

Paper Dreams

Working-Class Cultures and Political Drift in the Fox River Valley, 1850s-1950s

By

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For Camille

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Acknowledgements

Admittedly, this is a deeply personal project. I grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin and am the daughter of working-class parents. My father was an industrial sales representative, my mother is self-employed, and my stepfather is a homebuilder. My mom, Marion grew up for most of her life without a mother, and was one of only three of her ten siblings to graduate high school. Although she wanted to attend college, she decided to keep her job at a local diner and married my dad, Thomas Jacklin at age 19. After my parents divorced when I was in elementary school, my mom established her own commercial and residential cleaning business in the Fox Valley. Despite not having gone on into higher education, she inspired a deep appreciation for music and literature and a love of conversation and free time. From the age of eight until I left for college, I labored with my mom; and while I knew that I did not desire her same profession, her hard work motivates my writing. I want to tell the stories of people like her, who regardless of the challenges of their daily toils, found ways to celebrate and enjoy their lives.

My mom comes from a family of women with a strong and intelligent patriarch at the head of it. My grandfather, the son of Finnish immigrants, a Korean War veteran who grew up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan during the Great Depression, raised five girls by himself. Each one of my aunts is a hardworking, independent, and kind person. They are caring, wise, and cautious, and all are storytellers. Brenda, Debbie, Maggie, and Diane have encouraged my passion for this project. They all had children, and my maternal cousins matter to me and have made my life more meaningful. Meanwhile, my grandfather, Ronald Koski has inspired this project through his daily perseverance; and his wife Donna has been my grandma my whole existence, and is one of the sweetest and most caring people that I know (and raised five children of her own). My mother had ten siblings, and if they read these pages, they would each see their

lives celebrated in this project. Although I never met her in person, as she died of heart failure in 1978 at just 46, my mother's biological mom has imprinted her life upon this dissertation. Thus, despite her distance, she helped draw the map for "Paper Dreams."

My Dad also loves history, and majored in it during his years in college. He sparked an interest in politics and always told me that I should become a professor. Not only did he read every single word of this document, he reminded me that I could complete it. Being one of six children, he grew up in a lower middle-class household, raised by hardworking parents. My dad and his siblings are also close and are deeply kind people and devoted parents. They all love each other and are cordial; and they are all, excellent storytellers. Their vastly polarizing political perspectives reveal the complicated ideological world that can transpire within one close-knit family. Their ability to forgive each other after intensely emotional disputes reflects the genuine affection that existed between my grandparents, Doris Jean and Gordon. Their humor and poise influence the way that I approach my subject matter, with a faithful and respectful spirit. My paternal grandfather encouraged loyalty to family and a love for learning. Although she died unexpectedly at only 58, my grandma is my internal warrior. Significantly, she created what she called, the "Cemetery Safari," which became an important pastime for my dad and his siblings (this familial adventure traces the story of our family's genealogy). Although she died when I was just two, her memory is alive in the gift she left for future generations of storytellers, including her grandchildren who continue her legacy.

The affect and dedication that my stepfather and brother express in the animated tales that they tell about their gritty responsibilities as construction workers have fueled this dissertation. Mike, my mom's husband, is a finish carpenter ("wood surgeon") and general contractor for one of the biggest homebuilding corporations in the Fox Valley; and as a skilled worker, he is one of

the most respected. He tends to the houses of wealthy area residents and does an exceptional job. His work ethic is impeccable and his narration is on point in hilarity and insightfulness. Our conversations remind me to look for enjoyment in daily life, and my brother Ben provides this insight in different ways. A gifted musician and golf professional, he is also a highly skilled finish carpenter and the best storyteller. He has been entertaining me since the famous living room talent shows that we performed during our youth. His ability to capture human emotion through his music is breathtaking to me, and the seasonal work life that he both embraces and endures have helped sculpt the framework for this project. His life and its meanings are scattered throughout “Paper Dreams.” I also thank our dear friend Zachariah Cameron, who always reminded me about the importance of family and friends. His joy for life inspires this project, and his death on February 10, 2012 will forever sadden Fox River Valley residents.

Then there is Anthony Berg, my strong, silent, and understanding partner, who has stood by me every day and night these past seven years, as I have struggled to craft a story that represents those that I care about. How would I be here without him? He has cooked, cleaned, parented, walked, stayed awake and at home, and has literally listened to every single word of this document in the most intellectual and supportive way. Our children, Jayden Anthony and Veda Camille (and our cats Che and Houdini), will always remember how their dad was the person that kept life together while I navigated the myriad challenges embedded in earning a Ph.D. Thank you to Anthony’s family as well, especially his mom for her enthusiasm. I wish that I could have expressed to all of you how you have encouraged us to have faith in our partnership during our commitment ceremony. Alas, COVID-19 changed those plans.

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saved my life. Thank you for being some of the smartest, bravest, and most capable humans that I have ever met. To Deb Anderson at the Green Bay Area Research Center, you truly are the best. The archivists at the Wisconsin Historical Society were so generous, and to the volunteers at the Little Chute Windmill Museum, I so appreciate your dedication to the past. To the staff of the History Department at UW-Madison, you are truly wonderful. Leslie Abadie, thank you for recognizing my dedication as a student, teacher, and mother, and for never giving up on me. Cristina Springfield has been my rock when it comes to detail. Without her I could not have navigated the technology of academia. Our friendship (along with that of her partner Ricardo) means so much to me. Also, thank you to Dr. Consuelo López Springfield, who has constantly supported me and served as a mentor in my effort to successfully complete my doctoral studies.

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Graduate school is not an experience that I would describe lightly, and surviving it is a different matter. However, I can attest that the people I encountered on the journey have enlivened this process. Jackie Cooney, MaiGer Moua, Megan Stanton, Erin Kramer, Chong Moua, Ashley Barnes-Gilbert, Brit Tevis, and Stephanie Rytlahti were my closest friends during coursework and prelims. Rachel Gross was my gym partner and confident sidekick on campus,

and she and her partner Irene Toro Martinez offered my family support in many ways when we needed it most. My union, the Teaching Assistant's Association, helped me realize that my ideas had purpose. Thank you especially to Matt Reiter, Naomi Williams, and Sergio González, for helping me realize that working-class lives are important and always believing in me. Meggan Bilotte and Brendon George have given much of their time to this dissertation. They are exceptional humans, scholars, and parents. Ariel Eisenberg and Jennifer Holland were the best mentors that a new graduate student could have imagined. Ari reminded me to remember to meditate and breathe during this intellectual marathon. Meanwhile, Jen showed me what it looked like to be a brave storyteller and inspiring teacher.

The professors that I have had the opportunity to learn from during my time in graduate school are unparalleled. Jim Leary taught me about the need for laughter in scholarship and life. His wisdom as a folklorist is beyond comparison. Finn Enke drove my intellectual curiosity from the beginning and has taught me that it is good to care so much about my students. Nan Enstad has demonstrated clarity and compassion, and our shared interests have reminded me of what drives my scholarly pursuits. Thank you also to Will Jones, who instilled a sense of deeper learning. I certainly knew what hard work looked like when I started all this; however, he taught me to think differently about my approach to academia. Tony Michels is another gem. Not only did he guide me through the meanings of evidence, but he also treated me as his intellectual equal from the beginning. Thank you to Jean Cronon and her family for providing crucial financial support for this dissertation, and to Bill especially for being a tremendous mentor, scholar, and model lecturer. His dedication to this profession represents what it means to be a historian, and I am so honored to have him on my committee.

To Susan Johnson, who has directed this project with creativity, patience, and hard labor, there will never be enough of an acknowledgement. I hope you know that I would not be at this stage without you. The willingness to take on a grieving graduate student as your advisee is not only generous but it also demonstrates your gifts as a scholar, writer and mentor. I cannot express the sincere gratitude that I have for your understanding and intellect through the challenges that I have encountered while on this journey. Our shared roots in the Fox River Valley and your belief in this dissertation have kept me motivated during the hours that I have spent at my desk.

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Introduction

There is an interesting resemblance in the speeches of dictators, no matter what country they hail from or what language they may speak.

Edna Ferber, *A Kind of Magic*, 1963

On October 5, 2018, activists from around the United States and the globe gathered in the Fox River Valley to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the John Birch Society (JBS) at the Red Lion Hotel in downtown Appleton, Wisconsin. Event activities included a Friday afternoon open house at the nearby headquarters, where visitors could tour the research library and archives of the right-wing anti-communist political organization. According to a local reporter, the Saturday “parade of speakers” would cover topics that included “honoring law enforcement, freedom movements in Poland, Trump’s America, the so-called ‘Deep State’ and putting religious values and patriotism into education.”¹ Participants traveled a range of distances, coming from Illinois to eastern Europe to attend a celebration of Christian morality and “the family unit in the United States.” For instance, Rose Christensen, who came from North Dakota, explained that Birch Society members had “seen a deterioration in the home life,” and thus, with “women all over the workforce, children are being raised by complete strangers.” Likewise, Carol Phillips from North Carolina, who in 1960 became a Bircher, as they called themselves,

¹ Mica Soellner, “John Birch Society draws visitors from afar as it marks its 60th anniversary,” *Appleton Post-Crescent*, October 5, 2018: <https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/2018/10/05/john-birch-society-draws-visitors-fox-cities-trump-era/1521303002/>. For right-wing literature on “the Deep State,” see Jason Chaffetz, *The Deep State: How an Army of Bureaucrats Protected Barack Obama and Is Working to Destroy the Trump Agenda* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018); Jerome R. Corsi, *Killing the Deep State: The Right to Save President Trump* (West Palm Beach, FL: Humanix Books, 2018); Robert L. Maginnis, *The Deeper State: Inside the War on Trump By Corrupt Elites, Secret Societies, and the Builders of An Imminent Final Empire* (Crane, MO: Defender Publishing, 2017); and Mike Lofgren, *The Deep State: The Fall of the Constitution and the Rise of a Shadow Government* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016). On the philosophies and overall mission of the John Birch Society, see John W. Welch Jr., *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* (Appleton, WI: Western Island Publishing, 1959); D.J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014); Thomas Mallon, “The John Birch Society’s Lasting Influence,” *New Yorker*, January 11, 2016; John Savage, “The John Birch Society is Back: Bircher Ideas, Once on the Fringe, Are Increasingly Commonplace in Today’s GOP,” *Politico Magazine*, July 16, 2017.

claimed that she worried about “those people” in positions of political power who promoted “a big agenda to demean Christians and God and diminish Him to destroy families” and “to control the means of communication and media.”²

Other attendees echoed concerns about what they referred to as “the Deep State,” an alleged political arm controlled by wealthy politicians who sought to undermine the liberties of U.S. citizens. For example, Leo Loving explained to an Appleton reporter, “we are living in a police state now.” He worried about losing his freedoms and appreciated the Birch Society’s emphasis on the American Constitution, sharing the organization’s belief that the federal “government has too much control of people’s privacy through digital surveillance.”³

Additionally, two sisters and their father, Pawel Chojecka, a Protestant pastor from Poland, explained that they were attending the event as a reflection of their desire to undermine government corruption and spread the tenets of Birchers and the Trump Administration throughout Europe. For example, one of the sisters, Eunika Chojecka, maintained that the Polish government was supposed “to be patriotic and conservative,” but lamented that “it was not.”

The Chojecka family hoped to use their “Mega Church project” to “restore religious values to

² Soellner, “John Birch Society draws visitors from afar.” On Bircher concerns about the erosion of “home life” and “the family unit,” see John S. Huntington, “Right-Wing Paranoid Blues: The Role of Radicalism in Modern Conservatism” (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 2016), 49-50, 83-85, 110, 123, 147, and 318. On the American Right and the gender politics of home and family, see Jennifer L. Holland, *Tiny You: A Western History of the Anti-Abortion Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020); Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Michelle M. Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Daniel K. Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Matthew D. Lassiter, “Inventing Family Values,” in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 13-28; Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman’s Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Paul Apostolidis, *Stations of the Cross: Adorno and Christian Right Radio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

³ Soellner, “John Birch Society draws visitors from afar.”

their country and government,” which would further their mission to “make Poland great again.” According to Pastor Chojecka, their nation was home to “freedom-loving people” who looked to the John Birch Society and the U.S. under President Donald Trump as models of an ideal political culture. According to the religious evangelist, “America is an example for our nation for building a Christian, Republican Poland.”⁴

Meanwhile, JBS’s public relations manager, Jordan Belanger, stressed the group’s focus on restoring a government built on faith, liberty, and patriotism in schools and daily life. When *Appleton Post-Crescent* reporter Mica Soellner inquired about media allegations suggesting that the Birch Society espoused racism and xenophobic philosophies, Belanger ardently defended the society’s inclusiveness. He retorted, “a lot of the publications that write about us lump us into those racist organizations like the KKK just to smear our name,” but “there is no evidence that we are racist or discriminate against anybody.” Belanger continued, “a lot of people think that we are crazy and have a lot of conspiracy theories but most of what we have been saying has been proven to be true.”⁵ Rather than arbiters of an exclusionary society, he said, group

⁴ On the politics of the alt-right movement in Poland as well as its Christian roots, see Sean Williams, “The Taming of Poland’s Far Right,” *New Republic*, January 7, 2019; Joanna Berendt, “Poland’s Leaders March with Far-Right Groups on Independence Day,” *New York Times*, November 11, 2018; Christian Davies, “Poland’s President addresses far right at independence march,” *The Guardian*, November 11, 2018; Paul Hokenos, “Poland and the Incredible Fury of Europe’s Far Right,” *The Atlantic*, November 15, 2017; and Christopher Mathias, “This Is Why You Are Seeing The Confederate Flag Across Europe,” *Huffington Post*, July 14, 2017.

