded housing was too socialistic and therefore at odds with the tradition of American individualism and the value placed on individual home ownership.[104] Federal Government retreated from any housing program leaving housing shortage issues to be dealt with at a local level.[105]

There is no indication from reviewed sources that New Kensington sought federal funding for worker housing during World War I. The community did have an increased number of people involved in war production at various factories and Alcoa did provide temporary housing for single men. Like other communities, New Kensington had a post-war housing boom. Housing construction was a private concern promoted by real estate developers who emphasized individual home ownership.[106]

In doing so they also sold the city to outsiders. Selling points included the typical standards of proximity to schools and the industrial district, as well as superior city

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[103] Radford, chapter one. Congresses measures on rent control were more successful. For more on the events and detail surrounding federal involvement in housing during WWI see, Eric J. Karolak, "'No Idea of Doing Anything Wonderful' The Labor-Crisis Origins of National Housing Policy and the Reconstruction of Working-Class Community, 1917-1919" in John F. Bauman, Roger Biles, Kristin M. Szylvian, *From Tenements to Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth Century America* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000): 60-80.

[104] Jackson, 192.

[105] Lawrence J. Vale, *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000): 6.

[106] For example see advertisement on page four in July 30, 1918 of the *New Kensington Daily Dispatch.*

services and multiple diverse social institutions.[107] The W. Riley Alter agency promoted New Kensington as "The Queen of Westmoreland County" and in doing so promoted the town's industrial identity – a community of "20 factories employing nearly 10,000" – and situated it as the center city to satellite communities from three different counties. One W. Riley Alter advertisement included a sixteen-point five year prediction for the city. Three of these points emphasized: bridges connecting New Kensington and surrounding areas to communities across the River in Allegheny County; improved roadways to the county seat and industrial towns in the Allegheny Valley; and, the three boroughs consolidated into a third-class city.[108] The promise of New Kensington was its industry, its ideal location, and its potential strength as a large regional commercial hub under a consolidated city. Local real estate developers no doubt saw consolidation or the future possibility of consolidation as a great way to market their real estate – to promise a future owner the forthcoming benefits of city services.[109]

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[107] Representative of the basically daily real estate ads running during this time period can be found: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 29 March 1918, 27 December 1918, 29 March 1918, 11 April 1919, 1 August 1919. The March 29, 1918 edition features a real estate section and a multi-page promotional article on the New Kensington School District.

[108] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 29 March 1918. The *Dispatch* also promoted housing development. Aside from meetings coverage, they ran lengthy promotional stories hyping not only the housing shortage but also the effects of a shortage – as a barrier to industrial and economic growth. The paper also promoted the benefits of home ownership. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 29 March 1918. The paper ran an interesting front page promotional logo which claimed "More than one million people reside within a radius of twenty five miles of New Kensington." This logo defines not only accessible markets, but the boundaries of the Alle-Kiski Valley, and placed New Kensington at the center of four counties. It went northeast beyond Kittanning and southwest to Clairton, below Pittsburgh.

[109] Jackson, 146. He makes this point in his claim that it is difficult to gauge land speculator's support for annexation, noting that they may very well have worked behind the scenes. Regardless, developers and local residents took the initiative to resolve the issue. By April of 1919 a massive building campaign was underway as developers perhaps anticipated New Kensington's continued annexation of land. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 11 April 1919. Developers worked up the hill district in New Kensington and Arnold, and then jumped Freeport Road and moved into Lower Burrell Township.

But not all could afford what Riley and his peers were selling. The shortage of affordable housing was a concern for many. It is not clear from reviewed evidence if urban reformers were behind New Kensington's push for housing reform. The *Dispatch* only identifies those behind the drive for housing reform as "citizens." These citizens took their concerns to the Board of Trade, who in turn formed a committee to study the issue. Among those on the committee was W.C. Walley, real estate businessman and future mayor of New Kensington. The Board took up the housing shortage matter but was more concerned with providing moderately priced rather than low-cost housing. They proposed a housing plan comprised of four to six rooms with a bath priced at $1600 with a $200 down payment and the rest on $22.50 monthly installments. In promoting its plan the Board emphasized it as a not-for-profit enterprise – with the sole aim to alleviate the housing shortage. The *Dispatch* published a mail-in response form for interested parties to meet with a Board representative.[110] How many people responded to the survey is unknown nor is the outcome of the Board's plan. However, if the Riley agency's advertisement gives any indication then the housing shortage in New Kensington was addressed through the construction of moderately priced homes by private builders. For its part, New Kensington council's concerns were focused on the growing deteriorating old housing stock in the flats which was giving rise to slum conditions. Council focused on putting forth orders to raze uninhabitable buildings.[111]

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[110] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 30 January 1918 and 2 August 1918. The Board then organized a citizens' committee to further investigate and develop plans concerning the matter, and then held a series of informational meetings. What happened at these meetings and what was resolved is not explicitly reported in the newspaper.

[111] Representative of concerns brought before Council was W.H. Yost, Arnold resident statements regarding the poor conditions of housing at 1126 Third Ave. on behalf of "single men's quarters."

This was typical of the 1920s as the responsibility for slum clearance rested with local governments and housing authorities.

As the decade progressed, many across the nation began to realize that federal intervention was needed to address the growing housing crisis. According to Gail Radford, in the 1920s a diversity of groups – from urban reformers to the Home Builders Association to the Central Labor Union - agitated for the federal government's involvement to assist with slum clearance matters and the shortage of affordable housing. Urban reformers and unions saw the action of European governments in providing affordable housing as a model for what the federal government could do and finance the development of public housing communities to be largely populated by the struggling yet respectable working-class. For their part the builders and real estate interests sought government intervention in the form of tax relief and mortgage financing. The Hoover Administration sided more with the business interests, though, and government promoted private home ownership under its "Better Homes for America" campaign which was bolstered by standardized housing codes and building materials.[112]

Nationally, over the course of the 1920s housing costs rose five and a half percent greater than the cost of living. The new housing construction market went into decline.[113] There was a ninety-percent drop in private housing construction from 1925 through the start of the Great Depression. By 1931 the commercial real estate market

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[112] Radford, chapter two, esp. 36-37, 52-53. For more on the detail surrounding the Hoover Administration's policies concerning housing and the Better Homes for America movement see Janet Hutchinson, "Shaping Housing and Enhancing Consumption: Hoover's Interwar Housing Policy" in John F. Bauman, Roger Biles, Kristin M. Szylvian, *From Tenements to Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth Century America* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000): 81-101.

[113] Radford, chapter one.

could no longer remain a viable industry to serve the country's housing needs. As with other industries, the building trades were marked with severe unemployment. People who may have been adversaries in the past – urban reformers, labor unions, contractors, and so forth – found common cause in rebuilding the industry; but, their approaches to this industry were varied. They differed in their approach to putting construction workers back on the job to providing low-cost housing for workers to debating over what types of residences should be constructed.[114]

As the Depression deepened President Herbert Hoover was forced to involve the federal government in a more significant way. In 1931 he convened the President's National Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership. The results of this conference favored the private homebuilder and the working man and focused on affordable home loans and lowered construction costs.[115] Hoover's other efforts involved the Federal Home Loan Bank Act, which provided federally backed home loans. It established the Home Loan Bank Board System and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation which gave loans for slum clearance and low-rent housing projects. But these ventures were not as effective as hoped.[116] For many workers, whose labor was unsteady and pay unsecured, these loans were largely unobtainable.[117]

New Kensington's housing market fell into a similar slump. The town, like other communities, did not see much benefit from Hoover's initiatives. Like most

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[114] Vale, 155-156.

[115] Jackson, 194.

[116] Radford, 88.

[117] Ibid., 53.

communities seeking assistance from the federal government, help for New Kensington came with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. According to Radford, the Roosevelt administration "liberalized" the Reconstruction Finance Corporation by providing grants and altering terms of loans. However, this was not as successful as hoped and only lasted four years. But from this experience other more useful programs were developed. For example, the Roosevelt administration also expanded funding for slum clearance projects, which was especially popular with city governments and had the support of urban voters, a number of who were second generation Americans whom had grown up in substandard tenement housing as well as workers looking to secure decent, affordable housing.[118]

The Depression exacerbated both New Kensington's slum conditions and its affordable housing shortage. Various groups brought before council their concerns regarding both unsafe structures and limited low-cost housing stock. At a March 15, 1932 meeting the Chamber of Commerce presented council with a resolution requesting their cooperation in addressing the issue of unsanitary housing. The Chamber was concerned that a number of unsanitary homes received funds from the Emergency Relief Committees and were not only a health hazard but also a "moral let-down" to the community. The Chamber's intent was to clean up existing housing stock located in close proximity to the commercial district. Relief agencies were a hindrance to their goals in that the agencies' rent payments came with no demands – slumlords were given money and were not required to improve their properties. Furthermore, deteriorating

[118] New loans through the RFC were secured for up to twenty-five of the cost, restructuring the mortgages to thirty-five years and made these loans and grants available to public groups. Radford, chapter four.

buildings inhabited by relief clients reflected poorly on the community. The council responded to the Chamber's concerns by forwarding their petition to the Street Committee and Ordinance Officer.[119]

While council passed off Chamber's concerns they could not do so with a natural disaster. It was the Johnstown Flood and its aftermath that motivated community leaders to consider more than talk and shuffle around petitions. And, it was the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 which provided them the means to act.

The Johnstown Flood of 1889 was considered at that time to be the worst natural disaster in American history. But the winter thaw in 1936 caused considerable damage to western Pennsylvania communities along the Allegheny and its tributaries. The slow rising waters gave Alcoa and other riverfront industries plenty of time to make adjustments and move machinery.[120] Damages in New Kensington were mild compared to other communities and was contained to the downtown flats.[121] The flood brought the living conditions of flats' residents to the attention of many for the first time, including middle-class women relief volunteers. Many of those owning flood zone housing could not afford to tear down damaged structures let alone repair them.[122] It

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[119] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 15, 1932).

[120] Alcoa workers moved all equipment to higher levels in the plants, the New Kensington plant and T.A.C.U. facilities. The Arnold plant was untouched as it sat 21 feet higher. Much of the production was shifted to Arnold. The warehouse facilities were well stocked so the primary post-flood task was cleaning up the shipping room to limit order interruptions.

[121] Early estimates from the *Dispatch* have about 4,000 left homeless in the A-K Valley. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 21 March 1936. According to the September 11, 1936 issue of the *Dispatch* N.L. Lichetenwalner, state director for the National Emergency Council estimated the spring food damage at $212,535,010, with Westmoreland County's share at $2,304,415.

[122] A March 28 *Dispatch* editorial on slum housing in the flats notes that this was the first time many of the middle class women of the community visited this area. The editorial noted, "It is almost a case of half

was argued that new housing should be built away from the flats in the "healthful surroundings" of the rural periphery, which is much like the urban reformers' desires in Robert Fairbanks' Cincinnati. Others believed it should be built in close proximity to the factories in which they worked. But current market conditions prevented such housing from being built along the flats. A *Dispatch* editorial argues that real estate developers were so much out for profit that they were ignoring the profit potential found in the low income housing market. Cheaper property was available only on the rural fringe. Proponents believed that this housing should be affordable to the average worker.[123]

A local welfare agency director's December 1936 appeal to council highlighted a problem not readily seen through relief client evictions. Conditions of the Johnstown flood left local relief agencies unable to cope with mounting problem and they pressured council to seek out federal help.[124] This aid came through the United States Housing Act of 1937 also known as the Low Rent Housing Act or the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act. Among other things Wagner-Steagall tied the development of low-cost public housing to slum clearance. It also created the U.S. Housing Authority, which in turn has the authority to create branch agencies in the states, which were necessary for communities to partake in government housing programs. The Authority provided funds to these

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the city not knowing how the other half lives." The editorial's main focus was to stress the importance of tearing down existing housing and build more "wholesome surroundings." To do so would be part of a progressive city plan and which would show "a sense of pride and an interest in the well-being of those least able to help themselves."

[123] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 9 May 1936. The paper continued its campaign for progressive working class housing. Editorials on this subject were numerous and consistent in message. For comparison see the October 13, 1936 edition.

[124] Apparently George McAllister supervised the WPA real property survey which was presented to council and noted that the survey found that there were over 800 multi-family homes in the community. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 7 December 1936.

agencies for slum clearance and housing projects, as well as annual contributions for maintenance of low income housing.[125] At a September 21, 1937 council meeting, just twenty days after Wagner-Steagall's passage, citizen groups were already pressing local government to seek these funds. For local government Wagner-Steagall was a win-win. Federal monies enabled council to address community demands for low-cost housing while pursuing their interest in slum clearance with tremendous help from government to lessen the strain on already tight budgets.

One of the first, if not the first, community organizations pressing the city for affordable housing was organized labor. As will be explained in chapter three, organized labor's greatest contribution to the community was this drive to establish a local housing authority to provide for low-cost housing. In 1937 organized labor representatives approached council and encouraged them to use provisions of the Wagner-Steagall Act to establish a local housing authority.[126] Four months after labor's initial suggestion council formally acknowledged the city's need for low-cost housing and the creation of a local housing authority.[127] But as Mayor Dick Reeser was set to attend a meeting in Washington, D.C. concerning the city's proposed housing authority, the council

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[125] This Act was named for House Representative Henry Steagall of Alabama and New York Senator Robert F. Wagner. U.S. Housing Act of 1937, Act of September 1, 1937, ch. 896, 50 Stat. 888. The quest for affordable housing was mainly to service the worker, not necessarily serve the poor. Under Wagner-Steagall, according to Lawrence Vale, "public housing metamorphosed into a decentralized program of slum clearance, unemployment relief, and low-rent housing construction, coordinated by the United States Housing Authority (USHA)." Vale, 182.

[126] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (September 21, 1937). The group was represented by Keith Sward, Allegheny Valley Industrial Union Council. The partnerships they formed to accomplish this will be discussed in chapter three.

[127] Ibid., (January 24, 1938). Within a year of Wagner-Steagall's passage 221 communities had established housing authorities. Jackson, 219-225.

authorized the use of city street department trucks, at the request of Community Fund officials, to assist with evictions from rental properties.[128] Such actions cause speculation as to whom council sought to serve through low-cost housing. Most public housing advocates in the period believed that low-cost housing was for the benefit of the working-class, not necessarily the poor. But in New Kensington help to deal with the mounting low-cost housing problem could not come soon enough.

Organized labor across the country was involved in the low-cost public housing movement – specifically targeted for workers. Gail Radford discusses the Carl Mackley House development in Philadelphia as an example of a modern worker housing development created under the New Deal. In 1933 the Public Works Administration's Housing Division began providing loans to private interests for construction and management of low-rent housing developments. The Philadelphia-based American Federation of Hosiery Workers sought out this funding and worked collaboratively with the Philadelphia Building Trades Council and Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius to design and build the model housing complex. The development hit many road bumps in its construction: difficulty in obtaining land near the industrial district; real estate interests who did not like the competition; fears that the project was socialistic in nature and so forth. For its part the union mounted a successful massive public relations campaign to combat these matters by taking their case to city council meetings and the newspaper.[129] New Kensington's workers, specifically the Aluminum Workers' of

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[128] Ibid., (September 20, 1938).

[129] The union was radical, but this radicalism was tempered when complex management required a mix of residents – not so much to suppress radical thought, but to safeguard the complex against bankruptcy in the face of unstable worker wages. Radford, chapter 5.

America, would find themselves in a similar struggle and be just as successful.

Wagner-Steagall was the vehicle though which New Kensington received its housing authority and access to federal funds for slum clearance and housing construction. However, the community's first housing project came through organized labor's pursuit of federal funds under the 1940 Lanham Public War Housing Act. Unlike housing provided by Wagner-Steagall, Lanham set aside low cost housing for those involved in national defense activities.[130] According to Lawrence Vale, while the push for public housing became a patriotic outgrowth of the war effort, some still believed that such low-cost housing projects would undermine property values.[131] Such was one of the concerns of New Kensington's residents. In 1941 East Kensington, a suburban section of New Kensington, was selected as the site for the defense housing project which would eventually be named Aluminum City Terrace (ACT).[132] East Kensington residents opposed the project as they believed low-cost housing implied low income housing which in their mind would house undesirable persons. Consequently East Kensington residents frequented council meetings to air their grievances and found they were not alone in their growing points of opposition to the project. Some council

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[130] This is discussed in more detail in chapter three.

[131] Vale, 201-233.

[132] At one point the mayor and council suggested the project be named after former burgess/mayor Dan Burns. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (May 22, 1941). At the June 30, 1941 meeting of council the name was changed to The Aluminum City Terraces of New Kensington, a name selected by the local Defense Housing Committee.

members voiced reservations over the national origins of the Bauhaus architects, Walter Gropius and Marcel Breur. [133]

Another concern facing council was the costs associated with the new federal programs. Some people feared that the city could not afford to both undertake a low-cost housing project and address its concerns with slum clearance. As the ACT project moved forward Mayor W.C. Walley, who was also a real estate developer, pushed council to repeal a slum clearance and low rent housing project in consideration of the city's financial troubles. He argued that the city was already considering reductions in city services due to increased debt and could not afford the expenditures despite the subsidies from the federal government.[134] Council agreed to this measure and notice was sent to the Westmoreland County and federal housing authorities. The project appeared to be at a standstill.

Further complicating this situation was the fact that the project was a shared venture between New Kensington, Arnold and the aluminum workers' union – the Aluminum Workers of America. In April of 1942 the City of Arnold notified council that it would not pay its share of preliminary expenses.[135] As will be discussed further in

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[133] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (May 20, 1941). At this meeting, for example, East Kensington residents and land owners presented a petition and resolution opposing the plan, as did the Ladies of the Community Circle. The majority of Council discussion on the Aluminum City Terrace project concern the nuts and bolts of it – paving of roads, coordination with county, state and federal housing authorities, for example, New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (April 21, 1942).

[134] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (January 6, April 7 and May 5, 1942). Walley lobbied the community to support for a $150,000 bond sale proposal. At the December 19, 1944 council meeting Walley reported on his trip to the League of Third Class Cities Convention that "the average in cities in liquidating their bonded debt was 18% but the city of New Kensington is 40%."

[135] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (April 13, 1942). Each party was responsible for $173.70.

chapter three, the Aluminum Workers of America pushed the plan forward, despite a seemingly endless number of concerns and objections from the value of real estate to the to the paving of streets to the problem of recouping city costs. With this latter concern, after much discussion, it was determined that units in the Aluminum City Terrace would be taxed the same as private property.[136] While the city did receive tax income from the project, real estate developers like Walley most likely saw it as a missed opportunity for greater personal profit.

Aluminum City Terrace was completed in 1942 but concern over the project continued throughout the decade. How it was maintained after construction reflected council's - and private real estate interests' - attitudes towards the development and its residents. Residents complained about the lack of police and fire protection, as well as waste removal services. Emergency vehicles did not have ready access to the complex as its unpaved lower entry road often remained closed. East Kensington residents aggressively pressed council for city services from a dog catcher do something about the packs of dogs running wild to police patrols to investigate reports that "women and girls are being molested and that hoodlums look into the windows and throw things."[137] In general, it appears that city services did not (consciously or not) include the Aluminum City Terrace. While the mayor authorized the police chief to "send police up at intervals"

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[136] According to council minutes, County Assessors appraised the Defense Housing Project at $512,000. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (May 5 and October 20, 1942).

[137] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (February 14, 1944).

and connect the Terrace to police radio, citizen complaints still persisted.[138] Whether it was intentional on the part of the mayor to make the housing plan's environment look as bad as possible is uncertain, but not unlikely.

Much changed in New Kensington between 1918 and 1942. The city's flats became the center for vice and other illegal enterprise. The work of criminal entrepreneur Mike Zervos established an organized underworld in the community controlled by an ethnic syndicate. Local government proved itself sympathetic to such activities and as a consequence community activism to remedy these social ills was unsuccessful. The residents of the tri-boroughs settled the matter of consolidation at the polls with New Kensington and Arnold to remain at odds in the future. A consolidated Parnassus and New Kensington successfully pursued a more efficient form of government as a third-class city. Continued industrialization and increased population crowded the urban core and the city, like much of the country, faced the problem of a developing slum as well as a housing shortage. With the advent of New Deal programs New Kensington found its answer to both slum clearance and low-cost housing construction.

By the 1930s three major institutions had firmly rooted themselves in the community – industry, organized crime, and organized labor. Alcoa was by far the most dominant industry – not only in terms of numbers employed but also in their influence on city government. Organized crime grew out of early vice activities in the flats and moved

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[138] Residents continued to complain about packs of dogs roaming the project and juvenile delinquency, specifically boys shooting guns in the woods between the Terrace and Memorial Park. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (April 3 and May 1, 1945).

from the apparently loosely knit Mike Zervos' organization to the tightly controlled Mannarino Organization. Organized labor was most strongly represented by the aluminum workers, namely the Aluminum Workers of America. These three institutions – aluminum workers, Alcoa, and the Mannarino Organization – and their influence in the community are the focus of the next three chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

Aluminum Workers: Contribution and Chaos

In *Less than Forever: The Rise and Decline of Union Solidarity in Western Pennsylvania, 1914-1948*, Carl Meyerhuber argues that "the alleged power of Big Labor in the [Alle-Kiski Valley] was an illusion."[1] He notes that New Deal solidarity was short lived, perhaps five years, making it an "aberration" when compared to that of Pittsburgh and other industrial communities in western Pennsylvania. His treatment of New Kensington's aluminum workers chronicles the organizational rivalries between the AFL and CIO, the amalgamation of the Aluminum Workers of America with the United Steelworkers of America, and the intra-group conflict which prevented any sustained workers' union solidarity and influence within the community.[2] This analysis is certainly true, though Meyerhuber's is a very limited study. He fails to strongly anchor these activities in the context of community politics and affairs.

Aluminum workers were leaders in the community and advocates for good housing – primarily for workers, but their efforts laid the groundwork for future housing projects. Partnerships between labor and civic leaders were instrumental in establishing the Westmoreland County Housing Authority and its New Kensington office. Consequently it can be said that labor played a significant role in shaping the city's attitude towards state and federal slum clearance and low income housing programs.

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[1] Carl I. Meyerhuber, *Less than Forever: The Rise and Decline of Union Solidarity in Western Pennsylvania* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press), 1987.

[2] Ibid., 9-12, 179-199; Carl I. Meyerhuber Jr., "Organizing Alcoa: The Aluminum Workers' Union in Pennsylvania's Allegheny Valley, 1900-1971," *Pennsylvania History* 48, no. 3 (July 1981): 195-219.

However, tensions among ruling parties within the aluminum workers' local did more than just divide the rank-and-file. In fact, it is arguable as to whether or not the membership cared much for the politics of the union. Drawn out intra-group conflict, symbolized by the 1948 Frank Hill executive board affair, did more damage for the union's reputation in the community at a critical time. After the Hill affair labor struggled to regain a sense of a workers' community and to influence policy decisions in the city.

This chapter examines the role organized labor played in the community, specifically its quest to secure low-cost housing in the community. It also discusses the implications of one intra-union conflict beyond the union hall.

Alcoa, Organized Labor, and Community Relations in the 1930s

Corporate historian George David Smith chronicles Alcoa's rise from a small Pittsburgh-based workshop to a global power. His treatment of the New Kensington Works focuses on the plant's and the company's rapid growth and he uses Meyerhuber's scholarship to contextualize early labor relations. As noted in earlier chapters, New Kensington was situated as Alcoa's largest and oldest plant, but just one of a growing number. Alcoa's treatment of its workers was considered generous for the region as they often paid the highest wage rate, had a solid benefits package and was known for its productive in-house grievance policy.[3] As discussed in chapter one, Alcoa derailed early unionization attempts by waiting out strikes and improving its corporate welfare

[3] Carr, 193-200; Smith, 119, 181-186; Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa." They had pension, hospitalization and life insurance programs.

programs. Consequently Alcoa had the upper hand in labor relations until the early 1930s when aluminum workers were drawn in to the national industrial union movement.

In the early years of the Great Depression Alcoa did its best to head off worker discontent. In September 1931 Alcoa president Roy A. Hunt issued a ten percent wage reduction for all employees and suggested that workers be "devoutly thankful" that this was the worst of it and asked for "loyal support" during these hard times.[4] On the surface Hunt's notice speaks to a paternalistic relationship cultivated over forty years, maybe guilting the employees into taking the cut while thanking them for understanding why it had to be done. But the company's next move signaled that this approach was not working. Sometime after Hunt's wage reduction notice, anti-union propaganda started to circulate in Alcoa's various plants. A document titled "Beware of Strange Gods" promoted the advantages of Alcoa's employee programs while cautioning workers against labor organizers. The "employee" author claimed that "I prefer to work for the Aluminum Company of America at a much lower rate of pay than I could get at numerous other places."[5]

The author explained that Alcoa did not recognize labor unions because they were controlled by men who were detached from the rank-and-file and cared little for the worker and their family. He told workers that "You should ask yourself and answer for yourself whether the persons who are getting up this union have enough interest in your personal welfare to spend their time and money in order to do you a good turn or have

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[4] The duration of this reduction was not noted. Memorandum, S.A. Copp to all employees, September 28, 1931, box 39 folder 9, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[5] "Beware of Strange Gods," box 39 folder 9, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. This most likely indicates wage disparities among Alcoa's various plants.

they a selfish motive in doing what they are trying to do."[6] The aluminum workers pushed for unionization despite the warning against "strange gods." However, many workers would ask the author's question of their American Federation of Labor (AFL) organizer in the 1930s, and which the local's executive board in the following decades asked of their Aluminum Workers of America (AWA) and United Steel Workers of America (USWA) leadership.

The Allegheny Valley Central Labor Union (AVCLU) was behind the summer 1933 aluminum worker organizing drive.[7] The AVCLU's efforts translated into the chartering of an AFL-affiliated Aluminum Workers Union Local 18356. The local's early leadership faced tough competition in Alcoa's company union, the Company Protective Plan, but they emerged victorious in August 1933.[8] This was no doubt the result of Section 7(a) of the New Deal's National Industrial Recovery Act which gave the workers the right to choose union representation and collective bargaining.[9] By November Alcoa management, including that of its subsidiaries, recognized the union of roughly 3,000 members.[10] But the negotiations which followed were not so easy.

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa", 198. Meyerhuber's article focuses on the resurgent unionism in the context of New Deal policies. His work deals more with the ideological struggles of labor versus capital.

[8] The AFL union was initially successful when on August 25, 1933 it won 2897 to 831. Workers organized over unsafe work conditions and Alcoa's informal, somewhat arbitrary hiring practices. Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 199; Letter from union to Pennsylvania Department of Commerce, September 27, 1934, box 8, folder 30, AWA Papers, PSU. The local was chartered on August 1, 1933

[9] The NIRA was passed in June 1933. For more on New Deal see: William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932-1940* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

[10] Notice from J.E. Sharp, vice president, Aluminum Seal Company, November 7, 1933, box 19 folder 22; Correspondence from Roy Hunt to AWU No. 18356 Executive Committee, December 16, 1933, box 19 folder 16, AWA Papers, PSU; Meyerhuber, *Less Than Forever*, 184.

In correspondence with the union's executive committee, Roy Hunt stated that the company agreed to recognize the union and provide it with bulletin board space in the shop, but rejected requests for a formal contract and dues check-off. Union strength depended on the check-off as it secured the financial health of the local. The company also rejected workers' demand for a twenty-five percent wage increase, citing tough economic times, and reminded them of a recent eleven percent wage increase.[11] Hunt explained that Alcoa's compliance with National Recovery Act codes governing employment practices, plus competition with other metals industries, complicated both plant operations as well as labor relations. Despite these issues Hunt promised to keep wages competitive with those in the community as well as like industries.[12] Hunt's position balanced an acceptance of workers' right to organize with the company's economic circumstances while attempting to build a relationship based on their past paternalistic practices. While they may have just been tactics designed to stall negotiations these gestures went a long way with the community.[13]

Alcoa did not keep and control New Kensington as a company town like it did Alcoa, Tennessee or Bauxite, Arkansas. But the community knew that its economic well-being was tied to the company's success and its failures. The company cultivated relationships with local government, civic and other community leaders from the start.

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[11] Correspondence from Roy Hunt to AWU No. 18356 Executive Committee, December 16, 1933, box 19 folder 16, AWA Papers, PSU.

[12] Ibid. Alcoa actually had the upper hand in New Deal negotiations with the aluminum workers since it was influential in drafting the codes which governed the aluminum industry.

[13] There were many tactics used by companies to hinder union power under Section 7(a) including firing activists, bargaining with anti-union employees while dragging out negotiations with union officials. Robert H. Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions* 2nd ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1994): 37.

Consequently the company had the support of local leaders in settling labor disputes and helping to maintain a compliant and complacent workforce. One such leader was Fr. Nicola Fusco, pastor of St. Peter's Church, which was the core of New Kensington's Italian community. Fusco led not only the rapidly growing Italian immigrant community but also roughly fifty to sixty percent of Alcoa's workforce.[14]

By the 1930s St. Peter's congregation had outgrown its initial small wooden church and established a new building campaign. The parish found generous donors not only in the congregants but also from industrialists and bankers. Pittsburgh's Mellon family, who as noted in chapter one were early Alcoa investors, donated a "fabulous sum of money" as well as salvaged construction materials from their soon to be razed Pittsburgh mansion. The structure built from the Mellon mansion and the parishioners' sweat was incredible compared to many simple wooden churches in the town; and, parishioners marveled at the ability of their pastor to work for the good of the parish.[15] Given the donation it is no surprise that Fusco often sided with Alcoa in labor-management relations. For example, it was noted that during the 1930s Fusco criticized union activities during mass while he allegedly mediated labor-management disputes from within the rectory walls. In the 1940s his service would be rewarded when Alcoa's

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[14] Perhaps 4,000 Italians at peak. Carol Billman and Christine Mueseler, "'It Was More Than a Job ... It Was a Way of Life' Alcoa, New Kensington" (Johnstown, PA: America's Industrial Heritage Project, The Folklife Division, 1993, photocopied): 52.

[15] Nicola Fusco, *Mount St. Peter: Story of Saint Peter's Church in New Kensington, Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh: St. Joseph's Protectory, 1944), 1-84. On page 53 Fusco called the Mellons "instruments of the hands of God," and noted that, "St. Peter's in Rome had the Colosseum for its quarry. St. Peter's in New Kensington had the Mellon's Home." p. 53

first ethnic foreman promoted from within was a member of St. Peter's Parish.[16]

Fusco's influence over a significant portion of Alcoa's workforce cannot be underestimated. Alcoa must have believed this to be the case to have invested so heavily in church construction as well as selectively appointing its first ethnic foreman from among its parishioners. In one way this is like Ford and other automotive companies' relationships with black churches in Detroit. Thomas Sugrue explains that these industrialists cultivated such relationships to pull the best from the black community to guarantee "that it brought in reliable, long-term workers."[17] Alcoa received the "best" of New Kensington's ethnic groups plus a labor mediator.

Community leaders' support allowed Alcoa's promised wage increases to work for a time. In March 1934, however, 3800 workers took a labor holiday in demand of a reduced work week, increased wages, and the dues check off. Workers accepted a wage increase counteroffer and returned to the job with other issues left to negotiate.[18] The workers' return might have been a sign of faith in both the negotiating ability of the union as well as trust that the company would do the right thing. Negotiations continued through the summer, and while Alcoa agreed to recognize the principles of collective

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[16] Billman and Mueseler, 73-74. Fusco informed Floyd Greco of his upcoming promotion. Meyerhuber also speaks to Fusco's influence and his attempt to exert influence over the early leaders of the Aluminum Workers Union. Meyerhuber, *Less Than Forever*, 184. Drawing on oral history transcripts on deposit at PSU, Meyerhuber recounts the tale of organizer Mary Peli Petringni's refusal of Fusco's offer of a job with the Italian Consulate in Pittsburgh in exchange for an end to her labor activism. It can therefore be asserted that not all Italians in New Kensington were under Fusco's influence.

[17] Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996): 25-26.

[18] Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 202.

bargaining – it had no choice - it refused all other requests. It appeared as though the young union was growing in strength as in August the workers went on strike.[19]

Community attitude towards the situation appeared mixed. Apparently tired of labor unrest, the Chamber of Commerce appealed to the union to work to end the conflict in order to end the "paralysis of all lines of business" which would "spell disaster to many" if it continued. Of course this disaster was one largely befalling the business community. Justification for their appeal rested on their claim that ninety-percent of those working in the town were Alcoa employees. It can be inferred that the Chamber believed labor troubles were caused by the workers who made the choice to strike. It consequently appears that at least in the eyes of the business community, the burden for resolving the labor conflict fell on the union.[20]

Evidence suggests that Alcoa saw this community-labor conflict as an opportunity to reintroduce its workers to the company union - the Aluminum Workers Protective Association (AWPA). The plan had low monthly dues and a generous insurance program thus making it more appealing than what independent unions had to offer. Alcoa may have used NIRA Section 7(a) as rationale behind forming this union and perhaps tried to use it as a way of tempering further organizing tactics.[21] The AWPA had some community support as merchants favored AWPA members over unionists to whom they

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[19] It is interesting to note that while Alcoa did not use any strong arm tactics in dealing with strikes, they may have used company police to maintain their properties. A draft petition to the Arnold borough council requested the removal from the borough's payroll special police positioned at Alcoa's Arnold properties. Draft petition to Arnold Borough Council, August 23, 1934, box 1 folder 2, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[20] Communication from the New Kensington Chamber of Commerce to Aluminum Workers' Union 18356, August 24, 1934 and September 1, 1934, box 19 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

[21] James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980; reprint 1998): 141.

did not offer credit in their stores.[22] Furthermore, support for the AWPA must have gained support within the worker community as in September 1934 union officers requested that the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce not issue the AWPA a charter. This was followed by correspondence to various state and federal agencies requesting assistance to combat a strong company union's organizing campaign.[23] This is an indication of perhaps three different scenarios: there was not strong rank-and-file support for an independent union; workers were loyal to the company; or, workers were choosing sides based on which organization was of greater personal benefit.

Adding to these road blocks was the difficulties Local 18356's leadership had with David Williams, its AFL-appointed organizer. One of the local's complaints was the AFL's lack of support (or what they considered to be appropriate support) in the dispatching of organizers to the area. Another was that the AFL was lukewarm to the idea of organizing aluminum workers industry-wide. The AFL did allow for an international organization of aluminum workers - Aluminum Workers Union of America - but it was tightly controlled by Williams, and its affairs were not conducted in a manner suitable to Local 18356's leaders, namely John Haser and Nick Zonarich. Because of this the local spent more time arguing with the AFL than organizing. This internal conflict

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[22] Foremen also favored the AWPA members. Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 201.

[23] Aluminum Workers' Union letter to Pennsylvania Department of Commerce, September 27, 1934, box 8 folder 30; Aluminum Workers' Union correspondence to John A. Phillip, president, State Federation, October 1, 1934, box 20, folder 22, AWA, PSU. The AFL distributed generic "fact sheets" comparing company unions to AFL unions. For its part the Aluminum Workers' Protective Association underscored the specific benefits – sick pay, insurance – of their organization while the AFL propaganda speaks in generalities. There is no record of the company plan in the open Alcoa records though union correspondence lays out the program: one dollar initiation fee, which covers three months of dues. Dues are twenty-five cents per month, which provides ten dollars per week of sick pay and a death benefit of $100. The union makes the case that such benefits cannot be derived from that monthly dues payment and as evidence that Alcoa was behind the association.

prevented the workers from presenting a unified front at the bargaining table. Alcoa took advantage of this conflict and gave nominal but steady wage increases; and, while they had to recognize the union, they did not have to agree to a dues check-off.[24]

New Deal policies – not the work of Local 18356's leadership – forced Alcoa to deal more directly with the aluminum workers. In an August 14, 1935 agreement undoubtedly pushed forward as a result of the recently passed Wagner Act (National Labor Relations Act), Alcoa recognized the principles of collective bargaining and employee rights to join the union.[25] However, the stability guaranteed by the federal government could not repair the rift between Local 18356 and the AFL. Battles with the AFL destabilized the union's base and by 1935 Local 18356's membership dropped to seventeen.[26] The rank-and-file appeared to prefer the stability and familiarity of the company and its wage concession to the uncertainty and disorganization of the union.

Local leadership did not give up their push for unionization, but they knew their interests were not well represented by the AFL and so they approached the Congress of

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[24] Numerous letters, AWA Papers, PSU. For examples, see: January 17, 1935 letter from AFL organizer David Williams to Paul Howlett, New Kensington union president, box 7 folder 10; September 30, 1936 letter from David Williams to W.B. Gravatt, union board member, box 15 folder 1; March 16, 1937 letter from John Haser, union VP to William Green, AFL President, box 12 folder 9; and March 23, 1937 letter of William Green to Haser, box 6 folder 24. Smith, 182.

[25] Agreement between Aluminum Company of America and All Its Employees, October 14, 1935, box 39 folder 9, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[26] Meyerhuber, "Organizing Alcoa," 204-207. Meyerhuber covers these issues in great detail. The conflict of the New Kensington local with the AFL and its push to affiliate with the CIO can be found in boxes 6, 7, 12, 15, and 19 of the AWA Papers, PSU. A "brief history" of Local No. 18356, very anti-AFL tone and deals nearly all with AFL (very little Alcoa except to note dissatisfaction with the way AFL handled negotiations and strike), can be found in box 12 folder 9, AWA Papers, PSU.

Industrial Organizations (CIO).[27] The CIO, which sought to organize all industrial workers, assured local labor leadership that they would organize aluminum workers nationwide. With the New Kensington Works' employing the most workers, it was logical that they host the first national mass meeting of aluminum workers. The first Aluminum Workers' Constitutional Convention convened in the Elks Hall on April 12, 1937.

Unofficially representing Alcoa at the convention was Daniel Zeloyle, New Kensington's police chief, who was introduced by union activist W.B. Gravatt as the "man who is well known ... because of his fairness to both the employer and employee." Zeloyle welcomed the delegates by noting it was only fitting that the new union start in the city which was the center of the aluminum industry. He explained, "The Aluminum Company is a major industry. Their officials have been very fair at all times relative to organized labor. I have found that they were always in a receptive mood to suggestions."[28] Here Zeloyle emphasized a desired balance in labor-management relations. He acknowledged New Kensington's pride in being the Aluminum City and the responsibilities Alcoa had to its workers as industrial leaders. But, Zeloyle was careful to underscore Alcoa's fairness in dealing with its workers. He alluded to the importance of the industry to the town's economic well-being; and, in essence he directed the young union to be open rather than combative with the company.

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[27] For more on the history of the CIO see: David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the Twentieth Century Struggle* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 120-156; Robert H. Zeiger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[28] Minutes of the Constitutional Convention of the Aluminum Workers of America, April 12, 1937, box 6 folder 2, AWA Papers, PSU.

The convention was successful and on June 15, 1937 the CIO chartered New Kensington's workers as the Aluminum Workers of America (AWA) Local 2. Soon the union had sixteen locals with a total national membership of about 16,000.[29] Operations were running smoothly as industrial unionism appeared to be a success in New Kensington. AWA 2's July 1937 correspondence to other AWA locals boasts a membership of 5,600 at a New Kensington Works employing 6,000. They announced that the union had bargained an effective grievance procedure with Alcoa; and, the local's business agent, John Haser, found grievances were "fairly satisfactory settled."[30] Membership was high and support for the union was growing; however, it still took strikes in 1937, 1938 and 1939 before the union finally got what it wanted from Alcoa – a comprehensive industry-wide contract.

Naturally New Kensington became the AWA's national headquarters and AWA 2 was its most active local. AWA 2 sought out partnerships with civic leaders in order to safeguard New Kensington against future labor unrest.[31] And, as the size of both the AWA and AWA 2 grew so did the standing of its founding activists, especially Nick Zonarich and John Haser. Zonarich moved from president of AWA 2 to AWA president while John Haser served as AWA 2's business agent through the 1940s. The Zonarich-

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[29] Two-thirds of the international's membership was Local 2. March 28, 1944 minutes of a meeting between the AWA International board with USWA-CIO, box 12 folder 28, AWA Papers, PSU.

[30] W.S. Pasnick, recording secretary, AWA Local 2, correspondence July 6, 1937, box 7 folder 6, AWA Papers, PSU.

[31] At a July 1937 membership meeting AWA Local 2 situated itself as "a responsible Trade Union ... and as members of this industrial community" and passed a resolution which acknowledged their duty to safeguard against labor strife. They called for a conference of labor, fraternal, religious, civic and business interests to resolve "disputes in a peaceful manner" between industry and labor. This conference held August 26, 1937. Correspondence to interested parties, no date, box 22 folder 3, AWA Papers. PSU.

Haser team directed the affairs of AWA 2 to suit their interests and the AWA was supported by an executive board dominated by AWA 2 representation. From the late 1930s through the 1940s aluminum workers' prominence in the community appeared second only to Alcoa.[32] They used this power to affect changes that benefited not only its workers, but also the broader community.

Labor's Community Activism: Low Cost Housing

Lizabeth Cohen explains that the New Deal engaged workers in the political process on a national level.[33] Many came to benefit from New Deal programs and as a consequence became extremely active in facilitating change in the world in which they lived – whether it was on a national, state or local level. What they focused on, how deeply they were involved, and ultimately how successful they were varied from place to place and industry to industry.[34]

According to Eric Leif Davin, labor played a critical role in New Deal Era politics across the state of Pennsylvania. Like many across the country state Democrats benefited tremendously from Franklin Roosevelt's successes. They captured a number of elected

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[32] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch.* Stories concerning the activities of the Local, their dealings with Alcoa (including, but not inclusive of labor issues), and the political campaigns of certain members are spread across the issues. Zonarich, the authoritative voice of the aluminum worker in America, is also quoted concerning the affairs of the Local, with Haser and whatever standing AWA 2 president following in importance. See: *Aluminum Workers News Digest/CIO News, Aluminum Workers Edition* for years 1938-1941. Haser wrote a regular column titled "Let's Talk It Over." Small sampling of local press: "Zonarich and Hobaugh Will Retain Posts," *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 6 May 1940, p.1; "A Unionist's Viewpoint," (editorial), *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 26 April 1940, p. 6.

[33] Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1990; reprint 1993).

[34] In *Glass Towns: Industry, Labor and Political Economy in Appalachia, 1890-1930s* Ken Fones-Wolf examines how union influence faired in West Virginia in different communities to varying levels of success. See chapter seven.

offices long held by Republicans and crafted their own "Little New Deal." These programs were very pro-labor and gave the state's working people a favored position in the Democratic Party. Labor's efforts brought George H. Earle to office as the first Democratic governor since 1890.[35] "Worker statism" translated to the state level and was expressed through the state Democratic Party's platform which emphasized labor's importance. Aluminum workers' involvement in the pursuit of New Deal monies to improve the quality of life for its workers through safe, affordable housing was expressed at the local level.[36]

CIO affiliation brought stability not only to labor organizing, but also workers' community involvement. As noted in chapter two, labor was actively involved in resolving the affordable housing crisis that had plagued the community from almost its inception. Union support for this cause coincided with the 1937 passage of the Wagner-Steagall Low Cost Housing Act. As discussed in chapter two, Allegheny Valley Industrial Union Council (AVIUC) representative Keith Sward brought the issue of low-cost housing before city council and encouraged them to establish a city housing authority under Wagner-Steagall despite the Chamber of Commerce's protestations.[37] A few months later council adopted a resolution citing the need for low-cost housing and

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[35] Eric Leif Davin, "Blue Collar Democracy: Class War and Political Revolution in Western Pennsylvania, 1932-1937," *Pennsylvania History* 67, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 253.

[36] Ibid.; The concept of "worker statism" can be found in Cohen, chapter six. She argues that workers took the New Deal and made it their own – they shifted from politics as a local concern shifting during the New Deal to involve workers in national politics. In New Kensington's workers' case they adopted the federal programs centered on housing.

[37] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (September 21, 1937).

the creation of a housing authority to meet those needs.[38] Labor was not only the force necessary to push council to act, but also its ability to do so is indicative of the power labor had in the community during this time.