⁵ On the connection between JBS and the Mega Church movement in the U.S., see Philip Rojc, *Path to Power: Who Funds the Religious Right*, accessed on March 30, 2019, at <https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2017/1/17/giving-to-glorify-god-who-funds-the-religious-right>; and Savage, “The John Birch Society is Back.” Historians have begun to examine the entanglement of the rise of large Christian evangelical churches and right-wing political organizations funded by billionaires like the Koch brothers, who have an affiliation with the John Birch Society. See Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan For America* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017), xxvii, 17, 34-36, 165, 243; and Jane Mayer, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), 201, 262, 384, and 517. On the association of racism and conspiracy theories with the

members wanted to expose how “most of what our government is today is outside the boundaries of the Constitution.” They wanted to return to a time of minimal federal interference in the lives of private citizens, and to promote limited bureaucracy and protect individual freedoms. He was adamant that members wanted to “eliminate the ‘unconstitutional agencies’ of government and restore a government based on the foundation of the Constitution. They want less government. Much, much less government.”⁶

Although the Birch Society gained popularity before leaders moved the central office to the Fox River Valley in 1989, the organization already had ties to the region.⁷ Specifically, Joseph McCarthy, the infamous politician who championed the Cold War anti-communist hysteria of the post-World War II era, spent his youth and the majority of his adult life in agricultural communities near Appleton. When the Birch Society first moved to the area, leaders chose the small rural town of Grand Chute for its main office in Wisconsin, which was where McCarthy’s family had owned and operated a dairy farm.⁸ Although society leaders claimed that they had not settled upon their new location based on the former U.S. Republican Senator’s roots there, promotional information suggested that the choice was beyond coincidental. For instance,

John Birch Society, see James A. Hijiya, “The Conservative 1960s,” *Journal of American Studies* 37, no. 2 (August 2003): 201-27; Lisa Graves, “Like His Dad, Charles Koch Was a Bircher,” *The Progressive*, July 8, 2014; Alex Newman, “Using Truth to Fight Globalist Lies About The John Birch Society,” *The New American*, September 25, 2017; and Savage, “The John Birch Society is Back.”

⁶ Soellner, “John Birch Society draws visitors from afar.” On JBS’s emphasis on limited government, see Welch, *Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 3-5; and Mulloy, *World of the John Birch Society*, 10-20.

⁷ Soellner, “John Birch Society draws visitors from afar.”

⁸ Mulloy, *World of the John Birch Society*, 187. On Joseph McCarthy’s upbringing and life in the Fox Valley, see M. Stanton Evans, *Blacklisted By History: The Untold Story of Senator Joe McCarthy and His Fight Against America’s Enemies* (New York: Random House, 2007), 28-29 and 433-34; David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-15, 25-34, and 50-57; Arthur Herman, *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamining the Life and Legacy of America’s Most Hated Senator* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 1-7, 25, and 28-33; and Edwin R. Bayley, *Joe McCarthy and the Press* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 1-20.

when the editorial team of the *J.B.S. Bulletin* announced the decision to move the office, Appleton insurance giant G. Allen Bubolz, who was also the organization's chief executive officer, highlighted that the new headquarters would be in McCarthy's hometown.⁹

Although the John Birch Society had been less visible in the last decades of the twentieth century, by the early twenty-first century, staff worked tirelessly to build membership through the electronic dissemination of advertising materials from its centrally located office in the Upper Midwest. Not only did the McCarthy connection appeal to members, but also Grand Chute sat conveniently in the middle of the U.S., where leaders believed that they would have profound cultural influence.¹⁰ Since executive officer Bubolz had significant social and economic clout in the local community, the institutional agreement to move to the area made administrative sense. Indeed, on September 16, 2016, reporter Jim Collar of the *Appleton Post-Crescent* published an article asking, "Is the reach of the John Birch Society on the rise?" According to the advocacy group's spokesperson and CEO, Arthur Thompson, the "ultra-conservative" organization was "at home in Grand Chute" but also had offices in all fifty states across the U.S. Sidestepping accusations of ethnocentrism and racism, Jim Fitzgerald, national director of field operations, claimed that that the organization had "members of all backgrounds, races and faiths" in Wisconsin and nationwide.¹¹

More important than the inclusivity of the society, leaders argued, was that members had been successful in their central purpose, which was to limit the power of federal officials and

⁹ "Birch Headquarters to Move," *New York Times*, March 10, 1989; and Mike Ward, "Regrouping the Cold War to Close San Marino Office, Intensify Fieldwork From New Headquarters," *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1989.

¹⁰ Ward, "Regrouping the Cold War to Close San Marino Office."

¹¹ Jim Collar, "Is reach of John Birch Society on the rise," *Appleton Post-Crescent*, September 16, 2016.

their bureaucratic apparatus. As CEO Arthur Thompson explained, the group had not moved away from its anti-communist rhetoric; rather, the organization maintained its original mission, which was “to bring about less government, more responsibility, and, with God’s help, a better world.” Not unlike Joe McCarthy, the John Birch Society promoted the protection of capitalism, family values, and individual liberties.¹² According to Thompson, “the American people can stop a totalitarian world if they understand what’s going on, because of strength,” especially “our moral strength.” Apparently, the Fox River Valley provided the prime location to promote this ideological perspective, and the advocacy group was having success doing so there.¹³

Indeed, by the early twenty-first century, national media outlets claimed that the region was one of the most conservative parts of Wisconsin.¹⁴ Yet it has not always been so. As I

¹² Collar, “Is reach of John Birch Society on the rise.” On right-wing people and organizations that have promoted these ideals since the 1950s, see Catherine J. Kramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Tula A. Connell, *Conservative Counterrevolution: Challenging Liberalism in 1950s Milwaukee* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016); Eric Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City: Working-Class and Growth Politics in 1940s Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Joseph A. McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike that Changed America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Nelson Lichtenstein, ed., *Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism* (New York: The New Press, 2006); Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); and John A. Andrew, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

¹³ Collar, “Is reach of John Birch Society on the rise.”

¹⁴ By conservative, I mean that the historical subjects that I discuss invested themselves in maintaining the status quo rather than creating or encouraging systemic or institutional change. For example, a person was politically conservative when they voted against candidates who sought to reinterpret aspects of the legal and political structures that governed daily life both locally and at a national level. These people generally believed in a strict understanding of American laws and political documents, especially the U.S. Constitution. Meanwhile, I refer to a person as socially conservative when they expressed a desire to protect their cultural values, religious practices, and access to liberty—the belief that a government needed to protect the individual freedoms of its citizens. In the Fox River Valley during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Republican Party most often represented the

explore throughout this dissertation, the region has been on the frontline of battles over the shape and meaning of American political culture for more than a century. Although now the home of the John Birch Society headquarters, the Fox Valley's ultra-conservative reputation erases a complicated history riddled with periods of social foment. Whether in factories or on farms, at insurance offices, diners, or department stores, Fox Valley residents struggled against the parameters of capitalism and the systemic inequalities embedded within a free market society. Working-class activism took several different forms, including shop floor resistance to unfair treatment on the job and social behavior that endangered the cultural norms of local communities. Whatever the expression or wherever it occurred, working-class people reacted to what they viewed as a threat to their values, which depended on their cultural backgrounds and ethnic identities. Workers had a diverse set of religious and moral values that defined their social worlds, and they involved themselves in activities that reflected their views on everyday life.

interests of politically and economically conservative constituents, since its platform supported local businessmen and the expansion of corporate capitalism. Although social conservatives voted for a range of personalities across political parties, they choose candidates who demonstrated a commitment to reproducing an image of Christianity and white settled family life. On the other hand, by progressive I am referring to an ideology grounded in uncovering avenues of political, economic, social, and cultural change for the betterment of all members of a society. The duality that existed between progressive and conservative in Wisconsin reflected the profound hypocrisy that United States lawmakers had etched into the footings of American institutions since the inception of the nation. The U.S. continued to serve as a model antinomy that rested on a belief in not only individual rights but also collective justice. An internal struggle against this deeply rooted double standard preoccupied the social dynamics of the Fox River Valley from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century. Although progressive and conservative ideologies were in opposition, one could be both conservative and progressive simultaneously, depending upon their specific set of beliefs at a particular historical moment. During the early twenty-first century, national media outlets claimed that the Fox Valley was one of the most politically conservative parts of Wisconsin. For instance, see Michael O'Donnell, "What's the Matter With Wisconsin," *New York Times*, September 14, 2018; "Supreme Court race in Wisconsin becomes good omen for Trump," *Washington Post*, April 3, 2016; and Micah Cohen, "Political Geography, Wisconsin," *New York Times*, April 3, 2012. On the political culture and electoral complexity of Wisconsin and the Fox Valley specifically, see Dan Kaufman, *The Fall of Wisconsin: The Conservative Conquest of a Progressive Bastion and the Future of American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2018), 15-30; Kramer, *Politics of Resentment*, 83-85, 241; Robert Booth Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes: An Electoral History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008); Jerome Pohlen, *Oddball Wisconsin: A Guide to Some Really Strange Places* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2001), 33; Herman, *Reexamining the Life and Legacy of America's Most Hated Senator*, 1, 305-06; and Bayley, *Joe McCarthy and the Press*, 15.

Consequently, I define working-class activities broadly, as practices and pursuits that reflected the desires and beliefs of those who participated in them. Fox Valley residents made their everyday choices along religious and cultural lines in order to enjoy and make sense of their lives.¹⁵ Working-class people picked from a wide array of church gatherings and leisure opportunities when determining how they would spend their free time, and I argue that the partisan decisions they made in the voting booth reflected their principles and the ways that they chose to express their religious devotions and entertainment pursuits. As I explain, this self-activity shaped not only the local cultural landscape but also had important political meaning in the Midwest and nationally.

When they could not embrace their values, workers turned to cultural dissent, which I define as an expression of overt protest against something that they identified as unjust. Here I am referring to moments when an individual or group of people passively, openly, or covertly sought to upset the social scaffolding that characterized their community in an intentional way. This activism existed across the political spectrum not only in the Fox Valley but also in Wisconsin and throughout the U.S. During the early twentieth century, newcomers brought their own set of beliefs and institutions with them when they migrated, and they challenged the basic cultural framework of the region simply through their presence. Simultaneously, their commitment to maintaining their leisure life jeopardized the hegemony of local industrialists

¹⁵ Throughout my dissertation, I define the working class as a group of people who have labored to survive materially as well as those who have participated actively in the reproductive and domestic worlds that kept industrial workers and their rural counterparts alive. For example, although dairymen benefitted from the labor of their farmhands, during the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, agricultural producers barely profited from their foodstuffs and most encountered increasing debt and financial turmoil. Thus, I consider them members of the working class. Meanwhile, I define working-class values as a set of ideas that reflected a person's or group's desires and beliefs. Working-class activities were the daily pursuits that workers involved themselves in either at work or during their leisure time, which often mirrored but also reinforced and sometimes even changed the values of the people who participated in them, depending upon time and place.

over the area entertainment scene. At times their activities were radical, meaning that the ways that they publicly protested or even conducted their lives seemed outlandish to other local residents. Meanwhile, there were those Fox Valley dwellers that had generally identified as socially or politically conservative who expressed transformative ideas about the economic climate and cultural landscape of the region. This radicalism suggested extremism to those who disagreed with the protestors, whether activists advocated for either social stability or political change. For instance, during the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, the area witnessed instances of worker radicalism, which contributed to a nationwide labor movement and helped spark the rise of the Wisconsin's Progressive Party. Residents protested low wages and unsafe workplace conditions and struggled to protect their cherished religious practices, ethnic customs, and recreational activities. Their efforts helped to inspire legislation that aimed to foster good, responsible government and decrease corporate greed, which in turn led to the expansion of a taxation system and the promotion of a social welfare state throughout Wisconsin and the United States.

But residents of the same area contributed to a rising conservatism in Wisconsin as well. The Fox Valley served as the birthplace and local political stage for one of the most socially conservative public figures in U.S. history, Joseph McCarthy. In 1946, this son of poor Grand Chute dairy farmers successfully campaigned against popular incumbent Senator Robert M. La Follette Jr., who was a celebrated former Progressive. McCarthy, the judge for Wisconsin's 10th Circuit Court, won the Republican Senate nomination, and then went on to defeat the Democratic challenger, U.S. Representative Howard J. Murray from Milwaukee, in the general election. This moment marked a change that unfolded from the 1890s to 1950s, which brought the downfall of Wisconsin Progressives and the rise of homegrown conservatives. What

caused this dramatic political swing? How did a geography of popular protest become one of conservative consensus? “Paper Dreams” traces the influence of local residents on this cultural shift, focusing on how working-class values and everyday activities prompted the ideological transformation that occurred there.

Dominated by wood-products mills, and geographically in the east-central portion of the state, the Fox Valley is the economic heartland of northeast Wisconsin.¹⁶ The river itself defines the region, but so do two lakes fed by both the Fox and Wolf rivers: Lake Winnebago, the largest lake entirely within the state of Wisconsin, and the smaller Lake Butte des Morts. The area has been host to a diverse range of industries, including wheat farming, lumber processing, dairy production, papermaking, and meatpacking. With Menominee timber stands to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, fertile farmland to the west, and Milwaukee to the south, the Fox Valley remains central to Wisconsin’s livelihood, as it was in the period considered in this dissertation, from the 1850s to the 1950s. From Fond du Lac to Green Bay and Manitowoc to Wautoma, residents developed an identity based on their shared investment in the survival of area workers and the health of local industry. When people discussed the urban centers that dotted the landscape of the region, they referred to these places as the Fox Cities (Appleton, Neenah,

¹⁶ Although the Fox River Valley is in the east-central part of Wisconsin, residents often refer to the area as northeast Wisconsin. This makes sense if one mentally divides the state into quadrants: in that case, most of the Fox Valley falls into the northeastern quadrant. And the Fox Valley is intimately connected, economically and culturally, to areas further north. As a resident of the region, the moniker “northeast Wisconsin” is most recognizable to me. But in deference to readers who are not residents, I will often refer to the area as “east-central Wisconsin.” Different state maps demonstrate how the Fox River Valley is in both east-central and northeast Wisconsin, accessed on April 12, 2020 at: <https://www.travelwisconsin.com/maps>; <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Wastewater/PermitsStaff.html>; http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/directory/map/NEW_NE.htm; <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties.htm>; and <http://newimmunizationcoalition.org/new-page-3>.