Wagner-Steagall required that the state authorize communities to establish a local housing authority and then appoint a five member board.[39] In early 1938, after Governor George H. Earle granted New Kensington an authority, AWA 2's leadership worked in concert with the AVIUC to petition the governor for board representation. Earle was responsible for three of the five appointments with New Kensington's mayor the other two. AWA 2's leadership had many arguments supporting worker representation on the board which emphasized the power they had in the community as well as at the ballot box. They noted that many workers' families would receive first consideration as tenants and with board representation residents would be more vested in these housing projects. The result of their involvement would improve the city's quality of life. Furthermore, they claimed that the growing CIO worker community was responsible for the increased number of Democratic victories which translated to a strong political voice in the community.[40] The first reason is a point of logical speculation and the second was a matter of fact.

New Kensington Mayor Richard Reeser was not amenable to labor's request for representation. In correspondence to the governor, the AVIUC explained that they had

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[38] Ibid., (January 1, 1938).

[39] "Interpretations of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act," September 27, 1937, box 12 folder 7, AWA Papers, PSU.

[40] Theodore Settlemyer, president AVIUC to George H. Earle, governor, March 5, 1938, box 17 folder 9, AWA Papers, PSU.

lobbied Reeser for a seat but had received no definitive answer. They acknowledged an expectation that an Alcoa representative would be appointed to the board, and rightfully so given their stature in the community, but worker representation was needed to balance that out.[41] As a mayoral candidate Reeser was backed by the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee, was himself a unionist (American Federation of Musicians), a young thirty-four years old, and became the first Democrat elected to office in New Kensington.[42] Reeser's reluctance was odd as undoubtedly workers from many New Kensington industries helped elect Reeser to office. Reeser's election can be seen as workers' successful involvement in the political process. But Reeser undoubtedly had other loyalties. He was a life insurance salesman who must have had ties to the business community, and he was certainly aware of Alcoa's pull.

Earle was persuaded – no doubt because he understood what forces brought him to office - and workers were represented on the local housing authority's board.[43] And it appears that union members close to Haser were recommended to fill these appointments, demonstrating the early political structure within AWA 2.[44] The local's leadership

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[41] Ibid.; Paul Stefan, recording secretary to the Director of Information, Farm Security Administration, September 28, 1938, box 10 folder 8; John Haser, business agent to Division of Unemployment Compensation and Employment Service, Department of Labor and Industry, Pennsylvania, March 24, 1939, box 8 folder 30, AWA Papers, PSU.

[42] Davin, 258.

[43] Edward Prendergast, governor's office to F.J. Carson, Secretary, Local 2, March 10, 1938, box 10 folder 12, AWA Papers, PSU. Low cost housing was a concern of many western Pennsylvania workers, for an example see: Resolution on Low Cost Housing, Western Pennsylvania Unity Conference, box 20 folder 30, AWA Papers, PSU.

[44] March 10, 1938 letter from Governor's office acknowledging AWA Local 2 request to appoint two specific members (Garfield Jones and Charles Ferguson) to New Kensington Housing Authority, box 10 folder 12, AWA Papers, PSU.

continued to promote the government's housing program through even small measures such as distributing United States Housing Authority (USHA) literature to its membership in order to educate them on the concept and benefits of low-cost government housing.[45] The AWA was among labor's leaders in securing a county housing authority necessary for obtaining government funds.[46]

At a meeting of regional unions, a USHA representative informed the group that cities with a population of less than 30,000 could not receive federal funds through local authorities but instead must work through a county authority.[47] Shortly thereafter AWA International offices received communication from the Allegheny County Housing Authority requesting that they assemble a committee to help establish a Westmoreland County Housing Authority. The AWA must have been held in high regard to have been asked to assist in such a matter. Given the number of aluminum workers and the importance of New Kensington as the largest city in the county, not to mention its "dire need" for low-cost housing, Nick Zonarich believed the AWA must be proactive in helping to create the Westmoreland County Housing Authority (WCHA).[48]

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[45] John R. Ellingston, U.S. Department of Housing to William Hanka, AWA, June 1, 1919, box 26 folder 9, AWA Papers, PSU.

[46] The aluminum workers were just one of the Valley's unions pushing for low-cost worker housing. For example, a centerpiece of the Western Pennsylvania Unity Conference held in Tarentum was a Resolution on Housing which demanded improvements in federal housing plans that catered to workers. This included a demand for lower costs to housing than outlined in Wagner-Steagall. Letter from the Department of the Interior, U.S. Housing Authority to the AWA dated June 1, 1939, box 26 folder 9, AWA Papers, PSU. The conference covered a six county area within a 121 mile radius of Tarentum and claimed to have represented 99,882 members. For more on this see box 20 folder 30, AWA Papers.

[47] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 April 1940.

[48] Letter from N.A. Zonarich, International Union of AWA President to Local 2, February 12, 1940, box 6, folder 27, AWA Papers, PSU.

To do this AWA 2 organized a rally which brought together civic and labor organizations across the county. They sought to build a base from which to pressure county commissioners to develop a county housing authority. Aluminum workers fostered a partnership of civic and labor leaders in New Kensington to work cooperatively with the county's other industrial towns of Vandergrift, Monessen and Greensburg.[49] Seizing an opportunity, the AWA continued to sponsor town meetings not only to promote a housing authority but also worker housing.[50]

The WCHA was organized at a meeting in the Westmoreland County Courthouse on January 4, 1941. Not surprisingly the AWA wanted appointments to the WCHA, and John Haser successfully lobbied the governor to ensure that two positions on the board were filled by labor.[51] Appointment to this authority was of tremendous importance. As a result of their involvement with the WCHA the city received federal monies to construct a defense housing project which was eventually ninety-percent occupied by AWA 2 members and their families.[52] The AWA's advocacy for low-cost worker

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[49] Other labor groups represented at this rally included the United Mine Workers of America and AFL Teamsters. *AWA-CIO News*, 4 March 1940.

[50] For example, in April 1940, the AWA sponsored a community meeting on the topic of low cost housing at its meeting hall. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 April 1940.

[51] May 19, 1941 letter from Frank K. Cochran, Westmoreland County Commissioner, to John Haser regarding WCHA vacancy caused by George Hobaugh's resignation – request that William J. Hanka fill position, box 12 folder 2, AWA Papers, PSU. Eventually Haser was appointed to the Housing Authority when a position was left vacant by one of hand picked men. June 18, 1943 letter from John Haser to Frank Horne, mayor of Arnold, PA, soliciting his support for Haser's appointment to Westmoreland County Housing Authority to fill vacancy left by William Hanka, noting also his long standing support for low cost housing, box 1 folder 2, AWA Papers, PSU; June 23, 1943 letter from Harry White, chairman of Westmoreland County Housing Commission, informing Haser of his appointment to the Authority, box 22 bolder 18, AWA Papers, PSU.

[52] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (May 20, 1941). Various meeting minutes for 1941, AWA Papers, PSU. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* articles in 1940-1941. *CIO News-Aluminum Workers' Edition/Aluminum Workers' News Digest*, various numerous articles from 1938-1941. June 18,

housing was reflective of the CIO's worker housing agenda.

The CIO Housing Plan's objective was to secure and promote workers' welfare in securing clean, safe and affordable housing.[53] Much like the CIO, the AWA believed that current government housing policies were inadequate.[54] The CIO Housing Plan focused on changing federal laws to meet current defense worker housing needs as well as put those in the construction trades back to work. Furthermore, it acknowledged a current housing shortage in many communities which fell in line with New Kensington's chronic shortage. Finally, the CIO encouraged its affiliates to work with "progressive groups" to agitate for housing reform.[55] While it is debatable as to whether or not city council could be considered "progressive," the AWA did forge a partnership with them. Thanks to the efforts of the AVIUC and the AWA these relationships, regardless of their nature, had been long standing.

The CIO and the AWA found their answer to defense worker housing needs with the 1940 passage of the Lanham Public War Housing Act.[56] The Lanham Act authorized

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1943 letter from Haser to Frank Horne, mayor of Arnold, PA, box 1 folder 2, AWA Papers. "For Low Cost Housing" (editorial), *New Kensington Daily Dispatch,* 4 May 1940, p. 6. "Housing Action Sought by Union," *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 June 1940, p.1. See also: Kristin M. Szylvian, "Bauhaus on Trial: Aluminum City Terrace and Federal Defense Housing Policy During World War II," *Planning Perspectives*, 9 (1994): 229-254.

[53] James B. Carey, "The Program and Policies of the CIO," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 224 Labor Relations and the War (November 1942): 25-26. The emphasis of this plan rests on housing for defense workers. I have not been able to find a specific copy of the Housing Plan itself. My assessment of this program is based on the above article, as well as the *CIO News.*

[54] *CIO News, Aluminum Workers' Edition*, 15 October 1938.

[55] Ibid., The plan also acknowledged that workers other than defense ones would have access to this housing.

[56] This Act is also known as: Defense Housing Insurance Act, McGregor Act, National Defense Housing Act. Lanham Public War Housing Act, Act of October 14, 1940, ch. 862, 54 Stat. 1125.

the construction of housing for those involved in national defense activities and their families.[57] It also allocated projects to communities whose housing needs were not being fully served by private builders.[58] Among other things, the Act provided for maximum housing unit costs which were less than the costs laid out in Wagner-Steagall, which kept in line with organized labor's wishes.[59] For New Kensington's workers this act was reflective of labor's rewards for their support of Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal programs. As Alcoa began to take on war contracts and the housing shortage became increasingly acute, aluminum workers and the cities of New Kensington and Arnold now had another way to address housing needs.[60]

Shortly after Lanham's passage the mayors New Kensington and Arnold created a Citizens' Defense Housing Committee to which they named AWA 2 representatives. This committee also included some businessmen and city clerks from both towns, as well a woman active in local women's affairs.[61] This committee was responsible for

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[57] Ibid., According to the Act, "persons engaged in national defense activities" include men enlisted in the military, employees of the Navy and War Departments, industrial workers in defense production.

[58] Kristin M. Szylvian, "The Federal Housing Program During World War II," in John F. Bauman, Roger Biles and Kristin M. Szylvian eds., *From Tenement to Taylor Home: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000): 123-124.

[59] Lanham Public War Housing Act. It was also more in step with the Western Pennsylvania Unity Conference resolution The Lanham Act states "...the cost per family dwelling unit shall not exceed an average of $3,000 for those units located within the continental United States ... and the cost of no family dwelling unit shall exceed $3,950 within the continental United States ... exclusive of expenses of administration, land acquisition, public utilities, and community facilities, and the aggregate cost of community facilities shall not exceed 3 per centum of the total cost of all projects."

[60] *CIO News, Aluminum Workers' Edition*, 15 October 1938.

[61] It also included labor representatives S.F. Pollock, AWA 2 business agent John Haser, New Kensington mayor Dick M. Reeser and Arnold mayor M.F. Horne. *CIO News, Aluminum Workers' Edition*, 12 May 1941.

conducting a housing survey with the results used to apply for a separate federal grant for the construction of defense housing. In promoting their efforts the committee brought civic and labor leaders from nearby industrial communities like Aliquippa to speak to the benefits of their defense housing projects. This placed New Kensington in the context of other western Pennsylvania industrial communities. The final survey supported the project and by May 1941 a housing contract was awarded to the communities. The resulting housing project would not have developed had it not been for the two city councils' sponsorship of housing surveys which prompted an area assessment by the federal government. In this way the two communities put aside differences to work for the betterment of its largest constituency.

As noted in chapter two, federal funds were allocated to construct 250 units in what was named Aluminum City Terrace (ACT) and located in East Kensington.[62] New Kensington city council and the AWA worked together to promote the project with AWA 2 signing up members as future residents.[63] As discussed in chapter two, within weeks of the project's approval New Kensington residents began to express concerns over its possible location. More so than council, the aluminum workers aggressively fought opposition to the construction of Aluminum City Terrace.

Historian Kristin M. Szylvian focuses on Aluminum City Terrace in its place within the U.S. federal Works Agency's New Deal experiment to provide European-

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[62] *AWA-CIO News*, 3, 10, 17, 24 February 1941, 26 May 1941.

[63] AWA claimed that there were numerous applications for the yet to be built housing. In their *AWA-CIO News* promotion for Aluminum City Terrace, the claim was made that some were commuting over 60 miles a day to work at Alcoa. *AWA-CIO News*, 30 June 1941 and 21 February 1942.

designed model worker communities as promoted through defense housing projects.[64] Szylvian's scholarship, while weaving in community opposition, emphasizes New Deal social engineering philosophies and their application through European housing models.[65] She explains that community opposition to ACT came in multiple forms: disdain for the Bauhaus architects contracted for the project – Walter Gropius and Marcel Breur; dislike of International Style architecture; real estate interests resenting the intrusion of federal government into their community; and correlation of defense housing with slum clearance low-income housing.[66]

It is interesting to note the diversity of reasons behind East Kensington residents' objectives – a number of which are common. What is missing is objection based on racial prejudice, as noted in Thomas Sugrue's work on inner-city Detroit in the post-war period which emphasizes racial prejudice against integrated public housing projects and private neighborhoods.[67] Perhaps unstated was a class and ethnicity based concern. Equating low-cost with low-income perhaps speaks to East Kensington residents'

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[64] Kristin M. Szylvian, "Bauhaus on Trial: Aluminum City Terrace and Federal Defence Housing Policy during World War II," *Planning Perspectives* 9 (1994), 229-254.

[65] For more on the intellectual discussion of International Style and the European design for modern worker living between American architects and progressive housing proponents and their European counterparts see: Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998): chapter nine.

[66] The source materials used in this article are largely federal records (U.S. Federal Works Agency and its various branches). She uses the *CIO News* (not the Aluminum Workers' Edition) to illustrate industrial labor's support for defense housing, though she does not actively engage AWA involvement in the push for defense housing or their role in the housing controversy. The majority of evidence used to document community conflict comes from 1940s issues of *Architectural Forum* and 1950s articles in *The Journal of Housing* (quoting Mayor Walley), a few *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* articles from 1942, and a few author-gathered oral histories from Aluminum City Terrace residents.

[67] Thomas J. Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction Against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (September 1995): 551-578.

attitudes towards a segment of the community's industrial workers who resided in the crowded flats. It is likely that the workers coming from the center city region were foreign or the children of foreign-born. But since those opposed to the project did not use any direct language of exclusion in their protests it is difficult to ascertain if there were any unstated concerns.

Editors of the *CIO News-Aluminum Workers' Edition*, as well as AWA 2 leadership, felt the need to "clear up misunderstandings" regarding the proposed housing project.[68] They held informational sessions and brought in B.J. Hovde, the Federal Works Administration official responsible for the ACT project, to answer East Kensington residents' concerns.[69] The union keyed on the defense housing nature of the plan, rather than its existence as low-cost housing. Perhaps in doing so they were attempting to separate out the worker from other flats' dwellers. The union emphasized the New Kensington-Arnold area's vital importance for defense work while noting the crowded living conditions in town and long commutes for workers forced to live elsewhere.[70]

The press was the strongest tool the union had at its disposal. The *News* was the national journal of the Aluminum Workers of America. Locals across the country read of AWA 2's efforts to secure defense housing; consequently, how the ACT project unfolded had implications for other AWA locals lobbying for defense housing. But it is also

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[68] *CIO News, Aluminum Workers' Edition*, 26 May 1941. According to the story the membership of Local 2 voted in favor of this campaign to assuage the fears of those citizens opposing the plan.

[69] *AWA-CIO News*, 26 May 1941, 2 June 1941, 9 July 1941.

[70] *CIO News, Aluminum Workers' Edition*, 26 May 1941.

important to keep in mind that the AWA was also targeting AWA 2 with its press campaign. This perhaps indicates that there was a need to grow community support for the ACT project. Finally, the campaign must have also been a way to give workers talking points to take into the broader community.

It can also be inferred that the AWA was attempting to sell the physical manifestation of the New Deal and CIO Housing Plan to its national membership, as it also had to combat an American ideal of modern living.[71] Since 1936 New Kensington had been sold an ideal of individual home ownership by the federal government in the FHA model home built in the new upscale Pine Manor development - the likes of which could be financed via the convenience of FHA home loans.[72] If ACT's International Style design was not palatable to AWA 2 - the most urban and "radical" of its locals - then modern cooperative housing would no doubt be a difficult sell to its others. For its part the AWA needed the strength of AWA 2's 5,000-plus membership as the plan's advocates. After all, its membership was to benefit from this project and other New Kensington workers would benefit from the union's success of having established a workers' housing project in the city.

While the AWA fought hard for this housing, Alcoa was not involved. Szylvian speculates as to Alcoa's attitude towards the defense housing project. The ACT development meant that Alcoa would not have to finance housing construction but would

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[71] For example, see FHA model home advertisements in the *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 and 6 March 1936.

[72] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 and 6 March 1936. These two days feature a model demonstration home opened to the public featuring many of the consumer conveniences of modern living and sold "not a style of architecture but a way of living." The 1936 editions emphasized the new National Housing Act loans.

benefit from a stable, steady workforce not disrupted by problems associated by lengthy commutes or poor housing. However, she notes that Alcoa could also have viewed the placement of federal worker housing in New Kensington, and other developments in the Greater Pittsburgh area, "as a sign of growing union influence."[73]

There is no evidence in corporate records that the company ever had the intention of building worker housing in New Kensington.[74] It is apparent that early on in the town's development Alcoa left housing concerns to the Burrell Improvement Company, preferring the Mellon-backed land company to design a community with urban lots situated near its plant. Basing her claims on literature pertaining to industrial housing and industrialists' attitudes towards worker housing, Szylvian speculates that Alcoa was like other manufacturing concerns that "typically preferred that workers purchase homes in neighbourhoods near the mill so that they would be more reliable and less mobile than those who rented their homes." She also notes that Alcoa, like Mayor Walley, may have resented federal intrusion into real estate markets and "probably wanted the real estate market to remain in control of local interests."[75] Given an understanding of local officials' involvement in the business community and their ties to Alcoa as both businessmen and elected officials, this second assertion is most likely true. However, from a review of AWA materials it appears that ACT housing candidates resided in the

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[73] Szylvian, 237.

[74] This is from a review of the public records available through the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. It is unknown if there is record of company attitude towards ACT in the sealed New Kensington Works records. From my review of *Daily Dispatch* editions from 1939 to 1941, there is no reference to Alcoa's attitude towards the project.

[75] Szylvian, 237.

flats and were forced to pay high rents controlled by businessmen like Walley.

Furthermore, it does not appear that Alcoa sought out a partnership in the venture. Alcoa's action (or inaction) could also signal a lack of concern over the development. Meyerhuber considers the AWA a "radical" union, but it was clearly not as militant as the Valley's miners, or even those workers at New Kensington's General Electric plant.[76] Given the history of Alcoa's relationship with its workers, the union, and the community, as well as the union's ongoing intra-group conflicts, the company should not have had any worries of "growing union influence." What potential for "growing union influence" would have mattered to AWA 2. If anything, ACT's location on the city's periphery could have provided the struggling union with an opportunity to build an intense workers' community, though not necessarily along the lines of the FWA's European model. Perhaps it could have been one to promote union solidarity and give the aluminum workers the core strength to become a greater influence in both the community as well as at Alcoa.

Szylvian's assertions that residents resented the contracting of German architects during wartime and that the Walley-led opposition did not approve of the International Style are undoubtedly true.[77] But overall, opposition to this project appears limited to the residents of East Kensington, W.C. Walley, and other unnamed real estate interests. This is not to minimize concern over the project, but must be noted that the *New Kensington*

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[76] The electrical workers were a much smaller union, perhaps 300 at its height. The United Electrical workers' regional collection can be found at the Archives of Industrial Society at the University of Pittsburgh. See also: Carl I. Meyerhuber, "The Alle-Kiski Coal Wars, 1913-1919," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 36, no. 3 (July 1980): 197-213; Ronald W. Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse, 1923-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983).

[77] Szylvian does not develop the first point, but the bulk of her discussion of community opposition centers on the second, as well as Walley's role as both mayor and real estate developer.

Daily Dispatch was not dominated by articles, editorials and letters to the editor opposed to the project. The paper does no more than cover the East Kensington residents' opposition to the project which is also reflected in city council minutes. Coverage of rallies, informational meetings, and advertisements to sign up for ACT housing appear in the *CIO News-Aluminum Workers' Edition.*

As the project reached completion, tensions between the aluminum workers and those like Walley eventually moved out of the press and into policy negotiations. In December 1941 AWA 2 representatives, real estate interests and city government (the latter two led by Mayor W.C. Walley) met with government housing representative John J. Carroll to set the rent rates for the project.[78] Walley wanted a rate to keep par with local housing. The unionist supported New Kensington-Arnold Fair Rent Committee claimed this to be ten to thirty dollars higher than initially proposed rates. The federal government, which had the final say, kept rates more in tune with the workers' wishes.[79] Though hard fought, the workers were met with success at every step.

By January 1942 ACT was one of 207 completed defense housing projects with tenants nationwide (though a housing shortage remained).[80] In February 1948 the federal government offered to sell the residents Aluminum City Terrace as a cooperative housing project for $560,536, which was half of what it cost to build and significantly below its two million dollar market value. After a series of meetings Terrace residents put together

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[78] In some cases, under Wagner-Steagall, annual sums/percentages of property rentals were given local and state agencies in lieu of taxes. U.S. Housing Act of 1937, Act of September 1, 1937, ch. 896, 50 Stat. 888.

[79] *AWA-CIO News*, 15 December 1941. According to the paper, real estate interests wanted a 4-bedroom unit to rent for $27.50 not including utilities. The Fair Rent Committee wanted $25 per month inclusive.

[80] Kristin M. Szylvian, "The Federal Housing Program During World War II," 129.

the roughly $80,000 needed for a down payment and closing costs on a mortgage underwritten by the Federal Housing Authority. The deal closed by October 1948 and Terrace residents went from renting from the Westmoreland County Housing Authority to cooperative home ownership.[81] Aluminum City Terrace became the first resident-cooperative U.S. defense housing project thanks to the Federal Government's Mutual Ownership Plan.[82] The aluminum workers' success is representative of labors' gains outside of the workforce as a result of New Deal programs. The AWA not only secured defense housing for its workers, but it also established housing authorities that were necessary for post-war public housing desperately needed by those dwelling in the flats' slums.

AWA Discord and Its Effects: Amalgamation with the United Steelworkers of America and the Frank Hill Executive Board Affair

The AWA 2's role in securing affordable housing and influence in establishing local and county housing authorities was arguably its greatest contribution to the community. But individual workers ventured into local politics and community affairs, and mounted several successful campaigns for elected office such as school board. John Haser, arguably the most powerful man to come out of the aluminum workers union, petitioned local, county and state officials for worker representation on many appointed

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[81] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 February 1948, 16 February 1948, 8 September 1948, and 2 October 1948. Terrace residents were paying the WCHA $35 a month in rent. Under the cooperative plan they paid between $35 and $40 a month for their share of the mortgage, plus utilities and maintenance/facilities repair.

[82] Szylvian, 244-248. The author covers the post-World War II fate of ACT, its possible sale to the city as low-income housing, and the drive of residents to form a housing cooperative to purchase the development under the terms of the National Housing Agency's Mutual Ownership Plan. See also, Handbook, Aluminum City Terrace Housing Association, 136 ½ Aluminum City Terrace, New Kensington, PA 15068, revised January 1997.

boards and commissions.

In 1940 aluminum worker and AWA 2 president Al Daughenbaugh sat on New Kensington's school board. That year he was up for re-election as AWA 2's president and led a popular slate of candidates (including a business agent) on the "More Pay – Less Speed Up" campaign. While active in the local it appears as though these candidates were not Haser's and Zonarich's preferred choices and might have been perceived as a threat to their control over the local. As noted, Zonarich and Haser were the voice of aluminum workers not only in New Kensington, but also in the nation. What they viewed to be in the best interest of the workers was usually what happened. In a move most likely to protect their interests, Zonarich made claims that certain candidates were sponsored by the local Communist party. It was a somewhat successful move – while Daughenbaugh and two others were elected by a large margin the rest were not, and Haser retained in his position.[83]

Zonarich's tactics were undoubtedly effective given the CIO's extreme prejudice against Communist influences at this time.[84] Now there could very well have been Communists in the local given that its early founders had Socialist leanings. In their discussion of the relationship between Communists and the CIO, Judith Stephan-Norris and Maurice Zeitlin explain that during union elections some candidates "accepted

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[83] Meyerhuber's work focuses on the CIO's preoccupation with Communism and purging communists from the union and the impact of this in Local 2. "A.W.A. Head Charges 'Reds' Back Slate in Local 2 Vote," *New Kensington Daily Dispatch,* 13 December 1940; "Daughenbaugh, Haser Reelected by Local 2," *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 17 December 1940. A post-election newspaper article notes that there was very little Socialist influence in the campaign. Walter Pasnick, who finished third for president, was also candidate for lieutenant governor on the Socialist ticket in 1937. Daughenbaugh had run for U.S. congress on the Progressive Party ticket in fall of 1940.

[84] For a detailed examination of this subject see: Harvey A. Levenstein, *Communism and Anticommunism and the CIO* (Westport, Connecticut, 1981.)

Communist support" even though they themselves were not Communists.[85] Daughenbaugh and two others elected might very well have accepted Communist support, but it can be asserted that they themselves were not Communists. It is doubtful that New Kensington's citizenry would elect a Communist to the school board, so Daughenbaugh was most likely not seen as a radical threat by rank-and-file voters. Therefore it was most likely a move to keep AWA 2's power structure intact. As a result Haser continued to closely direct the business of the local and select representation for various appointments.[86]

This power structure remained intact for the next four years and it guided the AWA through a major change affecting aluminum workers nationwide. In 1944 a financially struggling AWA sought out amalgamation with the ideologically conservative United Steelworkers of America (USWA).[87] For its part the USWA saw amalgamation as an opportunity to fold all metals trades together in anticipation of post-war competition.[88] According to Mark McColloch this marriage, "set the pattern" for future

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[85] Judith Stephan-Norris and Maurice Zeitlin, *Left Out: Reds and America's Industrial Unions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 7.

[86] New Kensington, PA, City Council Minutes, (November 16, 1943); 1944 letter from the United War and Community Fund, Inc. to Local 2, box 4 folder 16, AWA Papers, PSU. New Kensington, PA, City Council Minutes, (July 17, 1946); New Kensington, PA, City Council Minutes, (July 17, 1946); New Kensington, PA, City Council Minutes, (June 10, 1949). During World War II Local 2 remained relatively quiet and members continued their involvement in civic affairs. Haser maintained his appointment on the Housing Authority and pursued other positions, serving as V.P. of the United War and Community Fund, Inc. and as an officer of the AVIUC.

[87] John Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class Struggle in Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002): chapter 3. Twenty-five percent of the USWA members were in Pennsylvania.

[88] March 28, 1944 meeting minutes of AWA International Board with USWA and CIO officials. See: Local 2 special meeting minutes on May 14, 1944, box 18 folder 20; minutes of all day executive board meeting on August 10, 1944, box 18 folder 20; and, minutes of regular meeting, September 25, 1944, box 18 folder 20, all from AWA Papers, PSU.

USWA mergers and brought more territory under the union's stewardship.[89]

When queried by *Dispatch* reporters Zonarich denied secretly working to fold the AWA into the USWA. Zonarich again denied rumors about potential affiliation with the much larger USWA shortly after returning from a meeting of the AWA national board in March 1944.[90] But by May the *Dispatch* reported that at the USWA's national meeting USWA and CIO president Philip Murray told delegates that an AWA-USWA merger "had been under discussion for several months." Furthermore, "leaders of the aluminum union" – most likely Haser and Zonarich – favored the action.[91] Haser and Zonarich now had to sell this to the membership it had kept in the dark.

Perhaps prompted by this news, or perhaps planned to coincide with its release, AWA 2 held a special meeting to discuss the issue on May 14. Members in attendance approved the consolidation and chose representatives from AWA 2 for the June national convention. Haser did his part to ensure that amalgamation went forward by selecting delegates from AWA 2 who would draft a pro-amalgamation resolution and swing the

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[89] Mark McColloch, "Consolidating Industrial Citizenship: The USWA at War and Peace, 1939-1946," in Paul F. Clark, Peter Gotlieb and Donald Kennedy, eds., *Forging A Union of Steel: Philip Murray, SWOC, and the United Steelworkers* (Ithaca: ILR Press, New York School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, 1987): 79.

[90] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 31 March 1944. Local 2's membership had its doubts about the rumors and may have been clued into the financial struggles of the AWA International. See: April 7 correspondence from Local 2 officer Anthony Mele to Zonarich which references the amalgamation rumor and inquires about the long overdue (by two years) financial report of the International, box 7 folder 5, AWA Papers.

[91] At this meeting the 2400 delegates approved the merger. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 13 May 1944. The *Dispatch* reported that the AWA represented roughly 60,000 employees at sixteen plants. This is in comparison to the reported one million members of the USWA. According to the article, this was the "first step in a plan to form a new CIO basic metals industries union with divisions in copper, lead, brass and tin" and presumably aluminum.

necessary votes to seal it at that year's AWA International convention.[92] With the help of AWA 2's delegation Zonarich sold the other locals' representatives on the merger by arguing that their best future would be found in a strong inclusive metals union organization. Zonarich and Haser believed this merger was a step in the right direction. Furthermore, they believed that the USWA's size and strength would undoubtedly help organize the unorganized at aluminum plants across the nation and in Canada.[93] For a union leadership that had for so long wanted to have an industry-wide organization but did not have the funds or manpower to successfully do this, the USWA provided their last hope. The merger was completed that summer and by August 1944 AWA 2 became USWA local 302.

Judith Stephan-Norris and Maurice Zeitlin explain that CIO unions were formed both as amalgamated and unitary organizations. Both the USWA and the AWA were initially formed as solitary unions. Stephan-Norris and Zeitlin use the USWA as the model unitary organization characterized by "very little if any local or district autonomy, and ... bereft of organized internal dissent and real rivalry for its top leadership." But an amalgamation of unions, according to these scholars, causes a "redistribution of power" that reorganizes the positions had by leadership in the smaller more autonomous unions –

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[92] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 15 May 1944. The delegates included: Sam Nealer, Joseph Carey (local 2 president), John Haser (business agent), Joe Clark, John Chmiel, Tom Dalton, Kenneth Bender, Allan Hill, Leroy Harkins, and John Shand. See also May 16, 1944 letter from Local 2 to other AWA locals of Local 2's resolutions created during the special meeting to put forward at the upcoming national convention.

[93] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 June 1944, 6 June 1944. James Dickerson, New Kensington organizer, said the merger would serve two purposes: boost organizing work and drive the AFL out of the aluminum industry.

for better or worse.[94]

The benefit to the AWA leadership was instantaneous as Haser, Zonarich, and their close associates received appointments within the USWA. Zonarich disappeared to its Pittsburgh offices and Haser moved up into a staff position in District 19 assisting director William Hart, which allowed him to continue to exert some power over the local. USWA Local 302 and its membership found themselves as one of an easy 100 steel workers' locals in the Alle-Kiski Valley. While the largest in New Kensington they no longer held a privileged position as they were one of many locals serviced by the district offices.[95]

Amalgamation of independent unions of roughly equal stature can result in greater democratic participation through multi-party negotiations.[96] From its inception the aluminum workers' union appears to have been run in a very bureaucratic manner, with the concentration of power with the business manager (Haser) and initial union president turned AWA international president (Zonarich). The AWA was more like a miniature version of the USWA; however, the aluminum workers were much fewer in number and resources. Therefore, although they were ideologically compatible they were unequal in resources. This was not necessarily a case of amalgamation as labeled by the union movement as much as it was labor's version of a corporate take-over.

Some members believed the top-down approach to amalgamation did not foster

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[94] Stephan-Norris and Zeitlin, 74-75.

[95] August 10, 1944 Minutes of all day executive board meeting between Local 302 officers and USWA district representatives; February 21, 1945 regular meeting minutes of Local 302, box 18 folder 20; John Haser, "Labor News," n.d., box 19 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU. See also: USWA District 19 records, PSU.

[96] Stephan-Norris and Zeitlin, 76-80.

union democracy. From the start USWA 302's executive board seemed to take issue with the new arrangement. Executive board members, some of whom had been representatives to the AWA national convention, quickly bristled under USWA district control. As the AWA's flagship local they had a certain amount of freedom which came with their leadership role. Now they had to submit to rules and guidelines of a far more bureaucratic organization.

In an August 1944 meeting with their district director, USWA 302 president Joseph Carey asserted that amalgamation was pushed on the aluminum workers, signaling unease with how it came to pass as well as a bit of buyers' remorse on the part of the rank-and-file. The executive board raised several questions about the aluminum workers' autonomy within the USWA, what type of involvement the USWA would have in negotiating aluminum workers' contracts, the USWA's true commitment to organizing aluminum workers industry-wide, and support for their desire to hire a local-specific business agent. District answers appear straightforward, but signaled that much was left undecided as the district representative frequently referenced future matters to be determined by the International.[97] This signaled the start of an uneasy relationship between 302 and District 19 – and between the rank-and-file and John Haser and William Hart. This indicates that there might very well have not been a post-amalgamation plan, leading to the possibility that USWA leadership was more concerned with numbers than promises made to aluminum workers.

USWA 302's leadership might have been skeptical of what the district was offering in terms of service, but they still had the affairs of the local to deal with. The

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[97] August 10, 1944 minutes of the executive board meeting with William Hart, box 18 folder 20, AWA Papers, PSU.

loss of the AWA's International headquarters can be seen as a blow to the aluminum workers' pull in the community – although they achieved their housing goal. But it could also be seen as an opportunity for the rank-and-file to take control of their local, now free of Zonarich and with Haser in a seemingly outsider position. In 1946 a new slate of executive board officers, led by presidential candidate Frank Hill, was elected to 302's executive board. This board quickly came to be at odds with the district over how the local should conduct its affairs. In January 1948, two years of tensions between USWA 302 and USWA District 19 erupted into a very public battle.[98] This conflict lasted nearly a year and pitted eleven executive board members, led by president Frank Hill, against District 19 officials. The USWA International offices became involved and the resulting publicity of the year's activities undoubtedly tarnished the union's reputation in the community.

Like Daughenbaugh's 1940 challenge, these rogue officers were labeled Communists by those in Haser's camp. Carl Meyerhuber notes that the real story behind this conflict is not clear, and he emphasizes the legacy of Communist/radical influence from the 1930s and its legacy in the local. This must be well noted, but more has to be considered. 1948 was the year following the passage of the pro-business Taft-Hartley Act, which curbed the power of labor unions. Harry Truman, who was no fan of striking workers, had just been elected. And, the CIO began an intense purge of Communists within its ranks.[99] According to Judith Stephan-Norris and Maurice Zeitlin 1948 was the

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[98] Meyerhuber provides a brief summary of events. I agree with his basic narrative. Meyerhuber, *Less Than Forever*, 196-198.

[99] Zieger, chapter 4.

zenith of the CIO era where insurgent "workers' control" groups gained power and made changes to the union's constitution. But they also note that this was not the case in what they describe as a "faction-less" USWA.[100] The Frank Hill affair shows that there were indeed factions within the USWA and that maybe this was more about workers' control of the local than it was Communism. Furthermore there are other factors to consider such as that which revolves around who holds power in New Kensington's political structure.

In January 1948 the USWA International suspended ten officers and the grievance chairman after an investigation of the local called by its membership.[101] The International appointed long time unionist and district representative Bert Gravatt as administrator of the local.[102] The primary reasons cited for the suspension were undefined "irregularities within the union" and "lack of cooperation" with the International. The *Dispatch* reported that the suspensions came after a "period of considerable trouble" at the Works, specifically production slow-downs.[103] Productivity issues were a corporate and community concern since September 1947 when Alcoa President Roy A. Hunt spoke before the Chamber of Commerce's annual Industrial Day Luncheon. As will be discussed in chapter four, Hunt cited a changing economy,

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[100] Stephan-Norris and Zeitlin, 164. They discuss Oil Workers, the UAW and the NMU.

[101] According to various *Dispatch* accounts and various AWA documents, both the executive board and their opposition claim to have called for the investigation. The three member investigative committee was comprised of high-ranking USWA officials including John Murray, the nephew of CIO and USWA President Philip Murray. This affair dominated *Dispatch* reporting through March, it then trails off slightly and picks up heavily again for the month of July. After that it is spotty at best, concluding in November of 1948. Letters of suspension were sent out to the executive board on January 16, 1948. For a sample see box 19 folder 2, AWA Papers, PSU.

[102] January 16, 1948 letter to Gravatt notifying him of his appointment as administrator, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers, PSU. He appears to be part of the tightly knit district office group.

[103] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 17 January 1948.

increased competition, and slack in worker productivity as the main reasons why New Kensington was losing critical divisions at the Works. In January 1948 Alcoa launched a public relations campaign which in effect encouraged community leaders to pressure aluminum workers to work harder and faster to keep the plant in town.

Shortly after the suspension, the officers called a general membership meeting at which they laid out their case. Frank Hill claimed that since the board's election in 1946 they had attempted many times to arrange a meeting with CIO and USWA President Philip Murray to "discuss problems confronting our local." These problems largely involved what he characterized as an "uncooperative" relationship with District 19, namely John Haser and William Hart. This might be an indication of USWA 302's board's autonomous nature in conflict with the district offices' bureaucratic managerial style. The board also addressed the productivity issue noting that problems with Alcoa centered on "differences of opinion" over wages and "production standards" but assured the membership that these were to be dealt with in collective bargaining sessions in the upcoming year.[104] Murray's non-response to the issue is also indicative of a leadership far removed from the rank-and-file.

The suspended executive board held hastily called membership meetings over the next few days to reinforce their case and lobby the membership for support. They reassured the membership that the International's investigation found USWA 302 in good fiscal health and emphasized that their suspension was merely the efforts of two men

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[104] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 19 January 1948. I could find no reference to allegations of Communist influence in the local in the *Dispatch* save for their references here that there was a rumor circulating that was even reported in unnamed newspapers.

displeased with an executive board who would not bend at their will.[105] The most significant of these meetings came on January 21 where the membership voted to support the board. The *Dispatch* estimated that around 500 were in attendance inside the union hall and that a significant number listened from outside.[106] The highlight of this meeting was the presence of Catholic priest and long time union activist Fr. Casimir Orlemanski, who was a contrast to the pro-corporate Fr. Fusco. Orlemanski was squarely on the side of the suspended officers and called out district officials for behaving like a "dictatorship" and urged the rank-and-file to regain control as they "rule the union here."[107]

The officers pushed for a public airing of charges against them as well as a hearing in keeping with the International's Constitution.[108] In response Murray directed Gravatt to release the investigative commission's report to the press, in which "irregularities within the union" were outlined in detail. Foremost the findings kept with

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[105] Ibid., 20 January 1948.

[106] Various *Dispatch* reports that the union represented 6400-6500 workers. Data provided by the Alcoa librarian (see appendix) puts a year average of 3039 employees (including salaried workers) for 1948.

[107] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 21 January 1948. Orlemanski was a union activist since the early days of the CIO. A nationally respected organizer, he appointed himself intermediary of the dispute between USWA 302's officers and the International to discuss their concerns over district officials. They did eventually meet; however, Phillip Murray did not attend – contrary to assurances that he would. The paper draws a contrast between the community's predominant Catholic clergy and their involvement in labor and labor-management affairs. Fusco was pastor of the predominately Italian Mt. St. Peter's and Orlemanski of the predominately Polish St. Mary of Czestochowa. For minutes of the January 20, 1948 meeting see box 20 folder 4, AWA Papers, PSU.

[108] Membership circulated a petition on the plant floor calling for the same. Only 350 signatures were gathered by the time they brought it to the *Dispatch* offices on January 30.

Hill's assertion that financially the union was solid. Other issues varied.[109] Some of the many charges include the local's refusal to cooperate with district officials; the local's rocky relationship with Alcoa; and Hill's entrance into New Kensington politics.

The vaguest charge was that the executive board refused to cooperate with District 19 and as a result "deprived the membership ... of advice and counsel which the district office provides." Furthermore, when running for union president the summer prior, Hill was alleged to have used radio airtime (which he claimed to have paid for himself) to call the opposition candidates "company stooges." It is certain that the district office, and most likely a number of USWA 302's members, were not happy to see in-house campaigning taken to the airwaves for all, including Alcoa, to hear. The public nature of the fracture within the union was of benefit to the company. Furthermore, USWA 302 had been suspended from the AVIUC for per capita assessment delinquency. This was problematic as the aluminum workers' union was historically a significant constituency of the multi-union organization as well as an important advocate for the region's workers.[110]

Additional charges centered on Hill's involvement in local politics. The previous year Hill decided to run for city council. The USWA claimed that his bid for council was problematic because it not only took time away from official union business but also

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[109] One concerned the existence of a "Club 11" comprised of the executive board, which conspired to take away the power of the membership. Another alleged that Hill misused funds to cover travel expenses for the purposes of changing his name from Helenski to Hill.

[110] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 31 January 1948. Another point of contention was the failure of the executive board to post a reward notice in a timely manner for the theft of $1400 of union funds allocated for a membership picnic the previous summer. Hill claimed the executive board withheld the member-voted reward because law enforcement had yet to complete its investigation of the theft. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2 February 1948.

threatened the union's "unity."[111] Hill took issue with this assertion and rightly so given that past active union leadership successfully ran for office and been appointed to various positions – with John Haser being the highest profile of them. Hill claimed that he had membership support behind him. He "thought he knew what the town wanted" but blamed his loss – by 140 votes – on Haser and Hart, among others.[112]

As a result of his early union activism Haser had long-standing ties to men who became powerful figures in city politics. One such man was Raymond Gardlock, who was elected to city council in 1948. He was a long time union man and friend of John Haser, who in the 1930s used his position as business agent to secure Gardlock employment in a state agency.[113] In 1950 Gardlock was elected mayor and Haser was chosen to fill his unexpired council seat. It would appear that this affair was nothing more than a friend returning a favor.

While on city council Haser proposed a resolution to create the city's Urban Re-Development and Slum Clearance Authority, to which he then received a mayoral appointment.[114] He also received mayoral appointments to the Municipal and Water Authorities and held these positions for years.[115] While these appointments started at

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[111] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 31 January 1948.

[112] Ibid., 2 February 1948.

[113] October 6, 1937 letter from Haser to New Kensington Democratic Party Chair stating the Local's endorsement of Raymond Gardlock for the position of Senior Interviewer for Unemployment Insurance in the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. September 13, 1938 letter from Haser to Ralph Bayshore, Pennsylvania Secretary of Labor and Industry box 8 folder 30 AWA Papers, PSU. Haser used his influence to secure a position for Gardlock.

[114] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (May 17, 1950).

[115] Ibid., (November 20, 1951) and (December 18, 1956).

least two years after the Hill affair they are relevant to mention here. To receive such appointments is indicative of Haser's position in New Kensington's political structure. Since the 1930s Haser had not only been a workers' advocate but he had also used his position as such to gain a foothold in local and county politics. It is not a stretch to believe he benefited tremendously from his connections and may have done what was necessary (to a degree) to protect them.

Perhaps a strong showing for Frank Hill at the polls could be seen as a threat to Haser's position. And, if the Hill board did have the following in the mill he claimed then such a powerful voting block could be seen as a threat to the established political machine. Robert Slayton notes that Chicago's political machine sought out relationships with organized labor that was "tightly controlled, with policy dictated by a clear, powerful hierarchy."[116] In Chicago this control was directed by Joe Germano and the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and in New Kensington it was John Haser and USWA District 19.

Hill and the executive board kept this and other matters pertaining to their suspension alive and in the public eye. They held several "illegal" meetings covered by the *Dispatch.* They sounded a steady message of a district office unconcerned with settling work grievances or fighting company speed-up policies. This was incredibly problematic as in the post-war period settling worker grievances was not only the closest way for the union to stay involved in the worker's life, but it was also the best way for the

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[116] Robert A. Slayton, "Labor and Urban Politics: District 31, Steel Workers Organizing Committee, and the Chicago Machine," *Journal of Urban History* 23, no. 1 (November 1996): 47.

worker to exert power on the shop floor.[117] For some, to ignore workers grievances meant that one sided with unfair corporate policy. The ousted unionists labeled Haser an "Alcoa man" concerned only with the financial success of the union and his own self-interests. Hill urged the membership to ignore Gravatt's administrative control over the local as to fight district control was to engage in a fight for democracy.[118]

For their part, Gravatt and the district issued few statements on the matter and went about the business of running the local.[119] Gravatt reorganized shop stewards and grievance committeemen into zones in order to process the difficulties facing workers and address the backlog of grievance actions at the plant. He appointed many "old time" unionists – some of whom were former officers during Haser's tenure as AWA 2's business agent - to head these zones.[120] It is interesting to note that a number of these committeemen lost the 1946 election to Frank Hill and other members of the executive

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[117] Robert Zieger notes that "work rules, discipline, and disposition of workers grievances" were the core of collective bargaining in the post-war period., 154.

[118] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2 and 3 February 1948.

[119] Ibid., 2 and 4 February 1948. Gravatt sent letters to organizations and city officials informing them of the administrative takeover and requests they do business with him and not the suspended officers. Gravatt letter to the Loyal Order of the Moose, February 18, 1948; Gravatt letter to Mayor W.C. Walley, Mary 23, 1948; Gravatt letter to the Arnold Businessmen's Association, March 25, 1948, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers, PSU.

[120] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2, 6 and 9 February 1948. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 6 March 1948. The zone chairmen were Sam Moses, Joseph Carey (former 302 president), Anthony Mele, Howard Langue. Letter from Gravatt to Grievance Committee members, February 18, 1948, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers. Gravatt sent a number of letters to the Grievance Committee, including one telling the men to stop raising money for the suspended officers' defense fund. Gravatt kept steady communication with the representatives on grievance action as well as requested their assistance in restoring the union to its former glory as the premier local in the A-K Valley. Gravatt letter dated March 2, 1948, box 4 folder 29; Minutes of Grievance Committee Meeting, March 5, 1948, box 19, folder 6; Minutes of Grievance Meeting with Alcoa, March 19, 1948, box 3 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU. See other letters to committeemen and minutes of Grievance Committee meetings: Letter of March 15, 1948, box 5 folder 29; Gravatt correspondence to the AVIUC, March 3, 1948, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers. The local was also reinstated into the AVIUC on April 3, 1948.

board. This further indicates factions within USWA 302 as well as evidence of the USWA's bureaucratic control. While Hill continued to hold unauthorized meetings, Gravatt, Hart, Haser and appointed representatives began to hold meetings with Alcoa officials to improve labor relations and establish guidelines for union operations during the suspension. It is apparent that Alcoa preferred the old unionists to those balking at Alcoa's drive for greater worker productivity. [121]

The relationship between Alcoa, Haser, Hart and Gravatt is representative of "businesslike conduct" used by union officials in professional relationships with employers. Stephan-Norris and Zeitlin note that when union officials conduct themselves in such a manner they are often not accountable to or representative of their membership.[122] This may or may not have been the case here. If one sides with the Hill board then certainly USWA officials were not representative of their members' interests. However, they were accountable to them in that they were clearing a backlog of grievances lodged by the membership. But, such "businesslike conduct" also encourages union officials to cultivate tighter relationships with employers which might cause them to pursue less aggressively worker demands in contract negotiations.

Familiarity with the readily apparent power-structure of the AWA and its legacy with USWA 302 make it easy to understand how factions of unionists can see as oppressive the influence of Haser, Gravatt and resurrected former union officials. An

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[121] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 9, 10 and 11 February 1948. For minutes of these unauthorized meetings see box 12 folder 28, AWA Papers for meeting of February 10, 1948. Another meeting produced a member-approved notice to Gravatt warning him not to spend the local's money, February 10, 1948, box 12 folder 28, AWA Papers, PSU. At a March 13, 1948 meeting a strike vote was almost called. Minutes of meeting, March 13, 1948, box 19 folder 6, AWA Papers, PSU. A corresponding letter was sent to President Philip Murray, February 11, 1948, box 12 folder 28; Correspondence from Alcoa to Gravatt, February 24, 1948, box 1 folder 26, AWA Papers, PSU.

[122] Stephan-Norris and Zeitlin, 161.

awareness of Haser's position in local government forces one to acknowledge the potential accuracy of Hill's dissatisfaction with the city's political process. However, it is necessary to also acknowledge the possibility that the Hill executive board might have been behind a production slow-down in response to Alcoa's speed-up policy. Keeping in mind the recent announcement by the company of impending unit and subsidiary relocations as well as its continued threats to completely pull out, it was undoubtedly necessary for district representatives to change union culture for the sake of job preservation.

The *Dispatch* certainly put their faith in Gravatt's ability to smooth out worker-management relations – frequently referring to his service with the company, his long-standing dedication to the union, and his contributions to the broader community. Gravatt presented himself to the media as a thoughtful mediator. He keyed on the importance of better labor-management relations for job preservation by remedying inefficiencies in production practices set by the company but complicated by the worker. Gravatt undoubtedly appealed to the worker when he acknowledged that the company had to bear its share of responsibility for past differences. This was even more so when he subtly called out Alcoa's "increased productivity" message for what it was – a speed-up policy.[123]

Smoother labor-management relations were necessary not just to secure Alcoa's future in New Kensington but also to prepare both sides for impending contract negotiations. Wage negotiations between Alcoa and the 20,000 USWA-represented

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[123] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 19 February 1948. Continued progress on this point can be seen in press releases on labor-management meetings. One which stands out covers the issue of speed-ups and the debate over what constitutes a "fair day's work" in the Cooking Utensil Department. Press release for publication on March 26, 1948, box 19 folder 2, AWA Papers, PSU.

workers at their eight U.S. plants were scheduled to open in March of 1948.[124] The USWA had a vested interest in how negotiations with the aluminum workers unfolded as their negotiations with Big Steel were set to open in April of 1949. How aluminum workers fared against Alcoa would very well be an indicator of what USWA members would achieve. Consequently it was important for USWA 302 to be seated at the USWA's Wage Policy Committee meeting of February 1948.[125] The Wage Policy Committee consisted of 175 men from various USWA locals. Their primary concern was recouping wages lost to recent increases in the cost of living. Discord within USWA's largest aluminum workers' local could very well prove fatal for the aluminum workers across the country. If the largest union was weak, it might not be difficult to break the others. Consequently it can be seen as necessary for USWA 302 to get its own house in order and have the full backing of the USWA.

While Gravatt and district administrators did their best to conduct business and prepare for negotiations, Frank Hill and others did their best to make things difficult. They encouraged members to disrupt the work of the newly appointed stewards and committeemen, refused to turn over union property and froze Gravatt's ability to access roughly $125,000 in union funds.[126] This led to legal action in county court, with the

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[124] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 19 February 1948.

[125] Ibid., 12, 16 and 17 February 1948.

[126] Newspaper and trade journal accounts, as well as *The Daily Worker*, estimate the funds anywhere from $114,000 to $125,000.

membership supporting the Hill board's request to use union funds for their own defense.[127]

The three month county court trial began in early March 1948. Gravatt hoped the outcome would strengthen his ability to conduct the local's business and protect its bank accounts. The suspended officers used the forum to justify their actions – they did what they did in response to Alcoa's unfair labor practices and the district offices' failure to help them settle grievances.[128] During the proceedings the board continued to hold unsanctioned meetings and placed advertisements in the *Dispatch* to rally the community to their cause.[129] However, if letters to the editor are any indication of community sentiment, people were basically fed up with the situation. One letter to the editor called on civic leaders to step in and settle a dispute obviously concerned with nothing more than money and that to permit this matter to continue was to damage the community's financial security.[130]

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[127] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 February and 4 March 1948. From newspaper accounts it appears as though banks refused to "honor checks issued by Gravatt, or to give him access to the union's safe deposit boxes." See letter from Gravatt to the Lower Burrell Township Memorial Fund regarding a bounced check, February 26, 1948, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers, PSU. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 1, 2, 3 March 1948. Three attorneys were hired: Morris J. Kaplan out of New York, Vincent Smith of Greensburg, PA, and Andrew Romito of New Kensington. The ousted board appealed to other USWA aluminum workers' locals for financial support in their battles against the USWA's persecution and Alcoa's unfair labor practices. February 23, 1948 letter to the Alcoa, TN USWA Local 9, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers, PSU.

[128] One grievance against Alcoa concerned company policy of inspecting employee belongings when leaving the plant. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 6 March 1948. For reporting on the trial see issues of the *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* for March 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 17, 1948. See also Local 302 (Gravatt administrator) press releases for publication March 3 and 9, 1948, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers, PSU.

[129] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch,* 24 and 30 March 1948.

[130] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch,* 8 March 1948.

It appears that the public believed that someone had to put this runaway union in check and civic leaders appeared to be the last best hope. By this time Alcoa had finished running a series of newspaper advertisements subtly threatening to pull out if workers did not fall in line. What was left unstated was the assumption that it was the citizens' duty to help Alcoa stay viable in New Kensington. This duty might involve pressuring workers to fall in line, stop this nonsense and do their job as the company wished. But there is no indication that civic leaders were involved. Therefore, an aluminum workers' union consumed by infighting that spread across the front page of the paper for months on end was not helping the community's cause to keep Alcoa in town.

While the county judge deliberated on the matter the union made efforts to shape up. The AVIUC welcomed USWA 302 back into its fold and elected Haser and others as representatives to the CIO convention.[131] It was the beginning of a return to normalcy in restoring a community of old-time unionists. After little more than a month the judge ruled against the suspended officers, granted the USWA's request for a permanent injunction, and ordered the officers to turn over all union property. After more stonewalling they eventually did.[132]

After its victory in July the USWA finally granted the suspended officers' request for a hearing as outlined in their Constitution.[133] Four more men were charged with

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[131] Ibid., 3 April 1948.

[132] Ibid., 5 May 1948. The suspended officers took their case to the state supreme court. The court ruled against them, stating that the USWA and Philip Murray had the authority to suspend the officers. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 21and 27 May 1948.

[133] Formal charges were put before the rank and file at a general membership meeting on July 6, 1948. For a copy of the published formal charges see box 4 folder 25, AWA Papers, PSU. A draft copy can be found in box 12 folder 1, AWA Papers, PSU. There was debate as to whether the press would be allowed in to watch the proceedings. At first the International wished to keep it closed, but it was resolved that one

interfering in the union's business, including a former New Kensington Democratic Party Chair and an Arnold city councilman who were both Alcoa employees. The trial, like everything with the local, played out on the front page of the *Dispatch*. The newspaper reported that the trial board was comprised, not surprisingly, of "old union men."[134] The trial carried on through the fall with an occasional break so that all of those involved could get a full day's work in from time to time. The officers continued to plead their case to the community through publicized meetings and letters to the editor.[135]

By late August a number of the defendants facing lesser charges pled guilty to be done with the matter and quietly returned to their jobs.[136] When the trial came to its conclusion in mid-September Frank Hill was not even present, having taken a ninety day leave from his job.[137] Not surprisingly, the trial board ruled against the remaining

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Dispatch reporter and one stenographer could be present. Copies of the transcripts can be found in the AWA Papers.

[134] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 7 July 1948. In the middle of the Greensburg trial Jack Walker came out in support of Frank Hill. He supported Hill's theory that his candidacy was railroaded by Haser's and Hart's political connections. Hill even labeled himself as one of their "stooges." *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 13 March 1948.

[135] For early coverage of the trial see the *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* for July 7, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 29, 29 and August 28, 1948. The trial cost $300 per day – the twenty-five participants each received a stipend of twelve-dollars per day. Tensions surrounding the whole affair eventually erupted into street violence as pro-Hill board supporters beat Anthony Mele, an "old union" man (and current second in command). Hearings concerning his beating coincided with the USWA trial. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 29 and 30 June 1948, 29 July 1948 and 3 December 1948. Testimony during the trial underscored the differences between a pre- and post-USWA-AWA merger. Actions of prior executive boards were brought into the discussion. Of particular note was the incorporation of Alcoa payroll records by the USWA "prosecutor" as evidence of financial misdeeds. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 16 July 1948. There was some question as to whether or not the use of payroll records was even legal. Hill board supporters objected to their inclusion. The records were used as evidence that the defendants illegally received double payments for certain days they conducted union business. The fact that Alcoa granted the USWA access to these records clearly indicates a preference for union administration.

[136] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 28 August 1948.

[137] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 16 September 1948.

defendants. [138] A November rank-and-file vote to approve the board ruling determined if the men would be dismissed from the union and blacklisted from work. During a twelve hour period 1583 members voted and rejected the ruling by a vote of 968 to 615.[139] Despite the vote Gravatt remained USWA 302's administrator, and he called on the membership to move beyond this affair to rebuild the union. Others considered the vote result a condemnation of his administration.[140] Either way, it was learned that there was no use in fighting Haser and Hart. Sometimes union membership is what one has to accept to earn a living wage.

In the end the trial cost the union $30,000, did nothing to resolve the intra-union conflict, and as a *Dispatch* editorial put it, left the "union and this community ... [with] a black eye."[141] Furthermore it underscored the discontent of a significant faction within the union with the continued influence of "old union men." It pitted them against another sizeable faction of those supporting the Haser-Hart machine. Still, these groups comprised a minority of the union membership, perhaps indicating that the majority of the rank-and-file had concerns much larger than a union bank account or who was administrating the local's affairs. These concerns were undoubtedly job security brought on by Alcoa's fear mongering.

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[138] Report of the Trial Committee, Local 302, USWA, CIO, 1948, box 25 folder 10, AWA Papers, PSU.

[139] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 6 November 1948. The paper reported that there was enough tension during the vote that police were put on notice to be ready for a potential riot. The spreadsheet given to me by the Alcoa librarian indicates that an average of 2240 plant employees for 1948, while union records indicate that it was much higher.

[140] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 11 and 17 November 1948.

[141] Ibid., 6 November 1948. The AFL represented 6500 aluminum workers at Alcoa plants. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 16 June 1948. Letter to Committee Members from Gravatt explaining the general information on the start of negotiations, April 5, 1948, box 7 folder 11, AWA Papers, PSU.

Also undoubtedly more pressing were the coinciding wage negotiations. As noted, USWA-Alcoa talks began at the end of April. The union asked for a twenty-five cent per hour wage increase.[142] By mid-June the Detroit plant was on strike and USWA 302 voted in favor of a strike platform. If the *Dispatch* is any indicator, the community was less than enthused about a possible strike. An editorial insinuated that it was the union leadership (meaning Gravatt, Haser and Hart) who dictated the affairs of the local - not the rank-and-file. The editors, like some in support of the suspended Hill executive board, asserted that the aluminum workers were merely a pawn to test out demands the USWA would make of the steel industry in the coming year. Consequently, the editors believed that before any strike moved forward another full membership vote be taken.[143] Fortunately for all involved, wage issues were resolved before it got to that point. The union accepted a ten percent wage increase which guaranteed an eleven cent an hour increase in the New Kensington plant.[144]

On its side of the negotiating table Alcoa continued a practice of taking advantage of discord within the local and in 1948 threatened to close the plant unless labor made certain concessions and agreed to the company's speed up policies. The membership may have acquiesced to Alcoa's demands, but workers still pursued efforts to gain control over their local and regain power in the community – though after a couple of years' rest. In the 1950s and 1960s various candidates' campaign materials were filled with rhetoric seemingly fueled by outrage over the Hill affair and the resulting USWA

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[142] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 1 May 1948.

[143] Ibid., 18 June 1948. In a separate article the *Dispatch* reported that many members did not want to strike.

[144] Ibid., 26 June 1948. In response Alcoa raised the price of aluminum.

administrative control. A number of slates were filled with candidates who had supported the Hill board. Campaign materials for union elections through the 1960s referenced not only the Hill affair and USWA meddling, but also more vaguely worded "outside interference." [145]

One such candidate was Robert E. Sullivan, who was elected president on the "Honest Review of the Record" campaign. Sullivan remained USWA 302's president through 1955 - the year FBI informants claimed that the Mannarino organized crime family attempted to infiltrate 302. They failed as Sullivan was able to swing board votes against Mannarino-controlled men and cleared them out of office. Some campaign materials promoted candidates who would "not tolerate any interference from district or international officers that will be harmful to the rest of our members." Others expressed the belief that "we ABSOLUTELY will NOT tolerate any outside interference in our Local Union from ANY outside political faction."[146] It is difficult to say if "outside interference" or any other allusions refer conclusively to the Mannarino Organization, District 19 officials, or any other local politics. It is plausible that it is a mix of these possibilities given how often paths crossed with union duties and the business of local government. Regardless, these campaign materials reflect workers' continued desire to

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[145] 1950 flyer from Robert E. Sullivan slate of candidates, box 4, folder 29, AWA Papers, PSU; John F. Kennedy Assassination Files, NARA, January 15, 1958 report on Gabriel Mannarino. Informants could not remember the names of the Mannarino men cleared out of the union. While the Pennsylvania State Police could find no other Mannarino attempts or labor rackets in Westmoreland County, it was alleged that Gabriel had close connections with the Director of the Pittsburgh Steel Workers Union. John F. Kennedy Assassination Files, NARA, 124-10222-10205, December 9, 1971 report. John F. Kennedy Assassination Files, NARA, 124-10220-10435, March 23, 1962 SA Frank Allison memo to Director.

[146] Given the climate of the time, the more vague language could be broadly interpreted, perhaps, as a reference to the attempted labor racketeering events of 1955. Miscellaneous campaign materials for elections in the late 1950s through early 1960s, AWA Papers. Handbills for June 25, 1958 election and June 22, 1960 election, AWA Papers. See: box 4 folder 29; box 9 folders 9 and 10; box 20 folder 5; box 26 folder 8.

control their local. Their continued campaigns for elected office and involvement in community affairs signal their desire to affect change in the town.[147]

In the mid-1950s the AVIUC, led by 302 President Robert E. Sullivan, protested the various policies of the Gardlock administration and Westmoreland County Commissioners. After a 1952 voter fraud scandal involving several Mannarino Organization associates, Sullivan represented labor's demand that the county purchase new voting machines for New Kensington. Interestingly enough John Haser represented the AVIUC's complaint against Gardlock's use of relief roll men as free labor on city projects. Obviously Haser was a political player who balanced his own interests with those of New Kensington's workers.

Outside of labor politics, workers ran for city council, alderman, and even mayor of Arnold. Unionist Charles Keller served both on school board and as union president. Aluminum workers continued to be appointed to a number of boards which focused on the town's post-industrial future. In the late 1950s and early 1960s labor sat on the development board for a New Kensington satellite campus of Pennsylvania State University, and workers donated heavily to its building campaign. In the late 1960s labor sat on the committee designated to determine what to do with Alcoa's donation to the city of its Wear Ever building.

An aluminum worker would eventually serve on city council. Former union financial secretary Anthony Giordano served intermittently from the 1960s until his death in the early 1970s. In the mid-1960s he collaborated with the Westmoreland County

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[147] Local 302 *Bulletin*, May 21, 1963. List of eight union members running for local office in the upcoming election cycle, AWA Papers

Schools to bring a vocational-technical school to the area. It is possible that his worker's perspective and experiences with declining industry made him more in tune with a need to prepare youth for a post-Alcoa New Kensington. Furthermore, in the late 1960s it was Giordano who pushed council to arrange a meeting with Alcoa concerning its future in the community.[148] Other Alcoans were just community agitators. Rank-and-filer Joe Baksis appears throughout city council minutes for the 1960s questioning council's actions on any number of affairs, from the allocation of funding for redevelopment assessments to audits of the city's books (or lack thereof).

Joe Baksis and Anthony Giordano, aside from being aluminum workers, had in common their affiliation with the Volunteers for Good Government. During the mid-1960s Joe Baksis served for a time as its president and Giordano was one of its candidates for Council in 1961.[149] As will be discussed in chapter five the Volunteers For Good Government was a "factionalist group" within New Kensington's Democratic party whose ultimate goal was to bring integrity back to local government and "remove the brand of racket run city."[150] The Volunteers for Good Government and the aluminum workers started to make significant inroads into higher office at the same time. And their efforts were successful to some degree, but by this time the city was on a downhill slide.

As will be discussed in chapter four, through the 1950s and 1960s Alcoa continued its threats to pull out of town if their demands were not met. Local 302 spent

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[148] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (June 16, 1964 and September 3, 1968).

[149] JFK-NARA, 124-10216-10473; JFK-NARA, 124-10216-10472, April 16, 1961 memo. New Kensington, PA, City Council Minutes (June 16, 1964).

[150] JFK-NARA, 124-10216-10459, April 27, 1961 Memo to Director.

1965 and 1966 negotiating with Alcoa to wind up, at the urging of their USWA district representatives, agreeing to major concessions in work rules, wages and benefits to keep Alcoa in town for a few more years.[151] But these concessions did not prevent Alcoa from slowly moving much of its production elsewhere, and as it did so, it gradually reduced the number of its employees, so that by its last day of operation in 1974 only 200 workers were on the job.[152] By 1970 labor's position in the community was so diminished that when city council created the Industrial Development Authority to plan for a post-Alcoa future, it sought representation from Alcoa, but not labor.[153]

Meyerhuber's claim that "the alleged power of Big Labor in the region was an illusion" is true. However, their influence in the community was a mixed bag. Their greatest achievement concerned providing low-cost housing for area residents. They built partnerships with civic and business leaders, but they also had to fight special interests and allay citizen concerns. Amalgamation with the USWA took away the autonomy of a local that had for years been an industry leader. The Frank Hill executive board affair was the greatest example of how intra-union strife harmed the union internally and the workers externally. It demonstrated the power the USWA had over its locals and its ability to crush any insurgency in its ranks. Furthermore, the Hill affair reflects the power old time unionists had in the community. Finally, it appears as even with its successes (housing) and potential for labor unrest, Alcoa feared the union very

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[151] See box 18, AWA Papers, PSU, 1965-1966

[152] See appendix for employment averages released by Alcoa's Research Department.

[153] New Kensington, PA, City Council Minutes (August 4, 1970).

little – if at all. If anything Alcoa, like the majority of businesses, settled into post-war union dealings as a matter of the realities of the times. However, as will be discussed in chapter four, perhaps the biggest reason Alcoa had nothing to fear of the union was because the company essentially owned the town. It made grand gestures to the community to cultivate its loyalty, it influenced city policy for its own benefit, and through its corporate benevolence it determined the community's post-industrial fate to a certain extent.

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BIRTHPLACE OF ALUMINUM, CRADLE OF CRIME: SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN THE DEINDUSTRIALIZATION OF NEW KENSINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 1930-1970

VOLUME II

By

Jeanine Mazak-Kahne

A DISSERTATION

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

History

2009

CHAPTER FOUR

The Aluminum Company of America: 1930-1971

A late 1950s edition of the Aluminum Company of America's in-house publication, *Alcoa News*, featured the New Kensington Works in "The Aluminum City: A Good Place to Work, Trade, Live."[1] The article emphasized the symbiotic relationship between industry, company and town. However, New Kensington was not a "traditional" company town like steel magnate George McMurtry's nearby Vandergrift or Alcoa's community of Alcoa, Tennessee.[2] As noted in chapter one, the New Kensington-Arnold area contained coal mining operations, glassworks, steel production and fabrication mills, needle-trades and other small industrial concerns.[3] But Alcoa dominated the community

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[1] "A visit to one of Alcoa's plant communities," *Alcoa News*, undated [1955-1956], box 152 folder 6, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The article played up New Kensington's status as the "oldest existing aluminum manufacturing plant in the industry" and its place as an aluminum producer in a region dominated by steel manufacturing. The author notes the location of the "nation's foremost metals research laboratories" and lists the other key Alcoa units housed in New Kensington.. This document also notes that 6000 people are employed at the Works earning $25 million in annual wages in a town the author estimates has an annual retail business of $53 million.

[2] For more on McMurtry's influence in creating a company town see: Anne E. Mosher, "'Something Better Than the Best': Industrial Restructuring, George McMurtry and the Creation of the Model Industrial Town of Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, 1883-1901," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, no. 1 (March 1995): 84-107; Anne E. Mosher, *Capital's Utopia: Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, 1855-1916* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). For more on Alcoa, Tennessee see: box 1 folder 8, Alcoa Papers, HSWP; Russell D. Parker, "Alcoa, Tennessee: The Early Years, 1919-1939," *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 48 (1976): 84-103; Russell D. Parker, "Alcoa, Tennessee: The Years of Change, 1940-1960," *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 49 (1977): 99-115; Russell D. Parker, "The Black Community in a Company Town: Alcoa, Tennessee, 1919-1939," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 2 (Summer 1978): 203-221. Another more recent study of company towns similar to that of Anne E. Mosher's work is Arnold R. Alanene's *Morgan Park: Duluth, U.S. Steel, and the Forging of a Company Town* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

[3] For example, in 1922 there were fifty-seven plants operating and employing 5,712 with a payroll of $15,340,200. A 1923 breakdown of numbers employed in the area were 4,000 to Alcoa, "2,300 people at Valley Camp Coal Company, 1,200 men at American Sheet and Tin Plate, 750 workers at Union Spring, 300 men at P.H. Murphy, 250 workers at Sprague Electric, 100 men at National Lead and Oil, and 60 men at Valley Stand Supply." Michael MacBeth, "New Kensington's Industrial Heritage," Blissell, ed., 82-85.

physically, economically and to a great extent exerted a significant amount of political influence.[4] By the 1930s Alcoa's state-of-the art research laboratories stood out like an ivy-league university hall among the stately houses of the Pine Manor neighborhood. The Aluminum Club was neighbor to two ethnic Roman Catholic parishes and served as a symbol of what education and hard work could bring to a young man aspiring to join the professional class.

The mills, lab and clubhouse were merely buildings; but, they represented what allowed residents, whether employed by Alcoa or not, to draw a common identity as residents of the "Aluminum City." Decades of paternalist practices fostered a workplace identity whereby many employees called themselves "Alcoans."[5] The company cultivated the city's and community's loyalties through a steady stream of tax revenue, assistance with the building of city infrastructure, corporate reinvestment, and various beneficent gestures.

Alcoa expanded its operations nationwide as numerous patents secured its monopoly position. They monopolized the industry through World War II when lesser national aluminum manufacturers moved in. Regardless of other companies' inroads, Alcoa held the lion's share of the aluminum industry's manufacturing capacity. Still such changes forced Alcoa to rethink its operations, which included its New Kensington Works. Alcoa created an atmosphere which encouraged the broader community to

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[4] This is much like what Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht found in Pennsylvania anthracite mining towns. They were not necessarily formed as company towns but certain companies dominated the town politics and economic structure. Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht, *The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[5] From a review of in-house publications found in the Alcoa Papers at HSWP, this is a corporate-wide employee identity.

pressure labor to accept workplace change and increase productivity in fear of capital flight through a post-war public relations campaign. Alcoa began to ready the community for eventual industrial pull-out through this campaign and other corporate moves. The deindustrialization process was gradual enough, starting in 1944 with the final shutdown in 1971. While Alcoa did not envision an industrial future for New Kensington it appeared as though there was to be a research and development one nearby. With the construction of a new laboratory complex in suburban Merwin, many believed New Kensington would transition from the Aluminum City to Science City.

This chapter broadly examines Alcoa's relationships with city government, its workers, and the larger community. It touches on Alcoa's decision to build its state of the art laboratory on the community's outer fringe. Finally, it discusses the long-planned reasons behind Alcoa's departure and the manner in which they eased out of the community over a twenty-five year period.

Alcoa and City Government

Through the 1920s Alcoa had interests in other countries, largely Canada, but also in places like Dutch controlled Surinam where it mined raw materials for use in U.S. plants. However, as corporate biographer George David Smith explains, "a combination of logistical, organizational, and legal constraints" forced Alcoa to largely withdrawal from its foreign interests.[6] Consequently corporate expansion had to come within the United States. Joining the New Kensington Works at this time were a number of facilities including: East St. Louis, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; Massena, New York; Alcoa,

[6] Smith, 135. The Canadian Alcan, one of Alcoa's international competitors, resulted from this divestiture.

Tennessee; and Bauxite, Arkansas among others. Thanks to a patent-secured monopoly, Alcoa continued to grow through the 1920s. Like other industries, Alcoa faced a setback with the stock market crash of 1929. Smith notes that the company hit bottom in 1932 but by 1937 "Alcoa's assets swelled from about 120 to 223 million dollars and the number of its employees increased about 11,000."[7] Smith explains that this growth was the result of new product development (such as furniture and "high fashion giftware") and manufacturers' adoption of aluminum as a manufacturing substitute for tin and steel. Furthermore, monopoly status prevented Alcoa from doing what other industries did - overproducing to match competitors. Alcoa was able to securely, and for great profit, manufacture on demand.[8]

Alcoa's massive corporate growth fueled a New Kensington Works' expansion program during the 1920s and 1930s which influenced and complicated its relationship with city council. This expansion campaign firmly set Alcoa as the community's dominant industry and city government's most influential constituency. While they note an engagement with other local industries, council minutes reflect local government's willingness to make numerous financial and spatial concessions to Alcoa. At times the council played mediator between Alcoa and other interests to the company's benefit.[9] From a review of Alcoa's public records and city council minutes it does not seem as though any of Alcoa's requests were denied. The city was also a corporate booster as

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[7] Smith, 133.

[8] Ibid., 133, 189.

[9] For a sampling of council's engagement with other industries see minutes: Pennsylvania Railroad, (July 20, 1920); American Sheet and Tin Plate Company, (February 14, 1921); Atlantic Refining Company, (March 16, 1926); and, 3rd Ave. junkyard, (September 22, 1931).

evidenced by a constant stream of gratitude for Alcoa's efforts which ensured the town's industrial security.

Council's major concern for Alcoa's corporate growth was over how plant upgrades and expansion would impact borough infrastructure. The two parties negotiated responsibilities for the cost of paving alleyways that cut through properties which Alcoa acquired from the city.[10] As noted in chapter one's example of Wear Ever Way, Alcoa received permission to make various improvements at its own cost with council reserving the right to request modification of such improvements as necessary.[11] As Alcoa expanded it made more requests of the city, largely to acquire city and public property. The majority of negotiations between city and company appeared to follow this pattern of granting corporate requests that would benefit its growth and improve New Kensington as a byproduct.[12]

For example, during a 1936 facilities upgrade, the *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* reported on roundtable meeting between Works' superintendent R.R. Stevenson and city council. It appears that this meeting was less a dialogue between parties than Stevenson informing council of what the city must do for Alcoa to guarantee the

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[10] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 20, 1923).

[11] It is difficult to determine if they ever found it to be so. Wear Ever Way discussion at council, New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (December 16, 1926). Other examples in city council minutes can be found: fencing matter (January 1, 1925); construction and maintenance of a high pressure steam line, (March 19, 1929); Special Tax Valuation Committee's tax assessment exemption of Alcoa's manufacturing plants which remained assessed at $5,000,000.00 and the 10% increase in property taxes would not apply to the company, (February 5, 1925).

[12] For example, in April of 1927 Alcoa requested the city to vacate property along a portion of First Avenue. Council agreed to split the cost of road resurfacing in front of Alcoa's Freeport Road laboratory, New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (April 27, 1936). That June Alcoa successfully petitioned to widen and resurface Freeport Road and council also contracted with the company a shared agreement for the maintenance of an overhead high pressure steam line. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (June 2, 1936).

company's growth. The "various privileges to be granted by the city" included property easements along the Allegheny River adjacent to the Works. Alcoa also instructed the city to "speed up construction" of its Tenth Street sewer lines under new plant construction so the company could lay the first floor. Stevenson also requested that the city sell its garbage disposal plant and surrounding property to Alcoa for plant expansion.[13] Shortly thereafter the city authorized the sale of the plant to Alcoa.

This last request was of some benefit to the city. The plant was appraised at $11,866 and purchased for $15,000.[14] Alcoa permitted the city to use the plant at no cost until the company chose to develop the land.[15] The city received more than market value for the property while still being allowed access, without expense, to the services it provided. The city was able to use the funds brought by the sale to temper a budget deficit while paying no fees for continued use. Alcoa, in turn, was not charged property tax for as long as the city used the plant.[16] Alcoa's actions may appear to be subtle threats; however, there is no evidence which indicates potential punishment if the city failed to grant their requests.[17] It is more likely that council was just continuing a

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[13] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 28 September 1936. The garbage incinerator was located at the end of Pine Alley and Thirteenth Street.

[14] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (September 8, 1936). The city also granted Alcoa six feet of Ninth Street and permission to repair the "surface of the lower level" of that section of property.

[15] The agreement, as reported in the September 28, 1936 *Dispatch*, stated that Alcoa was to give the city six months notice to make other arrangements.

[16] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 6 October 1936.

[17] This is in contrast to what Camden experienced in their dealing with RCA. Jefferson Cowie notes that during the Depression RCA's president told the Chamber of Commerce that they would remain in Camden as long as they could be competitive, which meant concessions from the city. Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999): 16.

beneficial pattern of behavior amenable to the community's dominant employer.

City government benefited from Alcoa in a number of other predictable ways. When they granted Alcoa's request for easements and shared costs for paving roadways (even if the city had no plans to pave roadways or put in sewers) they were able to make improvements in the community at a fraction of the cost. These improvements were made in two vital areas: the industrial flats and the growing residential area around the Alcoa lab – both home to Alcoa workers.[18] After the Johnstown Flood of 1936, council granted Alcoa city property as well as negotiated a common easement with Union Spring for their properties bordering the Allegheny River. With these easements along the Allegheny River, Alcoa constructed a flood wall which benefited all residing in the flats – industry, the business district, city government, and first and second ward residents.[19] The city also benefited from corporate tax revenue. For example, during the Depression it appears that in at least one case the city was able to cover budget shortfalls through an Alcoa tax advance. According to April 3, 1934 minutes, city council passed a resolution authorizing Alcoa to advance its quarterly taxes as a loan to the city. In exchange council was to pay Alcoa six percent interest by that July.[20] It appears as though this tax advance allowed the city to cover its bills at a time of economic uncertainty.

In fact, it can be asserted that many of the improvements done in the 1930s would not have happened had Alcoa not been a successful monopoly. As evidenced by the tax

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[18] This is where the Alcoa Laboratory was located on Freeport Road.

[19] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (September 29, 1936) and (December 1, 1936); *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 29 September, 6 October, and 2 December 1936. In the flood wall ordinance Alcoa was also granted property for a company financed First Ave. sewer construction project. This street ran along Company property.

[20] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (April 3, 1934).

advance it can be reasoned that city council could not have afforded these city improvements alone or solely though the assistance of federal works project money. This is not to say that New Kensington and its citizens did not face difficulties during the Depression. However, at a time when many workers and communities were disillusioned with big business and turning wholesale to unions and New Deal social welfare programs to solve their problems, New Kensington still had faith in Alcoa.[21] Maybe this was because they knew that in such a troubled economy the successful company was their anchor.

Perhaps because of this, the city positioned itself in a semi-neutral position during the most active labor disputes between Alcoa and resurgent organized labor. From 1931 through 1934 council minutes reflect receipt of a number of union workers' resolutions as well as superintendent's letters thanking both the police department and council for their assistance in maintaining calm during various strikes. Both parties referenced the city's perceived cooperation on their behalf which kept demonstrations peaceful. During the 1934 strike Alcoa credited both the police department and the council's "loyalty in keeping good control of the situation twenty-four hours a day."[22] It could easily be interpreted that city government remained impartial, but minutes suggest that the city may have acted in Alcoa's interests by preventing more militant demonstrations by an active aluminum workers' union.

Alcoa's community support is evidenced in symbolic gestures which both

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[21] For more on working class attitudes towards capital and New Deal programs during the Depression see: Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal.*

[22] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 20, 1934).

honored the company as well as acknowledged it as the base for the city's livelihood. For example, in 1938 the city protested the tariff reduction on British aluminum imports proposed by the Roosevelt administration and sent a delegation to Washington for hearings to plead Alcoa's - and their - case.[23] City government teamed up with organized labor to pass largely symbolic resolutions and petitioned the federal government to change tariff laws, award contracts for fabricated aluminum products, and address other changes in economic policies affecting the aluminum industry.[24]

The city also honored the corporation in ways which emphasized identity as the Aluminum City – an association which preferenced Alcoa above all other industries. 1936 marked the fiftieth anniversary of Charles Martin Hall's discovery of the aluminum refinement process. The *Dispatch* covered celebratory events, the majority of which honored the industrialists who founded Alcoa and those who grew the company in New Kensington. Features celebrating the industrial worker were largely absent.[25] The city renamed the municipal Ken Mor Golf Course the Alcoa Golf Club, "as a tribute to the Alcoa which is known over the world."[26] Furthermore, council renamed the major roadway Broadview Boulevard to Stevenson Drive in honor of New Kensington Works'

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[23] Ibid., (February 15, 1938). In a petition to the company, New Kensington begged U.S. Steel to give "serious consideration" to reopen its local American Sheet and Tin Plate mill. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (July 6, 1933).

[24] For example, in 1936 labor leaders protested a U.S.-Switzerland trade agreement which allowed for inexpensive imports of aluminum foil. In a letter to the editor the aluminum workers call on civic groups to join in the protest against this agreement. Labor asserts that 6000 persons are employed at the New Kensington Works. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 3 March 1936.

[25] See the February 24-28, 1936 editions of the *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2 March 1936.

[26] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (May 15, 1939). *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 17 May 1939.

superintendent R.R. Stevenson.[27]

Though not as costly as infrastructure, corporate response to such community gestures illustrates executives' efforts to build goodwill. In an open letter of thanks to the city for the anniversary celebration, Alcoa president Roy A. Hunt noted the company's appreciation for the "expression on the part of the people of New Kensington ... most gratifying when it comes from people with whom we have been co-workers for so many years."[28] Though one example, this is reflective of Alcoa's ability to utilize the history of its corporate birth and rapid growth to acknowledge the important role the community played in its achievements to that point. Furthermore, it demonstrates Alcoa's efforts to foster a shared responsibility for corporate success, thereby encouraging the community to remain personally invested in its growth and stability.

A by-product of the realities of the company's early small shop days, Alcoa's image in New Kensington was one where corporate leaders were men who labored alongside the industrial worker to build the company. To use the image of a "co-worker" implied an equal partnership between corporation and community – worker, community and company all helped to make New Kensington "The Aluminum City" and its workers "Alcoans." Finally, the strength of this partnership image and positive community response had a significant impact on how the community came to view industry-labor-community relations in the post-War period.

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[27] Ibid., (May 23, 1939).

[28] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 28 February 1936.

Industrial Expansion, Realignment and Reorganization

George David Smith explains that through the 1930s demand for aluminum continued to grow and by 1937 was at an all-time high.[29] In the late 1930s Alcoa in New Kensington found itself in an interesting position. Its two New Kensington-based subsidiaries, The Aluminum Cooking Utensil Company (TACU) and the Aluminum Seal Company (ASC), continued to expand while the general manufacturing plant was starting to become outmoded. As noted in chapter one, the New Kensington Works' was the company's oldest facility and was the development site of various processes and product development. Once perfected, these processes and products were often transferred to other plants easily adapted to or built for these specific purposes with newer, more efficient equipment. But as a proving ground the Works remained a valuable site in which Alcoa continued to invest. In 1936 Alcoa invested $500,000 to modernize some buildings while it continued to send production elsewhere.[30] Eventually the jobbing operations, developing laboratory facilities, and numerous initiatives such as the apprenticeship program, brought about the need for a facilities study. This study resulted in a realignment plan which covered all Alcoa operations in New Kensington: the general Works, the subsidiaries, the Logan's Ferry powder plant and the research laboratories.

It was also part of a corporation-wide assessment of current production methods. The resulting eight-year plan for New Kensington was part of a larger $30 million

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[29] Smith, 137.

[30] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 1 May 1936.

expansion program Alcoa coordinated among its plants.[31] New Kensington Works' assessors explained that the manufacturing departments there must reorganize in order to maximize usage of limited space. Among other things it was suggested that other Alcoa plants should absorb future growth in extruded shapes, foil, sheet and tubing fabrication, while the New Kensington Works minimize production and focus more on product development.[32] The Works' reorganization included maximizing available space for its job shop and warehouses so that the subsidiaries could increase and expand their production capabilities.[33] This plan indicates that by 1930s Alcoa had maximized its flats' property. Unless Alcoa were to develop production facilities on the city's periphery, Alcoa in New Kensington had limited its spatial capabilities.

The plan derived from the study repositioned the New Kensington Works in the company's expanding national fabricating operations. At this point all manufacturing activities for TACU and ASC subsidiaries were based in the city. This can be seen as a move towards decentralization through an expansion program based on national market

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[31] Wear-Ever promotional brochure, 1939, box 15 folder 3, Alcoa Papers, HSWP; *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 30 December 1939. It is certain that $102,000 was spent on a storage facility expansion plan during 1939. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 22 December 1939.

[32] "Development of the New Kensington Works Facilities: Land." July 1939, box 16 folder 8, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Any cost laid out to purchase expansion property would be recovered by streamlined facilities focusing on sheet production and subsidiary work. It was proposed that the "ultimate solution" would be to remove all A.C.O.A. departments – foundries, forge and pattern shop and segments or all of the sheet mill and melting room.

[33] Ibid. This plan called for subdividing the plants' properties into A.C.O.A. (general works), T.A.C.U. production and A.S.C. production facilities. New Kensington Works would comprise five manufacturing divisions: New Kensington housed T.A.C.U. Plant and Mechanical Shops; Arnold housed the A.C.O.A. Manufacturing Plant and Aluminum Seal Company. The Albron Plant remained at the Logans Ferry Powder Plant.

demands.[34] Production of ingot, sheet, foil, extrusions and tube manufacturing were conducted at other Alcoa plants. For example, in 1937 Alcoa expanded its mining operations in Surinam. It built a new fabricating plant for aluminum tubing in Lafayette, Indiana, a new alumina refinery in Mobile, Alabama, and expanded the Massena, New Jersey plant's rivet capacity.[35] Furthermore, during 1937-1938 one million dollars were invested in Alcoa, Tennessee, Edgewater, New Jersey, and New Kensington for improving efficiency in its three sheet mills.[36]

In New Kensington improvements had to be coordinated in a way which considered the growing subsidiaries. This realignment and improvement campaign began to narrowly define the Works' duties to emphasize production of the subsidiaries' manufactured products. Productivity and profit drove the expansion of both the cooking utensil production as well as the job shop. The cooking utensil business had proven itself to be a ten million dollar a year enterprise that within the next few years was projected to hit fifteen million dollars annually.[37] During this period it was determined that the big money to be made in New Kensington was through TACU and ASC. The city's identity as the "Aluminum City" rested on the nation's demand for utensils and bottle caps, beer barrels and baking pans.

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[34] Jefferson Cowie notes that decentralization at RCA's Camden, NJ plant was a subtle process which began in the 1930s but was most evident in the post-war period. Cowie, 33.

[35] Smith, 214.

[36] "Development of the New Kensington Works Facilities: Land." July 1939, box 16 folder 8, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Sheet mill upgrades handled the demand for aircraft sheet.

[37] "Development of the New Kensington Works Facilities: Summary." July 1939, box 16 folder 8, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

Putting a significant portion of their resources into cooking utensil and seal production also called for an "opportunity ... to make these units as efficient as possible by providing the necessary facilities for expansion and for such rearrangement of equipment as may be desirable."[38] The limited room for physical expansion was not the only factor determining the Works' reorganization. Surveyors noted that "the lower costs, better labor conditions, and greater flexibility of some of the newer fabricating plants makes expansion of these A.C.O.A. manufacturing departments [in New Kensington] uneconomic." Furthermore, the New Kensington Works was considered by the company to be a "high cost plant due to high labor and overhead expenses and inefficient arrangement of manufacturing equipment."[39]

It is easy to understand that the physical arrangement and dated equipment of the Works made for inefficiencies – their study demonstrates as much. What remains unstated here – as through most of Alcoa's public records – are their labor difficulties. As discussed in chapter three, aluminum workers were in the middle of a New Kensington worker-led successful CIO organizing campaign across many Alcoa plants. This involved strikes in 1937, 1938 and 1939 which resulted in a comprehensive contract with the company. Among the many issues the AWA fought for was national wage parity both on gendered and regional terms – which it never quite achieved. In this context it is clear as to why surveyors found New Kensington's workers, among the highest paid, to be not only expensive but difficult. Still, how to deal with the labor

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[38] Ibid. There is an interesting document at the end of folder 8 in box 16 listing expansion activities during 1937-1938.