Menasha, Kaukauna, and sometimes Oshkosh) in order to demonstrate the differences between these sites and nearby rural zones, which included both small towns and farm fields. This physical geography makes the area unique but also represents communities of its size and character around the Midwest, where city and country life intermingle and coexist.

This dissertation complements a body of literature that resists a top-down approach to understanding trends in American politics, embracing instead the role that peoples' movements have played in producing social and electoral change.¹⁷ Fox River Valley businessmen and their supporters in local government viewed the region, both technologically and culturally, as progressive.¹⁸ But who built this "progressive" machinery and laid the foundation for the

¹⁷ On peoples' movements and the role that working-class people have played in making political change, see Jon Shelton, *Teacher Strike! Public Education and the Making of a New American Political Order* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017); Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (2010; New York: New Press, 2012); and Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Quest for Cheap Labor* (1999; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Rebecca Edwards, "Politics, Social Movements, and the Periodization of U.S. History," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 8 (October 2009): 463-73; Nancy MacLean, "Getting New Deal History Wrong," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 78 (Fall 2008): 48-55; Jean H. Baker, "Getting Right with Women's Suffrage," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 5, no. 1 (January 2006): 7-18; Edwin Amenta, *When Movements Matter: The Townsend Plan and the Rise of Social Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Jacqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233-63; Chad Goldberg, "Haunted by the Specter of Communism: Collective Identity and Resource Mobilization in the Demise of the Workers Alliance of America," *Theory and Society* 32 (December 2003): 725-73; María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions* (Latham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); Marcy Darnovsky, Barbara Epstein, and Richard Flacks, eds., *Cultural Politics and Social Movements* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Frances Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); and Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: the Populist Moment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

¹⁸ On the historiography of the Progressive Era and progressivism as a movement, see Glen Gendzel, "What the Progressives had in Common," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 3 (July 2011): 331-33; Edwards, "Politics, Social Movements, and the Periodization of U.S. History" 463-72; John Judis, "Are We All Progressives Now?" *American Prospect* 11, no. 12 (May 2000): 34-39; Steven Diner, "Linking Politics and People: The Historiography of the Progressive Era," *OAH Magazine of History* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1999), 5-9; Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States,*

amenities that set places like Appleton, Wisconsin, apart from similar sized industrial communities throughout the Midwest? What were their daily lives like? Did they view all of the advancements around them as progressive? By answering these questions, I provide a bottom-up version of U.S. socioeconomic history that appreciates the struggles and experiences of the farmers, mill hands, housewives, sex workers, and prisoners who labored among the immense industrial and bureaucratic developments created under industrial capitalism. In this way, “Paper Dreams” contributes to the fields of both labor and working-class livelihood and the history of American capitalism.¹⁹

Although I am primarily interested in how ordinary people influenced the political climate of the Fox River Valley, this story would be incomplete without an exploration of the tactics implemented by employers to control the local workforce. So this project draws on corporate history, if only tangentially, in order to explain what workers were fighting against in their daily battles for cultural and social inclusion.²⁰ For example, lumber barons, paper entrepreneurs, and urban leaders viewed social “progress” as synonymous with prosperity for their business interests and saw the actions of government officials as progressive as long as they

1877-1919 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), ix-xiii; Daniel T. Rogers, “In Search of Progressivism,” *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December 1982), 113-32; David M. Kennedy, “Overview: The Progressive Era,” *The Historian* 37, no. 3 (May 1975): 453-68; and Peter G. Filene, “An Obituary for the Progressive Movement,” *American Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 20-34.

¹⁹ On “new” history of American capitalism and its emphasis on the lived experiences of people and the ways in which individuals shape political economies, see Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, eds., *American Capitalism: New Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Seth Rockman, “What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 34, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 439-66, Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014); Christine Desan, *Making Money: Coin, Currency, and the Coming of Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Edward T. Linenthal, ed., “Interchange: The History of Capitalism,” *Journal of American History* 101, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 503-36; Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

²⁰ On the “wide divide” between corporate history and labor studies, see Nan Enstad, *Cigarettes, Inc.: An Intimate History of Corporate Imperialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), ix-x.

reinforced the rigid social arrangement that supported their commercial enterprises in the region. At the same time, they championed legislation and supported regulations that barred specific people from living in the area and restricted residents from participating in certain cultural customs and recreational practices in the public arena. Thus, when capitalists and area leaders described Appleton as progressive, they were pointing to the corporate advancements that supported the health of factory operations and the technologies that garnered them wealth and prestige. They did not extend this philosophy to include the desires or needs of their employees.

Nonetheless, working-class people's values sometimes conveniently overlapped with those of their bosses. Initially, this agreement created a favorable environment for thriving area business. But this did not last long. As industries grew and employers needed more laborers, the diversity of the workforce complicated the corporate mission of local businessmen. Indeed, the belief systems of incoming migrants often diverged from those of their employers in ways that created cracks in the bureaucratic framework crafted by Wisconsin industrialists. Working-class devotion to their religious practices, ethnic customs, and recreational pursuits influenced how and to what degree they challenged the corporate strategies that sought to regulate their everyday lives. The managerial effort to dictate workers' activities prompted pushback from residents, and this resistance had a profound effect on the local social climate and shaped the Fox Valley leisure scene. For instance, despite the aversion that some employers expressed to the "uncivilized" recreation and community gatherings of their workers, I demonstrate that people continued to participate in these pursuits during their free time. Fox Valley residents' penchant for betting on sports, drinking alcohol, and purchasing intimacy in the public sphere changed the economic landscape in ways that at times undermined the supremacy of industrialists in local government. The history of such disputes helps to explain the trajectory of the Wisconsin

political imagination during the first half of the twentieth century as well as the emergence of extraordinary electoral movements that occurred during the Progressive and Cold War eras.²¹

In some cases, however, workers' protests against managerial power over their daily lives divided them, as did their ethnic and religious prejudices. These divisions blunted their efforts to exercise their individual liberties, let alone to create a shared laboring consciousness.

Encouraged by their employers, residents became increasingly intolerant of difference, developing perspectives on gender, race, sexuality, and skill that hindered their attempts to establish working-class unity. By constructing fictional fences among themselves, these residents reinforced factory owner control both on the shop floor and in area communities. Focusing on working-class people's everyday choices, this project demonstrates that employees' preferred social behaviors and lifestyles had profound political implications for the region. The history of working-class life provides essential insight for understanding not only the Fox River Valley as a partisan battleground but also the conservative drift of the state of Wisconsin and the U.S. as a whole that was a precursor to the conformist Cold War era.

In order to support these claims, my project focuses on the intersection between everyday workplace politics and forms of cultural expression, specifically how laborers used their leisure practices to resist the oppression that they experienced on the shop floor. I explore the connections between labor movements and the communities in which workers lived, and I look to the cultural arenas of vaudeville, theatre, pub culture, barn dances, church picnics, and spaces

²¹ On the rise of the Progressive Party in Wisconsin, see John D. Buenker, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 4, *The Progressive Era, 1893-1914* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1998), 196-99; Paul W. Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 5, *A New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1990), 40-50; and Nancy C. Unger, *Fighting Bob La Follette: The Righteous Reformer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 190-200.

of consumer activism as sites of labor organizing and worker solidarity.²² A central component of my intellectual agenda is to continue to expand the definition of what constitutes work and who counts as a worker in order to get a more complete sense of how everyday people influenced social and political change. Though the earliest work in labor history focused primarily on the experiences of white male factory workers, more recent scholarship urges historians to consider a wider range of historical actors and struggles. My work is part of this intellectual undertaking and social justice mission.²³

²² On working-class leisure spaces as sites of struggle between employers and workers for workplace control, and as places where workers came to understand themselves as members of a distinct class, see Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-10; Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890-1925* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 12-20; Peri Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 50-55; Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 45-50; Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1986), 260-63, and *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1997), 283-309; Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 252-58; Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor: Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 119-30; Randy D. McBee, “‘He Likes Women More Than He Likes Drink and That Is Quite Unusual’: Working-Class Social Clubs, Male Culture, and Heterosocial Relations in the United States, 1920s–1930s,” *Gender and History* 11, no. 1 (1999): 82-112, and *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure Among Working-Class Immigrants in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 13-16; and Linda España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s-1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 4-13.

²³ On the ways in which race has influenced working-class organizing and activism, see W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Free Press, 1935), 3-16; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 5-12; Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 10-22; David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872* (New York: Knopf, 1967), 23-30; David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1999), 10, and “What if Labor Were Not White and Male? Recentring Working-Class History and Reconstructing Debate on the Unions and Race,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 51 (Spring 1997): 72-95; Nell Irvin Painter, “The New Labor History and the Historical Moment,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 2, no. 3 (March 1989): 367-70; William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana:

This project uses a local lens to tell a national story by building upon the work of Lizabeth Cohen, whose scholarship provides a useful framework for examining working-class lives. In *Making a New Deal*, her exploration of Depression-era industrial Chicago, Cohen argues that workers “acted politically” and their lives outside of electoral politics influenced how they came to “adopt new ideological perspectives.”²⁴ By expanding the political arena beyond the voting booth and into the world of working-class social interactions and leisure activities, Cohen offers a model for investigating how Fox Valley workers not only embraced but also inspired divergent social ideologies and movements. For instance, working-class leisure activities and cultural values influenced the platform of the Wisconsin Progressive Party, as well as what constituted progressivism as a political philosophy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Similarly, workers shaped the cultural landscape that permitted a socially conservative politician like Joseph McCarthy to enter national politics.

The differences in Cohen’s work and my analysis in “Paper Dreams” are three-fold. In *Making a New Deal*, Cohen claims that fragmentation in Chicago along the lines of skill, ethnicity, and race kept workers from having a meaningful political voice before the 1930s. By contrast, I argue that working-class people influenced the social and cultural landscape in the Fox Valley in ways that gave them political power beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing well into the 1950s. Though we both discuss the excitement and importance of the political activism of the Depression era, my narrative arch reaches further back to demonstrate how working-class values and activities were shaping the social worlds and political realities that

University of Illinois Press, 2005), 1-14, and “Black Milwaukee, Proletarianization, and the Making of Black Working-Class History,” *Journal of Urban History* 33, no. 4 (May 2007): 544-50; Joe William Trotter Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 20-45; Roger Biles, “Black Milwaukee and the Ghetto Synthesis,” *Journal of Urban History* 33, no. 4 (May 2007): 539-43.

²⁴ Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, 9.

Fox River Valley residents had inhabited since the influx of immigrants began to accelerate in the 1880s and continued into the 1920s. Meanwhile, not only is my chronology longer but also my dissertation includes a broader range of working-class people. Like Cohen, I discuss how industrial workers made daily choices and participated in cultural activities that had political meaning, but I have also expanded my analytical lens to include farmers and their rural counterparts.²⁵ This makes scholarly sense when examining a place like the Fox River Valley, where urban and rural life were more visibly connected than in a large city like Chicago. The physical geography along with the economic landscape of a region that depended on lumber and dairy to survive created political diversity that reflected disagreements between working-class people, even within family units. Yet, I argue that it was these very divisions among workers that sparked the rise and influenced the form of national ideologies, policies, and legislation as far back as the 1880s. Thus, *Making a New Deal* demonstrates that everyday workers had political influence during the 1930s in industrial Chicago, while “Paper Dreams” notes that working-class people in the Fox Valley enjoyed that influence earlier and longer.

Moreover, working-class values continued to shape the U.S. political landscape even after World War II. Cohen’s work is relevant here, too. Her book *A Consumer’s Republic* is helpful for framing the latter part of my dissertation, where I discuss the influx of wealth into the Fox Cities during and after the war as well as the expansion of the middle class in the region.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid., 3.

²⁶ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 1-15. Cohen takes up the issue of postwar consumption, examining how spending in the capitalist marketplace usurped industrial democracy as the predominant expression of freedom and social equality in the U.S. During the second half of the twentieth century, the ability to buy material goods symbolized U.S. affluence. But at the same time, limited access to this representation heightened social inequalities. As Cohen asserts, “the policies pursued and the values embraced in the Consumers’ Republic circumscribed gender roles in such a way as to delegitimize the

The valley's wood products industry played a crucial role in the success of U.S. military endeavors abroad. At the same time, the industry gained significant influence in the growing consumer market at home. The postwar era witnessed a leveling of ethnic difference in local white communities, but race and faith continued to divide area workers in ways that limited their power against corporate interests. Cohen's is an important national study that makes a similar argument about the role that postwar consumption played in distracting workers from shop floor matters. My dissertation focuses on the Fox River Valley as a place that sheds light on the culture and politics of working-class life in the mid-sized communities of the Midwest.

Additionally, I argue that Fox Valley workers, both in industry and agriculture, participated in electoral and recreational activities that were as important as those of middle-class and elite residents to the rise of ideological movements like Progressivism and McCarthyism. Despite the power of local industrialists, labor influenced the trajectory of the policies and platforms of local law enforcement agents and federal officials who struggled to promote sobriety, settlement, and the expansion of industry in the area. As more working-class people gained access to the voting booth, however, their changing cultural values along with their firm religious convictions brought about momentous political shifts. Ultimately, the electoral choices of area workers had lasting and devastating national consequences, especially when they voted for Joseph McCarthy, the son of an Irish Catholic farm family from the Fox River Valley.²⁷

civic authority that women had gained on the home front during World War II" (135). What the postwar free-market consumers' republic did offer was freedom of choice to shoppers to purchase as they pleased (assuming financial resources), in both the U.S. and "developing" nations. At the same time that the U.S. expanded its economic sphere through the acquisition of foreign markets, capitalists exported America's image, its products, and eventually its jobs (125-29). Consumers did resist capitalist domination through movements for price controls, by establishing cooperatives, and boycotting certain products. Civil rights activists used these tactics to obtain access to equal rights, demonstrating their ideological belief in a consumers' republic (186-91).

Along with Cohen's scholarship, David Montgomery's work on industrialists' unrelenting desire for control over workers inspires this dissertation. He explains how factory owners applied concepts of scientific management to their business undertakings, including their opposition to labor organizing.²⁸ Historians of gender and whiteness have augmented Montgomery's analysis, offering valuable tools for exploring working-class divisions both on the job and at play. Ava Baron's work on the sexual division of labor and David Roediger's studies on the intersection of racism and capitalism help to reveal how these power systems developed simultaneously in ways that shaped the parameters of working-class lives.²⁹ Racism and patriarchy operated together to support management tactics of mapping capitalist logics onto the bodies and into the psyches of their labor force.³⁰ Accordingly, my dissertation demonstrates

²⁷ On McCarthy and the ways in which his upbringing shaped his political career as well as his popularity in the Fox Valley, see Herman, *Joseph McCarthy*, 21-27.

²⁸ On strategies that late nineteenth-century employers used to organize their shop floors and control their workers, see David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies on the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 9-18.

²⁹ On the importance of bringing women in as a subject and using gender as a category of analysis, see Joan Scott, "On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 31 (Spring 1987): 1-13; Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), and *Gendering Labor History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965* (1995; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017). Baron's essay on masculinity and printers during the nineteenth century demonstrates how capitalist development created changes in the apprenticeship system that resulted in the hiring of young boys, challenging understandings of manhood in ways that threatened worker livelihood and their understandings of American exceptionalism. Ava Baron, "An 'Other' Side of Gender Antagonism at Work: Men, Boys, and the Remasculinization of Printers' Work, 1830-1920," in Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 47-69, cited material on 49.

³⁰ For relevant analysis, see Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working-Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 31; Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69 (Spring 2006): 143-60; and Ava Baron and Eileen Boris, "'The Body' as a Useful Category for Working Class History," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 4 (2007): 23-43; Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy And The American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15-

how workers in the Fox River Valley resisted corporate power but often in ways that reinforced the exclusionary practices of their employers. At the root of their diverse resistance efforts was an underlying fear of government power and a loss of individual freedoms, which resulted in an array of responses, from collectivism to libertarianism.

Moreover, following the lead of historian Tera Hunter, I emphasize how recreational activities helped workers defy employer domination and make meaning in their daily lives. Hunter demonstrates the ways that working-class leisure served as a strategy of resistance for Black women workers in the Jim Crow South. For instance, she argues that black women “workers saw [dancing] as a respite from the drudgery and toil and an important aspect of personal independence.”³¹ Meanwhile, Hunter explains that local elites in Atlanta thought that black vernacular dancing interfered with wage work and was an immoral way to spend leisure time. She claims that the response of African American and white middle-class reformers reflected broader concerns about race, class, and sexuality in the region. While employers worried that dancing would tire workers out for the next day of labor, black women workers viewed dancing as a way to recover their bodies and prepare themselves for their next day of work.³² Fox Valley residents did this as well. They used dance halls, barn raisings, and taverns as places to recover physically, commiserate about their everyday challenges, strategize for better working conditions, and build community.

Another way that workers challenged employer control was to leave one job or location for another in search of different employment opportunities. I analyze how working-class

37, and *Black Mirror: The Cultural Contradictions of American Racism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 2-8, 63-65.

³¹ Tera W. Hunter, *To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 84.

³² *Ibid.*

mobility served as a form of protest against hostile employers and capitalist control in general, even as factory owners and local officials responded by criminalizing transience. In this way, my work contributes to the history of incarceration and coerced labor. I follow the lead of scholars like Kahlil Gibran Muhammed who seek to understand the origins of the carceral state. Like him, I examine the racial categorization and cultural stigmatization of alleged criminals and root these developments in the Progressive Era. But my project also takes a different approach. While Muhammed looks at the entanglements of race and crime on a state and national level, I explore these processes more locally.³³ Moreover, I argue that the roots of mass incarceration extend back to the 1880s, and although race and ethnicity played a major role in determining who police officers arrested, occupation and skill were important factors as well. Prisons and jails served as sites to tightly control workers, a labor force that was vulnerable, cheap, and disposable, according to area capitalists. By exploring the history of incarcerated people as workers and penal institutions as acutely regimented workplaces, this study sheds light on the marriage between capitalism and forced confinement.

By deciding where workers could live and what types of recreational activities they could pursue, industrialists attempted to shape morality and civility in the Fox Valley. To do so, factory owners partnered with social reformers to campaign against the “evils” of sojourners who moved between jobs and across multiple communities. Corporate employers and their supporters encouraged transitory laborers to put down roots and establish families in order to live stable and “pure” lives. Paper barons wanted to manage working-class social life in order to maintain an abundant and malleable workforce, but this was not an easy endeavor. To regulate

³³ Kahlil Gibran Mohammed, *The Condemnation of Blackness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 6-12. Also see Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

their labor supply, employers sought to restrict working-class mobility by outlawing vagrancy.³⁴ Partnering with government bureaucrats and law enforcement agencies, businessmen devised municipal laws to limit working-class transience by making it socially and legally unacceptable. As a result, at the turn of the twentieth century, Fox Valley migrant workers dealt with daily coercive constraints on their movement, and thus their livelihood. Labor agents and local officials managed the supply of workers for corporations by arresting nomadic men and confining vagrants to local jails, until papermaking companies needed another wave of fresh bodies to support their mission to reap profits and maintain social order.

As historian Gunther Peck claims in his work, and my evidence confirms, workers used movement as a way to navigate capitalism, despite employer attempts to run their everyday lives. Miners in Utah and mill workers in the Fox Valley challenged these schemes, demonstrating their resourcefulness by circulating through jobs, cities, states, and in some cases, even nations.³⁵ Their transience frustrated capitalists, and working-class mobility created social worlds of immense ethnic, racial, and sexual diversity. Managers sought to restrict this mobility, though, and incarceration offered one solution. Like industrialists in Peck's study, paper magnates and lumber barons created discursive and material blockades against worker freedoms. Working-class resistance against the tools that employers used to control their labor force often led to jail

³⁴ On the use of vagrancy laws as tools of social control and methods of enforcing moral propriety in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Clare Sears, *Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 2-12; and Risa Goluboff, *Vagrant Nation: Police Power, Constitutional Change, and the Making of The 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3-14. On the relationship between civil liberties and governmental power, see Jennifer Fronc, *New York Undercover: Private Surveillance in the Progressive Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 2-10.

³⁵ Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Immigrant Padrones and Contract Laborers in North America, 1885-1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-5, 172, and 227-34.

time and periods of coerced labor.³⁶ What my work reveals is the role that workers played in defining the borders of criminality in the Progressive-era United States. By enjoying their social customs and leisure activities, workers created their own boundaries of respectability.

This dissertation is a history of a place that represents the experiences of only some residents of one small corner of the Upper Midwest. Yet, the Fox River Valley is significant for understanding the role that small towns and mid-sized midwestern communities—where the lines between urban and rural are blurry—have played in constructing the parameters of American political culture. This study cannot capture the astounding complexity of social foment that transpired from the Civil War to the Cold War era in the U.S. But it does provide a window into the lived experiences of workers who toiled in the wood products industry, labored on dairy farms, and participated in the Fox Valley dance hall and tavern scene. Likewise, it shows how these people, their organizations, and the communities where they resided all worked together to create the diverse ideological atmosphere of the region. In doing so, my work contributes to recent place-based scholarship that sheds light on how everyday phenomena and the actions of ordinary people in specific locations mirrored larger economic and societal transformations.³⁷ The diverging political perspectives that appeared and then fell out of favor in

³⁶ On employer strategies to coerce prisoners to work, see Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 7-14; Talitha L. LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 4-20; Karen A. Shapiro, *A New South Rebellion: The Battle Against Convict Labor in the Tennessee Coalfields, 1871-1896* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); 2-10; and Rebecca M. McLennan, *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 53-137.

³⁷ See, E.G. Sharon McConnell-Sidorick, *Silk Stockings and Socialism: Philadelphia's Radical Hosiery Workers from the Jazz Age to the New Deal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Michelle Nickerson and Darren Dochuk, eds., *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place, and Region* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York:

the area during the first half of the twentieth century were constitutive of a set of beliefs and anxieties that existed throughout North America. Given that all workers were part of an expansive transnational labor network, a local study that recognizes the inherent mobility of global capitalism presents an opportunity for examining the interconnected realities of laboring people.³⁸

Accordingly, I investigate how each community in the Fox River Valley developed, and how the method that employers created to control their workforce influenced the composition of a local population. For instance, Appleton would eventually become, after Green Bay, the largest city in the region. Originating as a Methodist community, Appleton developed around what is now Lawrence University. First named Lawrence Institute, a wealthy Boston

W. W. Norton, 2011); Rockman, *Scraping By*, 9-10; Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southern Metropolis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989); Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Jon Hunner, *Inventing Los Alamos: The Growth of an Atomic Community* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000); Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit: Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Elizabeth Jameson, *All That Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991). On the importance of local history, see Francesca Mari, "The Microhistorian," *Dissent Magazine* 60 (Spring, 2013): 81-86. For an example of a monograph that uses microhistory as a method, see Jill LePore, *The Mansion of Happiness: A History of Life and Death* (New York: Knopf, 2012).

³⁸ In his study *Capital Moves*, historian Jefferson Cowie demonstrates the long history of global capitalism. He claims that "social changes at the local level drive the relocation of capital investment," which causes businesses to find new locations for their enterprises to secure an even more controllable pool of workers. See, Cowie, *Capital Moves*, 273. I also emphasize the mobility of global capital; however, in my story it is the workers rather than the businesses that move in reaction to economic transformations. On the transnational turn in labor history, see Mireya Loza, *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, and Political Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Gunther Peck, "Migrant Labor and Global Commons: Transnational Subjects, Visions, and Methods," *International Labor and Working Class History* 85 (Spring 2014): 118-37; Cindy Hahamovitch, *No Man's Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Leon Fink, ed., *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders: Making America's Empire at the Panama Canal* (New York: Penguin, 2009).

businessman designed it to serve as a “civilizing” force for “foreigners,” including, ironically, American Indians as well as eastern European and Irish immigrants. But with the completion of railroads in the region, the expansion of the wood products and paper industries, and advancements in agricultural technology, Appleton shifted from a fledgling community of eastern transplants to an industrial city dominated in population by immigrant workers of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. Smaller communities in the Fox Cities developed differently, as employers often hired people of a specific ethnicity in order to maintain a loyal labor force. For example, while one was more likely to meet a Polish migrant in Menasha, Dutch immigrants made up the majority of the working class in Kimberly, Kaukauna, and Little Chute. Neenah, one of the larger cities in the area, was similar to Appleton, with employers and people of middling means often sharing religious and ethnic identities with people who worked in local factories. The composition of Oshkosh was unique as well, with the lumber barons welcoming “cheap” employees from all parts of the globe.³⁹ Regardless of the number of people in the community or their cultural differences, however, workers shared a need to earn enough money to survive and expressed a desire to command their own leisure time.

The following chapters demonstrate the importance of local politics and the political meaning of working-class people’s daily choices and social behaviors. For example, I examine how workers navigated the grind of industrialization and factory life and yet managed to spend time with their families and enjoyed their recreational activities. Fox Valley workers sparked the rise of the Progressive Party in Wisconsin, influenced the boundaries of the New Deal, and fueled the anti-communist movement in the United States. Their cultural values and religious

³⁹ On the ethnic composition of the region and the ways in which ethnicity influenced settlement, see Charles N. Glaab and Lawrence H. Larsen, *Factories in the Valley: Neenah-Menasha, 1870-1915* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1969), 109-26; and Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 33-50.

beliefs caught the attention of their representatives in local, state, and national government, and their efforts contributed to the rise of McCarthyism. The daily realities of dairy farmers and papermakers, as well as their family members and friends, influenced American political culture. Despite the social and financial power of industrialists, the work and play of ordinary people shaped the platform of state politicians and the design of government policies.

I begin telling this story in chapter one, “If Paper Were Gold: ‘Civilizing’ the Fox River Valley.” Using county, state, and federal documents, newspapers, company records, and local histories, I explain the rise of the paper and wood-products industries, as well as the system of social order that began developing prior to the arrival of the majority of workers to the region. Next, I introduce the visions that the Methodist founders of Appleton had for the area as well as the “civilizing” efforts that business owners and social reformers initiated among the local population. Finally, I explore the effect that colonization and capitalism had on American Indians, which I argue reflected the rigid social values that capitalists believed to be most important, specifically, sobriety, white patriarchal settlement, and a Christian lifestyle. Although moral reformers and government bureaucrats sought to define the political and economic realities of the region, local indigenous peoples picked which aspects of the changing social arrangement to adopt. I argue that despite white settlement, American Indians continued to influence the local political landscape through the ways in which they chose to react to industrial capitalism and Euro-American colonization. They did so for myriad reasons with diverse outcomes, all in an effort to protect their cultural values and material survival.