[39] "Development of the New Kensington Works Facilities: Summary." July 1939, box 16 folder 8, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

issue was not outlined in this document. Unlike RCA's actions in Camden, New Jersey during this period, Alcoa did not leave – or threaten to leave – New Kensington.[40] But what this study does show is the base of an argument which was developed and used to obtain post-war worker concessions.

In the end assessors concluded that the eight-year plan may not be the "best or only practical plan" but one that "appears to offer the best means of putting New Kensington Works on an efficient operating basis comparable with the other fabricating plants."[41] The tone is somewhat hesitant in its drive to move forward with upgrading an inefficient facility compared to their newer plants. It is speculative to say, though a point to be raised, that the improvement plan may have represented Alcoa's commitment to a town despite a report which could be interpreted as justification for planned obsolescence. But it also indicates that from that point forward efficiency and productivity were to be central issues at the New Kensington Works.[42] What grew in efficiency and value and consequently was aggressively developed and expanded were the company's research and development facilities.

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[40] Cowie, chapter one.

[41] "Development of the New Kensington Works Facilities: Summary." July 1939, box 16, folder 8, Alcoa Papers, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

[42] The *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* chronicles minor expansions and upgrades throughout the 1940s and 1950s, but the 1939 campaign was the largest for New Kensington's manufacturing facilities until the mid-1960s. Many fall along the lines of the 1944 construction of minor buildings. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 24 August 1944. It appears that expansion leans towards research and development. Following World War II through 1952, the newspaper reported that Alcoa's modernization programs resulted in a $12.5 million investment in New Kensington. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 October 1952. This appears to be part of a larger $350 million expansion campaign of 1951-1954. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 16 March 1955. The community celebrated the works as Alcoa's flagship plant, employing over 5,000, and serving the nation's light metal needs. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 12 July 1952

Research and Development

As discussed in chapter one, during Alcoa's early years its research and development program was extremely small and specific to individual facilities. The focus was on solving problems which arose from the production of aluminum and manufactured aluminum goods. Technological advances in metals production which resulted from World War I forced the company to review its approach towards research and development. The war created a demand for aluminum-based products, some of which were developed by outside entities who eventually became competitors. To move ahead of the competition Alcoa had to improve current processes as well as find new uses for the metal.[43] Consequently Alcoa's research laboratories were created in 1918 and by 1929 the company centered the world's largest research center in New Kensington.[44] New Kensington was home to the company's flagship laboratory, but these operations were largely decentralized – with facilities in Cleveland, Ohio, Massena, New York, and East St. Louis, Illinois. Together, the Alcoa Research Laboratories were considered the preeminent metals laboratory in the United States.

According to George David Smith, World War II was even more important as research was tied directly into war production. Wartime research focused on three areas: "new alloys with varying physical and chemical properties, process innovation, and new product design."[45] As minor players became major competitors for Alcoa's share of the U.S. market in the post-war period, advances made in the lab during the war were

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[43] Smith, 163.

[44] Press Release, May 2, 1957, box 187 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Expansion of laboratory facilities also occurred during 1939. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 31 August 1939.

[45] Smith, 173.

essential. By the 1950s the Research Laboratories were focusing on "product development and its manufacturing processes and away from primary aluminum processes."[46] The emphasis was squarely on enhancing profit-making capabilities, not scientific experimentation for science's sake.

Furthermore, research and development innovations shaped the post-war economy. Numerous major manufacturing companies invested in research and development not only to advance knowledge but to compete in a changing post-war global economy. One of the greatest impacts of this new industry was on the world of the worker. Much like Taylorism decades before, this new research and development changed the way work was organized. Such activities led to time saving devices implemented on assembly lines which resulted in increased productivity, reduced labor costs, and greater profits.[47] Harry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison note that such advances, when coupled with new communication and transportation technologies, made industrial decentralization easier.[48] It can then be posited that developments in Alcoa's laboratories assisted in post-war production relocations from the New Kensington Works.

Alcoa continued to expand its Freeport Road laboratory into the 1950s, purchasing additional acreage for potential future development. Community observers believed that this "underlined Alcoa's confidence in the future for Allegheny Valley."[49] As will be discussed later in the chapter, by this time the community had started to grow

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[46] Ibid., 262.

[47] Chafe, 114-115.

[48] Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Decentralization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982): 117-118.

[49] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 August 1955.

fearful of losing its manufacturing base. Consequently, subtle assurances obtained through the slightest gestures – such as the purchase of a few acres – went a long way. Adding to this was company officials' speculation that research and development would eventually outgrow existing facilities; consequently, they began to quietly search for land upon which to build a satellite location. In January 1957 Alcoa announced it was considering purchase of land in Merwin, a rural area roughly eight miles outside of New Kensington.[50] Despite its location outside of the city, some considered the Merwin site a win for the community. It was further indication of Alcoa's commitment to the region and its people. Others believed that by putting the lab beyond the city limits it was a sign of Alcoa's abandonment of the community.[51]

Merwin was among several sites in the Greater Pittsburgh area Alcoa officials were considering at that time.[52] New Kensington's excitement over the Merwin land deal is apparent through newspaper coverage. Citizens were certainly familiar with what went on at the plant since so many people worked there, but what went on behind the walls of the research laboratory was largely a mystery. Consequently, newspaper and city officials began to educate the public more about what went on in an Alcoa Research Laboratory. The Kiwanis Club held a "Keep Alcoa at Home" session to brainstorm ideas

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[50] Press Release, January 24, 1957, box 187 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Merwin is located in Westmoreland County, approximately 28 miles from Pittsburgh.

[51] John Kane noted this was sentiment of some during the late 1950s. John Kane, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, May 26, 2005

[52] Press Release, May 2, 1957, box 187 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. While the corporate release does not mention other sites, the *Dispatch* reported that Ohio was a proposed location for the centralized laboratories but speculation caused property values to soar. Furthermore, the *Dispatch* credits its cooperation to keep similar news from breaking (and sending property values soaring) as a factor in Alcoa's decision to stay in New Kensington. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 24 January 1957.

to secure the purchase, which included the idea of giving Alcoa an airfield jointly owned by New Kensington, Arnold and Vandergrift.[53] In the end, officials decided on the Merwin site thanks to the availability of 2,300 continuous acres of property, its nearby location to the homes of 700-plus lab employees, and its proximity to corporate headquarters in Pittsburgh.[54]

The Merwin development was part of a high-level corporate restructuring done from 1958 through 1960. During this period research and development was centralized and laboratories dotting the corporate landscape began to be gradually consolidated at the new facility. Operations from labs in Cleveland, Massena and East St. Louis were to eventually be transferred to New Kensington. The company believed that customers would be "better served" through a centralized location rather than travel to and from various sites. Increased space would allow for the creation of "experimental production facilities without disrupting plant activities."[55] All of this was to be a boon to New Kensington.

In July 1962 the *Dispatch* editorial board praised the growing industry of research and development. It recast the Alle-Kiski Valley as a research "hub" for Alcoa and other

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[53] For example see: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 25 January 1957; 26 January 1957; 29 January 1957; 15 February 1957; 27 February 1957; 12 November 1958; 17 November 1958.

[54] Press Release, May 2, 1957, box 187 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The company also had the Merwin re-named Alcoa Center, although the locals still refer to it as Merwin and Alcoa at Merwin. For more on this see: Memo, C.C. Conner to R.A. Hunt, June 11, 1957, box 187 folder 1; Letter from Donald Orth, Executive Secretary, Domestic and Geographic Names, to E.S. Howarth, Assistant Director for Engineering and Administration, Alcoa, December 19, 1973, box 187 folder 1; Memo from E.S. Howarth, Alcoa Technical Center, November 10, 1974, box 197 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. For more on the Alcoa Technical Center design and development plans see: "Alcoa Technical Center Phase 1: Alcoa Process Development Laboratories," box 91 folder 5, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[55] Smith, 331-334.

corporate research facilities including Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, and the Gulf Corporation. As it had done in the past with manufacturing, the editorial urged people to help grow the industry, stressing that community's long-term survival was tied to Alcoa's corporate success.[56] Perhaps this was an indication that all was not well with the city's manufacturing base. At this point the New Kensington Works was in steady decline and the city's hope for its future emphasized science and technology as a path to progress in what appeared to be a local post-industrial future.

The Alcoa Technical Center groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 1, 1962.[57] The press called the thirty million-dollar campus-style complex a "Science City" inhabited by 1,000 people.[58] Within three years of the groundbreaking the development's first phase was completed - shortly before Alcoa's 1966 announcement of the Wear Ever division's move to Chilicothe, Ohio. As New Kensington lost manufacturing departments, other plants lost their research and development divisions which were to be centralized at Merwin. For example, in 1966 it was announced that Alcoa's Equipment Development Division would move from Cleveland to the Merwin campus. This move brought nearly seventy engineers and their families to the area. The *Dispatch* predicted growth that did not come.[59] For years when scientists were recruited

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[56] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 July 1962.

[57] Quarterly Statement for the third quarter ended September 30, 1962, Aluminum Company of America, box 91 folder 2, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[58] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 1 August 1962.

[59] Quarterly Statement for the third quarter ended September 30, 1966, Aluminum Company of America, box 91 folder 6; "Remarks for A.M. Hunt to be delivered at the dedication of the new wing of Citizens

from across the country to work in New Kensington's lab they were encouraged to live in the community. As the new center developed outside of the city's periphery, recruits were not shown homes in town, but rather those in more suburban and rural communities of Murrysville, Lower Burrell and Allegheny Township.[60] This indicates that Alcoa no longer felt vested enough in the community to encourage its professionals to become engaged with the city proper. In the process of centralizing its laboratory facilities, Alcoa's new Technical Center did bring jobs to the area – high tech research ones – but the decentralization of its manufacturing base was responsible for the hundreds lost at the Works.

Alcoa Al and the Beginning of the End

The city of New Kensington was long aware of the potential for capital flight from their community. An October 13, 1936 editorial in the *Dispatch* spoke to the recent relocation of a Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) production unit from the region to Kokomo, Indiana. PPG apparently based its decision on market demands and a growing need for production space.[61] The editors cautioned their readers that "we must ever be on guard" to keep present industry in the community. A few years later in 1939 the *Dispatch* editorial board revisited the potential for capital flight. It used the annual Industry

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Hospital, New Kensington, Pennsylvania, July 24, 1966," box 95 folder 6; Press Release Draft, July 21, 1966, box 95 folder 6; Press Release, July 25, 1966, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[60] Ruth and Wendell Milz, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, June 10, 2005

[61] This is a constant refrain and reality in the decentralization process. For an example of this see Tami J. Freedman, "'A Trail of Ghost Towns across Our Land' The Decline of Manufacturing in Yonkers, New York," in Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, eds. *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca: ILR Press/Cornell University Press, 2003): 27-29.

Appreciation Day activities to underscore the loss of industry in other towns. The editorial reads: "Let's keep the industries that we have, by treating our present industries with solicitude we will earn a reputation that will attract others, that is what we have to do."[62]

As with other industries across the nation, war production kept employment high and production at capacity and thus allayed concerns over capital flight.[63] As with a number of other industries, World War II was of tremendous benefit to Alcoa domestically and internationally. At this point Germany was the global leader in aluminum production. But as the European conflict grew, countries such as England and France lost their primary trade market and were incapable of producing the amount of aluminum they needed for military purposes.[64] As the second leading producer of the world's aluminum, Alcoa was primed to step in. But in 1944 concerns previously articulated by *Dispatch* editors started to become a reality.

In 1944 the United Steelworkers of America, who were then representing the aluminum workers, called a month-long strike against the Aluminum Seal Company. The workers received a wage increase; and, company officials characterized labor relations as "fair" and noted higher productivity than during the war years. Still, two months following the strike company officials began negotiations to acquire the Perfect

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[62] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 13 October 1936. At the center of this editorial was the PPG move one of its production units to Kokomo, Indiana. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 July 1939.

[63] See appendix for employment numbers during the war years.

[64] Smith, 191-193.

Circle Plant in Richmond, Indiana from Firestone.[65] Shortly thereafter Alcoa determined that the ASC's Arnold plant was no longer suitable for production needs and plans were made to relocate most of the plant's equipment by 1946. Operations were transferred from the Arnold plant by mid-July 1947.[66]

Decentralization of some New Kensington Works' production was the result of Alcoa's loss of monopoly status during World War II. Wartime demand for aluminum was so great that Alcoa could not keep up despite building a new smelter in Vancouver, Washington in 1939 and a larger sheet mill at its Alcoa, Tennessee facility in 1940. As a result the government facilitated aluminum production. From 1941 through 1943 the federal government built twenty Defense Corporation plants with the assistance of Alcoa engineers. At the same time, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation provided the much smaller Reynolds corporation with a loan to build a sheet mill and smelter in Listerhill, Alabama, and a smelter in Washington state.[67] Between Alcoa, the federal government, and Reynolds, the aluminum industry was expanding farther west and deeper south.

During the war Alcoa operated many of the government facilities under multi-year leases, which allowed it to increase both profits and production. But George David Smith notes Alcoa's problems began with the 1944 creation of the War Surplus Property Board, which was responsible for selling off plants constructed for the war effort. Disposition of these properties were supposed to be done in a fashion that stimulated free enterprise, and for Alcoa this meant the end of its monopoly. Alcoa was allowed to

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[65] Michael MacBeth, "New Kensington's Industrial Heritage," in Blissell, ed., 82-85.

[66] "Aluminum Seal Company History, 1910 to Oct. 1940," box 2, folder 13, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[67] Smith, 214-218.

purchase only two plants – a smelter near Massena and an extrusion plant at Cressona, Pennsylvania. Reynolds Aluminum and Kaiser Aluminum benefited tremendously by the opportunities to purchase the smelters and fabricating operations Alcoa helped to create.[68]

Because of this Alcoa was forced to look for new markets and develop new products. Alcoa expanded into areas like housing construction and automobile production. The Korean War also spurred a demand for aluminum military products. Furthermore, Alcoa found that it had to compete with growing rival products of plastics and stainless steel. All of this resulted in a series of expansion campaigns which began in 1947 and lasted through 1956. Alcoa invested money in its existing facilities in Alcoa, Tennessee, Massena, New York, Cleveland, Ohio, Vernon California, and East St. Louis, Illinois. Among the changes in this period include: the 1948 closure of the Niagara, New York smelter and the 1949 opening of its replacement smelter in Port Comfort, Texas; the 1949 opening of a new fabricating plant in Davenport, Iowa and wire and cable plant in Vancouver, Washington.[69] One of the moves which directly impacted New Kensington was the opening of a production facility in Chillicothe, Ohio in 1947.

In 1947 Alcoa president Roy A. Hunt gave the keynote address at the Chamber of Commerce's Industrial Day luncheon. Hunt spoke to New Kensington's and Alcoa's role in shaping their shared future. He opened by emphasizing New Kensington as "the cradle of the aluminum industry" and the place where many of the company's future leaders, including himself, "cut their first teeth in the aluminum business." But the

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[68] Smith, 233-242.

[69] Ibid., 242-243, 256; Mueseler, 74.

nostalgic tone quickly turned serious when he addressed rumors concerning Alcoa's future in New Kensington, no doubt fueled by the loss of three key production units – the Sheet and Melting divisions, and the ASC – over the past three years.[70]

Hunt noted that the relocation of these units, contrary to rumor, did not mean a complete plant closure. But, if those in attendance thought they would receive a promise to keep all current units in New Kensington, they were disappointed. Instead, Hunt lectured civic leaders about changing markets and modes of industrial production. All of his arguments reflect standard patterns as noted factors behind capital flight. He explained that the urban, multi-storied New Kensington Works was rapidly becoming an outmoded facility and that single story facilities in larger rural areas such as Richmond, Indiana provided necessary room for growth. Added to this was marketplace competition which dictated the restructuring of several divisions across the company. Finally, Hunt explained that complicating everything was "the continuing rise in [manufacturing] costs ... as a result of the generally rapid rises in wages without – in many cases – adequate increases in productivity."[71] He essentially blamed New Kensington's workforce for corporate moves to rural Ohio.[72] Changes had to be made for Alcoa to remain viable in New Kensington - largely by the workforce.

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[70] Roy A. Hunt, Industrial Day Speech, September 25, 1947, box 9 folder 13, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The coverage of this event in the *Dispatch* is more thorough than the speech in the Alcoa Papers. There is more detail to the speech, perhaps indicating that Hunt made changes to the draft. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 26 September 1947.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid. The more modern facility was built in Chillicothe, Ohio.

Pointing to New Kensington's fame as "The Aluminum City," Hunt explained the company's commitment to the town was evident through its capital investment. Alcoa would make massive financial investments in a plant modernization campaign; but, new machinery was not enough. Hunt remarked that, "The greatest single remaining factor that will influence the future of the aluminum business at New Kensington is the productivity of our manpower here."[73] In addressing the Chamber of Commerce he was directing community leaders to keep industrial labor in line. "The rest of the burden is squarely on the shoulders of New Kensington and all of us who have New Kensington's best interest at heart," Hunt noted, "Productivity and prosperity go hand in hand, and I know we can have them both."[74] It can be implied that those who did not have New Kensington's best interests at heart were those impeding productivity – workers and their union. The Industrial Day luncheon marked the start of what became a very public twenty-five year period of decline of Alcoa in New Kensington.

Hunt's speech set the context for Alcoa's relationship with the community and the workforce in the post-war period. Alcoa's actions are reflective of broader corporate trends in this period. In her study of big business' efforts to regain its stature in the American economy in the post-war period, Elizabeth Fones-Wolf explains that "businesses hammered home the idea that a growing economy depended upon expanding

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[73] Ibid. He follows this statement countering claims that newly installed machinery did not mean the loss of jobs, rather the creation of new ones, as long as worker productivity played its part in lower costs passed on to the consumer. Hunt explained, "Improved equipment is not able is not able to meet competition without improved productivity."

[74] Ibid. Emphasis contained in source.

productivity through the application of increased mechanization, power and efficiency."[75] Hunt's speech laid out this message and gave the company a foundation upon which to build what Elizabeth Fones-Wolf describes as "a specific vision of the reciprocal relationship of businesses and citizens that stressed mutual rights and responsibilities."[76] However, Alcoa's vision emphasized citizens' responsibilities.

While Hunt's speech was directed toward those attending the luncheon, *Dispatch* reporting of the affair brought the message to a wider audience. If Hunt is representative of business leaders in the period, he undoubtedly understood the importance of press coverage of the event and its intended effects. Elizabeth Fones-Wolf explains that "public opinion of the local community became immensely important to business leaders. The community, they believed, was crucial in shaping attitudes and in determining the economic and political environment."[77] Almost immediately following Hunt's speech it was apparent that the community understood the gravity of the situation.

Indicative of community attitude towards Hunt's message was a sermon given by Fr. Nicola Fusco, pastor of Mount Saint Peter's church. Elizabeth Fones-Wolf explains that corporations believed clergy to be among those community leaders who were instrumental in forming public opinion.[78] As noted in chapter three it was clear that

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[75] Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994): 39.

[76] Ibid., 5.

[77] Ibid., 160.

[78] Ibid., 218.

Fusco had a tremendous amount of influence in the Italian-American community. According to one parishioner:

> "...there was a good relationship between Alcoa ... and the church ... and it was beneficial to both of them. Fusco always preached that you go to work and you give the company you work for a good day's work and you earn your money. And then of course you had to donate to the church too so that's why he wanted people to keep working to support the church."[79]

Whether or not he was solely motivated to keep the church's coffers full is not certain. What is known was his enthusiasm to promote Hunt's message of increased worker productivity. On the Sunday following Hunt's speech, Fr. Fusco used his homily to encourage employees "to be more conscientious on their jobs and produce what they are paid for."[80] He encouraged wives and children to pressure husbands and fathers to perform in order to secure their roles as family provider. Fusco went so far as to depict a future where a child would say, "We are poor and lonely because our fathers wasted their chances."[81] But he also noted that workers were not the only ones to blame for the current state of affairs. He believed the Chamber of Commerce and city administration were responsible for a twenty-five year lapse in pursuit of new industry, thus making the town dependent on Alcoa. His homily reinforced the long-standing fear of the capital flight which had already hurt neighboring communities like New Castle, Kinloch and Freeport. Fusco spoke out against those who encouraged slow downs (no doubt a reference to union members it appears he long despised) and called for labor peace. He did not, however, believe that Alcoa was to blame for the current situation.

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[79] Elvira Ginocchi, Interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, June 6, 2005.

[80] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 29 September 1947.

[81] Ibid.

The editorial board of the *Dispatch* appeared to feel the same way. In the same issue carrying the full text of Fusco's homily, the *Dispatch* sided with Hunt's emphasis on the changing nature of the economy, Alcoa's need to remain competitive, and the detrimental effects of workers slowing down on the job.[82] While community leaders promoted Hunt's message, Alcoa used a public relations campaign to get their message across and bring them into the solution.

Elizabeth Fones-Wolf examines how major corporations sought out various ways to reinforce its message of "the need for free enterprise to expand productivity through mechanization and increased efficiency."[83] These ways included national Advertising Council media campaigns to individual corporations' hiring of personal spokespersons for more intimate engagements.[84] Alcoa was not the only corporation in the Alle-Kiski Valley engaged in such a campaign. General Electric, Allegheny Ludlum, and the American Steel Institute took out full-page advertisements in regional newspapers to promote their corporations and industry. They hyped all that industry brought to the community – good wages, nice benefits, tax revenue, and a "sincere" interest in the region's total well-being.[85] These advertisements were straight-forward with facts and figures and pie-charts. Some contained scenes of families while others featured corporate logos or mascots, like the smiling, shining Allegheny-Ludlum star. Interestingly enough, Alcoa sought to shape community attitudes through a cartoon character – Alcoa Al.

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Fones-Wolf, 51.

[84] Ibid., 51-53.

[85] For examples of these advertisements see: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 July 1947, 11 September 1947, 3 May 1948.

Alcoa Al was a creature made of aluminum products who was created during World War II to do everything from sell war bonds to bring safety messages to the shop floor. But the Al outside of the factory gates was neither subtle (in his message) nor humorous:

> ALCOA, you might say, was pretty much taken for granted by New Kensington folks – that is, until the Company recently found it necessary to move two of its manufacturing divisions away to other locations because of high production costs in 'The Aluminum City.' Quite suddenly New Kensington began to worry about its aluminum future, and rumors started flying that Alcoa might pull out altogether, taking with it a multi-million dollar payroll.
>
> It was then that ALCOA AL stepped into the picture. ... AL's themesong [sic] has been that New Kensington can do something about keeping its share of the aluminum industry and insuring the city's future. It was found that many folks in and around New Kensington weren't aware of the Company's problems in meeting competition, for one thing; or that there's a lot of differences between 'production' and 'productivity' in a plant; or that a successful business must always keep its customers satisfied; or that, in the long run, improvements in machinery mean more jobs instead of less.[86]

The company played on New Kensington's pride in being the Aluminum City. Al reinforced a corporate demand of increased worker productivity through community coercion. As noted in chapter three, Alcoa Al made his public appearance at a time when the aluminum workers' union was embroiled in a conflict between USWA 302 and District 19 administrators for control of the local. Printed in the March and April 1948 issues of the *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, the Alcoa Al series found a readership fixated on the aluminum workers' very public troubles which Alcoa used to its advantage.[87] While neither the company nor its Alcoa Al spots directly reference this, it

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[86] Alcoa Al Press Release, January 1948, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[87] Alcoa Al was scheduled for four appearances – two each in the *Dispatch* and the Tarentum-based *Valley Daily News*.

is not difficult to assume that the public made a connection between long standing labor troubles – whether it was the AWA's demise or USWA 302's revolt – and Alcoa's claim of lost productivity.[88] To take the issue one step farther was to blame the worker for the loss of key production units.

The first Alcoa Al spot supports this. Alcoa Al assured Alcoa's future in New Kensington, but educated the public as to the troubles the company faced. These troubles included those of the marketplace, but also "a company is also jolted by ... fretting or tantrums of employees (sometimes right and sometimes wrong)."[89] Alcoa Al acknowledged that the "move-aways" of divisions to Ohio made residents nervous, but also explained that "Alcoa itself has been worried the past year or more by a drop in productivity on the part of some employees." But that curing this problem "is up to us, the people of New Kensington."[90]

The company played on the community's fears while blaming "tantrum-throwing" employees for the situation.[91] Perhaps these tantrums were manifested in USWA 302's revolt for control over the workplace, as well as against the district's laxity in handling workplace grievances. As noted in chapter three, one point of contention was unresolved grievances, particularly in regards to Alcoa's speed-up policy. A grievance

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[88] In fact the *Dispatch* does make this connection three months after the first Alcoa Al spot ran. The possibility for an aluminum workers' strike was great in June 1948 – which is keeping with labor unrest that year. In an editorial calling upon the CIO-USWA to allow their members to vote on a strike platform, the board references the year long battle between rival factions in the union and the toll it has taken on the union, as well as labor-management relations. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 18 June 1948.

[89] "There'll Always Be Alcoa," *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 March 1948.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Jefferson Cowie notes that RCA was more direct in their 1930s period full-page ad threatening to pull out of Camden if they were forced to meet union demands. Cowie, 28.

can easily be labeled a tantrum, causing the community to equate labor's legitimate concerns with unfair labor practices as childish and detrimental to the greater good – Alcoa remaining in New Kensington. Furthermore, the reference to "us, the people of New Kensington" alludes to the long-held partnership between the company and citizens in industry and community building. It was directly expressed in Hunt's 1936 open letter and it was implied by Alcoa Al. While the 1936 partnership was forged more out of celebration and success, in this instance people are moved to action out of fear. Despite peaceful post-war labor relations, George David Smith notes that Alcoa "adhered to the ideal of a unitary corporate family, and beneath the veneer of acquiescence lay a strong antipathy to unions."[92] In essence, Alcoa Al was the company's call to the community to be a corporate tool to coerce workers to perform.[93] It may also have intended to build growing dislike for worker (i.e. union) demands.

The second Alcoa Al spot featured a gardening anecdote about aluminum worker Sam Goodman and his wife. As the story goes, their decades of faithful stewardship guaranteed them a great harvest that year; and, as a result their family will be well-fed. They are much like Alcoa who has "gardened" the same spot for over fifty years. Like Sam, Alcoa has had better seasons than others, "but that fifty-year old factory garden is still one of the most fertile spots in the entire aluminum industry." Like Sam, Alcoa

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[92] Smith, 292.

[93] "There'll Always Be Alcoa," *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 March 1948. One of the illustrations selling Alcoa to the community has an every man asking Al, "What do you think about the future of Alcoa in New Kensington?" To which Al replies, "Well, Alcoa must think it's pretty good or they wouldn't have spent $1,600,000 for improvements here since the end of the war."

needed to keep the ground fertile, and new machinery is the right fertilizer for the factory garden. Sam understands that "this machine will grow things too, if I treat it right."[94]

On one level this spot appeals directly to the worker, but it is clearly intended for the community. The worker certainly knew what new machinery meant for their job – increased productivity through speed-ups at reduced labor costs. But to the outsider, technological advancement – and worker acceptance of these changes – meant Alcoa's long-term future in New Kensington. While the intent seems to strike fear in the minds of its readers, Alcoa Al "reassured" the community that "There'll always be an America, and there'll always be an Alcoa in New Kensington, and there'll always be a good future for good workers at Alcoa right here in New Kensington, if we continue our present progress."[95]

In effect this mixed message of community pride and community pressure, and of stability and insecurity was an Alcoa mainstay for years, but the realities of the message hit home, even to organized labor. USWA 302 administrator Bert Gravatt acknowledged that low productivity was one factor behind the possibility of capital flight.[96] But he was also wary of Alcoa's claims that worker productivity alone was the reason for the loss of various production units. Gravatt noted that over 2,000 jobs had been lost to Alcoa's movement of production units out of the city. Still, he sought a partnership with management and promoted a union-backed campaign to increase productivity and

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid. Fones-Wolf also explains that companies invoked various patriotic language in their messages. Fones-Wolf, 1.

[96] He believed the other two factors to be high taxes and distribution facilities. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 29 April 1948.

determine what needed to be done by both parties to keep Alcoa, and its jobs, in New Kensington.[97] According to George David Smith, Alcoa's executives accepted labor unions as a fact of life that was necessary for labor peace. This is in line with general national labor-management accord in the post-war period.[98] But they did not have to like it.

Fear of Alcoa's departure was more or less cemented by 1948, which prompted the city to make concessions to the company which was detrimental to the citizen's well-being. The starkest example can be seen in the April 18, 1950 city council minutes. At this meeting Valley Heights Civic Club representatives raised concerns over the company's long-standing practice of dumping waste magnesium near their neighborhood. The mayor showed concern over the issue and verbally assured the representatives that he would talk to Alcoa officials but believed that the problem needed further consideration because "we also want jobs." Councilman and USWA District 19 representatives John Haser assured the representatives that Alcoa was "safety conscious" and in effect echoed Gardlock's sentiment.[99] The city would do what it needed to in order to keep Alcoa in New Kensington.

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[97] Ibid. Gravatt sought to "cooperate in a campaign to eliminate wastes and improve productivity, providing no speed-ups, lay-offs or wage cuts result." Unfortunately this would not be the case.

[98] For more on post-war labor relations see: Nelson Lichtenstein, "From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining: Organized Labor and the Eclipse of Social Democracy in the Postwar Era," in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds. *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930 to 1980* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989): 122-145; and Zeiger, chapters 4 and 5.

[99] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (April 18, 1950). A number of residents alluded to this practice in casual conversation. For example see: Eugene Montemurro, Interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, June 9, 2005.

1960s, Concession Bargaining, and the End

As noted, Alcoa retreated from its global interests in the late 1920s but by 1958 it was venturing into global markets once again. Domestic markets for aluminum in the early 1960s had slackened to a point where traditional job shop-type production at mills like the New Kensington Works was no longer cost effective.[100] Corporate moves to not only remain competitive but also expand globally brought significant changes to the New Kensington Works in the early 1960s.[101] In 1962 a decision to cut costs and create a more efficient Works involved consolidating utensil and other fabrication activities under the fabricating division.[102] As demand for aluminum products shifted through the 1960s, Alcoa reorganized, and in some cases expanded, its operations across its plants. For example, Alcoa's 1962 expansion of its Alcoa, Tennessee plant to consolidate all foil production meant that plants at both New Kensington and Edgewater, New Jersey would cease foil production.[103]

In 1965 Alcoa announced a multimillion dollar manufacturing operations realignment campaign. It was determined that over the next two years the Works' divisions would be streamlined to four areas: impact extruding, central machine division, albron products, and the ever present jobbing division. Alcoa also announced that it was probable that remaining housewares and specialty items production would be relocated.

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[100] Smith, 308-313.

[101] For a detailed description of Alcoa's strategy in the 1960s see Smith, 320.

[102] Press Release, December 30, 1961, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[103] Quarterly Statement for the first quarter ended March 31, 1962, Aluminum Company of America, box 91 folder 2, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

During the process the New Kensington Works' gained impact extrusion operations from the forty-nine year-old Edgewater, New Jersey plant which was slated for closure. What remained of specialty foil rolling was phased out towards the end of the realignment program, with the equipment moved to a new plant under construction near Lebanon, Pennsylvania.[104]

In addition to relocating its housewares and specialty items the company also relocated small cooking utensils production to Chillicothe, Ohio. This was the end of Wear Ever in New Kensington.[105] However, New Kensington Works' manager E.G. Kort emphasized that realignment was a sign of not only Alcoa's commitment to staying in New Kensington but also its desire to make it a viable plant for the future and preserve 1700 jobs. In a press release Kort reiterated the theme of community support and cooperation; and, he keyed on the employees' and union leaders' efforts to make the plant "a more stable place of employment and a vital, profitable part of the company."[106] While the Works was not the only Alcoa plant dealing with outmoded production facilities, it was by far the largest. Workers and the community were acutely aware that they stood at an industrial crossroads of plant upgrade or production relocation. Management reassured citizens that Alcoa intended to reinvest in the community through

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[104] Press Release, July 20, 1965, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[105] Press Release, October 6, 1965, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. At this point small utensil production was split between New Kensington and its newer plant at Chilicothe. Again, this was done for the company's survival in "the very difficult and highly competitive cooking utensil market," according to Kort. New Kensington would retain only heavy cookware manufacturing. Heavy cookware is used in commercial kitchen and restaurant operations.

[106] Press Release, July 20, 1965, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The release quoted Kort as stating that "In changing our set-up here, we are trying to make New Kensington a works with a future - - something it has not been for a long time."

expansion and upgrades.[107] This domestic operations reorganization was a success as "between 1966 and 1970, annual profits were restored to their pre-1958 norms of ten percent, and higher."[108] But as the decade passed, New Kensington was not to realize any benefits from the company's success.

In the end the Vietnam War most likely kept New Kensington Works going longer than Alcoa officials had intended. In June of 1966 the company announced that it was awarded a fifteen million dollar Navy contract to produce aluminum tubes used to house rocket motors, which added another 150 jobs. Works' manager Kort credited Alcoa's decision to even submit a bid for the contract to a pledge by USWA 302 "to cooperate with the company in efforts to make the New Kensington Works a tighter, more competitive organization." He also noted that the company would continue its modernization plan alongside its pursuit of military contracts. Kort reinforced the company line on the importance of increased productivity as a benefit of a union-corporate partnership to keep Alcoa in New Kensington.[109]

The emphasis placed on worker productivity and union cooperation, when paired with the notion that the company would continue its program, gently hedged the company's intent to remain a viable plant in the community. An internal memo attached to the press release speaks of a waning commitment to the town. The memo's author explains that the "Last two paragraphs of this, for area consumption, were revised as late as Tuesday p.m. to beef them up a bit and to eliminate any impression we were

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[107] Cooper, ed., "Industry."

[108] Smith, 320.

[109] Press Release, June 1, 1966, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. According to the press release the air-to-ground rockets were an "armament mainstay."

irrevocably committed to finish the modernization program."[110] This was unfortunate since both workers as well as the community appeared to have bought into productivity demands and company promises initiated by Alcoa Al and constantly reinforced by official communications.

It appears that the union truly believed in Alcoa's message that cooperative efforts on the part of labor and capital would keep Alcoa (as well as other companies) in New Kensington. Unionist Joe Baksis noted the members' understanding that concessions in wages and other contract provisions were necessary to keep companies competitive. Union-management cooperation, he explained, was "borne out of the recognition of their common interest."[111]

In 1966 New Kensington celebrated its 75th anniversary. The Jubilee commemorative history reflected an optimism the workers and community felt for remaining the Aluminum City. Corporate executive A.M. Hunt (Roy's son) reinforced this identity while keeping the community informed of Alcoa's changing needs in a competitive global economy. He explained that these needs may not include an industrial future for Alcoa in New Kensington. During a speech given at the July 1966 dedication of a new wing at Citizens General Hospital, Hunt took the opportunity to ease the community into a future withdrawal. Hunt praised community effort in the hospital building campaign which provided for the town's present needs while building for the

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[110] Ibid. On August 10, 1966 Alcoa announced the Wear-Ever Aluminum Inc.'s headquarters would move to Chilicothe, Ohio, making all manufacturing, marketing and administrative divisions in one place. Quarterly statement for the third quarter ended September 30, 1966, box 91 folder 6, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Headquarters were opened there on July 17, 1967. Quarterly statement for the third quarter ended September 30, 1967, box 91 folder 7, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[111] Joseph M. Baksis, "The Labor Movement," in Cooper, ed. Baksis also alluded to mass meetings where workers learned of corporate issues which affected their staying power.

future. He developed the theme of future progress which "depends on change and the manner with which we cope with it," as he discussed the many corporate adjustments that would affect the community. Where Alcoa Al encouraged the citizens to ensure Alcoa's future in New Kensington, Hunt was now instructing the community that the city's "future is in your case – yours to direct toward continuing betterment and further progress."[112] In other words, you are on your own - figure something out.

Alcoa's workers had seen this coming for years before the modernization campaign began. Their plight in this period was a hint to what steelworkers would soon feel as the result of global competition.[113] By May 1962 the USWA represented 12,000 of 24,000 employees at eleven Alcoa plants. That month the USWA just completed contract negotiations with the company. The new agreement included no wage increases, though it did provide for increased benefits – vacation, pension, supplemental employment and a new Supplemental Vacation Plan.[114] That year USWA 302

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[112] "Remarks for A.M. Hunt to be delivered at the dedication of the new wing of Citizens Hospital, New Kensington, Pennsylvania, July 24, 1966," box 95 folder 6, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Hunt also referenced the recent corporate donation of the Aluminum Club House to the hospital for use as a nurses' residence. This is further indication that Alcoa no longer intended to use New Kensington as the training ground for its managers.

[113] For a solid synopsis of the effects of globalization and domestic competition on Big Steel see chapter four of John Hinshaw, *Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class in Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh* and John P. Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came*, 296.

[114] Quarterly Statement for the second quarter ended June 30, 1962, Aluminum Company of America, box 91 folder 2; Quarterly Statement for the third quarter ended September 30, 1962, Aluminum Company of America, box 91 folder 2, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Three plants had walk-outs over local work rules as well – the plants or their representation between the two unions is not noted. The AWIU would conduct a one-day strike of 8500 workers at seven plants. The stockholder reports note that this disruption were partially to blame for financial losses during the quarter. The improvements to benefits packages increased operating costs. The other two unions representing another 12,000 workers, the Aluminum Workers International Union and the United Autoworkers, came to terms with Alcoa in August.

established a 2,000 worker employment goal at the Works.[115] The union estimated an average loss of employees at 150 – combined resignations and retirements (company policy dictated retirement at age sixty-five.)[116] Negotiations between the local and Alcoa indicate that retirement and pension benefits during department phase-outs were the predominant issue.[117] In his work on Pittsburgh's steelworkers, John Hinshaw notes that it was common in such negotiations for the USWA to focus on strengthening workers' pensions where they knew they could not keep jobs secure.[118] This may have been an indication of the USWA's attitude towards the developments unfolding in USWA 302's negotiations. Other points of contention included department mergers, seniority rights, job classifications, and the elimination of bonuses in Shop 32.

Frequent meetings between USWA 302's executive committee and Works' management describe a constant dialogue of mixed messages, subtle threats and resignation to concessions. While the manner in which the company's message was given depended upon the personality of its negotiators, the focus was the same: the Works is outmoded in many ways; rising costs (particularly in wages) prevents us from being competitive; departmental mergers, elimination of bonuses and elimination of job classifications allows the company to operate more efficiently. Company representatives

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[115] The employment numbers for the years 1961 through 1964 are unavailable according to the Alcoa corporate librarian/archivist. In 1960 1,408 were employed at the New Kensington Works (including buildings in Arnold and Logans Ferry), coupled with 509 salaried employees bringing the total to 1917. In 1965, 1,849 were employed at the plant with another 461 salaried, with a total of 2,310.

[116] Union's Annual Report for 1962, box 20 folder 5, AWA Papers.

[117] John Hoerr notes that this was part of shut-down negotiations in the Monongahela Valley steel mills in the 1970s. Hoerr, 438.

[118] Hinshaw, chapter 4.

frequently told union negotiators that Alcoa understood its responsibilities to the community and its people, but that market forces coupled with productivity issues were causing problems. If these issues are resolved, New Kensington would remain a favored site and good things will happen.[119]

As employee numbers declined the union became less effective. The union was aware of this early on and executive committee member Charles Keller asserted as much. In the minutes for the December 6, 1965 meeting it was recorded that Keller suggested that "With all the proposals the company wants, the union wants certain things also and then to consider what the company wants and is going to do, its going to cost the union a lot of money and the loss of a lot of jobs."[120] The USWA was in a quandary over whether or not to make concessions to preserve some jobs, or try and fight for what they could as if they were a viable organization.

Union response, as recorded by the union, was always forceful and sought to highlight managerial issues which they believed were roadblocks to increased productivity. At one point Keller charged the company with an "orderly shut down" which reflected the union's most likely correct interpretation of department mergers.[121] As the minutes progress it is apparent that the union understood the inevitability of the changes which lay ahead. Consequently its focus became phasing out workers based on age and securing pension benefits. This then assisted with retaining younger, less

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[119] Minutes from these meetings between workers and management from 1962 through 1967 can be found in box 18 with emphasis in file 22, AWA Papers, PSU. These records illustrate what, when taken as a whole from the prospective of the present, is the several year negotiation of the shut down of the plant.

[120] Meeting of December 6, 1965, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

[121] Meeting of September 18, 1964, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

experienced, less expensive workers. While unstated, this undoubtedly had to be to the best interests of the company in its quest to minimize costs through lower wages.[122]

USWA 302 was involved in what appeared to be concession bargaining with Alcoa on a constant basis during the mid-1960s realignment program. John Hoerr explains that once parties engage in concession bargaining companies – at least in his example of steel – no longer feel a moral obligation to care for their workers.[123] After much negotiation, the workers (down to 1,650 by this time) agreed to accept a ten-point plan which Alcoa demanded from them in exchange for a continued realignment program (which they did not know Alcoa would never carry through). What was promised to them a year before was used as a tool against them now.

Their frustration with the situation is clearly apparent from the union's bargaining session minutes as workers lost incentives systems, seniority groupings, and were forced to accept altered work rules.[124] The company, however, agreed to disburse a limited compensation to the workers affected by work rules' change - a pay-out. In a press release Kort explained that the pay-out was not only an expression of corporate concern for its workers but should be seen as reassurance of Alcoa's good faith efforts to remain in the town to some degree. He was also pleased with changes in individual employee

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[122] The issue over the elimination of the bonus system in Shop 32 also dominated meetings for some time. As with most of its other propositions, the company won that battle. Various meeting minutes between union and management, 1962 through 1967, box 18, with emphasis in file 22, AWA Papers, PSU. It appears that to a large extent the union won the battle over pension benefits.

[123] Hoerr, 26.

[124] It was stated that the incentive system was as outmoded as the New Kensington Works and had to be changed to compete with "work practices in newer and more modern plants." Press Release, Friday, November 8, 1966, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

productivity which he believed signaled necessary changes in workers' attitudes.[125] In effect the company was starting to ease itself out of the community on a positive note. Their message to the community was clear – the company cares and notes well the efforts of labor and the community to try to make things work. However, actions that followed shortly after the acceptance of the ten-point plan are more reflective of a company which believed it had no moral obligation to its workers.

It appears that by early 1966 the company was bracing the union for a future full plant shut down. The union understood that the Vietnam War was behind the recent spike in employment and was basically all that was keeping the Works afloat.[126] Still, the fear of full plant closure did not prevent the union from drawing lines in the sand. At times of frustration (and quite possibly desperation at watching a way of life fade away) the executive committee cried that if Alcoa did not concede to certain union demands they might as well "shut the place down." Alcoa's response intimated the union's attitude would not sit well with the community, implying the community would blame the union for plant closure.[127]

The union figured as much, as noted in a meeting between USWA 302 and the International. At a March 3, 1966 meeting it was recorded that "The International Union thinks that the company wants to close the plant at New Kensington and put the blame on

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[125] Roughly half of the workers were affected by this change. One hundred and seventy-five of these employees were those retired with extra pension benefits. The total disbursement was $717,000. If community sentiment is to be considered, it is not a stretch to say that many believed the company was giving the workers a fair deal. Press Release, Friday, November 8, 1966, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[126] Meeting of January 5, 1966, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

[127] Meeting of February 1, 1964 and February 3, 1966, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

the union. The business people are putting pressure on the International Union to do what they can to keep the plant at New Kensington."[128] The meeting appeared to be less of a strategy session than one accepting the realities of the situation. Following this the company set forth a tentative memorandum of understanding which asked for a number of union concessions, with an end of the month deadline.[129] Its message was clear – sign an agreement or we will stop support for the New Kensington Works modernization campaign into which it had already invested $600,000 of the $4.5 million promised. In the end the International strongly advised the local to make the concessions necessary to keep Alcoa in New Kensington.[130]

On March 20, 1966 the union held a mass membership meeting to review the contents of the memorandum of understanding and explain the company's position that there would be a full plant shut down if no agreement was reached.[131] The tenor of the minutes reflects a membership resigned to sign what amounts to a survival contract. It was recorded that one representative from the USWA International "explained the difficulties that there would be in New Kensington if the plant closed down." Another

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[128] Meeting of March 3, 1966, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

[129] Copies of these documents can be found in box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

[130] Meeting of March 3, 1966, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU. It appears that Alcoa was ready to pull out of the campaign and the town despite a loss of nearly a half-million dollars. The minutes read: "Alcoa intends to spend 4½ million dollars at New Kensington and they have already spent $600,000.00, if the plant was to close down it would cost $200,000.00 to remove the equipment and they would have an actual loss of $400,000.00"

[131] One of the union's staffers explained to the membership that they were to receive a letter from Alcoa stating the same. Meeting of March 20, 1966, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

representative endorsed the agreement "whole-heartly [sic] ... to keep the plant in New Kensington."[132]

Tremendous community pressure on the union to accept the proposal followed. The greater Pittsburgh radio station, KDKA, broadcast an editorial on the situation in New Kensington and encouraged the workers to face the facts of a changing economy and do what was necessary for the company to remain competitive. The editorial noted that if workers acquiesced to Alcoa's demands it would be "very good news" for the town dependent on the company for its livelihood. Furthermore, the editorial explained, "It is equally good news for all of Pittsburgh because it sets a standard of union statesmanship that can mean a lot to the area's future. This kind of enlightened union leadership can create a climate that will attract new industry, and keep the plants we now have from moving away."[133] New Kensington was thus considered a potential model which Pittsburgh's workers should follow as their employers faced a changing market, low productivity and rising labor costs. What was happening to the aluminum workers should have been seen as a warning to the region's steelworkers of what soon lay ahead.[134]

Shortly after this meeting USWA 302 signed a "Save the Plant" agreement which kept the Works afloat for a few more years. By 1968 Alcoa no longer placed New

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[132] Meeting of March 3, 1966, box 18 folder 22, AWA Papers, PSU.

[133] Transcript of KDKA editorial, "The Way to Save Jobs," broadcast at various time from March 28 through April 1, 1966.

[134] In this way the aluminum workers were like coal and textile workers in Pennsylvania and other regions in the northeast during the 1950s which Gregory S. Wilson notes as the warning to other industries in the coming years. Gregory S. Wilson, "Deindustrialization, Poverty, and Federal Area Redevelopment in the United States, 1945-1965," in Cowie and Heathcott, eds., 181.

Kensington under its "domestic operations" listing in its quarterly report to stockholders. Instead New Kensington was noted for its research and development units – the Alcoa Research Laboratories and Alcoa Product Development Division in the city and the Alcoa Technical Center in Merwin.[135]

In 1969 Alcoa saw an all-time high of sales and operating revenues - $1,545.2 million.[136] But in the second quarter of 1970, Alcoa's industrial production in the United States was in decline. While a blemish on an otherwise upbeat quarterly stockholder report, it was reflective of the situation at the New Kensington Works. In 1970, despite employee improvements in work attitudes and productivity, declining defense orders and low commercial sale profits forced Alcoa to stop sales of impact extrusions, which were done exclusively at the New Kensington Works.[137] Works Manager T.I. Stephenson III noted that it was improved worker productivity that kept the impact extrusion department running as long as it did. One hundred fifty persons were affected by this move, roughly ten percent of those employed at the time. Stephenson III stated that efforts would be made to place workers in other jobs. He claimed that the improvement in worker productivity was what kept the extrusion production there for as long as it did.

"The decision we had to make was a commercial one," Stephenson said, "The effort of New Kensington Works employees to improve productivity has been

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[135] "Facts about Alcoa," Quarterly Report to Stockholders, October 1968, box 91 folder 8, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The Alcoa Technical Center at this time housed the Alcoa Process Development Laboratories: Fabricating Metallurgy Division, Alcoa Research Laboratories (an extension of Freeport Road Lab operations); Alcoa Equipment Development Division.

[136] Shareholder memo, January 28, 1971, box 92 folder 3, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[137] This happened after only four years of production since being transferred to New Kensington from Edgewater, N.J. where it had been producing extrusions since 1921.

outstanding and has been most helpful in this area and others. Without it, we probably would have had to take this action much sooner. As it is, we acted most reluctantly, because we had a long and valued history of accomplishment and leadership in the field of impact extruding."[138] It now seemed that after decades of pinning the blame for Alcoa's downfall in New Kensington on the worker, Alcoa sought to leave on a softer note – one which thanked the workers and shifted the blame to market forces beyond anyone's control.[139]

In 1970 the shut down began in earnest. At first Alcoa announced the phase out of the jobbing operations which had been a mainstay at New Kensington since the company's beginnings. Acting Works manager J.S. Goodman, Jr. was careful in reassuring the worker, as well as the community, that this phase-out was not their fault – it was merely market conditions which were driving the shut down. Alcoa management sent letters expressing these sentiments not only to workers, but also community leaders. Basically the message was that workers and citizens of New Kensington had done their part, what was happening was beyond anyone's control.[140] The company announced it would phase out manufacturing operations by August 1, 1971. Of the one-thousand

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[138] Press Release, November 20, 1969, box 17 folder 1, Alcoa Papers, HSWP, (there are two different press releases on the same subject released on the same date). They developed the process in the U.S. in the 1920s.

[139] To this point I have not been able to uncover worker resentment towards the company for not carrying through on its modernization campaign like Ruth Milkman's autoworkers. However, I can not believe that there was no resentment by workers and/or community for Alcoa's failure to carry through on its word. Ruth Milkman, *Farewell to the Factory: Autoworkers in the Late Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997): 13-14.

[140] *Valley Daily News*, 1 July 1970.

employees affected by the shut down, roughly 850 or eighty-five percent, were eligible for retirement benefits.[141]

New Kensington was not the only community to face the loss of an Alcoa facility that year. Three branch sales offices were also closed: Jackson, Michigan; Memphis, Tennessee; and Spokane, Washington. In 1971 it was reported that closing down the New Kensington Works would cost the company $6.4 million. This was compared to other similar closings and losses: the closure of the Edison, New Jersey and Chicago, Illinois Alcoa Castings Company Plants ($5.1 million); and, covering losses incurred in the Alcoa Credit Union Company phase-out ($2 million).[142] As noted, Alcoa was affected by the recession of 1970-1971; however, the following year Alcoa claimed "new records in shipments and revenues."[143] The moves made to reorganize and close certain facilities no doubt played a role in Alcoa's resurgent profits.

The high number of employees eligible for retirement most likely softened the blow of Alcoa's departure. The opportunities to graduate from high school and work in the mill was no longer a possibility, but given the age of the workforce it can be assumed it had not been a possibility for some time. The company was careful in underscoring the fact that what was happening on the industrial end of its business concerns was not to

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[141] Quarterly Statement for the second quarter ended July 22, 1970, Aluminum Company of America, box 92 folder 2, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. The report informed stockholders that this closing came after a "concerted efforts to make the operation profitable." As far as other operations were concerned, the Central Machine Division of the Works and the powders and pigments plant continued to employ four hundred persons. The employees at the Alcoa Technical Center were not affected. Statement to Shareholders, January 28, 1971. According to the *Valley Daily News* report, the company said another fifteen percent of employees affected by the shut down would soon be eligible for retirement. *Valley Daily News*, 1 July 1970.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Smith, 320.

happen to its research and development end. New Kensington still had the opportunity to envision a future as Science City. This Science City was removed from the city's center, where all that would shortly remain was a large manufacturing site filled with empty buildings.[144]

In December 1971, A.M. Hunt addressed a group of local politicians and community leaders at the Hillcrest Country Club to inform them of the company's sale of the New Kensington Works property (sixty acres total) and introduce the buyers – the Schreiber Industrial Development Company. Hunt stated that the company's responsibility to the community motivated its search for a prospective buyer who would bring jobs to the area.[145] Again the company sought to back out of New Kensington on a positive note, which insisted that it cared for the town as its Works went from cradle to the grave. The Schreiber Development Company's plan for the complex was to lease portions out to a number of smaller manufacturing concerns. In a prepared statement Hunt explained that the sale, "represents a happy solution to a perplexing dilemma – a

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[144] The *News* reported that in its letters to business and civic leaders that no determination had been made as to what to do with the Works facilities. The company assured them that its disposal would be handled with the best interests of the community in mind. *Valley Daily News,* 1 July 1970.

[145] Final Draft of Statement by A.M. Hunt, Hillcrest Country Club, New Kensington, December 1971, December 17, 1971, box 95 folder 6, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. Hunt stated that they would continue at the Works, leasing space from Schreiber for its General Machine Division, its Application Engineering Division, Alcoa Product Development Division, and parts of its Research Laboratories. Hunt noted they would continue to maintain its Patent Department Office in the downtown Mellon Bank Building, continue operations at the Freeport Road laboratory, an maintain the Aluminum Powder Plant at Logans Ferry. Including the growing Merwin laboratory complex, the company would continue to employ roughly 1500 persons. He also mentioned that many Alcoans working in downtown Pittsburgh offices remained New Kensington residents. These were largely managerial and clerical workers. All of this, he argued, signaled a strong presence of Alcoa involvement in the community.

way in which to utilize the site to the benefit of New Kensington's industrial redevelopment drive to assure new opportunities for business and employment."[146]

This was a very limited contribution to New Kensington's industrial development. For its part the Schreiber Company expressed enthusiasm for its future vision for a complex to be renamed the Schreiber Industrial District. It was pointed out in the press release that the complex's location to railroad and highways was a contributing factor in their purchase, signaling the potential for growth.[147] The sale of the Works to be used as a light, mixed manufacturing facility gave hope to the community that it would remain an industrial town. Whether or not this would truly be the case depended on how city government and civic leaders planned and facilitated urban renewal programs.

From almost its inception New Kensington identified itself as the Aluminum City. It knew that nearly its entire economic base depended upon the financial well-being of the company. But the story of manufacturing in New Kensington is representative of that which would come after its fall – technological obsolescence and aging infrastructure, decentralization, as well as domestic and global competition all played a role in Alcoa's end in New Kensington. But Alcoa did not just close up the factory gates overnight. Deindustrialization in New Kensington was drawn out over a twenty-five year period.

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[146] Press Release, Final Draft, December 13, 1971 for release December 17, 1971, box 95 folder 6 and box 28 folder 5, Alcoa Papers, HSWP.

[147] Ibid. Schreiber noted a forty-year industrial, commercial and residential real estate development business – and at this point claimed it to "unquestionably the single most exciting project we have ever undertaken." Roadway transportation lines at this time included: Interstates 70, 79 and 80 as well as the Pennsylvania Turnpike – all of which keep the area within a 30 minute drive of Pittsburgh. At this time construction of the Allegheny Valley Expressway (Route 28) was underway – this would connect the Alle-Kiski Valley from Kittaning into downtown Pittsburgh – drawing all communities together in the process. Rail and barge services also figured into the transportation equation.

Changes at the New Kensington works were part of a series of corporate reorganization efforts. Furthermore, Alcoa did its best to squeeze every last drop it could out of its workforce – from pressuring them to be more productive through a very public relations campaign to forcing them into concessions bargaining under threat of immediate pull out. At the same time Alcoa began to invest in research and development – expanding corporate labs on the city's periphery. It was certain that Alcoa exerted a tremendous amount of control over the community throughout its tenure. Another organization that exhibited like control was that of the Mannarino organized crime family, which is the next chapter's focus.

CHAPTER FIVE

Small Town Mafia: The Mannarinos of New Kensington, Pennsylvania

Brothers Samuel and Gabriel "Kelly" Mannarino controlled all forms of illegal enterprise in New Kensington from the 1930s through the 1960s. Their major interests during this period comprised mainly gambling, specifically numbers games and illegal casinos.[1] Much like the city's business district, Mannarino gambling operations reinforced New Kensington's position as a center city for the Alle-Kiski Valley region. Furthermore, the Mannarino Organization's ties to Pittsburgh's Amato-LaRocca-Genovese crime family positioned New Kensington as an important gambling hub in the tri-state region of eastern Ohio, northwestern West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania.[2] For thirty years New Kensington was considered a "wide open" town where illegal gambling was largely tolerated by the community and protected by local government and law enforcement. The size of the community, the Mannarino brothers' social mobility, residents' attitudes, and government officials' openness to corruption allowed illegal gambling to flourish.

The Mannarino Organization's success was tied to New Kensington's industrial health. When the mills were strong so were the casinos; and, as industry declined so too

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[1] When I use the term "illegal enterprise" I am referring to Mark Haller's definition which states that illegal enterprise is "a broad range of criminal activities ... [which] entail the sale of illegal goods or services to customers who know that the goods or services are illegal." Haller considers gambling and its various forms to be "most important." Mark H. Haller, "Illegal Enterprise: A Theoretical and Historical Interpretation," *Criminology* 28, no. 2 (1990): 207.

[2] Frank Amato was the Pittsburgh "boss" when the brothers first started their control of New Kensington's rackets. Amato's underboss and successor was Sebastian John LaRocca. Later the FBI would refer to the Pittsburgh organization as the LaRocca-Genovese Family, which acknowledged Mike Genovese, LaRocca's underboss and successor. JFK NARA, 124-10213-10443, December 29, 1960 report "The La Rocca – Genovese Organization."

did gambling revenue. The Mannarino Organization was like Alcoa's New Kensington Works. At their prime they employed many and pumped revenue into the local economy. As the years passed, both the Works and the Organization became aging structures. The physical facilities of the Works were no longer able to keep pace with changing methods of production. The Mannarinos brothers' age and declining health (and death) prevented them from effectively controlling their gambling industry. Alcoa responded to national and global economic change and adapted accordingly – which meant leaving town. The Mannarinos responded to changes in federal law enforcement's approach to shutting down organized crime by curtailing operations. They also responded to socio-economic changes in the community which resulted from deindustrialization. As the town's economy weakened the Organization moved elsewhere and those members who remained invested in narcotics trafficking. Overall, the changes to both New Kensington's legitimate and underground economies in the late 1960s were a blow to the community.

This chapter focuses on the influence the Mannarino Organization had on New Kensington. It focuses heavily on their illegal gambling activities as well as the impact that federal law enforcement pressures, the local press, reform movements, and deindustrialization had on the Organization.

Origins

FBI files' details of the early lives of Sam and his two younger brothers, Joseph and Gabriel are sketchy at best. Their parents, Giancanto Ruggerio and Domenica, were Italian immigrants who first settled in Pittsburgh and then moved to New Kensington some time before 1914. Giancanto and his wife operated a small grocery store near

where they lived in the predominately immigrant and minority residential neighborhood in the flats.[3]

Samuel Mannarino began his career like many others during Prohibition, distributing and selling bootleg alcohol. In 1926 Sam and his father were arrested for operating a still in the back of the Mannarino home. Apparently Giancanto Mannarino was involved in illegal alcohol production, and his three sons helped out not only in the grocery store but also with his bootleg alcohol side business.[4] This family activity was similar to that of Haller's Chicago "slum families" who became "alky cookers" to supplement their incomes.[5] It is unclear as to whether these men were doing it for a bootlegging gang (the Amato-LaRocca Family) or on their own.

If Sam and his family were working for a bootlegging gang, then it can be said that his early criminal opportunities placed him on specific career path. Scholars, particularly those studying Jewish bootleggers, give considerable attention to the gangster

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[3] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10234, April 14, 1958 SA Richard Gordon Douce report on Gabriel Mannarino. George Mannarino was born in 1876 in Amatea, Italy and immigrated from Naples on April 16, 1897. Domenica was also born in Amatea, but her date of birth was not known to the FBI. Mannarino became a naturalized citizen on December 21, 1915. At this time New Kensington's population was 7,707. As a town of 10,000 or less the ethnic breakdown is not included. The numbers available note the following: Native white/native parentage – 3,135; Native white/foreign or mixed parentage – 2,130; Foreign-born white – 2,376; Negro – 63; Indian, Chinese and Japanese – 3; From oral histories, city council minutes and FBI files, it appears that the First Ward contained the largest number of immigrants. The census divides the wards by population: First ward, 3,362; Second Ward, 2,558; Third Ward, 1,787. U.S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, General Report and Analysis, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913.

[4] JFK NARA, 124-10024-10027, April 1, 1955 memorandum on Gabriel Mannarino; JFK NARA, 124-10222-10203, November 19, 1957 report on Gabriel Mannarino; JFK NARA, 124-10222-10212, January 15, 1958 report on Gabriel Mannarino. JFK NARA 124-10277-10021, April 4, 1958 Report of SA Richard Gordon Douce on Sam Mannarino. For the still operation charge the FBI cites Westmoreland County Court Case No. 213, February Term 1927 Court of Quarter Session, Judge E. Whitten presiding.; JFK NARA, 124-10214-10225, June 24, 1958 SA Richard Gordon Douce report on Sam Mannarino; JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth, III

[5] Mark H. Haller, "Organized Crime in Urban Society: Chicago in the Twentieth Century," 5, no. 2 (*Journal of Social History*): 224.

finding his stride during Prohibition. Bootlegging enabled the gangster to lay the foundation for the social mobility necessary to expand his career. Scholars note that many bootleggers, especially in urban areas, provided a service to an affluent and politically astute clientele, consequently opening doors for the illegal entrepreneur.[6] They also describe an evolutionary process from bootlegger to gambler at the repeal of Prohibition, as they were primed for this transfer of industry as a result of political connections and mass wealth accrued through the 1920s. The coordination with which they ran a bootlegging operation transferred nicely to illegal gambling such as numbers games.[7] But as noted in chapter two, gambling was an industry established in New Kensington at least since the late 1910s. There was no such opportunity for Sam to bring gambling to the city, and he was still too fresh to the profession to have taken it over from others.

Sam moved into bootlegging-associated criminal activities. In 1927 he served a year and a half in a federal penitentiary for extortion while impersonating a federal [prohibition] officer but the time in federal prison did not damper Sam's drive. Through the 1920s and 1930s he had several arrests – suspicious person, concealed weapons, and gambling/running a lottery - which all mark his professional progress.[8] But as noted in

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[6] Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900-1940.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983): chapter five.

[7] Mark H. Haller, "The Changing Structure of American Gambling in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Social Issues* 35, no. 3 (1979): 92, 108, 110; Mark H. Haller, "Bootleggers as Businessmen: From Slums to City Builders," in David Kyvig, ed., *Law, Alcohol and Order: Perspectives on National Prohibition* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985); Daniel Bell, "Crime as an American Way of Life," *The Antioch Review* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1953): 137.

[8] JFK NARA, 124-10277-10043, December 23, 1957 report on Samuel Mannarino. For the impersonating a federal officer the FBI cites the records of the U.S. District Court, Pittsburgh, Criminal Case No. 2251;

chapter two, at that time Greek immigrant Mike Zervos ran New Kensington's rackets – namely narcotics trafficking and gambling.

While Zervos ruled New Kensington, the Pittsburgh family's line of succession shifted from John Bazzano Sr. to Vincent Capizzi to eventually Frank Amato Sr. of Braddock.[9] It was Amato who took the Pittsburgh organization beyond Allegheny County's borders. At this time Sam apprenticed under John LaRocca, Amato's heir apparent.[10] During this apprenticeship, Sam gained a reputation for his ability to "knock heads together." But in 1928 New Kensington's underworld went into a free fall when Zervos was convicted of murder and sent to prison.

By the 1930s Sam was a seasoned strong-arm man quite knowledgeable on the structure and maintenance of a criminal syndicate. With the financial backing of his mentors, Sam stepped in to take control of New Kensington. In time Sam would share control over New Kensington with Gabe.[11] By 1940 the Mannarinos controlled all phases of gambling in New Kensington and Westmoreland County. As one of the most

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JFK NARA, 124-10277-10035, February 14, 1958 report of S.A. Richard Gordon Douce report on Samuel Mannarino, Anti-Racketeering Case.

[9] Local and state law enforcement had been following Pittsburgh's Italian underworld since the 1920s. JFK NARA, 124-10284-10057, December 22, 1966 report of SA Thomas Forsyth III on Samuel Mannarino. This report provides more details on Sam's time as an apprentice in the Pittsburgh organization. See also, JFK NARA, 124-10284-10057, December 22, 1966 report of SA Thomas Forsyth III on Samuel Mannarino.

[10] *Organized Crime in Pennsylvania: A Decade of Change*, Pennsylvania Crime Commission, Alvin B. Lewish, Chairman, (Conshohocken, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1980), 60-63; Pennsylvania Crime Commission, 1990, 115. See Pennsylvania Crime Commission reports for the early history of organized crime in Pittsburgh.

[11] Gabriel's arrest record takes off after the Mannarino Organization is formed. His multiple arrest record through the 1930s included gaming and violation of the Uniform Firearms Act in 1933, violation of state liquor laws in 1934, and suspicious person in a robbery charge in 1934. JFK NARA, 124-10222-10203, November 19, 1957 report on Gabriel Mannarino.

powerful franchises in Western Pennsylvania the success of their organization relied on their ability to move across various social lines in the community, successfully influence local politicians, and control law enforcement.[12]

Social Mobility

Sociologist Daniel Bell calls a career in crime a "queer ladder of social mobility."[13] The career criminal moves up in society by mingling with others in legitimate enterprise through the exchange of illegal goods. In this sense it is an odd way to move out of one's original station in life. Mark Haller sees things in a more straight-forward fashion – crime was just one of a number of avenues one could take to move out of the ethnic slum, and this is the path the Mannarinos chose.[14] In their role as provider of illegal goods and services, the illegal entrepreneur moved necessarily across social, political and economic boundaries. Clients came from all walks of society and protection to operate without police interference required steady relationships with politicians and civic leaders.[15] New Kensington's relatively small size made it easier for the

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[12] JFK NARA, 124-10214-10225, June 24, 1958 SA Richard Gordon Douce report on Samuel Mannarino. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961 report of SA Forsyth. JFK Assassination Files, NARA, 124-10222-10203, November 19, 1957 Report on Gabriel Mannarino; JFK NARA, 124-10222-10212, Advisory Report on Gabriel Mannarino, 1-15-1958; JFK NARA, 124-10277-10021, April 4, 1958 Report of SA Richard Gordon on Samuel Mannarino; JFK NARA, 124-10222-10234, Report of SA Douce of Samuel Mannarino.

[13] Bell, 132.

[14] The others included factory work, higher education/the professions and city government service. Haller, "Organized Crime in Urban Society," 211-212.

[15] See also William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, Fourth edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Whyte's sociological study of the south side of Philadelphia is representative of ethnic-based organized crime and covers social mobility and police and government corruption.

Mannarinos to cultivate these relationships.

The Mannarino brothers grew up in and established their legitimate and illegal businesses in New Kensington's flats. While there may have been streets or parts of a street distinctly populated by a given race or ethnic group, there was not the space for clearly distinct neighborhoods like in Chicago, New York or Pittsburgh. Consequently the brothers grew up with many of the individuals who would later operate clubs, establish and manage businesses, and fill local elected and appointed positions. Work with their legitimate businesses also allowed the brothers to move professionally with other businessmen with whom they were not raised. Their success enabled them to move up and out of the flats and into a more affluent neighborhood. By day they worked in the downtown business district bordering the neighborhood where they grew up and at night they returned to a home to a neighborhood filled with merchants, industrial managers, research scientists, and other white collar professionals.

As a result of their experience the brothers understood how the community socially operated. They gave to others, most likely to curry favor with certain segments of the population, but possibly also because of a loyalty to the community in which they were raised and from which they profited. Elizabeth Blissell, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, explained to the FBI that the brothers contributed to many churches and gave "many gifts to needy people anonymously." She explained that they did not hide their occupation and were largely respected by the community.[16] An FBI reporting agent

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[16] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10234, April 14, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce; and, JFK NARA, 124-10283-10027, June 16, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce. Blissell also confirmed that the brothers completely controlled the town – gambling through city government. She claimed that the brothers made no attempts to hide their involvement with gambling. Blissell was a highly respected member of the community and did much to help it in various ways – specifically her involvement in establishing an extension campus of Pennsylvania State University (and after whom its library is named).

conveyed the sentiments of another informant who underscored the role the Mannarinos played in the community:

> ...in most communities persons commonly regarded as criminals, hoodlums, or racketeers, are looked down upon by the legitimate business people. It is not so, however, with the Mannarino group. He believes there is hardly a person in the New Kensington area who is engaged in legitimate business who cannot recall anywhere from one to many legitimate dealings had with the Mannarino group to the profit of the legitimate businessmen. Also, most of the legitimate citizens of the community have received gifts or favors from the Mannarinos or their henchmen and that the Mannarinos move socially across lines which in most communities would separate them from the legitimate type people.[17]

This is similar to what Mark Haller found in Chicago – successful, politically connected criminal entrepreneurs were financially able to give generously to various needy individuals and organizations. Haller even notes that some projects (in his case specifically in the ethnic slum) could not move forward without such funding.[18] It is difficult to say what projects in New Kensington needed Mannarino help, but FBI sources indicate that it was certainly accepted if not publicly acknowledged.

However not everyone saw the Mannarino Organization and its leadership as benevolent. Though not as dramatic as the federal law enforcement pressure that would come in the 1960s, the 1950s saw small protest movements such as "Operation Crusade."[19] Operation Crusade was an effort by the Westmoreland Ministerial Association to shut down illegal activity in Westmoreland County. Reportedly with the support of over 200 Westmoreland County churches behind it, the Crusade specifically

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[17] JFK NARA, 124-10284-10039, October 16, 1963 report of SA Clive G. Matthews to Director. The statements of Blissell are corroborated by those of the individual identified as "Kruse."

[18] Haller, "Organized Crime in Urban Society," 223.

[19] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 10 October 1952 and 20 October 1952.

targeted the Mannarinos as well as suspected corrupt politicians and law enforcement agencies. Their campaign may have received only a modest amount of publicity, but it was alleged that "gambling activities were voluntarily curtailed" for a short time as a result.

In his study of Reading, Pennsylvania, John Gardiner notes that during this time ministerial associations, as well as Chambers of Commerce, were among those groups who agitated for reform by harassing city officials.[20] In this case the Crusade focused on regional politicians rather than the local level. Perhaps they believed corruption at the local level could not be uprooted, or perhaps they believed that cleaning up the county would trickle down to the localities. Regardless, the Pennsylvania State Police claimed that prior to the 1960s the Crusade was the only organized group of citizens to actively protest illegal activity in the region.[21]

While the Crusade was public, there were more private ways that those unhappy with the Mannarinos could register their dissatisfaction. Not surprisingly, the brothers' white-collar neighbors provided information to the FBI, and while doing so specifically noted the distinctions between their lives and social position in the community as well as their having "no sympathy for racketeers."[22] While the brothers' social mobility and

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[20] John A. Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption: Organized Crime in an American City* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970):73.

[21] JFK NARA, 124-10024-10027, April 1, 1955 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director. A corroborating statement from a person listed as a "businessman in New Kensington" on the effect of "Operation Crusade" can be found in JFK NARA, 124-10224-10030, May 9, 1956 report.

[22] For example, one man was identified as an Assistant Chief Engineer, Design Division, Aluminum Company of America, Research Laboratories. JFK NARA, 124-10222-10234, April 14, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce. The FBI checked in on the "neighborhood sources" tracking the activities of Gabriel Mannarino's family. Their reporting largely focused on the activities of the Mannarino brothers' children and wives.

financial success provided them access to upper middle-class residence, they were not quite embraced by all of their neighbors in their private lives. The strengths of their social mobility rested in the flats, where business and politics freely mixed in a public arena. The anchor of their operations came through their legitimate businesses.

Legitimate Business and Coercion

Individually or together the Mannarino brothers and associates owned and maintained several successful legitimate businesses common to organized crime including the Nu Ken Novelty Company and the S & S Distributing Company, which rented and sold coin-operated machines.[23] They also owned a scrap metal business - Ken Iron and Steel Company - which had contracts with Alcoa and Allegheny Ludlum.[24] All of these businesses listed their central address as 1263 Third Avenue, a prime location near industry, commerce, major roadways and the residential area in the flats.[25] There

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[23] While largely concerned with pinball and vending machines, the business also owned console-type slot machines. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961, SA Thomas Forsyth III report on Samuel Mannarino. For a more detailed accounting of changes in ownership and partnership of Nu Ken Novelty through 1980 see: *A Decade of Organized Crime: 1980 Report*, Pennsylvania Crime Commission, Alvin B. Lewis, Chairman, (St. Davids, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1980), 219-220. The Pennsylvania Crime Commission notes that coin operated machine business is typical of the types of legitimate businesses owned by organized crime figures. R*eport on Organized Crime*, 49-50.

[24] JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961, SA Thomas Forsyth III report on Samuel Mannarino. According to FBI reports Ken Iron and Steel had scrap contracts with several of the local metals industries – Alcoa, Union Spring, and Allegheny Ludlum. Many of the scrap contracts were cancelled as the Mannarino organization's troubles with federal agencies received more press coverage in the early 1960s. See: JFK NARA, 124-10220-10495, May 25, 1962 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III; and JFK NARA, 124-10286-10004, August 8, 1962 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[25] FBI files indicate that the main office building on Third Avenue was the headquarters for both legitimate business and illegal enterprise, although wiretaps in the late 1960s failed to produce concrete evidence to the latter. It was believed that the organization also conducted business pertaining to its illegal enterprise at various other locations including local clubs, Catoris Candy, the Bonfire, and Samuel Mannarino's residence, among other places. For a sampling of wiretap transcripts see: JFK NARA, 124-90007-10006; 124-10279-10259; 124-10279-10262; 124-10279-10264; 124-10279-10266; 124-10279-10267; 124-10279-

were two notable exceptions to the Third Avenue offices: Gabriel's partial ownership of Catoris Candy, located on Fifth Avenue and Samuel's Bonfire Restaurant, located on a major highway to Leechburg (Rte. 356). The former was allegedly where Gabriel kept his business office and the latter provided access to a number of small rural towns in Westmoreland and Armstrong counties.[26] But the downtown location of Ken Iron and Steel through the mid-1960s provided a solid base from which to supervise and regulate their illegal enterprises.

The Mannarinos' illegal enterprises were both tied to and separate from their legitimate businesses. One example of how illegal enterprise was tied to legitimate business interests can be seen in the case of Nu Ken Novelty operations. According to a 1958 statement, an estimated 300 Nu Ken Novelty pinball machines were located in New Kensington-Arnold businesses supposedly bringing in between $30 and $50 a week profit. In 1958 an FBI informant alleged that for years the company and various proprietors split machine profits with fifty percent reported for tax purposes and the other fifty percent divided between the proprietor and Nu Ken Novelty.[27] Not necessarily a hard core mob-only scam, but it was a financial incentive for legitimate businessmen to accept the Mannarino's monopoly on the coin operated machine business.

10287; 124-10279-10292; 124-10279-10294; 124-10279-10369; 124-10279-100381; 124-10279-10388. These samples are from surveillance conducted during 1964.

[26] *A Decade of Organized Crime,* 219-220; JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961, SA Thomas Forsyth III report on Samuel Mannarino.

[27] Ibid. According to the FBI files these businesses included "bars, restaurants, confectionaries and hotels." Sam Mannarino, Gabriel Mannarino, their business partner Willie Sams, and two other associates were indicted for tax fraud for the years 1957 and 1958. The indictment charges that these men fraudulently reported earnings from their pinball machine distribution and maintenance business, Nu Ken Novelty. 1963 Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States, 219.

There was no such incentive for tavern owners. According to FBI files the Mannarino Organization forced tavern owners to purchase their supplies from City Beverage Company and to stock Stoney Beer over Rolling Rock, allegedly because of their interest in the Stoney Beer's brewing company. An anonymous letter dated May 8, 1958 from a tavern owner to U.S. Attorney General William P. Rodgers speaks to the level of control the Mannarinos held over local proprietors:

> Dear Sir ...
>
> I am a tavern owner in New Kensington Pa. I read of your investigation of " Racketeers and I wish to inform you of bad situation in our racket city. The Mannarinos own a beer distributors in Arnold Pa. called City Beveridge Co. It is operated by Victor Carlucci, Sam Mannarino son_in law . I and other tavern owners are being force to buy our beer from City Beverageo or face loss of our cigarette, pinball and music machines. We cannot get machines elsewhere because they control the two cities. If we buy our own we have been told our taverns will be bombed.
>
> The cheap beer that we are force to buy is causing us to lose trade. We cannot complain to local police or Liquor Board we know that Mannarino controls them.
>
> I thought we lived in a free country, but New Kensington has its own KHRUSHCEV.
>
> Yours truly,
> Am. Citizen (but not in N.K.)[28]

This tavern owner apparently believed there was no other avenue for registering dissatisfaction with the situation than through a letter to a federal agency. This also indicates the high level of local, and perhaps regional, political and law enforcement corruption. For its part, the Department of Justice believed it warranted enough attention to pass it through channels in its agency (rather than dismiss it completely) and

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[28] JFK NARA, 125-10224-10033, May 16, 1958, Memo from Malcolm Anderson, Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division to the Director of the FBI, referring to the copy of the above anonymous letter. Grammar and punctuation above transferred from original.

eventually forwarded it to the FBI's Pittsburgh bureau, where it appears it was filed but not acted upon.[29] While the threat of physical violence is troubling, a greater issue appears to be the loss of associated business. This can also be applied to the loss of coin-operated machines which would not only affect legitimate business, but the loss of the skimmed profits would be a blow as well. Taken at face value the letter is evidence of both the Mannarino Organization's control over the area as well as the discontent some citizens felt with their presence.

Also of note is the writer's reference to Soviet leader Nikita Kruschev. In his cultural studies work on organized crime in Cold War America, Lee Bernstein explains that "the dominant political and popular culture of the 1950s perceived organized crime as a conspiratorial threat to national security as serious as that posed by communism."[30] This is partly the result of the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce, more commonly known as the Kefauver Committee after its chairman Senator Estes Kefauver (D-Tenn.). From 1950 through 1951, the Committee traveled to fourteen cities across the United States and called over 500 witnesses, many of them alleged crime bosses. Televised, the hearings aimed to bring to America's attention the existence of a national crime syndicate. It also added another menace to America – organized crime.[31] Therefore, it is not a surprise for the anonymous letter writer to have referenced the Soviet leader in his correspondence.

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[30] Lee Bernstein, *The Greatest Menace: Organized Crime in Cold War America.* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002): 26.

[31] For more on the Kefauver Committee see: William Howard Moore, *The Kefauver Committee and the Politics of Crime, 1950-1952* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974). For his perspective see Estes Kefauver, *Crime in America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1951) - bib. For popular representation of the Committee see: "It Pays to Organize," *Time* (March 12, 1951). Proceedings of the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce in the 81st and 82nd Congress are published.

Both the coin operated machine scams as well as the Stoney Beer threats illuminate the dual nature of the Mannarino Organization as a criminal syndicate. In *East Side, Westside: Organizing Crime in New York, 1930-1950* Alan Block explores the social structure of organized crime. Embedded in this social structure are two forms of criminal syndicates: enterprise and power. An enterprise syndicate focuses solely on the mechanics of "illicit" enterprise – for example activities like gambling and prostitution. The power syndicate can operate within an enterprise syndicate or outside of it, such as in the arena of labor racketeering. Power syndicates are characterized by extortion or force.[32] It can be argued that the Mannarino Organization was largely an enterprise syndicate, choosing to operate for profit predominately in gambling. Many of those involved in the operations of the enterprise syndicate benefited, including merchants, politicians, police, and gamblers. Those involved in the power syndicate practices such as the "Am. Citizen," were terrorized with the threat of violence if they did not submit to Mannarino rule.

Illegal Enterprise: Numbers Play and Casino Gambling

While the intimidation of tavern owners and the coin-operated machine scam can be directly tied to their legitimate businesses, the Mannarino gambling empire could not. As noted, FBI files indicate that since the 1940s the Mannarinos controlled the majority, if not all, of the gambling activity in Westmoreland County.[33] In a 1940 interview Sam

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[32] Alan Block, *East Side, West Side: Organizing Crime in New York, 1930*-1950 (Cardiff: University Cardiff College Press, 1980; reprint, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005): 129-30. Those pages explain the syndicates in detail, although the concepts are carried throughout the work.

[33] JFK NARA, 124-10283-10136, July 24, 1961, SA Thomas Forsyth III report on Samuel Mannarino.

Mannarino admitted to his interests in gambling, horse racing and numbers play in the New Kensington area.[34] The numbers racket was the most widespread and financially successful of the gambling enterprises, but New Kensington was also known for its horse rooms and "carpet joints."[35] By 1954 it was alleged that gambling in New Kensington was so wide-open that the top members of the Mannarino Organization were netting $43,000 a week.[36] As with other such syndicates in the post-war period, gambling appears to have been the Organization's lifeblood.

Gambling has always been a part of society, from Colonial Era lotteries used to fund infrastructure development to contemporary state lotteries which support everything from K-12 education to programs for senior citizens. Over the years the legality of gambling has been hotly debated, and in the 1950s the majority of gambling activities were illegal in every state except Nevada. The heyday for illegal gambling in the twentieth century – from off-track betting to slot machines to illegal casinos – was the 1950s. Michael Woodiwiss points out that Gallup polls indicated that in 1950 fifty-seven percent of Americans gambled.[37] The explosive popularity of gambling can be tied to rapid economic growth and emphasis on leisure in the post-war period. Most Americans

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[34] JFK NARA, 124-10277-10043, December 23, 1957 report on Samuel Mannarino, SA Albert E. Klebe.

[35] A "carpet joint" or "rug joint" refers to an upscale gambling casino containing premier gaming equipment. This is in contrast to a "sawdust joint," which refers to a basic, no frills outfit. John Scarne, *New Complete Guide to Gambling*, revised edition (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974): 833, 848-849.

[36] JFK NARA, 124-10224-10030, May 9, 1956 report on Sam Mannarino.

[37] Michael Woodiwiss, *Organized Crime and American Power: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001): 214.

saw a thirty-percent increase in per capita income.[38] And with money to spend, Woodiwiss notes, many people saw gambling – from church bingo to illegal casinos – as an acceptable leisure activity.[39]

Post-war America was, as William Chafe notes, a "new world of consumerism and prosperity."[40] Therefore it is no surprise that in 1953, sociologist Daniel Bell noted the importance of gambling as a "function of mass consumption economy."[41] In his assessment of the 1950-1951 Kefauver Committee hearings, Bell explains that at this time gambling was a twenty billion dollar a year business with an estimated fifty million gamblers across the country.[42] He correctly notes that the Committee's findings revealed that "gambling [was] a basic institution in American life, flourishing openly and accepted widely."[43]

In some ways another scholar, John Gardiner, confirms Bell's claim. In his late 1960s study of Reading, Pennsylvania, Gardiner found that some residents saw gambling as harmless while others thought it was immoral, but with certain exception. This reflects William Howard Moore's claim that the public's fascination with organized crime and illegal gambling as a result of the Kevauver hearings "paralleled a growing controversy

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[38] William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World WarII* 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 112.

[39] Woodiwiss, 215.

[40] Chafe, 112.

[41] Bell, 142.

[42] Daniel Bell, "Crime as an American Way of Life," *The Antioch Review* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1953): 134.

[43] Bell, 142.

over legalized gambling."[44] In Reading, a number of the people Gardiner polled believed that churches and charitable organizations should be allowed to conduct bingo games and that the state should sponsor a lottery to support the schools. And regardless of one's position on gambling, respondents' generally agreed that people would gamble regardless of its legality.[45] While no such data exists for New Kensington, it can be assumed that residents' attitudes were largely the same. Those such as the Mannarinos' neighbors likely thought gambling was immoral, while at the same time the popularity of gambling in New Kensington demonstrates that many were tolerant of its existence if not among the fifty-seven percent of people gambling nationwide.

The numbers operation was the most accessible, widespread and possibly the most profitable of New Kensington's gambling activities.[46] As in other cities, numbers operations were highly organized and employed several people – from bankers to runners to bookers. Numbers runners came and went at specified times and covered specific

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[44] Moore, 33.

[45] He also noted that long time residents were more tolerant of gambling. John A. Gardiner, "Public Attitudes Toward Gambling and Corruption," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 374 (November 1967): 126; John A. Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption,* chapter four.

[46] Haller's work corroborates this statement. See: Haller, "Illegal Enterprise" and "Organized Crime in Urban Society" as well as Mark Haller, "Policy Gambling, Entertainment, and the Emergence of Black Politics: Chicago From 1900 to 1940," 24, no. 4 (*Journal of Social History,* 1991). For an excellent description of the mechanics of a numbers syndicate see chapter six in Alan Block's *East Side, West Side* and Peter Reuter, *Disorganized Crime: The Economics of the Visible Hand* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983): chapter 3. A December 28, 1962 FBI report notes that four types of numbers games existed. Old Stock play had a three number combination pulled from the NYSE's total volume of sales. It was not a popular play because of potential "rigging" and was avoided by most writers. New Stock, however, was the most heavily played – roughly fifty percent of total numbers that were written at that time. New Stock involved a "more complicated system of getting the individual numerals from a combination of Treasury balance and stock sales." Twenty-five percent of bets were with the Pittsburgh Race or 3-5-7 Race. The result is determined by finishing positions in the third, fifth and seventh horse races at a "eastern, midwestern or southern race track." The final twenty-five percent was played on the New Ken Race or 5-6-7 Race. The result is the same at the Pittsburgh Race, just using different finishing positions. JFK NARA, 124-10219-10222, December 28, 1962, report of James B. Fanning on Gabriel Mannarino.

areas – locally and regionally in Westmoreland, Armstrong, and portions of Allegheny counties.[47] People could place bets at a number of locations as local proprietors integrated numbers play into their legitimate businesses. In interviews conducted for this work, people noted that even if you did not play (and in this case they claimed, believably, to not play) you knew where you could go to play a number or bet on a horse race. Numbers play was just about everywhere - from shoe shine parlors to newsstands to lunchrooms, confectionaries, and factory floors.[48]

The New Ken game's odds varied, but were often comparable to those paid out in Pittsburgh, about 600 to one. Consequently several surrounding communities including Oakmont, Verona, Tarentum, Leechburg, Vandergrift, Ford City, and Jeanette all laid off their numbers bets with the Mannarino bank.[49] New Kensington was the center city for the Alle-Kiski Valley region in industrial employment, commerce, and gambling.

Most likely because of this, in 1961 FBI informants noted that the daily gross from numbers activity was roughly $15,000 with between five and ten percent (of the net) going to the Mannarino Organization.[50] Bookers' commissions varied over the

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[47] JFK NARA, 124-10282-10086, July 28, 1961, SA Thomas Forsyth III report.

[48] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10343, August 19, 1958 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the FBI Director. An informant in this file discusses the organizational structure of numbers play. See JFK NARA, 124-10222-10205, December 9, 1971 Correlation Summary on Gabriel Mannarino. Ruth and Wendel Milz, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, 10 June 2005; Anthony and Elvira Ginocci, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, 6 June 2005.

[49] In a 1961 report the odds were 500 to 1, JFK NARA, 124-10282-10086, July 28, 1961, SA Thomas Forsyth III report. However, other informants report that New Kensington also paid out at 600 to 1 and 700 to 1. There is no explanation for the inconsistency. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10016, 124-10283-10016; and, 124-10214-10214, May 13, 1958 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the FBI Director; JFK NARA.

[50] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10234, April 14, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce.

years and at some points they drew in as much as thirty percent – which is five to ten percent above the average.[51] Plus, numbers play was a very attractive sideline for small local merchants. Not only did it bring them unreported income via commission, but it also served to boost their legitimate business as it brought patrons into their stores, restaurants and taverns.[52] Furthermore, it is most likely that some merchants were what John Gardiner called "fringe beneficiaries" of illegal activities. He provides the examples of landlords who rented space used for numbers banks and hotel operators who gave special rates to out of town gamblers.[53] It should also be considered that some "clean" businesses benefited as well – perhaps some gambling downtown stopped in at a local merchant to make purchases they may not have otherwise.