Chapter two, “With Justice on Their Side: Working-Class Struggles to (Re)create Community in the American Midwest,” continues my exploration of the strategies that factory owners and their supporters implemented to create a moral framework in the region, emphasizing

the ways in which workers complicated this corporate project. I use U.S. census and immigration records, local and state laws, city directories, and print media to explain who migrated to the valley, where they settled, and the types of prejudice that they encountered in their pursuit of jobs and housing. I explain how ideas of ethnicity changed as a more diverse group of migrants moved to the region in the later decades of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century. Then I recount how industrialists and their supporters designed a cultural landscape that emphasized settlement, sobriety, and a gendered division of labor, and how this blueprint for corporate progress conflicted with the ethnic customs and leisure practices of a large percentage of workers. Finally, I discuss how this disagreement created a challenge for industrialists, who relied on cheap labor to make profitable paper and wood products, and I describe instances of working-class militancy and their social and political consequences. Ultimately, I argue that regardless of the lengths that corporate capitalists went to control the social behaviors of their employees, working-class people had their own religious values and cultural practices that upset the industrial design envisioned by factory owners. As a result of their daily perseverance, Fox Valley workers changed the social and political atmosphere of the region in ways that reflected their daily preferences and beliefs.

Next, in chapter three, “Policing Vagrants and Vice: Working-Class Leisure and Criminality in the Progressive Era,” I analyze the expansion of the local criminal justice system and efforts to limit worker mobility in order to control the labor supply of the Fox River Valley. Using vagrancy logs and arrest records as well as local legislative documents and newspapers, this chapter examines working-class leisure practices, exploring how these recreational activities had political ramifications. Despite attempts by employers to determine how their workers spent their time away from paper mills and wood products factories, workers continued their favorite

forms of diversion, even if they were breaking the law. The culture of surveillance that developed as a result of corporate desires to manage workers' lives was as much a product of divisions that laborers created among themselves along gender, religious, and ethnic lines as it was a confining system of social control created by valley industrialists and their middle-class and elite supporters. Focusing on crusades to eradicate vagrancy and sex work in particular, I examine efforts to eliminate immoral behavior in factories and surrounding communities and reveal how industrialists worked with law enforcement officials to criminalize certain aspects of working-class life. Despite these elaborate efforts, workers challenged the regulations and expectations of industrialists and their supporters in government by continuing to practice their favorite leisure time activities, and their resistance had political meaning. I argue that this struggle over appropriate entertainment activities had a profound influence over understandings of acceptable ways of living in the region, as workers changed the recreational landscape of the Fox Valley by refusing to forfeit their cultural freedoms.

Then, in chapter four, "A Cooperative Effort: Life, Liberty, and Protest in Wisconsin's Dairy Country," I examine the milk dumps and paper mill protests that occurred in the Fox River Valley and surrounding communities during the early 1930s. Using farmer-cooperative records and archival records from local mills, I explore how a devastating national financial crisis, disenchantment with industrial capitalism, and increasing corporate expansion in agriculture sparked a wave of protests in the region. I also emphasize the ways in which women and children played a crucial role in working-class demonstrations. Next, highlighting the violence and criminality associated with these movements, I investigate the political visions of farmers and factory workers as well as the systems of social control that sought to suppress labor movement goals. During the Depression era, workers in the region were militant about their

demands for fair treatment, and their efforts helped inspire collective bargaining and New Deal labor legislation that both heightened and stifled working-class livelihood in the area. Although not completely successful in their efforts, I argue that agricultural and industrial activists changed the social and political environment of the Fox River Valley in ways that sought to ensure their material survival and cultural integrity.

Finally, in chapter five, “The Midwestern Roots of McCarthyism: Race, Gender, and Working-Class Conservatism in the Age of Anti-Communism,” I discuss how local white male workers responded to their improved financial status after World War II as well as the expansion of the middle class in the region. I explore how this economic change flattened ethnic and religious differences but not gender and racial differences. Local Indigenous people especially struggled, even if they served in the U.S. military or contributed to the struggle abroad. This was more so the case if they were women. Ultimately, I argue that although working-class residents had successfully shaped the political landscape to reflect their everyday cultural values and desires to survive materially, this image did not include all residents. Instead, a majority of Fox River Valley workers had invested in a social world that valued whiteness, patriarchy, and individual liberties over collective justice, which resulted in greater social conservatism and caused an electoral drift to the right in the region. The ongoing swing in residents’ choice of government representatives has had lasting consequences that continued into the 1960s and still influences the trajectory of American political culture today.

Chapter 1

If Paper Were Gold: “Civilizing” the Fox River Valley

Any man who can look handsome in a dirty baseball suit is an Adonis.

Edna Ferber, “A Bush League Hero, 1912

Celebrated twentieth-century American novelist Edna Ferber used her hometown of Appleton, Wisconsin, as inspiration for several of her literary works, including her first short story, “A Bush League Hero.” After a summer watching local girls swoon at the sight of visiting minor league baseball players, Ferber decided to dramatize the cherished pastime in a fictional account. In her story, she describes characters whose relationships shed light on everyday occurrences in the Fox River Valley during the early decades of the twentieth century. Depicting a cultural landscape partitioned by power hierarchies and defined along the lines of class, gender, ethnicity, and occupation, “A Bush League Hero” takes place in the segregated social world of an exclusionary midwestern community.¹

Ferber created literature that reflected the conversations she overheard and interactions she witnessed as a spectator at her childhood home in downtown Appleton.² Sitting on her parent’s front porch, she observed and imagined the leisure activities and working lives of her neighbors, and later wrote about them. In “A Bush League Hero,” Ferber describes an illicit courtship between a young woman, Ivy, from an elite Appleton family and a traveling baseball player named Rudie, whom Ferber refers to as a “blonde god.” The story begins on a lovely June day, when Ivy, bored after returning home from “Miss Shont's select school for young ladies” for the summer, makes her way with her father, Pa Keller, to the local baseball diamond.

¹ Blanche Colton Williams, "Edna Ferber," in *Our Short Story Writers* (1920; New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., 1941), 146-59.

Here she encounters Rudie on the pitching mound. To the young local woman, the baseball player represents perfect manhood.³ After this first interaction, Ivy does not miss a game of Rudie's—that is until her father, a respected insurance agent, alderman of his ward and president of the Appleton "Civic Improvement Club," finds out about the affair.

Upset by his daughter's socially-jeopardizing relationship, Pa Keller exclaims, "Ivy, I don't like that ball player coming here to see you. The neighbors'll talk."⁴ Enraged by his daughter's "running of the streets" with a "seventy-five-dollars-a-month bush leaguer," Pa Keller demands that she stop dating Rudie or leave the house.⁵ But the relationship continues, as does Ivy's obsession with baseball. During one of their walks, Rudie says, "Let's talk about— us," and Ivy seems confused, asking, "Well you're baseball, aren't you?" Not long after, the baseball season ends and Pa Keller forces Ivy to accompany him out of town on business, where she unexpectedly encounters Rudie working as a shoe salesman. When Ivy realizes that Rudie is not synonymous with baseball and that he has another job, she decides to end their courtship. Rudie's class status, tied to his occupation as a salesclerk, limits his ability to perform the godly masculinity that he possessed as a baseball player. Ivy is unimpressed, Pa Keller gets his wish, and the established class hierarchy stays intact.⁶

³ Edna Ferber, "A Bush League Hero," in *Buttered Side Down* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912), 59-61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 69-70. Kathleen Sullivan explains that when Ivy returns home from school for the summer, she becomes obsessed with baseball and conflates Rudie's identity with his ability to perform on the pitcher's mound: "Ivy lacks an identity apart from being his fan, and the inability for their relationship to grow beyond hero worship causes her ultimate rejection of him when she sees him selling shoes in November." Kathleen Sullivan, *Women Characters in Baseball Literature: A Critical Study* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 44.

In the end, none of Ferber's characters escape their social positions. Ivy's father continues to wield influence as a white male patriarch in the community. Rudie and his teammates are heroes on the field, but during the off-season they are simply workers who leave "for the packing houses, freight depots, and gents' furnishing stores from whence they came."⁷ While Rudie is a "blonde god" or an "Adonis" on the pitcher's mound, Ferber describes the athletic shortstop, "Pug" Coulan, as an oversexed animal, with his red hair, "shoulders like an ox, and arms that hung down to his knees, like those of an orang-outang." His Irishness and position on the field make him less of an ideal man, which relegates him to the bottom of the social ladder. A slaughterer of "beeves at the Chicago stockyards in winter," Pug's only other work option is as a sexualized sportsman in the summer— during which time "he slaughtered hearts."⁸ Meanwhile, Rudie, or "Dutch," as his fans call him, is more fortunate, because he has features that are less "primitive," which allow him the opportunity to work outside of factory labor.⁹

⁷ Ferber, "A Bush League Hero," 74.

⁸ Ibid., 65. Ferber's description of "Pug" is similar to those found in local Appleton newspapers from the same era. Particularly telling are editorials that describe local vaudeville theatre productions highlighting Irish performers and mocking Irish physical attributes, occupations, and cultural practices. See "Amusements," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, February 3, 1911; "She Sings the Dublin Rag," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, June 17, 1911; "Amusements," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, November 11, 1911; and "Amusements," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, July 1, 1911. Other accounts characterize Irish workers as having less intelligence; see "Ann, Father's Helper," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, November 22, 1911. This form of typecasting, which scholar Matthew Frye Jacobson calls "Irishism or Celtism," occurred outside the Fox River Valley as well. Jacobson explains that negative portraits of Irish immigrants and their descendants spread throughout the United States. He argues that these representations, found in "jokes, political speeches, newspaper cartoons, constabulary reports, and social policy guidelines," helped shape a nationally popular belief that ethnic Irish people and Irish Americans "were 'constitutionally incapable of intelligent participation in the governance of the nation.'" This form of "racialism" continued into the twentieth century. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 48-49. For more on the connection between hyper-sexualized working-class masculinity and spectator sports, see Elliot J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 12.

Whatever its merits, “A Bush League Hero” conjures a dismal image of class relations in the Fox River Valley during the Progressive Era. Although it begins with a fun day at the local ballpark and climaxes with an exciting love affair, the ending reflects the realities of daily life in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States. Meanwhile, Ferber depicts Appleton as an elite community defined by limited opportunities for those who were not wealthy or did not do “respectable” work. Given that he is a “dream” in his uniform, Rudie is desirable enough to attract a woman of Ivy’s social status, but only on the baseball field. Pa Keller despises his daughter’s affection for Rudie, and Ivy only likes the shoe salesman when their interaction involves baseball. Each character ends up defined by his or her social position.¹⁰ The story suggests that gender, ethnicity, and occupation all influenced a person’s status in ways that restricted upward economic mobility as well as the romantic relationships that one could pursue.

In her autobiography, which she wrote twenty-five years after the short story, Ferber recalled her childhood in Appleton, which she describes as “a lovely little town of sixteen thousand people; tree-shaded, prosperous, civilized.” The community sat nestled in the Fox River Valley, surrounded by “small prosperous towns,” including “Kaukauna, Neenah, Menasha, [and] Little Chute.” But to Ferber, it was “Appleton [that] represented the American small town at its best.” The city had been “progressive” before others like it at the turn of the twentieth century, due to the boundless opportunities available for residents of the industrious and

⁹ Here historian Gail Bederman’s work is instructive for explaining why Pa Keller feels threatened by Ivy’s attraction to Rudie. Bederman examines how cultural understandings of a primitive and aggressive masculinity developed in opposition to that of a more “civilized” and “racially superior” Victorian white male ideal. The possibility of a baseball player having an intimate relationship with a woman of elite status endangered a social hierarchy that placed white, upper-class men on top. Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 52-53.

¹⁰ Ferber, “A Bush League Hero,” 47-75.

enlightened community.¹¹ Although this image differs from the one that Ferber paints in “A Bush League Hero,” her diverse depictions of the area reflect the contradictions embedded in everyday life during a particular historical moment.

Local businessmen and wealthy elites viewed their city as progressive because of its technological advancement and industrial development, not because they embraced social equality. Such residents considered the expansive paper mills and wood-products factories to be signs of progress that brought jobs and modern conveniences to the region, whether or not these operations paid their employees fairly. Industrialists and their business associates viewed the work they did in the Fox River Valley as progressive because they believed that they were improving society. For this reason, when discussing technological advancement and corporate capitalism, I use the terms “progress” and “progressive” as complements to each other and sometimes interchangeably. I refer to mechanization and changes in the natural landscape as “progressive.” I do not, however, claim that the capitalist activities of industrialists were examples of Progressivism as a political ideology and a movement. Instead, I reserve the term “Progressive” for the social activists and radical workers who took part in efforts to reform society in response to industrialization and corporatization, especially the negative consequences of these developments.¹²

¹¹ Edna Ferber, *A Peculiar Treasure* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1939), 57-58.

¹² Here my work contributes to a contentious debate about the periodization of the Progressive era as well as the meaning of “progressive” at the turn of the twentieth century. As scholars have shown, depending upon the viewpoint of the historical actor that one discusses, the meaning of “progressive” changes. Like Rebecca Edwards, in my project, I identify the Progressive movement as a set of initiatives that sought to “challenge big business, restore good government, and ameliorate poverty.” Although I am most interested in the ways in which working-class activists struggled for social change and encouraged the platform and trajectory of the Progressive movement nationally as well as the rise of the Progressive Party in Wisconsin, I also refer to the efforts of middle-class reformers as Progressive. Rebecca Edwards, “Politics, Social Movements, and the Periodization of U.S. History,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and*

This chapter explores industrial relations, labor management strategies, and the control mechanisms implemented by local factory owners and their supporters who desired profits and wanted to establish social order in the region. I analyze the methods that employers instituted in the paper and wood-products industries to manage worker output and working-class life in area communities. Emphasizing moral conduct and a Protestant work ethic, employers sought to limit labor unrest and political radicalism among their workers by encouraging faithfulness and diligence on the shop floor as well as beyond factory grounds. During an era of increased corporate paternalism, mill owners allied with social reformers and government officials to introduce guidelines that would unite workers in an effort to accomplish the capitalist goals of industrial production and societal improvement. From the 1870s through the first two decades of the twentieth century, the United States experienced dramatic corporate expansion and urbanization, which proponents viewed as symbols of progress. Industrialists and their supporters in government promoted these changes as representative of the progressive atmosphere of the time. But local workers also witnessed the multilayered consequences that accompanied the rise of a modern industrial nation—its downfalls and limitations.

Progressive Era 8, no. 4 (October 2009): 463-72, quoted material from p. 471. On who the Progressives were and for useful overviews of the historiography, see Steven Diner, "Linking Politics and People: The Historiography of the Progressive Era," *OAH Magazine of History* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 5-9; John Judis, "Are We All Progressives Now?," *American Prospect* 11, no. 12 (May 2000): 34-39; and Glen Gendzel, "What the Progressives had in Common," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 3 (July 2011): 331-33. On the Progressive Era and what it meant, see Peter G. Filene, "An Obituary for the Progressive Movement," *American Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 20-34; David M. Kennedy, "Overview: The Progressive Era," *The Historian* 37, no. 3 (May 1975): 453-68; Daniel T. Rogers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December 1982): 113-32. As I discuss in this chapter, capitalists and their supporters in local government viewed the Fox River Valley, both technologically and culturally, as progressive. At the same time, they backed laws and regulations that excluded certain people from the area and restricted working-class cultural practices. My sources suggest that during the late nineteenth century, "progressive" meant something different from single-issue, middle-class reform in the Fox River Valley, and that for urban leaders, including area industrialists, "progress" and "progressive" meant economic prosperity for businesses and a rigid system of social order that supported the success of these enterprises. "Progressivism," on the other hand, was a multifaceted movement that arose in reaction to the immense social changes brought on by mass industrialization and corporate capitalism; see Diner, "Linking Politics and People," 5-9.

I begin by examining the rise of paper and wood-products factories in the Fox River Valley and then discuss the social and political infrastructure that capitalists and their supporters developed to foster the growth and success of these new industries. Constructing a discourse founded upon the dual ethics of morality and civilization, turn-of-the-century industrialists and their associates promoted community standards rooted in Victorian-era understandings of proper gender relations, sobriety, and self-restraint as well as the Taylorist fundamentals of efficiency and progress.¹³ I demonstrate that despite well-intentioned attempts to foster better opportunities for their employees, the structures that factory owners put in place to handle their workforce undermined the very principles that they claimed to endorse. Rather than provide a sense of belonging, managers often discouraged the social customs of their workers. When they urged their employees to forfeit their ethnic, religious, and cultural practices, industrialists neglected the ethical framework that their methods claimed to nurture and instead reinforced beliefs in their cultural superiority. By supporting measures that denied the freedoms of their workforce, local industrialists sought to transform the bodies of their workers into the building blocks of what late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century capitalists referred to as progress. Thus, industrial success and the exploitation of local workers became “flipsides of the same coin.”¹⁴

¹³ Eileen Boris discusses the Progressive-era connection between the promotion of Victorian understandings of domesticity and the moral uplift of working women as well as the ways in which these discourses stemmed from Taylorism and methods in scientific management, Eileen Boris, *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 129 and 157.

¹⁴ Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 2. Rockman explains how scholars have mistakenly discussed the histories of economic prosperity and poverty separately. Similarly, I argue that Fox River Valley businessmen would not have been so financially successful without the systematic privation of their workers.

From the 1870s through the 1920s, as the region industrialized, employers sought creative ways to control capital and resources, including their workforce. Realizing the limitations and possibilities created by their environment, paper mill owners and lumber barons sought to disseminate the logic of capitalism across the rural Wisconsin landscape. The immense waterpower offered by the Fox River, and the timber available in the abundant pine forests to the north, supplied the means to produce the valley's most important commodities.¹⁵ These industries also had a necessary yet more complicated requirement: willing workers. Luckily, the push and pull factors of an increasingly globalized capitalism, including a nationwide depression, brought an influx of migrants from the eastern United States and Europe. These travelers sought employment, though often not permanently. Although some planned to stay longer, many workers passed through Wisconsin on their way to pursue opportunities in the extractive economy of the U.S. West. Some wanted to acquire a competency, the artisanal promise of entry into the middle class, while others planned to establish family farms. Regardless of where they came from or their dreams, industrialists had one nonnegotiable need, an abundance of compliant workers.¹⁶

Paper magnates and wood-products factory owners developed tactics to regulate the natural resources available and manage the lives of their labor force, all in the name of profit and social progress.¹⁷ Boosters and investors clamored to buy land and use the mighty Fox River to

¹⁵ Gregory Summers, *Consuming Nature: Environmentalism in the Fox River Valley, 1850-1950* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 50-51; and Charles N. Glaab and Lawrence H. Larsen, *Factories in the Valley: Neenah-Menasha, 1870-1915* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1969), 109-26.

¹⁶ Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth Century America* (1989; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 44-47.

fuel production, which relied heavily on dispossession of local Indian peoples. Hydroelectric power would eventually bring light to settler homes, but first, the force of water created energy to drive local industry. After acquiring timber and abandoned flourmills, which could be converted to wood-processing factories, capitalists worked with promoters in northern, eastern, and southern Europe as well as in New England to encourage immigration to the region.¹⁸ Once employers had workers, they applied theories of scientific management to the organization of their factories. They sought to map the rationality of capitalism onto the bodies and psyches of their labor force, and they began by devising ways to regulate time and space at their mills and eventually moved their strategies out into working-class communities.

¹⁷ To businessmen and area promoters, progress meant technological advancement and unregulated industrial capitalism rather than looking to the state for social change. These men, who were influential in local government, wanted to keep municipal costs low and community designs in line with encouraging maximum factory output and profits. One branch of the relevant historiography argues that if one looks at the efforts of businessmen, Progressivism has roots in the mid-nineteenth century with the search for efficiency and scientific management that would eventually come to dominate factories by the end of the century. Historians who accept this perspective claim that these businessmen viewed themselves as progressive, and certainly the mill owners in the Fox River Valley did as well. My project, however, suggests that the goal of factory owners and their supporters in municipal government was to maintain control over the economy, using social order as a tool against the chaotic effects of industrialization. Mauro F. Guillén, *Models of Management: Work, Authority, and Reform in a Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 44-47; Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 97-104. As I will explore in greater depth in subsequent chapters, fear and assumed cultural superiority rather than concern for social welfare drove these efforts. A majority of Fox River Valley factory owners worked with local law enforcement to deal with concerns about vagrancy, vice, and temperance and to regulate cultural norms in ways that undermined working-class life and aligned with the popular identity of the ideal U.S. citizen: a Protestant, white, heteronormative male breadwinner. Businessmen wanted to find innovative ways to make money, while keeping the Victorian era social hierarchy intact. Boris, *Home to Work*, 43-44; Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 98-100; and Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4-8.

¹⁸ Virginia Glenn Crane, *Oshkosh's Woodworkers' Strike of 1898: A Wisconsin Community in Crisis* (Madison: Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Commission, 1998), 8-9; Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 198-206; Dorothy Heesakker, "The Paper Mill Industry in the Lower Fox River Valley, Wisconsin, 1872-1890" (M.A. thesis, Loyola University Chicago, 1965), 5.

For owners and their associates, the supervision of working-class behavior was a time-consuming job. Fox River Valley capitalists became preoccupied with the idea of control, as they gathered assets and people in their mission to secure profits. Long hours and difficult working conditions, combined with maneuvers formulated to keep workers in line with corporate rhythms, supported employers' prophecies for robust industrial progress in the region. Along with implementing these measures in workplaces, employers joined with social reformers and government officials to invent ways to control workers' leisure time as well. By influencing how their employees lived and the types of recreational activities that they could pursue, I argue that industrialists and urban leaders defined a set of cultural norms that supported the development of free market economic values based on Christian colonization, European superiority, and white patriarchy. As I demonstrate, they did so in order to create a cultural atmosphere that was more conducive to their business aspirations. Yet, the cultural background of their workers challenged this arrangement, as immigrants brought their own set of religious values and entertainment practices with them to the Fox Valley. Meanwhile, Native Americans would challenge this corporate framework as well. They not only negotiated with federal officials and industrial capitalists over access to their land and resources, but they also decided which aspects of white colonization they chose to incorporate into their daily lives. As a result of their persistence, local Indians influenced the cultural, political, and economic landscape of the region in ways that reflected their cultural preferences and spiritual perseverance.

A Geographic Anomaly

The power of the river was what first attracted industrialists to the region. Falling nearly 170 feet over 35 miles, the Fox River uniquely flows north, dropping a height nearly equal to

Niagara Falls. Beginning as a quieter stream, the river has distinct sections, the Upper Fox and the Lower Fox. The northern section of the waterway (the Lower Fox) connects with the Wolf River at Lake Butte des Morts near Oshkosh, at which point the Fox flows into Lake Winnebago. From there, the river moves out of Winnebago and begins to fall dramatically northward. From the mouth of this large inland lake, the river passes by a series of connected cities and villages, continuously dropping over a sequence of eight distinct rapids. Historically, the river posed challenges to navigation, with its sharp falls and sheer force, but still provided myriad opportunities for commerce in the region.¹⁹ By the late 1870s, businessmen had harnessed local hydropower to produce lumber, flour, textiles, and increasingly paper. Soon after, technologies like electricity would contribute to the supremacy of the wood-products industry in the region.²⁰

For centuries, American Indians and then French and Canadian explorers had revered the immense waterpower of the Lower Fox River. But until the 1850s, the rugged geographic landscape surrounding it limited navigation and commercial development in the area. Starting with the twin rapids at Neenah and Menasha, where Doty Island split the river into southern and northern channels, the first major rapid fell 10 feet. Then, the river traveled six miles, descending 38 feet as it passed by what would become the town of Grand Chute and the city of Appleton, before dropping another 40 feet by the time it reached the village of Little Chute. Finally, the waterway reached its largest descent, falling 52 feet at Kaukauna, with a few smaller drops following, before the river spilled into Lake Michigan at Green Bay.²¹ This sequence of falls created a navigational nightmare for early explorers as well as eastern investors and local

¹⁹ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 44-48.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories of the Valley*, 7-11.

²¹ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 44-48; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories of the Valley*, 7-11.

businessmen who hoped to use the river as a transportation alternative to railroads. As freight rates climbed nationally in the 1880s with the corporate consolidation of railroad ownership, local manufacturers sought cheaper avenues for shipping raw materials and finished products. One Oshkosh newspaper reported that the Fox River was one of “the great highways built by God Almighty to keep the people from being robbed by the railroads.”²² Those involved with the effort to traverse the dangerous rapids of the Lower Fox encountered failure, however, and the river remained difficult to control for the next three decades.²³

The movement to “improve” the river by shaping its design to support emerging local industry and expanding national markets began with increasing capital investment in the 1850s, and came to an end by the 1880s, when a federally-sponsored effort to support a cheaper system of transportation in the valley failed.²⁴ Hoping to use the waterway to ship materials for the lumber, flour, and woolen mill industries, New York investors hired an engineer in 1853 to improve navigation on the Fox River for commercial gain. Upon surveying the river, C. D. Westbrook claimed that “the very magnitude of power” limited the Fox’s ability to support local commerce. Ranking it one of the most productive sources of power in the West, the respected engineer posited that until the U.S. government or eastern investors completed an

²² “The Fox River,” *Oshkosh Morning Times*, February 4, 1885.

²³ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 42-43, 67-68. For an explanation of the effects of increased railroad freight costs and consolidation of ownership of rail lines, see Robert C. McMath, Jr., *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 44-47, 55-57. William Cronon provides a thorough discussion of the development and expansion of railroads and explains the process of setting rates and schedules as well as reasons people became frustrated with railway companies in the second half of the nineteenth century. See Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 84-93, 362-63.

²⁴ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 42-43.

“improvement” project, “the water power on the lower Fox . . . could hardly be rated as a saleable article.”²⁵

Promoters sought to entice settlers and businesses to the valley by advertising that the power of the Fox River offered a supreme opportunity for local manufacturing, while land speculators and New England capitalists continued to look for a navigable connection between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. Joining together to establish the Fox-Wisconsin Improvement Company in 1853, members financed small improvements like locks and dams along the river, while the growing local population looked to tap the increasingly controlled power of the Fox. Without enough capital to complete the project, the company lobbied Congress for help. In response, the U.S. government provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to improve the river’s navigability. Difficulties in managing the Wisconsin River’s continuously changing streambed led to the project’s demise. But the obsession with manipulating Wisconsin waterways in order to reduce shipping costs brought an unintended commercial consequence—the rise of the paper industry.²⁶ As investors in the Fox-Wisconsin Improvement Company sought a traversable connection between the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan, private industries emerged along the Fox River, benefitting from the system of canals, locks, and dams that the project funded.²⁷

From the 1850s to the 1890s, the surrounding landscape transformed from a wheat-farming frontier to a bustling valley rich in lumber processing, dairy farming, and, increasingly,

²⁵ C.D. Westbrook Jr., *Fox and Wisconsin Improvement* (New York: S.S. Hommel, 1853), 13. On Westbrook and his involvement in the project, see Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 44-45.

²⁶ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 40-55. Glaab and Larsen also explain the origins and decline of the project as well as the ways in which the company’s preoccupation with transportation actually fueled the rise of manufacturing in the valley. Glaab and Larsen, 14, 26-27, 62, 140-47, 262. For more on the speculators and investors, see Heesakker, “The Paper Mill Industry in the Lower Fox River Valley, 15-17.