There are few instances in the FBI files which reference lower-level operators by name. One such reference is to Earl "Early" Fields, an African-American numbers operator. Fields, known as the "colored numbers baron," was the owner-operator of the Fields Hotel located in the flats around Twelfth Street and Fourth Avenue.[54] Scholars

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[51] Twenty to twenty five percent appears to be average for this field. See Alan Block's *East Side, West Side,* 151-152.

[52] Haller, "Illegal Enterprise," 225.

[53] Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption*, 82.

[54] It is noted that Earl Fields had an FBI file as well – file #4152032. In 1958 the FBI reports that he is 60 years old. JFK NARA, 124-10282-10086, July 28, 1961, SA Thomas Forsyth III report. Fields had a criminal record with the Pennsylvania State Police for numbers activity. He was arrested and convicted three times for "operating a lottery" between the years 1939-1945. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10027, June 16, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce; JFK NARA, 124-10222-10212, January 15, 1958 advisory report on Gabriel Mannarino. Runners also covered the Arnold and Parnassus areas – which at this point was still a predominately white area. Whether or not they crossed racial lines or serviced only minority/ethnic enclaves within those communities is not clear. It is clear that runners within the ward worked directly for Fields, not the Mannarinos. JFK NARA, 124-1022-10216, February 17, 1958 Report of SA Norman T. Thompson.

note that historically numbers play was an integral part of the urban African-American community. Ivan Light notes that numbers banks "became sources of capital and a major savings device" in their communities.[55] Rufus Schatzberg and Robert Kelly concur explaining that numbers banks may have lent money to retailers who sold numbers, as well as invested in the African-American community from the purchase of real estate to the funding of scholarships.[56] But African-American numbers operators began to lose their hold in many urban areas in the 1930s, when, as Michael Woodiwiss explains, white gangsters moved in on the action.[57] It is difficult to track the history of numbers play in New Kensington's African-American community prior to FBI surveillance; therefore parallels can not be drawn to what other scholars have noted. However, what it certain is that the Mannarinos controlled play in the town's African-American community, though they left its operations up to Earl "Early" Fields. His position in both the Organization and the black community was important.

It was alleged by one African-American female informant that no black man could open a gambling house in New Kensington without paying out thirty percent of gross profits to the Mannarinos. Consequently this made it nearly impossible for one individual to do so.[58] It appears then, that Fields was the preferred choice for handling

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[55] Ivan Light, "Numbers Gambling Among Blacks: A Financial Institution," *American Sociological Review* 42, no. 6 (December 1977): 892.

[56] Rufus Schatzberg and Robert J. Kelly, *African-American Organized Crime: A Social History* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996): chapter four. See also, Ivan Light, "The Ethnic Vice Industry, 1880-1944," *American Sociological Review* 42, no. 3 (June 1977).

[57] Woodiwiss, 207.

[58] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10212, January 15, 1958 advisory report on Gabriel Mannarino. The informant notes that two-three people minimum were required to go in on such a venture. Percentages paid in

the area – especially since the cost to get in the game was so high. Fields' position was no doubt the result of his long-standing relationship with Gabe. One FBI report notes that in 1945 Fields was arrested with Gabe for selling numbers and thus it is not unreasonable to believe that Fields and Gabriel Mannarino may have known each other in the neighborhood.[59] In Fields' case this demonstrates the inter-ethnic, multi-racial collaboration fostered in organized crime syndicates as well as that the Mannarinos were socially mobile not only across class, but also in this instance, racial lines. This keeps in line with Jenna Weissman Joselit's study on Jewish gangsters in New York City where she notes that Jewish gangsters maintained "ethnically heterogeneous gangs."[60] Furthermore it could be said that the Mannarino Organization understood the importance of race and the need for a cultural mediator in building business relations within the African-American community.

The same can be said of Field's role in exerting political influence in that community as Fields was also responsible for controlling the black vote. Numbers operators were particularly useful in getting out the vote at election time since they and their runners came into contact with several people on any given day.[61] In his work on Chicago's African-American community from 1900-1940, Mark Haller explains that

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protection money had to go to Mayor Gardlock, the police and the brothers. It is interesting to note that the informant in this report is an African-American woman.

[59] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10121, January 15, 1958 advisory report on Gabriel Mannarino. If the April 1958 report is correct, in 1945 Gabriel Mannarino was 29 years old and Fields 47.

[60] Joselit, 95.

[61] Woodiwiss states that politicians understood the "political realities" of numbers games as their operators "constituted the nucleus of a political bloc that included the votes of families, friends, employees and customers." Woodiwiss, 207

"black gambling entrepreneurs" – mainly numbers operators – used their financial and social standing to exert influence in local governments. They first worked within the white Irish Ward Boss system and eventually moved to elect black politicians – with both sets of politicians sensitive to the South Side's operations.[62]

Unfortunately New Kensington's black community did not see this type of political power. Fields' and the Mannarinos' concern was locking down the First Ward. But evidence may suggest that the African-American vote, however, might not have acquiesced to Mannarinos' choices if given other options. According to an FBI informant, in 1955 an African-American male had decided to run for First Ward's constable. It is alleged that at that time the constable was a "Mannarino man." Supposedly the candidate was paid (most likely by Fields) $150 not to run for the position. The informant believed that if the challenger had not dropped out he may have won, given community support for his candidacy.[63] Unfortunately, because we can not know what would have happened in this case, we can not gauge any potential levels of resistance within the black electorate.[64]

While Earl Fields controlled numbers play in the African-American community, there was no similar organizational structure for play on Alcoa's New Kensington Works' floors. According to an FBI informant, in 1958 a "substantial volume of numbers" play came from Alcoa workers, which would make sense since it was the

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[62] Haller, "Policy Gambling, Entertainment, and the Emergence of Black Politics."

[63] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10212, January 15, 1958 advisory report on Gabriel Mannarino; JFK NARA, 124-10214-10225, June 24, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce.

[64] A $150 payoff (if this is true) does not seem like an extraordinarily large sum, even by 1955 standards It is roughly $1100 in today's money.

community's largest employer. The Pennsylvania State Police noted that they were aware that some "shop stewards [sold] numbers or treasury lotto tickets in their departments."[65] Such activities were not uncommon as they fit well with the activities of the shop steward whose job brought him into daily contact with workers in multiple departments. Daniel Bell notes that at the Kefauver hearings a CIO official believed that about fifteen percent of low-level union officers might have been involved in numbers games.[66] Furthermore, William Howard Moore explains that gambling on the shop floor was so prevalent that "factory managers found it necessary at times to tolerate on-job bookie operations."[67]

In Alcoa's case unidentified employees were responsible for writing co-workers' numbers and turning them into a handful of local businesses during the noon lunch hour.[68] These businesses, which were located in close proximity to the Works' main entrance, made little to no effort to conceal their activities.[69] Namey's luncheonette kept their numbers book right by the cash register. Alcoa is the only New Kensington factory referenced in FBI files but ones across the river, such as Duquesne Light in Springdale, are referenced. Given these examples it is not a stretch to say that such activity most

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[65] JFK NARA, 124-10220-10435, February 23, 1962 memorandum of SA Frank E. Allison to Director.

[66] Bell, 137.

[67] Moore, 33. Moore also cites two popular journal articles to illustrate how prevalent factory floor gambling was, see: Irving Moss, "Big-Time Gamblers Invade the Factories," *Reader's Digest* (August 1950): 49-52 and "Plant Gambling," *Business Week* (January 21, 1950): 109-110.

[68] JFK NARA, 124-10220-10435, February 23, 1962 memorandum of SA Frank E. Allison to Director.

[69] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10343, August 19, 1958 report. The FBI notes the following businesses took these bets: Ben Namey's Lucheonette (1001 Second Avenue), John's Lunch (999 Second Avenue), Pool Room (unidentified address – noted as located in red brick faced one story building on 10th Street next to factory gate).

likely went on in other New Kensington factories.[70]

Since the Mannarino Organization controlled all phases of the city's numbers' action it most likely controlled its individual operators. Numerous FBI files indicate that these operators were required to back Mannarino-friendly candidates for local and county elections.[71] While files indicate that not all operators were happy with the required commitment, only one instance of rebellion is noted.[72] The 1956 mayoral race pitted Mannarino-backed incumbent Raymond Gardlock against challenger Edward Zaleski. Apparently one small-time operator, identified as Jim Kelly, broke from the fold and backed the challenger. The elderly Greek immigrant owner of a shoe-shine/hat cleaning business supposedly contributed a few hundred dollars to the Zaleski campaign and encouraged others in the Greek community to support him. While Gardlock won the election, an informant claimed that two Mannarino men visited Kelly to collect his books and shut down his operation.

Kelly apparently refused to comply and requested a meeting with Sam where he was said to have challenged Mannarino's authority to shut him down based on his political convictions and threatened to book his own numbers independently. In the end Sam took no further action against Kelly, allowing him to book within the organizational structure and with police protection.[73] Kelly's act of resistance through his decision to follow his own political convictions put him at odds with those of the Mannarino

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[70] JFK NARA, 124-10278-10040, February 19, 1962 report of SA Forsyth. In 1958 the FBI passed along information concerning numbers activity near the Alcoa plant. JFK NARA, 124-10216-10348, October 2, 1958 report of Richard Gordon Douce.

[72] For example see: JFK NARA 124-10283-10027, June 16, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce.

[73] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10404, December 15, 1959 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth.

Organization.[74]

Sam's initial response to shut down Kelly's book was certainly meant to exert control and demonstrate consequences of actions contrary to Mannarino policy. The question as to why Sam did not further pursue action against Kelly remains unanswered. Mark Haller notes that violence or the threat of it shapes illegal enterprise partnerships. He asserts that "violence is destabilizing and is not an effective method for partnership enforcement" and that "successful entrepreneurs" may avoid such partnerships.[75] If Kelly's small business was successful, and Sam's interference suggests that it was, then perhaps Sam did not want to lose that partnership. Furthermore, it may also have done Sam's reputation more harm than good if he were to aggressively make an example out of an old man. But it is doubtful that Sam saw any real threat to his control over city hall. According to the 1950 census, approximately seventy-six Greeks resided in New Kensington.[76]

Though it appears that business thrived well enough to not let little troubles like Jim Kelly hinder overall profits, the health of the numbers racket was tied to the general economic conditions of the area. For example, in early 1960 when the local economy was good informants claimed that "working people [were] playing numbers regularly and

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[74] Kelly's support of Zaleski is noteworthy. According to FBI reports, Zaleski's candidacy signaled disapproval for political corruption and the Mannarino rackets. There is the possibility that Kelly's support for Zaleski was a statement noting his dissatisfaction with the Mannarino organization's policies and practices.

[75] Haller, "Illegal Enterprise." 223.

[76] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Census of Population 1950, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population,* Part 38, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952.

in many instances, for larger amounts."[77] However, during an economic slow down in February 1961 "there were fewer large bets wagered but the number of bettors is about the same." At this time the estimated daily income from numbers play was about $15,000, but by July 1961 the gross daily income was down to between $10,000 and $12,000.[78] It is interesting to note that while the bet amounts declined the number of bets remained the same. It was either a gaming culture or a chance to supplement a decreased income (perhaps both) that kept people playing their numbers regardless of economic conditions.[79]

While numbers play was prevalent and seemingly accessible to everyone, the New Kensington casinos were fewer in number but still very popular.[80] During this time illegal casinos could be found across the United States in places like Hot Springs, Arkansas; Saratoga, New York; and East St. Louis, Illinois – not just large cities.[81] In 1958 the so described "plush" casinos in New Kensington were found in the Garibaldi

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[77] JFK NARA, 124-1026-10407, March 15, 1960, segment of unidentified report. It is noted that the informant gave this information during a January 28, 1960 interview.

[78] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10427, February 27, 1961 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III; JFK NARA, 124-10282-10086. July 28, 1961 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III. .

[79] In a November 1, 1961 interview an informant claimed that numbers play was down sixty percent because of federal investigation into illegal gambling in New Kensington. JFK NARA 124-10278-10016, December 13, 1961 report of SA Forsyth.

[80] JFK NARA 124-10277-10035, February 14, 1958, Samuel Mannarino Anti-Racketeering Case Report of SA Richard Gordon Douce. To understand New Kensington in the context of illegal casino gambling in the state of Pennsylvania as understood by a national audience see: Gordon Schendel, "Something's Rotten in the State of Pennsylvania," *Collier's*, 11 November 1958.

[81] Woodiwiss, 214.

Club and at Triangle Billiards.[82] The casinos operated seven days a week between the hours of ten p.m. and six a.m. Friday through Sunday nights drew the largest crowds with as many as three hundred patrons in a weekend. Informants observed that visitors came from as far away as Wheeling, West Virginia and eastern Ohio towns of Youngstown, Stuebenville and Warren. Craps and barbout were the most popular casino games.[83] One informant noted that two craps tables nightly grossed between $50,000 and $75,000. Two barbout tables brought in between $5,000 and $8,000 a night.[84]

A number of competent employees were needed to keep gaming operations running smoothly. As noted, people found employment as numbers runners and writers, but with casino gambling there were also opportunities to work as slot machine repairmen and collections agents, loansharks, bankers, sports bookies, horse room operators, luggers, card sharps, dealers and stick men to name a few.[85] It can be said that the experienced gambler was much like the skilled laborer. They were experts in their field and were compensated appropriately for it.

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[82] It is alleged that the casino in the basement of the Garibaldi Building opened in the spring of 1953. It remained in full operation there until fall of 1957 when it was complimented by the opening of a casino on the second floor of 938 Barnes Street which operated under the name of Triangle Billiards. Contained in one of the FBI files is an extensive, five-page description of gambling operations at both the Garibaldi Building and Triangle Billiards. JFK NARA, 124-10216-10348, October 2, 1958, report of SA Richard Gordon Douce; JFK NARA, 124-10282-10086, July 28, 1961 report of SA Forsyth.

[83] Both craps and barbout are high stakes dice games with craps being was the most popular.

[84] JFK NARA, 124-10214-10225, June 24, 1958 Anti-Racketeering case report of Richard Gordon Douce. The informant, T-10, appears to have extensive knowledge of the gambling activities of the organization. S/he is listed in other reports to provide information (corroborated by other informants) on salary and commission amounts.

[85] Luggers were individuals sent by casino management to pick up patrons from various locations. In this case it was from areas in Pittsburgh, most often Squirrel Hill. JFK NARA, 124-1028310164, report of August 23, 1961, Memorandum from Pittsburgh SAC to FBI Director. For more on loansharking see: Mark A. Haller and John V. Alvitti, "Loansharking in American Cities: Historical Analysis of a Marginal Enterprise," *The American Journal of Legal History* 21, no. 2 (April 1977): 125-156.

What and how an individual was paid depended upon the job held and/or position within the Organization. In a February 1958 report it was noted that one high level employee who ran a dice table made a $125 a week salary plus a six percent commission, which could be up to $1,000 a week. The FBI concluded that "routine employees at the gambling casino received $150 per week flat, and those in charge receive $150 weekly salary plus a small percentage of the net take."[86] Unfortunately FBI files do not provide a full accounting as to the number of people employed or an annual payroll. By comparison, John Gardiner notes that in Reading in 1960, a single dice game had an annual payroll of $350,000.[87] Furthermore, in comparison to wages paid in "legitimate" career fields one can see why some would risk casino employment. According to the 1950 census, in New Kensington the median income was $2,913 and for families $3,182. In Pittsburgh the median salary for a chemist was $3,910 and a skilled machinist or job setter $3,316.[88] Steady casino work was worth the associated risks.

As noted, only a handful of lower level employees are mentioned in the FBI files. Aside from Earl Fields and Jim Kelley, another notable employee was Eleanor Ciancutti.[89] Eleanor Ciancutti was the mother of three boys one of whom, Anthony or

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[86] JFK NARA 124-10277-10035, February 14, 1958, Samuel Mannarino Anti-Racketeering Case Report of SA Richard Gordon Douce; JFK NARA, 124-10283-10027, June 16, 1958 investigative summary report of SA Richard Gordon Douce. The two reports contain nearly identical information – the latter expands to name another high level employee making the same money.

[87] Gardiner, *Politics of Corruption*, 19-21.

[88] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Census of Population 1950, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population,* Part 38, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952. I selected chemist because it relates to Alcoa's Research Laboratory, and is nicely representative of New Kensington's professional class.

[89] Eleanor is the only woman Organization employee noted. She is also one of two references made to women involved in gambling. The other is of women who patronized horse rooms during the day. The

"Sonny," was a high ranking Mannarino man. Files indicate that Eleanor was a card dealer for games played in the backroom of the Mannarino-controlled Bachelor's Club.[90] There is no indication if her employment was part- or full-time, or as a supplement to other income, nor is there any indication as to how she became employed in this capacity. It is likely that she got the job through her son, but she may have known the brothers on her own. The FBI's primary interest in Eleanor was to uncover information about her boy. If the FBI wanted to know how disappointed Eleanor was in her son's chosen profession, they hit the jackpot. Eleanor was said to have frequently lodged complaints against her son's (and basically her own) employer for recruiting him into the profession. She contrasted Sonny's position to that of her other two sons, noted as college graduates who according to the FBI "held legitimate substantial positions in industry."[91]

Outside of her role as disappointed mother, multiple informants noted her as a much respected card dealer. It was alleged that she ran it "with an iron hand" and made sure that losers not covering their own bets were "beat up." As large-scale gambling went into decline after the 1961 federal raids, few big stakes card games continued to

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majority of reports on the Mannarino brothers and their top employees do mention women frequently. Agents note mothers, wives, daughters, secretaries and illicit love interests. The mothers and wives, with the exception of Eleanor Ciancutti, were always noted as deeply religious and quiet. In many cases the FBI appears to be almost obsessive with their interest in the race and ethnic backgrounds of Mannarino Organization associates' girlfriends and lovers. Another more hidden understanding of women and their role is through understanding the role of the female informant. Like all too much of the literature on the Mafia, it is difficult to find work that treats these women as much more than personalities and playthings. It appears that this is beginning to change. For example, see the scholarly: Giovanni Fiandanca, ed., *Women and the Mafia: Female Roles in Organized Crime Structures* (New York: Springer, 2007); and the popular (and somewhat superficial): Clare Longrigg, *No Questions Asked: The Secret Life of Women in the Mob* (New York: Hyperion, 2004); and the autobiographical: Andrea Giovino, *Divorced from the Mob: My Journey From Organized Crime to Independent Woman* (New York: Carroll & Graff, 2004).

[90] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10411, December 13, 1960 report of SA Forsyth. She was identified as a poker dealer but was also noted to deal other games.

[91] JFK NARA, 124-10283-10069, December 13, 1960 report of Forsyth.

operate. Informants continued to note, however, that Eleanor's card games – whether at the Bachelor's or Garibaldi clubs – continued to be the "important" game.[92] While it can be asserted that her personal ties to Organization members secured her position through times of turmoil, certainly much can be said of her abilities as a dealer. Furthermore, her position indicates that the Organization was gender as well as racially and ethnically integrated.

IRS Raids and Their Impact

Political payoffs and police protection were alleged to have kept operations "wide open" in order to maintain such a high level of gambling action and income.[93] This political influence allegedly ran across local government through regional representatives to the state assembly and crossed party lines.[94] However there were two entities that appear to have not been completely controlled by the Mannarinos – the press and federal agencies, namely the IRS.

The Mannarino Organization was not without its headline-making activities through the years. In the early 1950s members were involved in 1952 election voter fraud with the investigation and trial dragging on through 1954. In 1950s the brothers

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[92] JFK NARA, 124-10284-10030, October 13, 1964 report of Thomas G. Forsyth. This report is specific to Sonny Cianciutti. Sonny is also reported to have given beatings to those who did not make good on their debts. JFK NARA, 124-10277-10012, July 15, 1966 report of Thomas G. Forsyth. The FBI reports that her card game at the Garibaldi was "neither a high stakes nor penny-ante game."

[93] JFK NARA, 124-10214-10225, June 24, 1958 Anti-Racketeering case report of Richard Gordon Douce. The majority of scholarship on illegal enterprise documents payoffs for police and political protection. See: Mark Haller, "Historical Roots of Police Behavior: Chicago, 1890-1925," *Law and Society Review* v. 10 n. 2 Essays in Honor of J. Willard Hurst: Part Two (Winter 1976): 303-323; Block, *East Side, West Side.*

[94] JFK NARA, 124-10214-10225, June 24, 1958 Anti-Racketeering case report of Richard Gordon Douce.

disappeared from time to time to avoid subpoenas to testify before Congressional committees such as Kefauver and McClellan.[95] In 1958 members were caught trying to smuggle firearms stolen from an armory in West Virginia to Cuba, supposedly to help the Batista regime stay in power. And throughout the 1950s there were small raids by local, state and federal agencies – though the local ones were mostly for show and did not target big operators.

William Howard Moore notes that in many cases the newspapers were the only entities digging into and exposing illegal gambling.[96] The *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* reported on Mannarino activities as they did any other newsworthy event, but as time wore on the tone of these stories were decidedly anti-organized crime. This is similar to what John Gardiner found in Reading. Gardiner notes that in 1956 Reading's press exerted some power in curbing illegal activities through its exposure of corruption and police ineptitude following a series of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) raids.[97] In New Kensington it was alleged that the fear of press influence in bringing about federal investigation may have at one point affected the casinos' operations. For a brief period in June 1958 Gabe shut down Triangle Billiards allegedly for fear of possible IRS raids that could have been inspired by recent exposés of Triangle Billiards' operations which ran in both the *Dispatch* and *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.[98] At that time nothing happened, but

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[95] The McClellan hearings were officially known as the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field and lasted from 1957 through 1959.

[96] Moore, 40-41.

[97] Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption*, 29.

[98] JFK NARA, 124-10214-10225, June 24, 1958 Anti-Racketeering case report of SA Richard Gordon Douce. Allegedly the casino was up and running again by mid-June. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10035, July

later in the year the IRS raid conducted its first raid in New Kensington.

In the 1920s the IRS was a young agency taken lightly by many. Their pursuit and 1931 conviction of Al Capone on tax evasion charges gave them needed credibility.[99] They quickly became a major force in federal pursuit of organized crime and remained so for decades. For example, despite the creation of the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section in the Department of Justice in 1954, in the early 1960s the IRS's tax investigations still led law enforcement's way in fighting organized crime.[100] It is certain that despite near constant FBI surveillance, the IRS was the more aggressive federal agency conducting investigations in New Kensington.

Beginning in 1961 a series of raids by federal and state agencies, namely the Internal Revenue Service and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), threatened the success of the Mannarino Organization's illegal enterprises and unflatteringly took national New Kensington's reputation as a "Little Las Vegas." These raids were a result of recently passed federal gambling laws. In 1961 Congress passed a series of anti-gambling statutes which gave the IRS and the Attorney General the authority to more aggressively pursue

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8, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce. Common to the *Dispatch*'s May 12 and the *Post-Gazette*'s May 23 editions are references to out-of-state patrons and police protection. *Post-Gazette* writer Vince Johnson reported that the casino's estimated yearly income was $2 million. The *Dispatch* reported a nightly play of up to $100,000. The Vince Johnson piece, "Mannarino Mob Flies High," is interesting as it appears heavily edited – most likely for space. His description of Triangle Billiards is largely from the outside – a reference to valet parking in city lots and the ease of getting into the building. He notes the difficulty one has in getting to the actual casino itself and it appears that he did not get into the casino. Johnson also fails to note any sources for his story. *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 23 May 1958.

[99] Woodiwiss, 201-202.

[100] Jay Albanese, *Organized Crime in America*, 2nd edition (Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing Company, 1989): 80.

illegal gambling enterprise.[101]

For three months during the summer of 1961 undercover IRS agents patronized the casino and horse room in preparation for an August 24 raid. A three-hour raid on the casino and nearby numbers headquarters brought the arrest of twenty-six employees and approximately forty patrons.[102] What is interesting to note is the crowd response to the raid. The *Dispatch* reported that a crowd of about five hundred gathered to watch the spectacle unfold. This crowd cheered the patrons as they trickled out of the casino (having left their "name" and contact information with the authorities) and jeered the federal agents. The *Dispatch* reported that at one point Mannarino employee Jimmy Ameris broke free of the federal agents who had him in custody. It was reported that one of the two agents who pursued him was tripped up by a spectator. The crowd cheered Ameris in his escape and then jeered the federal agents after catching him. Whether or

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[101] Prior to the Kefauver Committee hearings of 1950, gambling laws were primarily a state affair. As a result of the Kefauver Committee findings, in 1951 Congress passed the Johnson Act targeting interstate transportation of gambling devices. In 1961 amendments were made to Title 18 of the U.S. Code "to prohibit the interstate transmission of wagering information." That year the federal government made it illegal to "travel in interstate commerce with the intent and attempt to engage in certain unlawful activities, including gambling." In 1962 the Johnson Act was amended into the Gambling Devices Act and in 1964 a law targeting bribes in sporting events was passed. *A Decade of Organized Crime,* 128. See also: Act of January 2, 1951, ch. 1194, 64 Stat. 1134; Act of September 13, 1961, Pub L. No 87-216, 75 Stat. 491; Act of September 13, 1961, Pub L. No. 87-228, 75 Stat. 498; Pub. L. No. 87-840, 76 Stat. 1075; Act of June 6, 1964, Pub L. No. 88-316, 78 Stat. 203. Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1966 (Washington: Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, 1966): 239-240. According to the Attorney General these laws "... [prohibit] the transmission of wagering information ... interstate travel in aid of racketeering enterprises ... interstate transportation of wagering paraphernalia." The resulting increase in investigations was great as by the close of the 1963 fiscal year, nationwide 1413 potential cases for evaluation had been forwarded to the Attorney General's Office. 1963 Annual Report of the Attorney General of the United States, 206, 349-351.

[102] The *Dispatch* reported that the federal agents had chosen this time because it was the peak hour for the horse room and near the time when the barbout games begin to start up. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 August 1961. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10151, August 25, 1961 teletype to FBI Director. The IRS gave the FBI extremely short notice of their aid. The *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* initially reported twenty-two employees arrested. As the investigation unfolded more employees were arrested. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 5 September 1961.

not these spectators were residents of the flats, persons with business in the downtown area or both is uncertain. What can be said is that the crowd's allegiance was decidedly not with the outsider federal law enforcement agents.[103] This can also be said to be a reflection of a tolerant, if not permissive, attitude people had towards illegal gambling.

This raid was part of Robert Kennedy's attack on organized crime. Since his work as lead prosecutor in the McClellan hearings – which sought to root out Mob influence and corruption in unions – Kennedy was tremendously influenced by what he believed to be the Mob's tragic impact on America. Consequently when he became U.S. Attorney General going after the Mob was a top priority. The Mannarinos became one of a number of criminal syndicates targeted for federal law enforcement surveillance and investigation. According to the *Dispatch*, Kennedy requested that surveillance and investigation of the town continue for some time following the raids.[104] Consequently small town New Kensington became part of a national drive against organized crime, making the community synonymous with Mob rule.

Local press condemned the Mannarino Organization as well as blamed its activities for the spotlight shown on the community as jeopardizing New Kensington's viability as a resurgent industrial community at a critical time. The paper was especially critical of the police force for their inability to keep the town clean and therefore

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[103] Interviews taken with just about every informant for this work all speak to the large downtown crowds on the weekend days and late into the night. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch* 25 August 1961. The IRS eventually called in the New Kensington police to help with crowd control and in response the department sent six officers – who handily settled down the crowd. *New Kensington Daily* Dispatch, 28 August 1961. FBI files indicate that federal and state agencies had intentionally in the past failed to inform local police of their investigations for fear that a corrupt force would tip off the Organization. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10155, August 28, 1961 teletype from Pittsburgh office to the Director.

[104] Motivation for Robert Kennedy's pursuit of the Mafia is best understood in his work *The Enemy Within* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1960). *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 28 August 1961.

attractive to potential investors. This problem was underscored in an August 28 editorial where it is asserted that:

> ... serious damage to the good name of New Kensington [comes] at a most critical time when it is competing with hundreds of other communities to attract new industry ... [and] the shameful failure of [police] Chief Bordonaro and his department is certain to have an adverse influence on industrialists who are looking for new plant sites. Maintenance of law and order is a basic requirement on the part of industry owners in choosing new locations.[105]

For the editors of the *Dispatch* the emphasis lay not solely on the inaction of a corrupt police force or the blind eye of a corrupt mayor but also on the reputation that the region was sure to receive as a result of this raid. This is nothing unique, as Gardiner points out that many in Reading believed that corruption was a deterrent to community growth.[106]

As discussed in chapter four, industrial decline was the primary problem facing the community and this raid did little to help matters. Alcoa had been threatening to leave New Kensington since 1948 when they instituted a public relations campaign aimed at generating community pressure to get their workers to be more productive and not so demanding in contract negotiations. Alcoa kept the community on edge as it invested in certain aspects of its production facilities while relocating others out of state. The company noted that some investments were rewards for being a good community while department relocations were the result of a combination of market and productivity factors. The press and the community blamed the uncertainty of their industrial future on three things: lazy workers, bad publicity brought on by Mannarino Organization activities, and corrupt city government and law enforcement.

Smaller raids followed the August 1961 event - mostly done by the PSP with a

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[105] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 28 August 1961.

[106] Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption*, chapter 6.

couple by the New Kensington Police Department – but none appeared to have as dramatic of an impact as the IRS's August 1961 raid.[107] Casino attendance dropped as many players feared arrest. One informant reported a sixty percent drop in all forms of gambling – from casino and horse room action to sports betting and numbers play – and claimed card games to be "non-existent." Many believed the high times would never return. It was so bad that one bookie was reported as saying "It looks like we are all dead." FBI spot surveillance indicated that this may very well have been the case.[108]

The raids resulted in a federal grand jury investigation which with the accompanying publicity, no doubt disrupted business.[109] Informants explained that the brothers shut down the town and in doing this they also shut down the FBI's sources for information. Agents asked their sources why they had nothing to report and were told there was nothing to give.[110] One informant, who was employed in the brothers'

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[107] For example, on February 1, 1962 a single PSP detective raids two minor establishments. See *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, February 2, 1962 and JFK NARA, 124-10278-10040, February 19, 1962 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III. Another raid of note was the July 28, 1961 Pennsylvania State Police effort to confiscate coin-operated "gambling devices." JFK NARA, 124-10219-10218, September 20, 1962 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III. For more detail on the Red Coach machine raids see JFK NARA, 124-102083-10097, Frank E. Allison report titled "Crime Conditions in Western District of Pennsylvania."

[108] The FBI reported little traffic at gambling spots and the "idle presence on street corners of numerous [Mannarino Organization] small fry." JFK NARA, 124-100283-10169, September 21, 1961 teletype from Pittsburgh office to the Director. Beyond a fear of unemployment, gamblers also feared that the IRS investigation prior to and following the raids would also bring federal indictments against them. JFK NARA, 124-10283-10116, September 26, 1961 teletype from the Pittsburgh office to the Director.

[109] The FBI summed up informants' statements as follows: "Men who have been employed in one phase or another of the Mannarino gambling set-ups are now loafing about town, and their principal topics of discussion concern the FGJ hearings, their belief that the newly-elected reform administration in New Kensington will not allow resumption of open gambling, and their 'fears' concerning their own futures." JFK NARA 124-10283-10200, January 3, 1962 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[110] Multiple informants explained that the brothers "ordered a moratorium" on activity, told underlings to talk to no one in the organization until informed otherwise, and avoid talking to the grand jury. Another estimated numbers play to be down fifty percent; only three card games were running (but only one a

legitimate businesses, noted that even casual conversations and drop-in visits by acquaintances stopped. Spot surveillance noted that the brothers' and higher echelon employees' routines had become extremely predictable.[111]

The federal grand jury probe into the Mannarino Organization continued into 1962.[112] It culminated with the June indictment of seventeen known Mannarino associates and employees on charges of violating the Federal Wagering Tax Laws.[113] Minor sentences were handed out, but federal pressure which continued through the 1960s took a toll. By 1964 informants reported that gambling was non-existent compared to years prior to the 1961 raids. The FBI reported that, "Many men who have made substantial incomes from gambling all of their adult lives are now either wholly unemployed or doing so little 'business' that they have had to reduce their living standards drastically, some to the point where they can no longer pay their bills."[114] They found themselves in a situation similar to the growing number of unemployed industrial workers.

Informants continued to report to FBI agents on the various though incredibly

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night); all sports/horse betting and dice games were shut down. JFK NARA 124-10283-10200, January 3, 1962 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[111] JFK NARA 124-10283-10200, January 3, 1962 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III. Gabriel began spending more time at his ranch in Allegheny Township. Sam had already started to spend more time at the Bonfire Restaurant, also located in Allegheny Township.

[112] While the probe is covered in the *Dispatch* the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* coverage in December 1962 is quite comprehensive. The *Post-Gazette* coverage also plays up Robert Kennedy's pursuit of the Mannarino "Gang."

[113] JFK NARA, 124-10219-10214, July 23, 1962 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 9 August 1962.

[114] JFK NARA, 124-10219-10244, February 28, 1964 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III.

reduced gambling activities in the community. The plush casinos were no more and high stakes card and dice games were infrequent and often traveled. Another blow came with Sam's death in 1967, leaving fifty-four year-old Gabe to run the entire Organization. As time wore on informants began to report on workers' discontent with Gabriel Mannarino's management style. After he allegedly relinquished most of the Organization's control of numbers play to independent operators it appears that gambling activities became small and extremely fragmented.[115] One informant claimed that play had dropped from a daily average of $12,000 in the late 1950s to about $4,000 per day in 1968. It no longer had the tight organization or the patrons necessary to be as profitable as in times past.[116] Another informant noted that same year that roughly only ten "long-time Organization numbers writers" continued to be employed. A number of independent operators began to pop up as a result. These operators did only small volumes of sales, which they covered themselves. A number of individuals in the Organization allegedly saw this as quite bold and would have been an unspeakable act in years past. It was taken as a sign that Gabe Mannarino no longer cared to monopolize all phases of gambling in New Kensington.[117] As a consequence Gabe seemed to have less concern for maintaining police protection or political influence.

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[115] JFK NARA, 124-10277-1009, February 19, 1969 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[116] In 1969 an informant reported that others believed Gabriel Mannarino would not permit new gambling establishments to open as he was uncertain as to whether "the Federal Government is serious about its avowed intention of intensifying investigations of members of 'The Mafia'." JFK NARA, 124-10277-10007, December 23, 1969 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[117] By 1977 there were very few places where one could play numbers or gamble – the FBI lists them as Weber's Hotel, Royal Café, and the Greek Club. JFK NARA, 124-10222-10200, April 26, 1977 report of T.A. Meek Jr.

Political Influence

Up until this time no one denied the Mannarinos' influence on local government and the brothers admitted as much in interviews with the FBI. The newspaper was critical of Mob rule in city hall and residents thought of political payoffs as "common knowledge."[118] As noted earlier, to guarantee the success of their enterprise, the Mannarinos made sure that everyone who benefited from government and police protection contributed financially.[119] One oral history informant, whose father was at one time the city's Democratic Party chairman, noted that one of his most embarrassing moments was coming home just as one of the Mannarino brothers was handing his father an envelope full of money.[120] Another method was not so direct. Around the time of each primary election major players met at Ken Iron and Steel where Sam instructed them as to which candidates to support. They contributed to campaigns and political parties by purchasing tickets to fundraisers rather than through direct contribution. For example, in 1958 they were encouraged to buy a set number of tickets for the Westmoreland County Worker's Committee dinner sponsored by the Democratic Party.[121] Furthermore, regional influence was carried through by the Organization's alleged political paymaster, an Arnold city official, who used his connections throughout Westmoreland County to further protect the Mannarinos' interests.[122]

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[118] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10203, November 19, 1957 memorandum on Gabriel Mannarino. "A resident of New Kensington" asserted that "it was common knowledge" the organization financed local elections.

[119] JFK NARA, 124-10277-10035, February 14, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce.

[120] Informant (protected identity), interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, 8 July 2005.

[121] JFK NARA, 124-10283-10027, June 16, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce.

In its assessment of law enforcement agencies in the state, the Pennsylvania Crime Commission stated, "For too many years in too many jurisdictions, public officials and citizens alike have denied the severity of the problem. Syndicated gambling and corruption were accepted as unpleasant but not overly important realities. Apathy toward the effects of syndicated gambling develops a tradition of poor government."[123] This certainly appears to have been the case in New Kensington. As noted in chapter two, for better or worse corruption and misconduct were parts of the social and political fabric of the community since the 1910s. Consequently it can be said that the town had a history of corruption which may have made it easier for the Mannarinos to cultivate political ties from the start.

In a February 1954 interview with the FBI Sam noted his approval of the current city government, going so far to say that "No one in this city gets any appointment or anything unless we clear them."[124] This was just slightly exaggerated as the FBI reported that throughout the 1950s no fewer than two councilmen and the mayor were Mannarino boosters which also indicate that the other two councilmen were independent of Mannarino rule.[125] Still, in a third class city structure such as in New Kensington, the mayor acts as a fifth council member and has the potential to break ties if the four council

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[122] JFK NARA, 124-10024-10027, April 1, 1955 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director.

[123] *Report on Organized Crime*, 74.

[124] JFK NARA, 124-10224-10032, September 27, 1957 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director. In this interview Sam admits to open gambling in the town and that he and his brother exert a significant amount of control over it. The majority of the FBI interviews were conducted in New Kensington – either at their places of business, the Ken Mar Hotel, or the Bonfire Restaurant.

[125] For an example of their claims, see JFK NARA, 124-10222-10216, February 17, 1958 report of Norman T. Thompson. The two non-Mannarino men were said to vote against measures which favored the Mannarino organization's interests. Often their votes were merely symbolic.

members are deadlocked. From 1950 to 1962 Raymond Gardlock was the tiebreaker.

Gardlock did what was necessary to keep New Kensington wide open and protect the Mannarinos' interests. But he took orders from them which protected the interests of others outside of the Organization.[126] In a 1958 interview with the FBI, a former Chamber of Commerce member claimed that at one point during the 1950s Gardlock wanted to raise taxes. The Chamber was not pleased and one of its members appealed to Gabriel Mannarino on the Chamber's behalf. It was alleged that the next day Gardlock reversed his decision.[127] While this is notable for what it says about the mayor's loyalties, this example also reinforces the brothers' power and their ability to move in various social and professional circles. It is also indicative of how enterprise syndicates benefit those tolerant of, but not completely involved in, the business of illegal enterprise. Chamber members, who associated with the brothers on various levels, sought out their assistance on this matter rather than acting as a block to put public pressure on city administration. The reasons for this action are not stated in the file; however, it is implied that it was easier to get it done via Gabriel Mannarino rather than on their own. What the Chamber had to reciprocate for this favor is also not known but in all likelihood it was continued tolerance.

As noted, not all of those on council were Mannarino men. In the fall of 1959 a group of political activists sought to pull city government out of Mannarino control. The Volunteers for Good Government, described as a "factionalist group in the Democratic

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[126] JFK NARA, 124-10277-10035, February 14, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce.

[127] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10234, April 14, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce. At the time of the interview the informant was the manager of the Bell Telephone Company in New Kensington.

Party," had a mission to sweep out corrupt incumbent city officials.[128] During the early years they met secretly for fear of "reprisals against any members" and throughout their existence not all would own up to membership.[129] In April 1961 the Volunteers issued a twelve-point position statement in the *Dispatch*. Their last point was that:

> "With the help of the people, we shall remove the brand of a racket run city. Curbing of vice will be placed in the hands of elected officials whose every desire is honesty, morality, and proper government, not government by submission to others."[130]

The Volunteers can be considered a proxy for crime commissions formed in larger cities during this period. John Gardiner notes that in Reading, the crime commission comprised the city's "economic elite" who fostered a relationship with the newspaper to make sure their efforts hit a wide audience. He also explains that most citizens' groups may have opposed crime, but "rarely called for sweeping political or economic changes."[131] The Volunteers were comprised of twenty-one professional and businessmen, which can be considered New Kensington's economic elite. But they were also different. They most certainly wanted sweeping political change but there is no indication, however, that they considered the economic consequences.

To achieve political change the Volunteers supported all opposition candidates –

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[128] "Volunteers for Good Government," New Kensington Jubilee Souvenir Book, 1966.

[129] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10440, April 3, 1964 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director. The informant contacted the FBI to set up this meeting; JFK NARA, 124-10216-10459, April 27, 1961 memo from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director. This informant claimed that after their 12-Point Program was published in the *Daily Dispatch* on April 7, 1961 they began "receiving opposition from the racketeering element."

[130] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 7 April 1961.

[131] Ibid., 86-88.

even Republicans.[132] As evidenced by the publication of their twelve-point plan, the Volunteers cultivated a relationship with the *Dispatch.* This was simple to do as the newspaper's editor, Eugene Simon, was working with the purpose of "rid[ding] the town of the reputation of being racket dominated." In an interview with the FBI Simon emphasized the press' increased efforts to support opposition candidates and stated that he planned to use the press to emphasize the "duties and responsibilities of the businessmen and average citizens of the community to cooperate in all possible respects with Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies in order to fight organized crime and racketeering."[133] The newspaper came out heavily in favor of reform candidate (and former mayoral candidate) Edward Zaleski.

According to FBI reports Edward Zaleski was considered a "clean" councilman who had voted in opposition of motions that may have supported Mannarino interests. Zaleski's ran on the "Clean-Up New Kensington" campaign which troubled Mannarino operators as an informant reported that the upcoming primary made gamblers nervous, believing the opposition group had a chance to win. Zaleski's reform message and the work of Simon and the Volunteers must have been somewhat successful as Zaleski defeated Gardlock in the May 1961 primary.[134] As a result the Volunteers believed they

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[132] In Reading, John Gardiner found that often "good government" groups supported Republican candidates, who often were the minority party. Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption*, 10.

[133] JFK NARA, 124-10287-10003, March 7, 1961 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director. During the campaign season as well as through the August raids the Pittsburgh office was sending a near constant stream of AIRTEL memoranda to the FBI Director. This possibly indicates the importance of the affairs (including its apparent success) of the opposition movement and federal agencies in their attempt to break the Mannarino organization's hold on New Kensington.

[134] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10472, May 16, 1961 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director. This memo also notes informants' claims that while Gabe backed Gardlock, Sam backed Zaleski. JFK NARA, 124-10282-10033, May 9, 1961 memorandum.

had affected and could continue to affect great change in the community. This was reinforced by informants' claims of a drop off in gambling as a result of Gardlock's defeat.[135] The Volunteers' success is similar to Reading's reform candidates who campaigned to clean up the town and did so with some success.[136]

While the Volunteers' efforts may very well have contributed to Zaleski's win, it is also important to note that past Mannarino Organization troubles had resurfaced. The Justice Department was reviewing an appeal from those convicted in the 1958 Cuban gun-running scheme.[137] Furthermore, organized labor had been especially critical of Gardlock's campaign tactics. USWA 302's president Charles Keller spoke of labor's concerns over Gardlock's vague campaign promises, specifically his references to the possibility of one to four industries relocating to New Kensington and employing the roughly 2,000 unemployed industrial workers. Keller characterized it as "loose statements just to win election votes." The *Dispatch* made sure that these issues, as well as its own editorial comments regarding Gardlock and his campaign tactics received regular coverage, most of it on the front page.[138] The effects of these efforts can not be

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[135] JFK NARA, 124-10216-10473, May 17, 1961 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director. This informant was a man by the name of James Russell Cooper, who stated that he was on the group's publicity and finance committees, wrote the press releases and was influential in crafting policy. He claimed that two candidates refused bribes from the Mannarino Organization. JFK NARA, 124-10216-10482, June 1, 1961 memorandum.

[136] Gardiner, chapter five.

[137] For example see: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 9 June 1961 and 20 June 1961.

[138] For example see: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 3 May 1961. There were a few articles reporting labor's dissatisfaction with Gardlock and his vague campaign promises. Also, the column "The Stroller" was given front page placement and frequently reported on citizens' complaints of dirty dealings in support of the Gardlock campaign. Among other things alleged to have happened were: police distributing Gardlock campaign materials, Zaleski supporting city workers without work, and threats made to female campaign workers.

taken lightly. In a small but highly unionized community, it was a slim chance for Gardlock to win without labor's support.

Given the history of the Mannarinos' ability to "get to" people, people like Simon had their fears despite the win. Simon informed the FBI of a rumor that Zaleski and other council candidates had been "gotten to" - though he refused to believe this to be true. Still these rumors persisted after Zaleski won the general election and dogged him throughout his tenure.[139] But unlike their investigation into Gardlock, the FBI could never authenticate corruption claims against Zaleski.

Through the 1960s the Volunteers billed themselves as a watchdog group and spent a good bit of their time keeping tabs on "the daily business of the city, school board and public authorities" and "alerting [the citizens] whenever their best interests are in jeopardy in civic business."[140] But in the end their reform movement did not shake New Kensington's identity as a "racket run" town.[141] Even as new mayors and council

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[139] JFK NARA, 124-10287-10003, 3-7-1961 memorandum from the Pittsburgh SAC to the Director; JFK NARA, 124-10283-10205, January 25, 1962 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III. In a November 1961 report a different informant reported that Zaleski was approached by high ranking members of the Mannarino organization with an offer of $30,000 to allow the organization to operate freely after his election to office. JFK NARA, 124-10278-10040, February 19, 1962 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[140] "Volunteers for Good Government," New Kensington Jubilee Souvenir Book, 1966.

[141] Neither did the changes to the police force. For years the Mannarinos allegedly appointed chiefs of police served and protected Mannarino interest. When the administration changed hands, new appointments were made and there were reported attempts to clean up the police force. To what extent this was successful is unknown. While discussion of the tenures allegedly corrupt or promisingly clean of police chiefs can be found in nearly every report, for highlights see: JFK NARA, 124-10277-10035, February 14, 1958 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce; JFK NARA, 124-10283-10027, June 16, 1959 report of SA Richard Gordon Douce; JFK NARA, 124-10283-10066, June 10, 1960 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III; JFK NARA, 124-10282-10086, July 28, 1961 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III; JFK NARA, 124-10278-10031, January 11, 1962 memorandum from J.F. Malone to Mr. Mohr on the subject of the New Kensington Police Department; JFK NARA, 124-10286-10035, March 11, 1964 memorandum from SAC Pittsburgh to the Director; JFK NARA, 124-10277-10013, January 24, 1966 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III; JFK NARA, 124-10277-10009, February 19, 1969 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth.

members were elected to office, rumors of attempted Mannarino interference and the existence of gambling (even at reduced levels) persisted.[142] And, as a bonus, Gardlock ran for and won a council seat in 1963.

Decline

> Alan Block acknowledges the obvious when he writes:
>
> > Like all other quasi-institutions, urban underworlds changed in response to outside pressures, such as population growth, ever more rapid urbanization and industrialization. These quantitative and qualitative changes in urban structures and economies accounted for different patterns of organized crime in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Modern capitalism created lucrative new enterprises for criminals.[143]

And to a large extent this was certainly the case for the Mannarinos. The Organization benefited from industrial success, the urbanization of the Alle-Kiski Valley, the post-war economic boom and invigorated consumer culture. But in the 1960s the Mannarino Organization was also affected by outside pressure of the federal government and the changing nature of America's industrial economy. It can be asserted that changes in modern capitalism were not to the Organization's benefit.

During a 1969 interview with the FBI, Gabe appeared to be relinquishing his control over the city. He noted that New Kensington was a dead town compared to ten years prior. While claiming no involvement in the enterprise, he asserted that the numbers racket was no longer a profitable business for two reasons: too many people

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[142] For concerns over other mayors' efforts to stay clean of organized crime see files concerning Lenus Hileman and James McDowell: JFK NARA, 124-10277-10012, July 15, 1966 report of Thomas G. Forsyth III and JFK NARA, 124-10277-10007, December 23, 1969 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[143] Alan A. Block, "Introduction: The Business of Organized Crime," in Alan A. Block, ed. *The Business of Crime: A Documentary Study of Organized Crime in the American Economy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991): 15.

wanted paid off and there was too much pressure by state and federal law enforcement agencies.[144]

That same year Alcoa announced that it would phase out of its New Kensington Works operations by 1971. By this time the Mannarino Organization, like Alcoa's New Kensington Works, was an aging institution. For years employment numbers at the Works, the area's largest employer had been in decline. In 1965 the plant employed 1,849 and by 1971 it was down to 364.[145] A few, as noted earlier, saw the industrial and underground economies closely linked. Much like Alcoa's 1966 modernization campaign to stay viable (and squeeze those last drops of blood out of their workers) in New Kensington, the Mannarino Organization stuck around in the community after it was no longer a highly profitable environment.

In 1972 interviews informants noted the impact – Alcoa's closure, as well as that of the American-St. Gobain glassworks in Arnold just about killed what was left of numbers play. On "really good" days it was estimated to gross $1,000 a day; and, as a result New Kensington was no longer the bank for surrounding communities – this had all transferred to Pittsburgh.[146] But it should also be kept in mind that the Pennsylvania lottery debuted in March of 1972 with fifty-cent bets on a chance for a million dollar prize. How much that drew away from illegal numbers is uncertain, but its existence can not be ignored. Since New Kensington was no longer a viable region for gambling, and with many of the older members of the Organization having passed away, a notable

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[144] JFK NARA, 124-10277-10007, December 23, 1969 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III.

[145] See the appendix for numbers.

[146] JFK NARA, 124-10222-10196, April 2, 1953 report of SA Thomas G. Forsyth III.

number of those Gabe's age and younger moved on to more lucrative positions in the Pittsburgh area – specifically East Liberty and Squirrel Hill.

Through an examination of the FBI files, it appears that by 1972 Gabriel Mannarino's attention to the gambling interests in New Kensington was waning, much to the consternation of former employees. An informant noted that remaining Mannarino men were "unhappy about his apparent disinterest in their problems." In a sense this is much like some corporations' interest in their employees after pulling out of a community. Like Alcoa's industrial workers who were trained to do a specific job, so were these runners, bookies, stick men, and card dealers. They could hold out the hope that gambling would return although the reality, just like for heavy industry, was highly unlikely. As with industrial workers, many of these gamblers were reported to have left the area. Those that remained found themselves seeking "legitimate" employment. Others became welfare recipients. The change in the socio-economic climate of the town – high unemployment, emptying store fronts, new low-income housing projects, and a shrinking population - made what activities that were left seem seedy.

Adding to this was the Organization's entrance into narcotics trafficking through its associations with Pittsburgh's LaRocca-Genovese Family. Just like with the Mannarinos gambling had been the LaRocca-Genovese Family's largest moneymaker; but, things changed in the 1960s. The Pennsylvania Crime Commission reported that sometime around 1967 the La Rocca-Genovese Family began investing their "significant" gambling profits in cocaine trafficking.[147] Like other syndicates for whom gambling had been their mainstay, the Mannarino Organization was lured by the rise in

[147] *Organized Crime In Pennsylvania*, 126-127. In the mid-1960s states began to legalize some forms of gambling in response to discontent with proposed tax increases.

popularity of cocaine and the potential for great profits. It was noted that in the 1970s the Mannarino Organization was represented in the Pittsburgh Family's drug trafficking enterprises.[148]

According to FBI files, this came as quite a shock to many as for years both Samuel and Gabriel Mannarino had allegedly sworn off involvement in drug trafficking, specifically in New Kensington. But by 1975 informants began to report that they had seen Gabe with a man identified as the operator of the Five Grand Club - the major outlet for heroin, marijuana and pills in New Kensington.[149] Informants believed that Gabriel received tribute from this narcotics action which leads one to believe that he did still exert considerable control in regulating what remained of the town's underground economy. Despite the brothers' protestations to the contrary, the Mannarino Organization did what it deemed necessary to survive – adapt to the more profitable market of drug trafficking. This also brought New Kensington's involvement as a drug trafficking center full circle from Mike Zervos' morphine trafficking operations in the 1920s.

Gabriel Mannarino's death in 1980 was considered by the Pennsylvania Crime Commission to be one of the major events in the decade. According to the Pennsylvania State Crime Commission Gabriel was considered to be the "most active" member of the

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[148] *Organized Crime In Pennsylvania*, 130-133.

[149] It was also said to be the center for considerable prostitution activity, another activity the brothers swore they had no interest in. JFK NARA, April 26, 1977 report of SA T.A. Meek, Jr. on Gabriel Mannarino. The informants in this file are quick to point out that despite his taking a cut of the drug action Gabe was very "vocal" in his opposition to narcotics trafficking. In the 1960s African-Americans became "major" drug traffickers in urban centers across the country. Schatzberg and Kelly, 108.

LaRocca-Genovese Family and the likely successor to John LaRocca.[150] When Gabriel Mannarino died, so did the brand of New Kensington as a "Racket Run" city. A new generation of city officials had to deal with the effects of deindustrialization. Alcoa left behind an empty industrial plant sold to a developer who would bring more light industrial jobs to the facility than had been seen in years. The Mannarino Organization, however, left behind and era of mythologized plush carpet joints and tales of foreign intrigue.

The Mannarino Organization was an important force in the New Kensington. It provided leisure activities for residents as well as visitors. It brought notoriety to the community at a critical time in its economic redevelopment. It controlled the actions of city government. But the Mannarino Organization was only one of three institutions that by the post-war period made a significant impact on the community. Organized labor crafted the city's relationship with low-cost housing and consequently its engagement of urban renewal programs. Alcoa also played a role in determining how the city adapted to changes in the industrial economy. What is left is to see how in the post-war period city government was directed by such influence and how they handled related community response.

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[150] Gabriel had been responsible for Westmoreland County and Youngstown, Ohio. After his death his responsibilities were divided between two individuals: Sonny Ciancutti took over New Kensington and Westmoreland County and Joseph Naples took over Youngstown. Gabriel's death put Michael Genovese next in line to succeed John LaRocca when he died in 1984. *Organized Crime In Pennsylvania*), 113, 120.

CHAPTER SIX

Crime, Consolidation, Housing and College Town: 1948-1970

The past three chapters have examined the three most important institutions in New Kensington – organized labor, Alcoa, and the Mannarino organized crime family. Each made significant contributions to and shaped New Kensington's political economy. Organized labor used momentum gained through New Deal activism to push for better worker housing. In the process it was responsible for establishing a housing authority in New Kensington. As a result New Kensington city officials in the post-war period found state and federal monies for slum clearance, low-cost housing construction and urban renewal as a way to cure social ills and revitalize a community with a declining industrial base. As the city's dominant industry, Alcoa created a relationship with city government that preferenced it above all others; and, as a result the city and its citizens became incredibly dependent on the company. For decades the Mannarino Organization essentially controlled not only the city's underground economy but also city government. In the post-war period all three institutions went into decline – Alcoa by choice and the others as a result of that decision. As layoffs increased, union power decreased and fewer workers meant less money to pump into the underground economy.

In the post-war period New Kensington city government's actions reflect the influence of these three institutions. Mannarino influence in city hall replicated mayor-police-council relations seen during the 1910s Morals Investigation. New Kensington continued to have contentious relationships with its neighbors. The city continued to pursue state and federal funds for public housing construction tied to urban renewal

programs. Inadvertently or not, Alcoa shaped New Kensington's future through its various contributions to the community in its final years in town.

This chapter revisits subjects discussed in chapter two, namely crime, consolidation, and housing. Also examined is the community's effort to build and sustain a community college – a branch campus of the Pennsylvania State University.

Disorder in the First Ward: City Government's Indifference

As discussed in chapter five, by 1940 the Mannarino brothers had transformed New Kensington's underground economy. Their organization streamlined the numbers game and built private upscale casinos in the heart of the flats. But, this transformation came with some hold over from the flats' older disorderly house proprietors. While these combination prostitution and gambling houses were shrinking in number, they were still a nuisance to neighborhood residents. Just like in the 1910s, the mayor and city council were largely indifferent to First Ward residents' concerns.[1] Residents regarded infrequent police raids as token efforts and they responded by stepping up their protests in large groups.[2] In February 1948 a delegation led by Arnold Baptist Church's pastor Rev. David Crockett presented council with a 400-signature petition seeking remedy of the Ward's "vice conditions."[3] Delegate Charles Alias complained of the city's uneven approach to dealing with the situation. He stated, "A raid today or tomorrow doesn't

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[1] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (January 15, 1946) and (September 16, 1947). One of these houses was noted to be located in the area of Thirteenth street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, and another on Second Avenue.

[2] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2 January 1948.

[3] Ibid., 3 February 1948.

mean a thing ... Constant raids must be made until every establishment is erased."[4] As typical of the city's mayors, W.C. Walley's response was to claim an unawareness of such houses' existence, but to assure residents that an investigation was forthcoming. He then ordered a few more raids which did little to calm the protests. A month later acting Mayor D.H. Anderson and council listened to another large delegation's protests. This time Anderson "advised [disorderly houses would] be closed tonight if such things exist."[5] Walley's and Anderson's response was representative of a thirty-year pattern of city government's indifference to flats' residents' concern with the troubles in their neighborhood.

It also reflects a history of the city mayors' tolerance of illegal enterprise. It can be asserted that the mayorally-appointed police chief continued a tradition which condoned, if not accepted, illegal activity in the city's flats. However, there is no indication as to what fostered this culture of permissiveness. FBI files reviewed for this work do not indicate the existence of a Mob-influenced city government prior to the 1950s. So it is uncertain as to whether or not city and/or police officials were on the Mannarino payroll. Finally, just like the 1918-1919 council investigations, concern over the moral well-being of the flats in the 1940s was predominately raised by its ethnically and racially diverse residents, not white middle-class reformers.

At the close of the 1940s First Ward residents and select councilmen sporadically turned their attention from independently operated disorderly houses to Mannarino Organization activities – specifically illegal gambling. During a February 1950 meeting

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[4] Ibid., 3 February 1948.

[5] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 2, 1948).

council accepted a petition from the Elders of the Parnassus United Presbyterian Church requesting an investigation into illegal gambling activities. The Parnassus Presbyterian Church congregation was predominately white and middle-class. However, the location of the church as well as the homes of some congregants were in Parnassus and thus bordered the business district and illegal gambling casinos. Mayor Gardlock initially dismissed the Elders' request based on council's current preoccupation with attracting new industry to the community and the need to deal with a long-standing sewage disposal problem.[6] However, a few months later the Elders followed up with a letter which sparked a lengthy council discussion regarding illegal gambling. Council minutes note that "it was the consensus of opinion that each councilman respond to the letter as he see fit."[7] Not surprisingly, council took no collective action on this matter and there is little indication much was done by them individually.

Council's pursuit of the Elders' requested investigation was no more active than their attention paid to First Ward residents' concerns. Still, council minutes indicate that at the very least council gave the Elders' request a bit more consideration. Both groups – the informally organized First Ward residents led by an outspoken Baptist minister and the formally structured Presbyterian Church Elders – were not quite the organized local citizens groups which sought out to reform government during this period across the country. Though their protests are separated by two years, it is interesting to note that the Elders did not approach the Baptist church to garner support for their effort. This may very well be reflective of Lee Bernstein's findings that while local citizen groups came

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[6] Ibid., (February 21, 1950).

[7] Ibid., (May 17, 1950).

together to fight crime, they really did not seek to change class or race relations.[8] Perhaps the racial, ethnic and class differences between the two groups inhibited collaboration. However, both groups' actions come close to the "harassment" of city officials that John Gardner found in Reading.[9] If they could not reform government directly through the vote, they could express their dissatisfaction and seek remedy to local problems in an alternative manner. Furthermore, it was not as if First Ward residents stopped bringing their concerns before council in 1948.

First Ward residents' continued to challenge city government's indifference to their plight. Though the Mannarino casinos were closer to the business district, First Ward residents were affected by their existence more so than any other neighborhood in the city. As noted in chapter five, hundreds of people came to gamble in downtown New Kensington. Patrons and their rowdy after-hours activities spilled into First Ward neighborhoods. The police department's apparent disinterest in these matters merely exacerbated the situation. Consequently, in February 1952 First Ward residents brought their same issues before council. However, this time they had allies in certain council members as well as the interdenominational Westmoreland County Ministerial Association.[10] On the surface it appeared that council agreed with the contingent's concern that an administratively unstable police force did not translate well to the streets. Furthermore, certain council members' interests in citizen's concerns might very well

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[8] Bernstein, 87-88.

[9] Gardiner, *The Politics of Corruption*, 73.

[10] As noted in chapter two and five, the Ministerial Association was the most active organization fighting to combat organized crime in Westmoreland County. They worked under the campaign of Operation Crusade and represented the only formal effort to fight organized crime and government and law enforcement corruption in the 1950s

have been a conduit through which to address their issues with an allegedly corrupt mayor.

Council took issue with Mannarino-controlled mayor Raymond Gardlock's management of the city's Mannarino-controlled police force. Council members were displeased with Gardlock's demotion of "clean" police chief John Bettor and appointment of replacement Daniel Zeloyle. Council's displeasure is indicative of a power struggle between council and mayor as well as an attempt to temper Mannarino influence in city government. This conflict was similar to that of the late 1910s which set burgess McGeary against members of borough council. As noted in chapter two, council accused McGeary of misconduct in his handling of the police force and negligence in dealing with the flats' vice conditions.

At a February 4, 1952 council meeting the Ministerial Association led a contingent of protestors so large that it spilled out of chambers and onto the street. Protestors demanded law and order while council questioned the mayor's recent decision to demote members of the police force without informing them.[11] Gardlock had demoted not only the chief but also all supervisory officers and gave Zeloyle the authority to reorganize the department. Council sessions which focused on the matter developed into a power struggle between council and mayor. Council questioned Gardlock's authority, but after discussing the legality of the mayor's actions with the city solicitor a compromise was reached. Gardlock's decision stood with qualification – the

[11] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (February 4, 1952). According to the minutes, Rev. Wilfred Noble lead the group of "several thousand others interested in law and order [who wanted] to know if the Mayor is going to enforce the laws in the city of New Kensington, Pa."

appointments were for a probationary period to assess the officers' qualifications "being, namely, integrity, honesty and efficiency."[12]

Despite the probationary period council members not only did not believe Zeloyle was qualified but also that he intentionally overlooked certain illegal activities. The struggle over the police chief's appointment became a proxy war between certain council members and those "certain person or persons" who carried influence with the mayor and police chief (i.e. the Mannarinos). Two days of near constant council sessions pitted councilmen C.L. Schmitt and D.H. Anderson against Gardlock. Frustrated after several hours of debate, Gardlock stormed out of the March 18 meeting and left council to assert their power and reappoint Bettor as chief.

The next day council reconvened without Gardlock. Councilman F.J. Fredrick put forth a resolution which alleged that officers were possibly loyal to "certain persons or persons unknown" who council claimed "to control the Police force of the city of New Kensington." The resolution asserted that Bettor was forced out of his position as a result of his efforts to close down gambling establishments in town. In an attempt to break the force free from outside influence, council brought in eight police supervisors and directed them to recognize John Bettor as their chief and follow his orders or not get paid.[13] The need to take such action indicates a force divided in their loyalties and most likely their attitudes towards illegal activities. Fredrick's second resolution, which called for an investigation of the Bettor incident and political machinations behind, was unanimously

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[12] Ibid., (February 4, 1952). Numerous FBI files reviewed for this work identify Zeloyle as someone sympathetic to the Mannarino Organization.

[13] Ibid., (March 19, 1952).

passed. Later that afternoon council reconvened without Gardlock (though he was notified) and they called in the majority of the police force and gave them the same instructions they did their commanding officers. This appeared to please those First Ward residents still following the session and who pledged their support for council's actions. Whether or not it would have actually changed the officers' attitudes is questionable at best.

Gardlock did not return to council meetings until April first which prompted debate over the legality of both the recessed meetings as well as council's actions. Unable to resolve matters in-house, the battle between mayor and council went to county court. After that court ruled in favor of Gardlock's right to make police force promotions and demotions, the matter went to the state supreme court where the mayor's authority was upheld.[14] A *Dispatch* editorial on the court's decision sought to place the burden for the city's troubles – and whether or not they would be remedied – squarely on Gardlock and Zeloyle. The editors asserted that if they failed to clean up the city they should be thrown out of office.[15] This of course did not happen. Community and council pressed Zeloyle to aggressively crack down on illegal activities immediately upon his reinstatement. His response to the matter was to deny the existence of such activity; and, according to FBI files he appeared to rarely address the issue during his tenure as chief.[16]

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[14] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 3, 5, 7 and 18 July 1952. This court case was actually a test case for a recently enacted piece of legislation which gave mayors the power to demote police officers without council's approval.

[15] Ibid., 5 July 1952.

[16] Ibid., 16 and 18 July 1952. See FBI files referenced in chapter five for discussion of Zeloyle's tenure as chief. Following the power struggle councilmen's attempts to address the city's problems with illegal enterprise were fleeting. One minor example was councilman Frederick's attempt to prove that numbers play did actually exist in the community. Frederick brought citizen complaints of numbers activity before

This conflict between mayor and council raises some interesting points to consider. At first council appeared to have the upper hand in carrying out the will of the people. They also voted as a block. As noted in chapter five, FBI files indicate that during the 1950s at least two of the four councilmen plus Gardlock were Mannarino men. Perhaps so early into Gardlock's term the council had not quite found these divisions, but this is hard to gauge. It is unclear as to why council, which was historically dismissive of citizens' previous complaints, were suddenly so concerned. It was not a local election cycle and it was months before Operation Crusade. It can be speculated that everything hinged on restoring some balance of power between council and mayor. Or, perhaps this is reflective of what Michael Johns notes in his study of the American city in the 1950s. Johns explains that from the New Deal forward civil service reform slowly replaced the political machine. Coalitions of business and civic leaders among others sought to either remove corrupt city officials and replace the political machine or create a hybrid government which connected political machines to modern bureaucracy.[17] City council was most likely not replacing a political machine; however, they might have been attempting to make that connection and redefine boundaries of the mayor's (and consequently the Mannarinos') power.

It is reasonable to assume that the reassertion of the mayor's powers to appoint the police chief factored into the Mannarino Organization's ability to operate freely during the 1950s. As noted in chapter two, the poor moral condition of the city,

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council. Raymond Gardlock challenged him to prove that such activity was actually carried on. Frederick brought in numbers slips purchased by a *Dispatch* reporter. Gardlock demanded that they name the sellers, which was not done. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (October 7 and 21, 1952).

[17] Michael Johns, *Moment of Grace: The American City in the 1950s* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2004): chapter two.

represented in the First Ward, was one reason that prevented it from consolidating with its neighboring communities. Despite council's very public troubles, in the post-war period New Kensington once again sought out consolidation with its neighbors.

Tri-City Consolidation

Chapters one and two chronicle New Kensington's difficulties successfully consolidating with its neighbors – Parnassus and Arnold. After New Kensington consolidated with Parnassus in 1930, the following several years of discussion to do the same with Arnold fell flat. At the same time the growing city was annexing sections of Lower Burrell. Because of financial troubles brought on by the Depression, New Kensington was unable to absorb the costs of further annexation. As a consequence Lower Burrell continued to grow on its own and became a thriving suburb.[18]

Annexation and consolidation matters between the three communities picked up again in the 1950s. Instead of New Kensington's business and civic leaders taking the lead, this time the responsibility fell to city councilmen. The spark for this renewed interest came from Lower Burrell residents. In September 1954 residents of the Forty Acres housing development bordering New Kensington approached city council with an annexation request. [19] Lower Burrell supervisors tried to stop the annexation, arguing that such an action would hurt the township financially by taking away necessary tax revenue.[20] The township supervisors took the issue before the Westmoreland County

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[18] For more on the growth of the three communities see census table in appendix.

[19] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (September 21, 1954).

[20] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 March 1956.

Board of Commissioners, who granted the Forty Acres residents' annexation request. In their ruling the Commissioners cited the advantages of living in New Kensington, including police protection and paved, lighted streets.[21] Lower Burrell was unable to provide these services at this time.

With Lower Burrell residents' renewed interest in annexation, it is not difficult to comprehend New Kensington's leaders' renewed hopes for eventual tri-city consolidation. In fact, this hope motivated city hall's relocation to the city's periphery. By 1956 city hall's deteriorated condition forced the construction of a new facility. Mayor Gardlock pushed to move city hall from the downtown to the periphery of the city which was just past Arnold, across from a developing suburban shopping complex, and close to the Lower Burrell border.[22] The new city hall/civic center complex was designed to house city government, the police station, and a fire station. Council unanimously agreed that the town needed a new city hall. However, councilmen Dudley Anderson and Edward Zaleski questioned the relocation of city hall from the downtown to the Lower Burrell border. Yet they did make an exception stating that "If Lower Burrell Twp., Arnold and New Kensington were one community that would, of course, change our opinion somewhat."[23] This indicates a renewed interest on the part of New Kensington leaders in tri-community consolidation and perhaps some indication that

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[21] New Kensington assumed $12,246 of the township's debt which was the eighty annexed homeowner's average. At this time Lower Burrell Township's total indebtedness was about $103,000. $30,000 of that was for the construction of their municipal building. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25 February 1957. Notice of the annexation's finality spreads over the city council minutes for December 17, 1957.

[22] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (March 21, 1956), (April 3, 1956). *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 21 March 1956.

[23] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 22 March 1956. Zaleski and Anderson, a Democrat and Republican respectively, were so strongly against the city hall project that they issued a joint statement against the plan much to the ire of Mayor Gardlock. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 24 March 1956.

there was community support for this action. The proposed city hall location was indicative of city officials' perceived regional growth away from the city center. This development is reflective of larger national post-war trends of people retreating from the city center to developing suburbs just like Lower Burrell. It is not illogical for council to consider the absorption of Lower Burrell into a greater metropolitan New Kensington. Perhaps because of this city council voted to approve the $700,000 civic center plan over the objections of Zaleski and Anderson.[24]

From the start of city hall construction in 1957 through the next aggressive New Kensington-led consolidation drive in 1962, New Kensington, Arnold and Lower Burrell civic leaders discussed possible cooperation on regional planning initiatives and programs such as Operation Renaissance and Partners in Progress.[25] These initiatives and programs were somewhat limited in their effectiveness given the varying levels of interest of the numerous participants over the years. In his contemporary assessment of partnerships in the Pittsburgh region, Brian Jacobs speaks to the complexity of multi-community partnerships. He argues that, "in Southwestern Pennsylvania ... coherent regional strategies have sometimes been difficult to produce because local political interests have hampered efforts to produce a broader regional perspective."[26] For

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[24] Ibid., 3 April 1956. For more on the planning and costs associated with the civic center plan see *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 25, 27 April 1956.

[25] Operation Renaissance was a movement by city volunteers whose purpose was to "improve the appearance of the three communities." The Arnold mayor initiated the Partners in Progress program, which sought to address the crumbling industrial base which Arnold and New Kensington shared. For more on these programs see: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 30 August 1962; New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (June 24, 1957) and (February 7, 1961).

[26] Brian Jacobs, *Strategy and Partnership in Cities and Regions: Economic Development and Urban Regeneration in Pittsburgh, Birmingham and Rotterdam* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000).

decades New Kensington and Arnold's "political interests" certainly complicated efforts to forge a vision for regional improvement – especially one which hinged on consolidation. The three communities' relationship during the 1950s is evidence of a history of conflicting agendas which hindered, and continues to hinder, regional development in western Pennsylvania.

In late 1962 New Kensington city council moved to soften the state's city consolidation laws which had crippled their past attempts. New mayor Edward Zaleski put a proposal before council which asked state government to change the way that cities consolidated to preference a majority vote among involved municipalities rather than on individual municipalities' vote. This was important as past consolidation efforts failed because the other involved municipalities individually voted to reject the measures. If there had been a majority vote of all involved municipalities consolidation measures would have passed as the number of pro-consolidation New Kensington votes would have been added to those of the other communities. Council voted four to one in favor of sending Zaleski's proposal to state government. The lone dissenter was Howard Dunoff who believed such an undertaking should be a joint venture with Arnold and Lower Burrell. In response councilman Dudley Anderson acknowledged that the proposal may stir up hostilities – which it did. Shortly after the proposal became public, Lower Burrell mayor Alfred Colianni and Arnold councilmember Louis Bruncsak issued statements condemning New Kensington's city council's action as self-centered. They argued that such laws would give the upper hand to larger communities like New Kensington.[27]

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[27] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 4 January 1963.

Arnold officials sought to counter New Kensington's actions. On January 9, 1963 Arnold city council unanimously voted to oppose New Kensington's proposal and send formal notice of their concerns to the state. Arnold citizens in the audience were so outraged by the possibility of merger that one even asked council to "restore the boundary back between New Kensington. Build a wall."[28] Lower Burrell's political leaders more or less felt the same. At a January 11, 1963 meeting councilman William Heavner argued that New Kensington's motives for consolidation were to "expand and absorb its neighboring cities to help correct their economic condition" so as not to raise taxes on its citizens. Heavner believed that the absorbed cities would be at a disadvantage as tax money would be invested in New Kensington's city center rather than on improvements in their area. This is understandable given the effects of the steadily rising industrial layoffs. However, they did leave the matter up for future consideration if and when New Kensington was more financially sound.[29]

Arnold and Lower Burrell officials' arguments were the same reasons behind past failed consolidation attempts – New Kensington's social and economic problems should not be carried by other communities. However, it can be speculated that there was significant support for consolidation in the other communities as a consolidation measure must be put on the ballot. Lower Burrell and Arnold leaders' efforts to counter New Kensington's petition to the state might have reflected a fear that if a consolidation

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[28] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 10 January 1963. All three cities sent their letters to the following: Representatives John F. Laudadio and Anthony Petrosky, Senator Paul Mahady, and the Pennsylvania League of Cities.

[29] Ibid., 12 January 1963.

measure was put on the ballot there may have been enough support to give New Kensington an edge in the popular vote.

A strength-in-numbers argument was behind the New Kensington Redevelopment Authority's (RDA) 1965 consolidation drive. They argued that if the three communities combined the new city's population would total 60,000 and make it the largest community in Westmoreland County and one of the largest in western Pennsylvania.[30] This would have given the region more clout when pressing for county, state and federal funds, which were desperately needed to combat New Kensington's (and Arnold's) steady decline. But the RDA's efforts were transitory at best. Still it is important to note that this clout would have been helpful in seeking redevelopment funds. It also may have allowed for industrial expansion outside of the city center to Lower Burrell's undeveloped lands. The post-war industrial decentralization trend could not be stopped; however, industries could certainly relocate nearby, thus keeping a regional manufacturing base and lessening unemployment. Jon Teaford notes that suburban migration and the inability to annex peripheral land set the boundaries for industrial decline.[31] Failure to consolidate might very well have been the case with New Kensington.

As noted in chapter four, beginning in the mid-1940s production of Alcoa's Wear Ever line was gradually moved to other plants across the country. There was no longer a need for its headquarters building so the Alcoa donated the Wear Ever Building to the

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[30] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 29 July 1965.

[31] Jon Teaford, *Cities in the Heartland*, chapter seven.

city in June 1968.[32] Centrally located downtown, the building appeared to have a number of possibilities for adaptive reuse. Debate over how the building should be used raged on for two years before finally ending in controversy.

Several groups wanted to use the building and possible tenants (either alone or in combination with others) included: the public library, the water authority, the local commercial school, a police substation, the Red Cross, and a relocated city hall. Debate carried on for a few months before council passed the task of what to do with the building on to an impartial citizens' committee.[33] Council appointed the vice president of the local branch of Mellon Bank to head the committee and he in turn appointed other members. The members comprised a cross section of civic leaders and included representation from downtown businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, organized labor, the director of the RDA, and an African-American church.[34] While the committee deliberated various organizations continued to present their requests regarding the building's use before council.[35] On more than one occasion these requests involved razing the building – an idea that council rejected given the property's $300,000 value.

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[32] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (July 2, 1968).

[33] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (August 13, 1968), (September 3, 1968), and (September 17, 1968).

[34] Ibid., (October 15, 1968). The Wear Ever Building Committee comprised: chair, Ralph Hudson, vice president of Mellon National Bank; Maurice Sakulsky, realtor; Michael Shamey, architect; Rev. Asa Roberts, pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist; Elizabeth Blissell, executive vice president of the New Kensington Chamber of Commerce; Joseph Ivanusic, president of the Northern Westmoreland Labor Council; Howard King, vice president of Burrell Construction Company; Alfred Holzman, RDA director; William Klingensmith, owner of Klingensmith Hardware; and Robert McVey, attorney.

[35] Ibid., (January 1, 1969). At one point the committee chair had to be replaced for unknown reasons.

After a year of discussion, council decided to sell the property.[36] All bids were forwarded to the Wear Ever Committee for deliberation.[37] The top contending bid came from real estate developer Eugene Litman who proposed to turn the building into a fifty-four unit apartment complex. The Committee recommended that the city accept his offer of roughly $50,000.[38] This basically forced city council to make a decision – but it did not come without great debate both among council members as well as outrage from residents.

This debate dominated the March 3, 1970 meeting where there was a strong push to convert the building into city hall plus lease out vacant space.[39] This move would have brought city hall back into the flats at a critical time as government dealt with the impending loss of major industry and multiple ongoing redevelopment projects; but, there were two factors at play – money and tri-city relations. At issue for some of the council members was the city's bonded indebtedness which had financed the construction of new

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[36] Ibid., (December 16, 1969), (April 2, 1969), and (November 19, 1969). At the April 2 meeting a letter was read from attorney representing Ken Associates, Ltd. who proposed to purchase and rehabilitate the building. The terms of the offer, including the purchase price, was not discussed. The company set a firm response date and it does not appear that council pursued the matter.

[37] Ibid., (January 6, 1970) and (January 20, 1970). It appeared for a time that the Committee favored the possibility of the city water authority's relocation to the facility, but their inability to submit a proposal in a timely fashion ruled them out.

[38] Ibid., (February 3, 1970). Litman planned $250,000 in renovations to covert the office building into fifty-four one bedroom apartments. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 21 January 1970. The apartments were to be rented for $125 to $135 a month. Litman was to lease parking spaces from the city parking authority for his tenants. Eugene Litman was the developer for the city's Ninth Street Urban renewal project. This project widened Ninth Street from the bridge and included commercial development. For more of Litman's plans for the building see *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 13 March 1970.

[39] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 3, 1970). Councilman Lew Heiles was the main proponent of using the building to house city offices. The chief of police even wanted to see the police station relocated to the basement of the Wear Ever Building. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 4 March 1970.

city hall. Council members debated as to whether or not they could lease that building to cover this debt and still make it financially feasible to relocate downtown. Furthermore, since taking over the Wear Ever building the city had lost roughly $16,000 in both property tax revenue taken in and also building maintenance going out. Controller John Monaco articulated an unstated underlying principle for initially moving city hall from the downtown to the peripheral border with Lower Burrell – the anticipated future merger of New Kensington, Arnold and Lower Burrell.[40] To return to downtown would be to abandon that plan.

Citizens in attendance were decidedly against Wear Ever's sale to Litman. They wanted it to be a mixed-use community-focused facility. They questioned the Committee's decision, arguing that they did not meet enough times and did not consider all of the options available. In reply Committee spokesman and RDA director Alfred Holzman spoke to the changing nature of the community – that there was no real market for the building in downtown New Kensington. He noted that other office buildings, like that of Mellon bank, were having difficulty leasing existing spaces and there were just no acceptable takers. It was apparent that the need for tax revenue overwhelmed other options.[41] "Boos and groans" came from the audience as council sold the building to Litman in a four to one vote.[42] In the end Eugene Litman purchased the building for $50,100 – far less than its $300,000 value. Instead of the potential benefits of a relocated

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[40] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (March 3, 1970). Minutes reflect that Monaco's reasoning for this future merger was "that Cities, because of high operating costs, would eventually have to move towards the direction of a merger like the School Districts have done. Therefore, he stated this City Hall may be in the right location someday."

[41] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (March 3, 1970).

[42] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 4 March 1970.

city government, the community's soon to be crumbling downtown was to get moderately priced apartment housing.[43]

The debate over and final disposition of the Wear-Ever Building is indicative of the serious economic issues facing the city in 1970. Arnold was dealing with similar issues. For its part, Arnold was not only bracing for Alcoa's departure but the city was also dealing with the aftermath of the recent closure of the American-Saint Gobain glassworks. Both cities were steadily losing population while Lower Burrell and other suburbs in the area grew.[44] On the surface consolidation appeared to be a very viable option. However, for unknown reasons, during his February state of the city report New Kensington mayor James McDowell brushed off questions about a possible tri-city merger.[45] Other city officials pursued the matter at a July 7, 1970 meeting during which councilman Anthony Giordano expressed concern over the city budget and the practice of deficit spending which was deepening the city's considerable debt. For Giordano tri-city consolidation was the clear solution. His reasoning was exactly what Lower Burrell councilman William Heavner predicted years prior – consolidation forged out of the fear that the city could no longer cover its operating expenses.[46]

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[43] The deal was completed at the June 2, 1970 council meeting when payment was formally handed over to council.

[44] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 5 February 1970; *New Kensington Daily Dispatch,* 30 July 1970. Between 1960 and 1970 New Kensington lost 3,323 people; Arnold lost 1,263 people; Lower Burrell gained 1,627. See also census chart in appendix.

[45] Ibid., 5 February 1970.

[46] Ibid., 8 July 1970. When asked by the paper about the possibility of a merger Lower Burrell mayor Earl Hill declined comment while Arnold mayor was open to the idea – if it was the will of the people.

McDowell and the rest of council agreed to pursue consolidation though they expressed reservations that New Kensington's debt would make it unattractive to the other parties. McDowell claimed that the bonded indebtedness, when taken in the context of final balance sheets and New Kensington's resources – namely a water treatment plant valued at $20 million – made New Kensington valuable to other communities.[47] Councilman Verle Bevan resurrected the RDA's argument that a larger sized community would better attract industry.[48] As before, the impression was that New Kensington would absorb rather than partner with the other two communities. Furthermore, it was not just New Kensington's debt but also industrial decline and the economic and social ills which accompanied it – namely growing unemployment, a shrinking tax base, increased poverty and the rise of narcotics trafficking – which made the city a very unattractive consolidation partner. It was easier for Lower Burrell to contract for city services with New Kensington rather than take on the burdens associated with consolidation.

For its part, Arnold's city government tried to counter decline by bringing the three communities together on matters such as sharing city services and regional planning. The communities held discussions on the matter and did work collaboratively on some minor projects, but never to the extent envisioned by New Kensington or Arnold.[49] Instead those two communities independently fell apart over the following decades.

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[47] Ibid., 23 July 1970. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (June 2, 1970), (July 7, 1970), (August 4, 1970) and (August 18, 1970).

[48] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 23 July 1970.

To combat decline and social ills New Kensington, like numerous decentralizing communities across the country in this period, sought out federal funds for urban redevelopment. The city's pursuit of public housing, slum clearance, and urban renewal monies accelerated after the war as a result of new governmental programs. For the sake of continuity with chapters two and three, this chapter will focus solely on the city's pursuit of public housing and the problems associated with it.

Public Housing

As discussed in chapters two and three, the Aluminum City Terrace (ACT) defense housing project was the only major residential housing project undertaken during the war years.[50] In fact, it was the only housing project undertaken in the community since the local housing authority was established in the 1930s. A few years after ACT's completion city council turned its attention towards much needed low-income housing. However, financing their share of such projects was more than the city's budget could handle. The necessary assistance came with the Commonwealth's 1945 passage of the Urban Redevelopment Law.[51] This law acknowledged the existence of blighted areas in the Commonwealth and sanctioned the creation of county and/or local Redevelopment Authorities to work in the best interests of communities to remove blighted areas through

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[49] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (July 7, 1970) and (July 22, 1970). For the time being, McDowell and Giordano were to serve as the city's representatives in meetings with Arnold over shared services while investigating consolidation options.

[50] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (March 19, 1946).

[51] Pennsylvania, Urban Redevelopment Law, Act of May 24, 1945, Public Law 991 (35 P.S. section 1701 et. seq.).

"economically and socially sound redevelopment."[52] The act broadly defines blight conditions – from properties which pose fire and health hazards to those "used for immoral and criminal purposes." Areas designated for renewal could be used to secure decent housing, recreational space, and industry.[53]

For the city of New Kensington, the Urban Redevelopment Law was seen as a tool through which they could address their housing needs as well as the First Ward's social ills.[54] In 1948 the Chamber of Commerce, the real estate board and local unions partnered to conduct a survey to assess blight areas and determine the city's public housing needs. The city used the survey's finding as support for public housing funding requests from the state.[55] The survey also prompted the Westmoreland County Housing Authority (WCHA) to partner with the city to secure funds for public housing construction.[56]

The Urban Redevelopment Act also called for the establishment of a local Redevelopment Authority (RDA) which allowed it to directly petition for state and federal monies. In May of 1950 council moved to create the Redevelopment Authority of New Kensington. It appears the scramble to put the RDA together was due in large part

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (November 16, 1948). At this meeting Councilman Raymond Gardlock offers resolution (which passed) asking that council "request Congressman Augustine B. Kelley to secure an allocation for low cost housing in the City of New Kensington, Pennsylvania, as soon as funds are available for that purpose since $875,000.00 had previously been earmarked for such a project for the City of New Kensington, Pennsylvania."

[55] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (September 20, 1949).

[56] Ibid., (January 17, 1950).

to the availability of $181,000 in federal and $90,000 in state funds for slum clearance projects which allowed for industrial, housing or parking developments.[57] All of these opportunities were important for a community that had quietly watched Alcoa relocate three key production units from the New Kensington Works from 1944-1947. By the end of June the RDA was created, the council approved the mayor's appointed board (which included three councilmen), and the RDA applied for state and federal funds.[58]

More federal funds were available to communities in the post-war period. Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 set aside one billion dollars in loans and another $500 million dollars in grants to be distributed to various cities over a five-year period. Through this act the federal government sought to dramatically increase the number of public housing units in the country. Slum clearance and related urban redevelopment projects also saw dramatic increase in government support.[59] During this period, and as a result of changes in federal housing laws, public housing shifted from its focus on giving a hand up to the "deserving" working class and working poor to a dumping ground for the indigent.[60] This Act also continued the New Deal practice of tying public housing to slum clearance

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[57] Ibid., (May 17, 1950). According to Council minutes, councilman John Haser reported on a conference in Washington, D.C. and that he, Gardlock and City Engineer Frank H. Recco had with Housing and Urban Redevelopment officials and having a representative sent to the area to assess the area. The Council passed a resolution creating the Redevelopment Authority of the City of New Kensington at the May 26, 1950 Council meeting. The Redevelopment Authority was later known as the Urban Redevelopment Authority of New Kensington. For the sake of simplification I will refer to this body as the Redevelopment Authority of New Kensington (RDA).

[58] Ibid., (May 26, 1950) and (June 27, 1950). At the May 26 meeting Council accepted Gardlock's nominations for appointment to the Authority. These names included – O.R. Grotefend, N.L. Koontz, John Haser, John Krupa and Raymond Gardlock. The final three were council members.

[59] John B. Willmann, *The Department of Housing and Urban Development* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967): 15.

[60] Jon Teaford, *Twentieth-Century American City*, 123-124.

and urban renewal projects. Because of this public housing projects were to preference those individuals displaced by slum clearance and urban renewal. In many cases these were the people who could afford to live nowhere else.[61]

A rumored location for a proposed housing project was Farm Hill, just beyond the Mt. Vernon neighborhood and close to the controversial ACT project. Before this rumor could even be confirmed, the Mt. Vernon Men's Civic Club led a delegation of residents to a May 1950 council meeting, where "after considerable discussion it was more or less agreed that they were all in favor of slum clearance but against it being mis-placed. [sic] in the Mt. Vernon District or any similar area in the City."[62] The "similar area" could possibly mean predominately white and/or middle-class residential neighborhoods. Residents noted that there was so much concern over this issue that "the women can not sleep at night thinking of this." More telling was their emphasis on the negative social effects of low income housing as well as concerns over potential decreased property values.[63]

Scholars have noted a common argument put forward by those opposing public housing of the economic liability of decreased property values. What is interesting to note is that Mt. Vernon residents did not engage in violent protest against those who would reside in public housing – at least from the review of records examined for this work. This is in contrast to what other scholars of post-war public housing and

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[61] Lawrence J. Vale, *Reclaiming Public Housing: A Half Century of Struggle in Three Public Neighborhoods* (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002): 5.