²⁷ Heesakker, “The Paper Mill Industry in the Lower Fox River Valley” 15-17.

paper manufacturing. While speculators, investors, and the U.S. government struggled against a stubborn waterway to create a shipping route from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes, private industries used the power of the Fox to build thriving flour, textile, and wood-products factories. Although engineers told the Fox-Wisconsin Improvement Company that the river offered unparalleled commercial possibilities, navigation remained the central theme of the project until its demise. This fixation opened opportunities for the development of creative ways to use the Fox River's mighty drops to fuel local business endeavors, even after the improvement project foundered. To foreign investors and fledgling entrepreneurs, the river along with the abundant forests nearby continued to represent an opportunity for robust capitalism and industrial progress in the Midwest. As one New York paper manufacturer who visited the valley claimed, "I would not change the power in [Appleton] for any like quantity in any other place."²⁸

Although efforts to make the Fox River fully navigable failed, local capitalists did not give up on their mission to use the surrounding landscape to promote industrial development in the area. In the 1870s, lumber and its byproducts became big business, which motivated prospectors to look toward the abundant supply of timber stands on Menominee Indian lands just to the north of the valley. Area manufacturers, however, were using energy from the river primarily to convert the extensive supply of local wheat to flour in mills that lined the banks of the Fox.²⁹ As the flour industry declined in the 1880s, however, local farming priorities changed from an emphasis on wheat cultivation to dairy production. This provided an opportunity for an innovative commercial undertaking. The abundance of abandoned flourmills and newly

²⁸ Alexander James Reid, *The Resources and Manufacturing Capacity of the Lower Fox River Valley* (Appleton, WI: Reid & Miller, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1874), 41.

²⁹ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 40-55.

available waterpower encouraged area capitalists to shift the majority of their investments.³⁰ As a result, a more permanent enterprise solidified its industrial hegemony in the region, the processing of lumber and manufacture of wood products, especially paper.³¹

Paper production was one of several economic experiments that capitalists initiated during the second half of nineteenth century in Wisconsin, with Appleton boasting the valley's first paper mill as early as 1853. Business owners developed other factory operations devoted to the growing wood-products industry in the 1860s and 1870s. But paper production did not become lucrative until the last decades of the nineteenth century, when local boosters drew capital and labor into the region. Valley promoters imagined a riverside landscape busy with paper mills, and their visions became reality by the end of the century.³² During the mid-1880s, eastern investors and area industrialists devoted abundant capital to papermaking in the Fox River Valley, and local natural resources supported production of the coveted commodity. The river and vast timber stands just to the north of Oshkosh and Appleton provided the natural resources necessary to support the expansion of local industry and corporate capitalism. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, entrepreneurs converted failing and abandoned flourmills into paper and wood-products factories. Not long after, the area earned a reputation

³⁰ One central reason that flour milling declined in the Fox River Valley had to do with competition. Although Neenah fought for the title of Wisconsin's "capital of flour," Milwaukee had also been a leader, until Minneapolis began to dominate the market by the 1870s. Heesakker, "The Paper Mill Industry in the Lower Fox River Valley" 3 and 32. On the rise of flour milling in Minneapolis, see Jocelyn Wills, *Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators: Entrepreneurial Culture and the Rise of Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1849-1883* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005), 1-8.

³¹ Wills, *Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators*, 1-8.

³² Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 50-55; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 109-26.

for industrial progress and innovation in the processing of lumber and its byproducts not only locally but across the United States.³³

*From “Rags to Riches”:
Wood and its Byproducts Become Big Business in the Fox River Valley*

By the late nineteenth century, local promoters boasted that the Fox River Valley had become a national leader in urbanization, industrialization, scientific management, and technological progress.³⁴ Fueled by the first hydroelectric operating station, on September 30, 1882, Appleton, Wisconsin became the second city in the United States to have centralized electrical power.³⁵ Spectators hailed the revolutionary feat in engineering, one that provided light for two paper mills and one residence. This event marked one of several “firsts” that area business advocates and local factory owners celebrated, highlighting the progressive character of the Fox River Valley in general and Appleton in particular.³⁶ Another praised technology was an electric streetcar system, which in 1883 was one of only a few in the nation. Initially catering to wealthier north-side residents, the trolley transported industrialists, their families, and their elite friends around the city to shop at local businesses.³⁷ By 1886, the Appleton Electrical Street Railway Company ran every twenty minutes, bringing passengers on a route downtown that

³³ Reid, *The Resources and Manufacturing Capacity of the Lower Fox River Valley*, 40-43.

³⁴ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 44-50. On efforts of industrial boosters and their tactics to bring industry and capital westward, see Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, 42-46; Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads: Community Policy in the Growth of a Regional Metropolis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 13-15; Wills, *Hustlers, and Speculators*, 1-8.

³⁵ “Electric Light,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, October 7, 1882.

³⁶ *Our First 100 Years, 1857-1957* (Appleton, WI: Appleton Centennial, 1957), 2, 8-10, and 71.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9. For more on the streetcar system in the Fox River Valley, see G. W. Van Derzee, “Pioneering the Electrical Age,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 41, no. 3 (Spring 1958): 210-14.

covered ten miles of track.³⁸ Eventually, in 1898, an interurban line connected Appleton to Neenah and Menasha, making its way to Kaukauna in 1900 and Oshkosh by 1903. For the next thirty years, the Fox River Valley enjoyed this luxury in transportation, making it one of the longer operating streetcar systems in the United States.³⁹

In response to these accomplishments, the local press and prominent businessmen touted the modern advancements of area communities, especially Appleton.⁴⁰ Not only did the small city boast the first private residence with hydroelectric power in the nation, but the new source of energy also electrified the Waverly Hotel, the first building of its kind lighted in the West. By 1882, the Edison central plant provided electricity and light for at least five mills, three private residences, a blast furnace, and a local inn.⁴¹ Celebrating the “white glow” radiating from the energy station that hovered over the Fox River on Vulcan Street, an editorial in the local newspaper claimed, “Appleton already [has electricity] placed in more buildings than any other city in the United States.” Local business owners encouraged this technology, hoping to use it to run their mills, light their homes, and claim the Fox River Valley as the first location in the U.S.

³⁸ *Wright's Appleton City Directory* (Milwaukee, WI: Wright's Directory Company, 1887-88), 22.

³⁹ R.W. Harness, “The Streetcar Service of Appleton,” in “A Study of Social Conditions in Appleton, Wisconsin” (unpublished paper, Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin, 1911), 44-45.

⁴⁰ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 70-76. “The Electric Light,” *Appleton Crescent*, September 9, 1882; “The Incandescent Electric Light,” *Appleton Crescent*, December 2, 1882; “Light Transaction,” *Appleton Post*, July 27, 1882; “Creation of Electric Forces,” *Appleton Post*, November 30, 1882; and “Glory Hallelujah!” *Appleton Post*, November 30, 1882.

⁴¹ On the buildings that first used hydro-electricity, see Louise P. Kellogg, “The Electric Light System at Appleton,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 6, no. 2 (December 1922): 189-94. Kellogg uses local newspaper accounts and information from the Edison Electrical Illuminating Association's *Bulletin* to make her claims regarding Appleton's technological progress.

to have electricity created by waterpower. As one local reporter put it, “some of our capitalists are determined to light College Avenue by electricity [even] if they pay for it themselves.”⁴²

Area industrialists prevailed, with one paper mill owner, H. J. Rogers, laying claim to the first home lighted by hydroelectric power in the United States. Proprietor of the Appleton Pulp and Paper Mill, Rogers convinced his Appleton Edison Electric Company associates to allow him to connect his private residence and another of his papermaking facilities to the generator by electrical wire. When his grand Victorian house first emanated with light, the *Appleton Post* bragged, “verily this *is* a progressive age, and Appleton keeps abreast of the time in everything.”⁴³ The capital produced by the paper industry fueled the lighting of Appleton buildings, but it was more than the wealth and resolve of paper barons that produced the electricity that sparked Appleton’s glow.

The story of electrification in the Fox River Valley is one of struggle and hope but also one of control of both resources and people. Certainly the peculiar landscape of the Fox Valley, along with the natural power of the river, contributed significantly to the electrification of the Appleton Pulp and Paper Mill in 1882. The Fox and Wolf rivers met near Oshkosh. This allowed loggers to transport timber from the abundant Menominee reserves that were just to the north of the valley south by way of the Wolf, which supplied local businesses with wood. Some timber stayed in Oshkosh for wood-products operations, while the remainder traveled north for use in paper mills. The region offered opportunity for land speculators and corporate financiers as well as fledgling industrialists, who imagined the potential capital promised by the powerful

⁴² “Electric Light,” *Appleton Crescent*, July 29, 1882; and Kellogg, 190.

⁴³ Larry A. Reed, “Domesticating Electricity in Appleton,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 65 (Winter 1981-1982): 120-21, quoted material from p. 120.

Fox. The same river system that produced hydroelectric power also fueled the paper industry—indeed, the two developments were mutually reinforcing.⁴⁴

Local businessmen played an important role in shaping municipal policies at the turn of the twentieth century, which was a central to their economic and cultural hegemony in the region. They influenced civic affairs, actively participated in managing utility companies, and guided decisions about local infrastructure. For instance, Publius V. Lawson Jr., whose enterprise, the Menasha Wood Split Pulley Company, one of the largest wood manufacturers in Wisconsin, was an urban leader who participated in the volunteer fire department and played an important role in the social and cultural atmosphere of the community.⁴⁵ Staffed by area businessmen, the fire department held significant authority in Menasha, especially regarding waterpower. Wood-products factory owners relied on fire protection to maintain inventory and insure their investments. In the event of a citywide blaze, as Oshkosh experienced in 1875, industrialists needed access to water. Fortunately for Lawson, he inherited control over half of the real estate where the city sat along the Fox River, which meant that he could influence whose businesses received the most efficient and thorough safeguards against potential fire.⁴⁶

Focused on promoting development in the region to benefit his business interests, Lawson gained considerable opportunity when he became mayor of Menasha in 1886. This allowed him to work out a settlement with contractors to build a portion of the Wisconsin Central Railroad through the city, which added to his authority over community matters. Next, Lawson became active in state Republican politics not only to gain support for area industry but also to

⁴⁴ Reed, “Domesticating Electricity in Appleton,” 120-21.

⁴⁵ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories of the Valley*, 179-80.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

further his control over the local labor force. For instance, in 1900, Lawson delivered a letter to his Polish employees at the Menasha Wooden Ware Company in which he endorsed William McKinley for president and also warned mill workers that a William Jennings Bryan win could hurt their wages. Furthering the threats, Lawson and his compatriots claimed that if McKinley lost, factories “could not employ half the number of men that are at work to-day.” A Republican win, on the other hand, would ensure that “laboring man and the manufacturers can do business together, with fair wages for both.”⁴⁷ Lawson also worked closely with Republican State Assemblyman and U.S. Congressional Representative Charles B. Clark of Kimberly & Clark Co., who also recognized the importance of robust local industry and control over labor.⁴⁸

Factory owners had a substantial effect on the community, and they used the connections that they created to influence the local economy to support their manufacturing needs. For example, Menasha aldermen voted against spending money on a library, parks, and hospitals because they did not view these public services as necessities. Since capitalists wanted to keep taxes and municipal costs low, they often spoke out against city improvements as creating excessive costs to local residents. Meanwhile, industrialists needed workers to make their products, and they hoped that their employees would want to stay in local communities and contribute to economic success in the area.⁴⁹ Thus, although they initially resisted improvement of municipal infrastructure, in time the desire for a larger workforce led to improved social services in the region. For instance, Neenah City Council members eventually voted in favor of

⁴⁷ “Menasha Wooden Ware Co. to Polish Voters of Menasha,” Correspondence, Box 2, Publius V. Papers, 1840-1920, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 185.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories of the Valley*, 217.

an improved sewer system, but only after several factory owners realized this would help their businesses.⁵⁰ Simultaneously, Publius V. Lawson Jr. produced a pamphlet in which he attempted to attract workers to the area by claiming that “the magnificent cities of Oshkosh, Menasha, Neenah, Appleton, and Kaukauna” demonstrated “the possibilities of the West.”⁵¹ Likewise, newspaper editors “stressed the proposition that Neenah-Menasha was an exceptionally ‘healthful’ place in which to live.”⁵² And the *Appleton Post* stated that “[n]o city in the Northwest has more brilliant prospects than Appleton.”⁵³ Thus, despite efforts to save money, workers’ everyday necessities influenced the corporate philosophies of local industrialists.

By the turn of the twentieth century, area factory owners became desperate for a steady, reliable, and abundant labor supply, yet they also wanted to foster maximum profits. George M. Paine, owner of a successful Oshkosh lumber company, for instance, believed that supplies should cost more than workers.⁵⁴ This created a conundrum, given the transient nature of the labor force and competition for workers with eastern manufacturers and the extractive economies of the West.⁵⁵ A strict and devout work ethic guided Paine’s managerial philosophy, which affected his ability to maintain a labor force. Like the industrialists who owned the Kimberly & Clark Co. factories, Paine Lumber emphasized new machinery and innovative ideas in scientific

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories of the Valley*, 183-84.

⁵² Ibid., 216.

⁵³ “The Population of Appleton,” *Appleton Post*, August 11, 1870.

⁵⁴ Crane, *Oshkosh’s Woodworkers’ Strike of 1898*, 14.

⁵⁵ Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 8-14.

management, including uniformity, efficiency, and the division of labor.⁵⁶ Central to both wood-products operations was a commitment to control over all aspects of business including the composition and behaviors of the local working class.