[62] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (May 2, 1950).

[63] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (May 2, 1950). At this meeting Mt. Vernon Men's Civic Club gave council "a written report on the employment and wages of the people in the proposed area of sub standard homes."

residential integration have found.[64] But it can be assumed that race played a significant factor in residents' opposition. Mark Gelfand notes that by the 1950s public housing was equated with black housing and public housing programs "could not be sustained in some big cities and could be continued in others only if public housing was kept away from white neighborhoods."[65] The situation in New Kensington indicates that the same can be said of smaller communities. The Mt. Vernon Men's Civic Club's acceptance of slum clearance (i.e. public housing) in principal but not in practice is indicative of Gelfand's latter point. As long as it was kept away from the white neighborhood it was okay to have public housing in New Kensington.

County and federal housing representatives were invited to the December 10, 1951 council meeting to discuss a WCHA selected site for the proposed housing project in the city's Valley Heights section.[66] It is not clear if this was a "scattered sites" type policy which sought to integrate neighborhoods and overcome "public antipathy to large-scale housing."[67] It is more likely that given New Kensington's limited boundaries the WCHA was merely seeking out available lands. Outside planners may have seen nothing more than available land while residents were strongly rooted in the community's varying social structures defined by neighborhood.

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[64] For example see Gregory J. Crowley, *The Politics of Place: Contentious Urban Redevelopment in Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005): chapter 2; Vale, *From the Puritans to the Projects*, chapter 3; Thomas Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics," 563-564.

[65] Mark Gelfand, *Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975): 202.

[66] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (December 10, 1951).

[67] J.S. Fuerst, *When Public Housing Was Paradise: Building Community in Chicago* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003): 197-198. Fuerst explains that this was one approach to constructing public housing in Chicago.

Council acknowledged citizens' concerns but emphasized the dire need for slum clearance in the flats to promote New Kensington's growth and required public housing for those in the affected area. The most vocal proponents of public housing, such as John Haser and C.L. Schmitt, pushed for urban renewal and low income housing projects to be kept to the downtown flats of the city. To suggest this was to resolve any unstated controversy over forced integration. Mayor Gardlock agreed and assured residents that a housing project would remain below the Stanton Avenue railroad tracks.

In 1952 the RDA and council targeted the First Ward for urban renewal. A long-time nuisance area and location of the city's oldest housing stock, the First Ward was by far the most logical choice for the city's first urban renewal project. It was close to existing industry and cleared blighted area opened room for new industry. This area, which had long been a polyglot of immigrants and African-Americans, now found itself to be home of the vast majority of the community's black residents. Council, the RDA and the WCHA shared a commitment to public housing construction.[68] This decision was welcomed by that area's residents who had hoped and lobbied for better living conditions.[69]

Urban renewal and public housing projects often force the removal of people residing in those areas. Where New Kensington's displaced people would go during redevelopment became a highly charged debate over the next few years. As the housing project moved from proposal to action it became a major concern of Valley Heights' residents. Council meetings became debate forums which engaged various cross-sections

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[68] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (July 31, 1952).

[69] Ibid., (May 20, 1952).

of the community. At times appearing agitated by residents' fears of public housings' potential negative social effects, Mayor Gardlock insinuated that those against it were supporting a culture of immoral activity rather than remedying it and helping those in need.[70] In September 1952 John Haser addressed council as an RDA representative in support of the housing project and urged them to act. The federally funded two-million dollar First Ward redevelopment plans could not move forward unless the housing project matter was settled.[71] Like most communities pursuing federal monies, redevelopment meant increased opportunities for the decentralizing downtown – it could mean more industry, revitalized business district, and an expanded tax base. The hang up for New Kensington's future success was due to its leaders' inability to make a decision – even if it meant alienating a significant constituency. What these leaders feared is not stated.

However, citizens' pressure must have been enormous for despite the downtown's needs by October of 1952 the Valley Heights project was abandoned. Councilman C.L. Schmitt explained that in a meeting with a Public Housing Authority (PHA) official it was decided that the project was too expensive as well as too great a hardship for Heights' residents, given the recent construction of a bridge to Tarentum on the periphery of their neighborhood. Schmitt proposed that the project be laid out between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets in the flats.[72] It was argued that this First Ward site was convenient to

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[70] Ibid., (August 5, 1952). In the minutes Gardlock is noted as replying to resident complaint, "that there are some people who have to have help and if you want to foster such conditions as prostitution, just don't put in the housing project."

[71] Ibid., (September 16, 1952). At this meeting letters in support of the Redevelopment program were read and Valley Heights' residents' complaints were fielded.

[72] Ibid., (October 21, 1952).

shopping, employment and easy access to public transportation.[73] While Schmitt may have been motivated by the Heights' citizens' protests, his argument raises an interesting point. Relocating a group of people often means removing them from a community in which they have deeply established roots. However, Schmitt's plan also kept the poor minority community in the city center, segregated from the majority of the residences.

The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) pressured the city to submit three site choices to the WCHA in order to move forward with the First Ward project. Debate over the public housing project's shifted to East Kensington. Already home to the controversial ACT, area residents balked at the idea of more public housing in their neighborhood. As a result Gardlock pulled the site from consideration and it appeared as though the renewal project was dead.[74] But nearly a year later Gardlock pushed the city government to resolve the matter as available funds were set to go idle.[75] At the recommendation of WCHA official Joseph Sheridan, council asked the WCHA and PHA to reactivate state and federal funds set aside for the housing project.[76] It was the threat of loss of federal funding which forced the RDA and council to push them beyond

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[73] One property standing in the way was Ken Iron and Steel, Sam and Gabriel Mannarino's scrap yard and home base for all of their businesses. The need for this property to make the housing development work is clearly stated in October 21, 1952 city council minutes.

[74] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (April 7, 1953).

[75] Ibid., (February 16, 1954).

[76] Ibid., (August 9, 1954). The funds were under Project PA 18-1 which allocated 150 low-income housing units. Sites targeted for this project were in the First and Second Wards. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch,* February 16, 1955. The newspaper reports on Gardlock's statement at the February 15, 1955 council meeting as to the status of the project and the recent visit by WCHA officials to review cites in the two downtown wards.

constituent-generated paralysis to help those in desperate need for better living conditions.

In May of 1957 nearly nineteen acres in the First Ward were designated for redevelopment. The majority of the acreage was slum housing slated for demolition.[77] The project proposal called for mixed use development: public housing, an elementary school, and commercial and industrial districts. More than half of the 1,699 residents to be affected by urban renewal were non-white. Sixty-nine percent of those affected by the project were renters with the remaining being homeowners.[78] A survey conducted by an RDA consultant confirmed what residents of the First Ward had long known – living conditions were less than ideal. While there were 549 residences there were just 437 buildings, which included forty businesses, clubs and churches. The consultant reported that ninety-percent of residents polled were "familiar" with proposed urban redevelopment project.[79] This majority awareness was important for community leaders to later organize the residents in support of the project.

While the survey determined the need for public housing, the availability of temporary housing options for displaced residents was limited. According to the redevelopment proposal there were readily available middle and high income rental properties. According to an RDA survey of available housing, there were approximately

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[77] Redevelopment Area Plan, First Ward Project, n.d. [possibly 1960], obtained from the Redevelopment Authority of New Kensington. Existing land use in 1957: residential, 7.21 acres; commercial, 2.55 acres; industrial, .90 acres; public and semi-public, 1.01 acres; public rights-of-way, 6.25, land not to be acquired, .88 for a total of 18.80 acres. This project was proposed on a 40 year plan.

[78] Ibid. The report notes that 258 families were to be affected by and as a result relocated from the area in order for the redevelopment project to go through. 158 of those families were non-white.

[79] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 11 September 1958. Two-hundred and eighty one occupants of the surveyed residences were non-white.

720 feasible rental properties open for whites, while only sixty-five for non-whites. The federal government gave the city an ultimatum – correct this problem quickly or lose the grant monies. This situation was also problematic at the county level as WCHA allocated 150 housing units for the city contingent upon the federal redevelopment project. If New Kensington faltered the county would release these units to another needy community.[80]

Local ministers attempted to force local authorities to remedy the relocation problem.[81] At a meeting of the Ministerial Association clergymen agreed to put gentle pressure on the Gardlock administration to move the redevelopment plan forward.[82] Rev. Earl Strawn of Calvary Lutheran Church laid out the case of urban renewal to as broad of a base as possible in an open letter published in the *Dispatch*. Strawn claimed that indifference was behind the lack of progress. He emphasized the project's potential benefit for the city - an increased tax base and employment gained through various construction projects. Such an argument was common to those promoting urban renewal campaigns. He targeted those long-time reformers displeased with the moral affairs of the community by explaining that the project would tackle "many of our sins and social ills." Finally he argued that urban renewal was an instrument which brought hope to those who lived in conditions they did not choose for themselves – those "who are caught in the social, mental, and economic confine of a 'Ghetto'" and deserve to live the life "of

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[80] Ibid., 3 December 1958. The prospects were not much better for those few non-whites who could afford to purchase a home as only fifty-five houses were available compared to 1,520 for whites.

[81] They were much like the African-American activists who in the 1930s agitated for the construction of the Harlem River Houses in New York City. Radford, chapter 6.

[82] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 March 1959.

self respect that God created them to have."[83] The First Ward's African-American community found a strong voice to push for the project in their ministers.

During church services and community meetings ministers stepped up their efforts to educate First Ward residents on the urban renewal project. Ministers supported the RDA's efforts to get the program moving and organized the community to both attend council meetings and quietly protest the mayor's and council's inaction. They teamed with the local chapter of the NAACP to bring political pressure on city officials in the upcoming spring 1959 primary election.[84] While East Kensington residents were protesting the proposed public housing project for their area, the First Ward's residents were calling for the construction of public housing in theirs.

The collective action of clergy, RDA officials and First Ward residents is similar to that of what Robert Fairbanks found in the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority's attitude and approach towards black community building and public housing segregation during the period 1933-1944. The organization knew that it had to deal with Cincinnati's black housing crisis and they believed that community building through public housing was necessary to give them the social and residential mobility denied by whites. Cincinnati's housing officials, much like New Kensington's informal coalition, believed that public housing allowed for racial uplift and socio-economic advancement. However, while Cincinnati's activists pushed for integrated public housing in addition to

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[83] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 March 1959. Rev. Strawn also noted that "Our failure to promote the project is a reflection on the moral and spiritual strength of our community." See also: *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 14 September 1961.

[84] Ibid., 18 March 1959. One minister noted that "certain political officials" told him that regardless of their efforts they could still get between 400-500 votes out of the First Ward. Whether these votes would come from the white residents of the Ward and/or other votes organized by the Mannarino political machine in that area is unstated. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 18 March 1959.

stepped up construction of a black-majority housing project, New Kensington's African-American community was struggling just to have housing built, and preferably in their neighborhood.[85]

In an attempt to balance out those opposing public housing in their neighborhood with the First Ward's residents' desire to stay put, council devised an alternative plan to go about slum clearance on a block by block basis. They reasoned that housing could be built and people relocated in smaller numbers. However, neither the RDA nor the federal government found this to be cost or time effective and pushed council to select an alternative project site.[86] This complex was to be built first and residents relocated before the First Ward renewal project would move forward.[87]

During the eight years it took to finally resolve the location issue, housing needs increased beyond the 150 unit allocation and the city had to renegotiate with the WCHA for 400 housing units.[88] In 1960 property in East Kensington not far from ACT was selected despite the protestations of East Kensington and Mt. Vernon residents. This was the only acceptable alternative to keep federal monies which allowed other First Ward Redevelopment – possibly bringing new industry to the community – to go forward. East Ken Manor's initial 126 units were completed in February of 1963. The project was designed as family housing, with certain units set aside for the elderly.[89]

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[85] Fairbanks, chapter nine.

[86] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 11 March 1959.

[87] Ibid., 12 March 1959.

[88] New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes (November 15, 1960).

As the East Ken Manor public housing project neared completion, the RDA was faced with a new and perplexing situation – a disproportionately low number of First Ward residents applied to live in that project. In January 1963 it was noted that less than one-third of the 275 applicants for East Ken Manor were from the First Ward. The RDA presented no reason behind this situation nor was there apparently any reported effort made to contact First Ward community leaders to see why this was the case.[90] Speculation can be made based on the geographic location of the two areas. The First Ward and the East Ken Manor housing complex are on two opposite sides of the city. Where the First Ward is urban, East Kensington is rural. East Kensington is difficult to get to without personal transportation and is not convenient to work or shopping. Another possibility may be similar to what Lawrence Vale found of others displaced by urban renewal projects. He found that a number of people forced to relocate did not want to go into public housing projects and instead found alternative housing options.[91] With limited housing stock available in New Kensington, it is difficult to ascertain where these people went.

While it can not be said that the East Ken Manor project sought to kill the black community, it can be seen as an attempt to relocate it and keep New Kensington

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[89] Spreadsheet. "Westmoreland County Housing Authority Low-Rent Public Housing Facilities," sent from the Westmoreland County Housing Authority to the author, September 25, 2008. The housing project in the First Ward, Kensington Manor, was opened on February 1, 1967. It is interesting to note that the streets in East Ken Manor are named after various city officials: Zaleski Court, Haser Drive, Gardlock Court, Dent Drive. How this came to be is unclear from the materials examined for this work.

[90] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 10 January 1963. Movement of residents into the project was set to begin February first. While preference was given to First Ward residents, the WCHA could not refuse qualified applicants to the housing project to wait on First Ward residents. The URA and WCHA also faced federal pressure to relocate First Ward residents by March 1. Consequently there could not be any more delays in the relocation efforts.

[91] Vale, 322.

segregated. In 1967, three years after the opening of East Ken Manor, the First Ward's housing project was completed. Kensington Manor was the residential component to the urban renewal project which mixed public housing with light industrial development. For a significant amount of time Kensington Manor stood alone among empty lots just waiting for new industry. At the same time, however, New Kensington's periphery was home to a growing branch campus of the Pennsylvania State University. New Kensington spent considerable time and effort seeking out redevelopment funds to take care of slum housing conditions and spark industrial redevelopment, but they overlooked the opportunity to rebuild the city as a college town.

Penn State New Kensington

If redevelopment and construction of low-income housing was the key to eliminating existing social ills in the First Ward, a different avenue towards community advancement could be seen in the establishment of a Pennsylvania State University (PSU) extension campus. As discussed in chapter four, Alcoa's decision to build a modern research complex in Merwin signaled a change in the company's vision of its future in New Kensington – to one based on scientific research and development. Some community leaders saw this as an opportunity to transform New Kensington from the Aluminum City to Science City – and education was the path through which this transformation was to take place. New Kensington civic leaders viewed universities as many do – as cultural centers with the ability to transform lives and communities. What

may have been unstated is the realization that universities can have a significant positive economic impact and transform an urban society.[92]

The Pennsylvania State University's extension services had conducted continuing education courses in the community since the late 1940s. In 1957 the Chamber of Commerce's Education Committee raised the idea of establishing a more permanent PSU learning center in the New Kensington area.[93] The PSU's General Extension staff surveyed regional high schools and determined that the area could support such a center. In order to be granted an extension campus a community is expected to make the financial and facilities investment for not only the initial establishment of the campus, but also account for projected growth.[94] In other words, while the University determined the need for a center, New Kensington's citizens had to make it a reality.

Once the University's Board of Trustees approved the establishment of a learning center, the Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups embarked on a door-to-door fundraising campaign to which individual citizens and community groups contributed $40,000.[95] The funds were used to renovate the vacant First Ward School which the

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[92] David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel, "Chapter One: From Campus to City: The University as Developer," in David C. Perry and Wim Wiewel, eds. *The University as Urban Developer: Case Studies and Analysis* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2005): 3.

[93] "Celebrating 25 Years of Service – New Kensington," AT04.05, PSU Archives. Branch campus growth across the Commonwealth appears to be of interest to the University in the mid to late 1950s. The University's Long Range Development Committee forecast the need for extension campuses to meet the increased demand of students seeking higher education and believed that this demand could be met through the growth at the existing and future created extension campuses. Minutes of the PSU Board of Trustees, 12 October 1956.

[94] Minutes of the PSU Board of Trustees, 6 June 1958. It was noted that the University may financially support the extension campus, but the weight fell to the community.

[95] "History of The Pennsylvania State University and The New Kensington Campus," author unknown, vertical file, PSU New Kensington library. Minutes of the PSU Board of Trustees, 9 May 1958. The

University rented from the New Kensington school board for one dollar a year.[96] The center's location in the First Ward School building was ideal. The Ninth Street bridge allowed for easy access by residents of several communities in both the Alle-Kiski Valley as well as Greater Pittsburgh. Furthermore, the growth of the school was projected to bring more people into the downtown business district. It appeared as though civic leaders understood the value of establishing the college in the city center.

In the fall of 1958 seventy-nine students enrolled in engineering programs.[97] Newspaper advertisements promoting the center appealed to the community's industrial identity but also emphasized change. Ads focused on an industrial demand for engineering technicians – a field readily occupied by those with an associate's degree. They targeted both recent high school graduates (and those soon to graduate) as well as adults seeking job advancement or retraining.[98] The *Dispatch* promoted the Center through human interest stories such as that of a disabled veteran given a chance for economic independence through the Center's programs. An editorial spoke to the fact

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University's Long Range Development Committee understood that community support for the development of extension campuses was extremely necessary for their, and consequently the University's, overall success. Minutes of the PSU Board of Trustees, 12 October 1956.

[96] Theresa A. Bonk, "History of Penn State New Kensington," unpublished paper for History of Higher Education course, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 25 November 1997. The First Ward School was located on Fourth Avenue near the city center and close to the industrial district at 840 Fourth Avenue.

[97] Timeline, vertical file, PSU New Kensington library. There were two full-time and three part-time instructors. "The History of Pennsylvania State University and The New Kensington Campus," vertical file, PSU New Kensington library.

[98] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 2 September 1958. The advertisement broke the programs into day (for an associate's degree) and evening (for a technical institute diploma or certificate). Associate programs were in drafting and design technology or electrical technology. Diploma/certificate programs were in mechanical and production tool design; industrial electricity, production management; building construction; production metallurgy; and also offered was an engineering review course. The Allegheny-Kiski Valley Community College Development Committee sponsored much of the Center's early advertisement.

that the Center's location made New Kensington "a cultural hub of the area."[99] This keeps with Julian Martin Laub's assertion that "most often [a community's] strongest reasons for establishing a new college center ... [is] a sincere desire to bring advanced education and cultural activities to the locality."[100] Newspaper coverage and capital campaign contributions are indicative of strong community support for the PSU Center.[101] Eventually a Center Advisory Board replaced the Chamber's oversight of the college. Members of this board included Alcoa management, labor unionists, businessmen and civic leaders. This is illustrative of a cooperative community effort to invest in the changing nature of industry and its future in New Kensington.

In 1960 the first set of students graduated with associates' degrees in mechanical and electrical engineering. About one-third of them worked in local industrial concerns like Alcoa and Allegheny Ludlum.[102] The Center continued to focus on technical training. In their new student welcome the Center's faculty and staff explained that "the courses you will be studying here will teach you the aspects of engineering as practiced in business and industry and also the part you can share in this profession."[103] This

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[99] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 12 September 1958 and 16 October 1958.

[100] Julian Martin Laub, *The College and Community Development: A Socioeconomic Analysis for Urban and Regional Growth* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972): 5.

[101] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 15 October 1958. PSU President Eric Walker was the guest speaker at the Chamber of Commerce's Industrial Day Luncheon that year. He lauded the Chamber for its work and emphasized the technical education of the center. He called the graduates of the two year programs as the "caretakers" of industrial society.

[102] Twenty-eight students graduated that year. Bonk, 2. "History of The Pennsylvania State University and The New Kensington Campus," vertical file, PSU New Kensington library

[103] *By Line*, 15 September 1960. *By Line* was the Center's newsletter. There are random copies in the PSU New Kensington library's vertical file.

shared part, at least as explained by PSU president Eric Walker, was that of "the caretaker."[104] In a speech to the Chamber of Commerce, Walker noted that there were three types of scholars: "innovators," "problem solvers" and "caretakers." Community colleges, like the young PSU New Kensington, produced "caretakers." As reported in the *Dispatch* "caretakers" are those who "construct and test in laboratories or in data-processing departments of corporations."[105] In essence the "caretakers" are the blue collar workers of the scientific and engineering community. The sons of the mill worker, then, become their fathers just in a different setting. This solidified the fact that post-secondary and continuing education in the Alle-Kiski Valley, specifically New Kensington, was tied to its industrial heritage.

The emphasis on engineering technology remained strong; but, the popularity of a readily accessible college education demanded some curriculum changes to include a broader general education base. Continued growth forced the Center to relocate to the Old Parnassus High School in 1962; and, while this move took the school to the center city's fringe, it did not travel far and remained easily accessible to the city and surrounding communities.[106] At the Parnassus location the Center's curriculum grew beyond its engineering origins. Center director Eugene Heide found that a survey

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[104] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 15 October 1958. In a 1970 report to its stockholders, Alcoa announced that the recently retired president of the Pennsylvania State University would join the company as Vice President of Science and Technology. Quarterly Statement for the second quarter ended June 30, 1970, Aluminum Company of America, box 92 folder 2, Alcoa Papers, HSWP. It was reported that "Dr. Walker has been a key counsel to the federal government, and his achievements have been widely acclaimed in this country and abroad. His dept of scientific and engineering competence add great strength to Alcoa."

[105] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 15 October 1958.

[106] 300 Main Street.

indicated that local high school students were increasingly interested in pursuing a college degree close to home and noted that the Center received over 100 applications in 1961.[107] By the early 1960s two-hundred full time students were pursuing coursework in liberal arts, education and home economics programs in addition to engineering technology.[108] It seemed like New Kensington's center city may very well become a college town – certainly a welcome idea as it watched Alcoa pull away.[109] But Alcoa had a hand in preventing this from happening.

In February 1962 Alcoa donated thirty-five acres of land for a new campus near its new research complex in Merwin.[110] The company noted that this donation made the campus more accessible to "major communities" in the Alle-Kiski Valley. But it really moved the campus away from major highways to the city's rural fringe. It can be speculated that it was more to Alcoa's benefit to have a technical engineering school so close to its research facility. It can also be asserted that that the donation represented a possible sense of corporate obligation to a community that served it so well over the years. It is more likely that the overall minor investment was a tremendous public relations move since it could be seen as a sign of corporate concern for the community's well-being.

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[107] *By Line*, 22 February 1961.

[108] "History of the New Kensington Campus," vertical file, PSU New Kensington library. This source claims the expansion in programs to be in 1964.

[109] The only complaint of the campus' location came from some Parnassus residents who were not pleased that the students were parking in their neighborhood. New Kensington, Pennsylvania, City Council Minutes, (6 December 1963).

[110] "History of the New Kensington Campus," vertical file, PSU New Kensington library. The property was valued at $23,000. *By Line*, 13 March 1962.

New Kensington Works' manager (and school advisory board member) Frank E. Tyrell said as much when he claimed that the donation represented Alcoa's "...continuing interest and faith in the future of this region. This educational development will make possible a broadened base for educational and cultural activities. Also, a community college will enhance the attractiveness of the New Kensington area in its quest for further economic development."[111] In other words, Alcoa was not the bad guy. If anything, just as it did with industry, it was leading the community towards a bright future as an educational and cultural center of the region – just not one in the center city where the community needed it most. As Tyrell emphasized the New Kensington "area" and the Valley region broadly, he began to shift the emphasis of the company's involvement in the community outside of New Kensington proper. This can be seen as a movement to cultivate a broader base of support for corporate action. Alcoa was then free to leave the city center without damage to its reputation as community provider.

Again the community mobilized to fund construction at the new site. The *Dispatch* published a series of articles on the Center's projected growth and corresponding funding needs. This campaign's leadership comprised business, civic and industrial leaders. And while Alcoa leadership dominated the advisory board, labor's

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[111] *By Line*, 13 March 1962. Resolution of the PSU Board of Trustees' acceptance of the Alcoa donation can be found in the minutes of 27 April 1963. The University's Committee on Student Affairs noted that commonwealth campuses needed to emphasize social and cultural development programs. In their words, extension campus students were "commuters, and many come to us from (and continue to live in) homes where social, educational, and cultural opportunities are very limited." Minutes of the PSU Board of Trustees, 8 June 1963.

representation shrunk considerably.[112] This was surprising given that the push behind the development of the new center was transparent. The emphasis was on industrial demand for college-educated technicians as well as retraining and continuing education of industrial workers.[113] Industry in New Kensington and the Alle-Kiski Valley was changing and it appears that "traditional" organized labor was to be left behind.

The community responded to the campaign so well that by the time ground was broken on October 27, 1965 over $650,000 had been raised by individual citizens, clubs, businesses and local industry.[114] Again, this demonstrates the investment the community had in a future vision for the city, or at the very least for their children. The first building constructed was an engineering classroom and laboratory; and, when it opened in 1966 enrollment rose by 125 students. Expansion continued through the 1960s and 1970s and the community continued to raise funds for construction, including a $500,000 campaign for a student union.[115] As with previous campaigns industry, namely Alcoa, was the lead

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[112] "Why A New Campus for Pennsylvania State University at New Kensington," n.d., vertical file, PSU New Kensington library.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid. According to one history of the campus, local funds raised totaled $750,000. "History of the New Kensington Campus," author unknown, vertical file, PSU New Kensington library. Another $150,000 was allocated by the Westmoreland County Commissioners. Bonk, 3. The $150,000 was contingent upon the success of the capital campaign. $350,000 of the $750,000 raised comprised corporate donations. The PSU Board of Trustees voted to cap construction spending of capital campaign funds at $680,000. Minutes of the PSU Board of Trustees, 1 October 1965.

[115] Expansion included the purchase of additional land. "History of the New Kensington Campus"; "History of the Pennsylvania State University and the New Kensington Campus." There was communication between the University and Alcoa in the early 1970s regarding the purchase of additional land from the company. This is interesting to note because it appears that one of the Alcoa representatives was also a member of the PSU Advisory Board. Memo of K.L. Holderman to S.O. Ikenberry, May 14, 1973; Correspondence of K.L. Holderman to Elbert Howarth, May 15, 1973; Correspondence of E.S. Howarth to S.O. Ikenberry, May 18, 1973; Correspondence of E.S. Howarth to K.L. Holderman, May 18, 1973; Correspondence of Robert A. Patterson to E.S. Howarth, June 5, 1973; all correspondence from vertical file, PSU New Kensington Library.

donor.[116] By 1970 six of the proposed seventeen buildings were constructed and the campus served over 6,400 students in various capacities and programs.[117]

Through their continued support of the campus and its continued expansion it is apparent that the community valued the importance of higher education close to home. It was definitely seen as a road to future growth for the community – one that kept pace with the changes in industry. It was also seen as a possible future post-Alcoa identity. Higher education and industry, according to the *Dispatch,* were "vital partners" in securing New Kensington's future.[118] The investment made by Alcoa and other industries, however, insured that higher education in the Alle-Kiski Valley at that time was tailor-made to their needs. So long reliant upon and trusting in Alcoa to make important decisions for them, the community willingly partnered with them to bring this institution to their community. However, Alcoa's "generosity" removed any chance of revitalizing New Kensington's city center into a college town when it donated land on the city's periphery.

Julian Martin Laub explains that the small college can diversify a community by attracting "central services and amenities and can draw industry and tertiary activity."[119] While industry was beginning to decline in the early 1960s, New Kensington's city center was still relatively stable as a regional commercial hub. Furthermore, at this time the

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[116] Timeline, n.d., vertical file, PSU New Kensington Library.

[117] 700 full time day, 300 night and 5400 continuing education. *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 3 April 1970. For other articles concerning campus expansion see *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 24 February 1970 and 5 March 1970.

[118] *New Kensington Daily Dispatch*, 31 January 1971, 2 April 1971.

[119] Laub, 22-23.

RDA was moving forward with land clearance for its First Ward project. A capital campaign could have easily raised funds to build a new college in the city's flats on land allocated through the renewal project. This would not have been a unique situation. Some slum clearance projects in Pittsburgh went to aid educational and medical facilities, including the University of Pittsburgh.[120] However, the RDA and city government chose not to integrate the young PSU Center into its urban renewal plans. According to retired RDA director Tom Haser, the primary focus of slum clearance was to bring new industry to the area.[121] Perhaps some city leaders could not envision a future without industry and the jobs it brought. Perhaps they did not want to lose vital tax revenue. But it was certain that they received no benefit from a number of idle empty lots which came from urban renewal. They missed an opportunity to grow the downtown, or at least stabilize it, through the investment in an urban university.

Post-war New Kensington was characterized by a series of missed opportunities caused by city leadership's inability to craft an independent vision for the community. Crime and corporate influence in city hall prevented leadership from responding to citizen and regional needs until it was almost too late. The very public troubles brought on by organized crime activities coupled with industrial flight made New Kensington a very unattractive consolidation partner at a time when tri-city strength would have been a benefit to all parties involved. The city's identity as the Aluminum City kept it grateful

[120] Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh, Vol. 1*, 129; Lubove, *Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: The Post-Steel Era*, chapter 3. In this chapter Lubove examines Operation Jump Start, a 1992 initiative that allowed for the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University to become community leaders which then sparked an investment in technology and research.

[121] Tom Haser, Interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, June 2, 2005.

for whatever Alcoa handed down – whether it was a discarded building or a land grant – even if it came at expense of growing the city. Finally, the city turned to state and federal programs pioneered by organized labor in the 1930s to cure the social ills of the 1960s. City leaders' indecisive approach to public housing and redevelopment programs most likely delayed progress at a critical time. In these ways industry, organized crime, and organized labor left their mark on New Kensington.

EPILOGUE

As New Kensington went into deeper decline throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s the First Ward public housing area became a trouble spot drawing in people from outside of the community and exacerbating the area's drug problem.[1] By the mid-1980s the area was known to the region as the place where people could go to get drugs.[2] In response, city leaders and law enforcement officials began to pursue state and federal grants and programs such as DARE and COPS to combat drug and crime issues.[3] These programs were beneficial to a certain degree. However, during an August 2007 interview with the author, Mayor Frank Link noted that over the past few years the city has seen a tremendous amount of success in their participation in the state's Weed & Seed program.[4]

The Weed & Seed Program is an initiative started by the federal government in 1991 which emphasizes crime reduction and prevention in high crime areas. In Pennsylvania the program is administrated by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The two-pronged approach first involves aggressive law enforcement agency "weeding" out criminal activities followed by the "seeding" of crime prevention and revitalization programs. New Kensington and Arnold began participating in the

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[1] Elwood "Woody" McGregor, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, June 8, 2005.

[2] Frank Link, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, August 6, 2007.

[3] Community Oriented Policing Services, http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/, (accessed March 25, 2009). The Cops initiative was part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act 1994 which emphasized on crime prevention through police involvement in the community.

[4] Frank Link, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, August 6, 2007.

program as a joint venture in July 2002. According to the New Kensington/Arnold Weed & Seed site, since starting the program crime rates have dropped over twenty-five percent.[5]

Because of these successes Mayor Frank Link was able to express optimism for New Kensington's future.[6] At the time of the interview the city and the Redevelopment Authority were moving forward on a number of "seed"-type projects which included the purchase and demolition of numerous downtown properties with hopes of selling the land for new construction. Link explained that New Kensington would not be rehabilitated as a bustling retail hub – the new Pittsburgh Mills shopping mall complex across the Allegheny River served that need. Plans focused on New Kensington's development as a center for high-tech/light industry and higher education. To make this a reality the city planned to tear down most of the downtown, leaving Fifth Avenue as the main corridor from Ninth Avenue to the Westmoreland County Community College branch which was under construction at that time. Open land from the center city to the Schreiber Industrial Park (the former Alcoa Works) would be primed for future industry.

Link explained that, "Basically what we're talking about here – if you want to simplify it – is an industrial park. It's pretty much it."[7] Link emphasized the same conditions which had made the region attractive to industrialists at the turn of the

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[5] Pennsylvania Weed & Seed, "What is Weed & Seed?" http://www.pccd.state.pa.us/pccd/cwp/view.asp?a=1395&Q=570867 (accessed March 25, 2009). For more on New Kensington's participation in the program see "New Kensington/Arnold Weed and Seed Initiative," http://www.nkaweedandseed.com/progress.html (accessed March 25, 2009). From July 2002 through July 2007 the two communities have received over $1,588,657 in funds. In January 2009 Arnold withdrew from the next five year cycle for the program as it could not finance the $250,000 city contribution necessary for participation.

[6] Frank Link, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, August 6, 2007.

[7] Ibid.

twentieth-century – proximity to markets and transportation access.[8] He noted that the city already had the infrastructure that industry needed – such as access roads, water, electricity and sewage services. All that the city needed to do was clear the land. While he explained the city's vision, he drew comparison to the corporate sites which aided in the downfall of many industrial communities – those industrial complexes built in outlying rural areas. He argued that it would be more cost effective for industries to relocate to New Kensington rather than a rural industrial park given its location and immediate infrastructure.

At the time of my conversation with Mayor Link the city had recently welcomed Geo-Solutions to the downtown. This company develops and helps civil engineers, the federal government, contractors and others to select high-tech groundwater barriers.[9] The company has offices in New Kensington and Littleton, Colorado. Geo-Solutions is an example of the high-tech industry the city hoped, and continues to hope, to attract to the flats. The Schreiber industrial park remains seventy-five percent occupied. The complex houses small to mid-sized companies which range from one man operations to shops employing 200 people.[10]

But New Kensington still has some house cleaning to do. Blight continues to be a problem, not just in various flats-bordering residential neighborhoods but also in the vacant, derelict downtown business district. Part of the Weed & Seed program involves

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[8] Ibid. He emphasized two main access roads in addition to rail and river travel – Route 28, which runs from Pittsburgh to Kittanning, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Neither of these roads has direct access to the city; however, it is not difficult to get to them.

[9] Geo-Solutions site, http://www.geo-solutions.com/ (accessed March 25, 2009).

[10] David Schreiber, interview with Jeanine Mazak-Kahne, June 3, 2005.

aggressive code enforcement which should target negligent building owners and force them to repair or demolish the buildings. But recent budget cuts have forced the city to cut the positions of one full-time and one part-time code enforcement officer, leaving one full-time officer to handle the bulk of the work. The city has contracted with a private company in the past and will undoubtedly continue to do so as budget constraints permit.[11] Complicating matters is the number of outside investors who appear to have no interest in the town other than turning over foreclosed properties for profit. Selling buildings to out of town investors has been a staple of New Kensington real estate for some time. Out of state buyers take advantage of tax lien sales and then turn around and sell properties on eBay. And it is not until a property changes owners that inspectors and code enforcement officers usually review the property.[12] Some, such as the individuals looking to sell/lease a pizza shop on the 900-block of Fourth Avenue, use the proximity of the property to the new community college as a selling point.[13]

Since the 2006 announcement of Westmoreland County Community College's (WCCC) intention to build a new facility in downtown New Kensington many hope and believe that the college will spur on new development.[14] In some ways the January 2009 opening of the WCCC site is a bit ironic. In 2008 Penn State New Kensington marked its

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[11] Liz Hayes, "New Kensington Council eliminates 4 positions to avoid tax hike," *Valley News Dispatch*, December 11, 2008, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/valleynewsdispatch/print_602553.html (accessed March 19, 2009).

[12] Celanie Polanick, "New Kensington buildings on sale on eBay," *Valley News Dispatch*, August 28, 2009, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/valleynewsdispatch/print_585258.html (accessed March 19, 2009).

[13] eBay Fourth Ave. pizza shop sale site http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=380096801644 (accessed April 5, 2009).

[14] Rittmeyer.

fiftieth anniversary since the opening of its first center in downtown New Kensington, which was in close proximity to the current WCCC building. Presently Penn State New Kensington (PSNK) has 900 students enrolled in fifteen degree programs. By PSNK administrators' own admissions, the campus has been largely isolated from the community. However, city and university leaders are hoping to work collaboratively in the future to bring the college back into the community.[15]

WCCC's new five million dollar New Kensington Education Center at 1150 Fifth Avenue replaced the Alle-Kiski Education Center that had been housed in the fifty-year old former Aluminum City Terrace grade school. The property on which the new facility was built was owned by the New Kensington Redevelopment Authority and was granted to Westmoreland County who then turned it over to WCCC.[16] Enrollment for the spring semester was 271 – the highest since WCCC opened a branch campus in New Kensington in 1987.[17] The new center offers sixty-five programs of study and has room to accommodate 400 students. Distance learning and laboratory classrooms provide students with new options, especially in nursing and related health care studies, which will enable them to stay in town rather than having to travel to the main Youngwood campus thirty-five miles away. The building also houses PA CareerLink - Alle-Kiski a facility which provides job training and unemployment services.

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[15] Liz Hayes, "Penn State New Kensington to mark 50th anniversary," *Valley News Dispatch*, September 13, 2008, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/valleynewsdispatch/print_588036.html (accessed March 19, 2009).

[16] Liz Hayes, "WCCC will build campus in New Kensington," *Tribune-Review*, September 30, 2006, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburgtrib/news/westmoreland/print_472919.html (accessed March 19, 2009).

[17] Brian C. Rittmeyer, "New Kensington hopes WCCC education center boosts local businesses," *Valley News Dispatch*, February 27, 2009, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/valleynewsdispatch/print_613716.html (accessed March 13, 2009).

Like PSNK in Merwin, the WCCC Terrace school location was inconvenient to those without personal transportation; and, was quite frankly hidden within a relatively isolated housing complex. The new facility is in the heart of the First Ward, directly across from Kensington Manor and other public housing complexes. WCCC officials note that the new central location better serves the community. Newspaper reports indicate that the move downtown keeps with the college's mission to better serve the public. WCCC President Steven C. Ender was quoted as having said as much – that the college should provide urban residents with the opportunity to obtain higher education. Ender also noted the positive impact the college could have on the community and vice versa. He foresees an opportunity for the college to receive further funding via grants for possible future initiatives to benefit both the school and the community. [18]

Community members, city officials and Center administrators believe the opportunity for expansion and outreach is great. According to press reports WCCC officials have and intend to continue to promote higher education in the community – both in terms of introducing potential first time college students to the advantages of a community college education as well as marketing to those who may enjoy lifelong learning classes. [19]

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[18] Liz Hayes, "WCCC will build campus in New Kensington," *Tribune-Review*, September 30, 2006, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburgtrib/news/westmoreland/print_472919.html (accessed March 19, 2009).

[19] Chuch Biedka, "WCCC to open New Kensington center," *Valley News Dispatch*, December 10, 2008, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/valleynewsdispatch/print_602379.html (accessed March 19, 2009). College president spoke at a gathering at the Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, promoting the benefits of higher education to its neighbors. Leaders in the black community believe that the potential for use by marginalized members of the community is great. Brian Rittmeyer, "WCCC's role in New Kensington discussed," *Valley News Dispatch*, October 7, 2008, http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/valleynewsdispatch/print_592922.html (accessed March 19, 2009).

There is a genuine hope for New Kensington's future. The Weed & Seed program has provided the means by which the city has been able to address its crime problem with some success. Pursuit of state and federal grants for redevelopment purposes is clearing space for future construction. City officials note that companies are interested in possibly relocating to the community as space becomes available. It is logical for the city to attempt to utilize its industrial history to fashion its future. The downtown industrial park concept makes sense. The city's proximity to Pittsburgh, as well as the recently opened massive retail complex across the river, really forces the community to rethink commercial redevelopment of the downtown. Furthermore, the condition of the buildings makes rehabilitation and extremely expensive undertaking that in the end potential profits may not make the efforts cost effective.

The WCCC center does offer great promise to the community. It is understood that the college alone will not revitalize the community. But, it will provide access to affordable education to many in the region.[20] WCCC is making a commitment to the downtown that Penn State should have fifty-years earlier. WCCC smartly hooked into redevelopment programs through its partnership with the city. Hopefully it will breed the right kind of success for residents of New Kensington and beyond.

New industry plus the community college will create ancillary businesses to the benefit of not only the downtown but the broader community. New Kensington city leaders have crafted a new identity which blends higher education with high tech/light industry. In one sense New Kensington is modernizing an industrial legacy and possibly

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[20] Tuition at WCCC is roughly $2,100 a year compared to PSNK's $11,006 for tuition and fees. PSNK is a 90% commuter campus. PSNK offers associate's and bachelor's degrees (with one master's degree) while WCCC offers associate's degrees and certificate programs. Both campuses provide two-year core curriculum for transfer to a four year college.

feeding it with workers trained through the WCCC center. What this means for New Kensington remains to be seen.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Selected Annexation, Incorporation and Consolidation Timeline

April 1872	Parnassus borough incorporated into Lower Burrell Township
January 1879	Burrell Township split into Upper and Lower Townships
November 1892	New Kensington borough incorporated
January 1896	Arnold borough incorporated
May 1913	New Kensington annexation of Walley lots
November 1916	New Kensington annexation of Overbrook
July 1920	Parnassus annexation of Mt. Vernon
February 1926	New Kensington annexation of Pine Manor
October 1929	New Kensington annexation of Valley Heights and Martin Area
December 1929	Parnassus annexation of Farm Hill
January 1931	New Kensington and Parnassus consolidation
January 1934	New Kensington becomes a third-class city
January 1940	Arnold becomes a third-class city
September 1954	New Kensington annexation of Forty Acres
January 1959	Lower Burrell becomes a third-class city

APPENDIX B

TABLE I

Decennial Census Population Table

	Parnassus	New Kensington	Arnold	Lower Burrell
1880	520			
1890	516			
1900	1,791	4,665	1,426	1,019
1910	2,578	7,707	1,818	1,598
1920	3,810	11,987	6,120	4,118
1930		16,762	10,575	3,114
1940		25,055	10,989	4,214
1950		25,146	10,263	6,445
1960		23,485	9,437	11,952
1970		20,312	8,174	13,654
1980		17,660	6,853	13,200
1990		15,894	5,557	12,251
2000		14,701	5,667	12,608

APPENDIX C

TABLE II

New Kensington Works Employee Numbers
Data from 1930 to 1960 are averages. Data from 1965-1975 are year-end.

Year	New Kensington Works	Arnold Plant	Logans Ferry	Coal Mine	Salaried Employees	Total
1930	1295	1112	138	2	358	2905
1931	1083	1086	129	2	301	2601
1932	944	910	112	2	247	2215
1933	1042	910	129	2	239	2322
1934	1381	1146	149	2	287	2965
1935	1670	1223	145	2	306	3346
1936	2104	1496	142	2	393	4137
1937	2063	1702	145	2	614	4526
1938	1921	1257	100	2		3280
1939	2287	1652	90	2		4031
1940	2874	2133	115	2		5124
1941	2791	2194	66	2		5053
1942	2945	2303	42	2		5292
1943	2790	2130	64	2		4986
1944	2299	1840	107	2		4248
1945	2019	1535	107	2		3663
1946	2008	1602	98	2		3710
1947	1155	1406	85	2	886	3534
1948	976	1208	58	2	795	3039
1949	708	811	40	0	675	2234
1950	754	1065	52	**Glassmere**	678	2549
1951	731	1348	46	7	747	2879
1952	758	1294	48	27	777	2904
1953	803	1536	56	16	839	3250
1954	789	1259	59	6	798	2911
1955	757	1353	71	0	794	2975
1956	757	1291	74		801	2923
1957	600	1072	63		693	2428
1958	1368	Data merged w/NK			545	1913
1959	1615				536	2151
1960	1408				509	1917
1961 – 1964	Data unavailable					
1965	1849				461	2310

1966	1739				445	2184
1967	1544				495	2039
1968	1394				423	1817
1969	1266				492	1758
1970	988				392	1380
1971	364				197	561
1972	256				133	389
1973	173				67	240
1974	178				58	236
1975	164				48	212

Librarian's Source Notes:

- Coal mine operations curtailed in 1923.
- From 1938-1946 salaried employees are not shown – it is unclear whether they were included in plant employees or not.
- It is unclear as to what the Glassmere operations are.

Source: Barbara R. Stewart, Alcoa corporate librarian, February 8, 2006

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