Fox River Valley industrialists in both wood-products manufacturing and paper production experimented with techniques that sought to place all authority in the hands of owners and factory management. Advanced machinery and the specialization of labor limited operatives' ability to work at their own pace, curtailed the freedom to determine the content of their work, and restricted their influence over the final product. Despite their pioneering approaches, Paine and the owners of the giant papermaking corporations north of Oshkosh found flaws in their capitalist designs, as workers found ways to challenge corporate interests in the area. As a result, local industrialists developed a business philosophy founded upon the idea that their "riches" rested not only on keeping workers in "rags" by maintaining low wages, but also on developing tactics to shape working-class life, both at the factory and in local communities.⁵⁷

During the late 1870s and early 1880s, owners of papermaking operations around the Fox River Valley sought to meet the demands of a post-Civil War media craze.⁵⁸ People wanted paper for everything from newspapers to scrapbooks, and demand skyrocketed. Between 1865 and 1880, the price of paper for consumers declined almost 50 percent, and area businessmen struggled to create enough output to keep their new factories profitable. The owners of the

⁵⁶ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 117-18.

⁵⁷ On strategies that late-nineteenth century employers used to organize their shop floors and control their workforce, see David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 9-18.

⁵⁸ Ellen Gruber Garvey, *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-6; and Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 65-67.

Appleton Pulp and Paper Company, who claimed in 1882 that their Vulcan mill was the first building in the U.S. lighted by hydroelectric power, also boasted that the factory produced 6.5 tons of paper for newsprint daily. Appleton's Richmond Mill, one of several newly opened factories around the valley, stood down river from the Vulcan plant, and in 1880 produced 500 tons of straw-wrapping paper. Another local factory, the Menasha Paper and Pulp Company, which was the first to occupy the Menasha channel of the river, yielded over 7.5 tons of paper from wood pulp that same year.⁵⁹ Despite efforts by industrialists and their workers, who labored in factories for hours on end, local mills could not keep up with demand. Given the unrelenting desire for paper products, local industrialists and eastern capitalists sought the most "efficient" and "modern" technologies for the increasingly profitable industry.

Commercial investors from the area as well as Chicago, New York, and New England poured capital into the industry in the early 1880s, with paper mills springing up all along the banks of the Lower Fox. From Appleton to De Pere, ambitious industrialists, some of whom had made their fortunes in flour production, hastened to grab a piece of the profitable business.⁶⁰ The post-Civil War era sparked a rise in consumption of all types of paper, including book, straw-wrapping, newsprint, and finer quality paper for correspondence.⁶¹ Until the 1880s, most valley

⁵⁹ Glaab and Larsen provide statistics about the amount of capital invested in the different paper mills as well as the amount and types of paper produced by the different mills. Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 109-26 and 285. For more information regarding product output, see the "Special Statistics of Manufacturers for Principal Industries, Paper," in *Report of the Manufacturers of the United States Tenth Census*, vol. 16 (Washington DC: U.S. Government, 1883).

⁶⁰ For the locations of specific mills along the Fox River at the end of the 1880s, see *Plat Book of Outagamie County, Wisconsin* (Minneapolis: C. M. Foote & Company, 1900); *Wright's Appleton City Directory, 1887*, 198; *Neenah City Directory* (Oshkosh, WI: John V. Bunn, 1900), 738; *Appleton's City Directory* (Appleton, WI: Morrow and Gillett, 1889-1890), 10-12; *Winnebago County Directory* (Oshkosh, WI: John V. Bunn, 1900), 858-59.

⁶¹ For the types of paper local manufacturers produced and the reasons that they chose certain methods over others, see Publius V. Lawson, *History, Winnebago County, Wisconsin: Its Cities, Towns,*

mills made paper out of woolen rags, which were expensive and hard to procure. The decade brought new technologies, however, as more efficient machinery from the eastern U.S. filtered into the region. Rag-stock papermaking was labor intensive, with factory owners hiring local farmers to carry out the time-consuming process. So aspiring industrialists sought modern methods to produce paper in ways that were simpler and relied less on the skills and patience of workers.⁶² In order to do so, manufacturers needed not only access to capital for new equipment but also a plan for managing factory workers.⁶³ As a result, several area manufacturers turned to scientific management in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

By far the most successful and innovative papermaking enterprise in the region during this era was the Kimberly & Clark Corporation. Locally referred to as “the Big Four,” industrialists Havilah Babcock, Frank C. Shattuck, Charles B. Clark, and John A. Kimberly invested in six valley mills in 1882. By the end of the decade, their total operation was valued at 1.5 million dollars.⁶⁴ Beginning as a small enterprise out of Neenah in the early 1870s, the investors dissolved their partnership in 1880 in favor of incorporation, as they expanded their firm into Appleton. In 1881 Kimberly & Clark financed the famous Vulcan mill, which signaled a new direction for the enterprise. Also acquiring the adjoining Atlas factory, the new facility produced everything from straw-wrapping to book paper. This further fueled the dominance of Kimberly & Clark. The corporation also bought a former flourmill in Neenah that owners

Resources, People (Chicago: C. F. Cooper, 1908), 431-32; Glaab and Larsen, 92-105; *Menasha-Winnebago County Press*, September 24, 1870.

⁶² For primary sources on the rag paper industry, see Gilbert Paper Company Records, Paper Discovery Center, Appleton, WI. For a secondary account, see Glaab and Larsen, 121-22.

⁶³ For the struggles of late nineteenth-century workers to manage production and the response of employers to regain control through anti-union and scientific management efforts, see Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, 33-44.

⁶⁴ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 114.

renamed the Tioga Mill. Next they purchased the Badger and Telulah paper companies, as investors shifted their sights to a new method in paper production—using sulfur to treat wood pulp. Throughout the 1880s, the growing company amassed land and abandoned factories, including failing papermaking businesses and former flourmills around the area.⁶⁵

When Kimberly & Clark decided to embark on an uncertain venture to create a superior grade of paper using wood in 1887, one local newspaper editor contended, “the secret of this process has been known only to foreign paper makers, until this experiment has solved the secret.” By attempting a new manufacturing technique, at least within the U.S. market, the Big Four solidified their hold over the industry in the valley, the Middle West, and, arguably, the nation. The corporation’s output equaled that of the industrial paper mills in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and it specialized in as many different types of paper production as any other enterprise of its kind. As the same local editor exclaimed, “the Kimberly Clark Corporation has struck the biggest bonanza ever in America.”⁶⁶ The company would guide the trajectory of the industry as well as command the paper market in the region for the next century.

At least three facets of corporate strategy assisted the Big Four in their commercial supremacy: first, capital for investment in all types of local industry; second, abundant land, buildings, and papermaking technology; and third, an innovative emphasis on control over all aspects of the production process. The business experience of Kimberly & Clark’s four owners assisted their endeavors. They already ran factories and had local connections. With the exception of Shattuck, who had spent considerable time in Chicago, each had lived in Neenah for

⁶⁵ Ibid., 112-15.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 113.

several years and applied his knowledge to the expanding paper-manufacturing enterprise.⁶⁷ The corporation particularly benefitted from the connections of Kimberly and Babcock, who co-owned a general store and were two of the partners invested in Neenah's largest flourmill.⁶⁸ Like the majority of municipal officials and successful local entrepreneurs, all of the paper mill investors were from either New York or New England, which helped them acquire support from people who wielded significant political and corporate power in the area.⁶⁹

Not only were three of the owners already respected for their commercial pursuits in the valley, but also their former ventures afforded them more access to capital than industrialists who were new to the region. Charles B. Clark, who founded the Kimberly & Clark Corporation, got his start as a junior partner in a local hardware store. He hoped to invest in the paper industry, and so he approached each of the others individually before incorporation and encouraged them to invest in his commercial dream. His success in convincing John A. Kimberly to join the partnership was key to the future of the corporation. Initially, each of the Big Four invested 7,500 dollars and agreed to a salary of less than 5,000 dollars yearly, a moderate income for capitalists of the era. Although they fronted a relatively humble amount of capital, each partner had investments in other local commercial endeavors, which meant that the corporation could tap into the owners' other assets if necessary. Kimberly was the richest in this

⁶⁷ Suzanne Hart O'Regan, *Family Letters: A Personal Selection from Theda Clark's Life* (Neenah, WI: Palmer Publications, Inc., 1983), 12-14.

⁶⁸ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 88-123.

⁶⁹ Municipal officials demonstrated preferences for supporting the business endeavors of industrialists who had East Coast roots and especially those who had established connections in the Fox River Valley. *Ibid.*, 88-123 and 175-82.

regard, as his father, John R. Kimberly, was the most prominent flourmill baron in the area and his family was one of the wealthiest in the Fox Valley.⁷⁰

Beyond the Big Four's access to capital, they understood the importance of expanding quickly and establishing hegemony in the paper industry by acquiring as much land and as many local businesses as possible. They succeeded in this regard almost from the company's inception. Here, Kimberly's connections were particularly useful because his family already had significant control over the local economy. His father was not a member of the corporation, but he provided his son financial backing as well as advice about how to expand and which abandoned or still-operating factories to purchase. Thus, one of the first undertakings of Kimberly & Clark was buying a former flourmill, demolishing the factory, and constructing a papermaking facility. The Globe Mill in Neenah began operation in 1872, when workers produced the factory's first rag paper. The company offered the best quality product produced within three hundred miles, allowing the owners to sell at prices comparable to their eastern counterparts. Their early achievements lured other entrepreneurs into the industry, but none had the success of Kimberly & Clark, which took a brave leap when owners expanded into Appleton by purchasing the Genessee flourmill. By 1880, the firm owned three of the nine mills in the Fox Valley, producing more paper and reaping greater profits than any of its local competitors.⁷¹

By the early twentieth century, Kimberly & Clark monopolized the paper industry in the area. Over the course of the 1880s, the corporation grew from owning property valued at 400,000 dollars, including three paper mills, a water power company, and an abandoned flourmill, to a company with over five mills and assets of more than 1.5 million dollars. Initially,

⁷⁰ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 175-82; and O'Regan, *Family Letters*, 12-14.

⁷¹ Glaab, *Factories in the Valley*, 109-18.

the Big Four agreed against paying dividends, but as the company expanded, so too did investments, and some high-level employees could purchase stock in the firm. This shift in policy allowed the corporation to buy more factories, introduce cutting-edge production practices, and keep managers satisfied.⁷² During the 1880s, papermakers moved away from rag paper to straw-wrapping and wood pulp. With this shift, Kimberly & Clark came to dominate paper manufacturing in the region, becoming an operation that rivaled any in the eastern U.S.⁷³

The shift to wood pulp and sulphite to treat lumber was inextricably linked to the third facet of the company's corporate strategy, control over all aspects of papermaking. The new manufacturing process brought management more power over factory workers and overall production, but supervisors still faced challenges. Unlike the rag-paper manufacturing of earlier decades, where farmer-workers were involved in most stages of the process, modern methods in scientific management relied on skill differentiation and the division of labor. Although craft workers, in most cases men, operated the papermaking machines, unskilled laborers, often women and children, performed the bulk of other factory tasks. Each employee learned a single phase in the production process. Rather than have one person perform all the steps necessary to make paper, the company hired people for specific duties, making each person less valuable and therefore more replaceable. This allowed workers negligible influence over production and, according to theorist Frederick Winslow Taylor, minimized opportunities for labor unrest. Paper barons trusted that sound business practices and factory design would create greater efficiency on the shop floor, which would result in more profit.⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 105, 116, 125, and 144.

⁷⁴ Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, 33-44; and David R. Roediger and Elizabeth D.

Owners believed that they would be able to extract more labor from their workers through these strategies because employees would operate similarly to any other instrument of capitalism. Managers did not, however, take into account that workers were not “raw materials” for the companies that employed them, but rather had emotions, beliefs, work habits, and their own sense of their value. While scientific management encouraged workers to perfect the completion of one repetitive stage of the papermaking process, laborers often learned several steps along the production line, sharing knowledge about the craft.⁷⁵ Papermakers were not easy to coerce or control, and workers did not operate as cogs in one large machine. Instead, they resisted corporate efforts to treat them as industrial parts by coming together to demonstrate their worth as human beings.

By the late 1880s, Kimberly & Clark had developed a process for managing their business affairs, both administratively and on the shop floor.⁷⁶ For example, the corporation set standards for time in correlation with the national railroad schedule, and each day followed the same pattern.⁷⁷ And the advent of hydroelectric lighting in 1882 offered an opportunity to keep factories running twenty-four hours per day. With the rise of professional management in the 1880s, owners demanded that factory leaders abide by their rigid work ethic in order to set an example for workers on the shop floor.⁷⁸ Allowing salaried managers to purchase stock in the

Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 146-50.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 109-18.

⁷⁷ For more on railroads and the standardization of time, see Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 74-80.

⁷⁸ For the history of scientific management, see David Brody, *In Labor's Cause: Main Themes on the History of the American Worker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Brody traces the strategies employers have used to control the workplace, including a discussion of Taylor's methods of business efficiency and scientific management. Brody, 131, 169. For more on Taylor's approach, see

corporation incentivized this group of employees, who in turn benefitted from increased factory output. Greater production meant more opportunities for investment and dividends for loyal supervisors, as Kimberly & Clark institutionalized policies that required workers to follow corporate dictates. For instance, Frank J. Sensenbrenner, an area factory manager and eventual president of Kimberly & Clark, applied an owner's viewpoint in the ways he directed efficiency in local mills. Once subject to Charles B. Clark's scrutiny for being a few minutes late for work during a snow storm, Sensenbrenner adopted "work" as his central philosophy, claiming that "when you work 365 days a year you do not need a vacation."⁷⁹ His statement reflects the corporation's approach to industry as well as its treatment of workers. Days were long and breaks were infrequent. Management punished breaches in efficient production, often making an example of neglectful employees by firing them.

Along with a strong work ethic, Kimberly & Clark emphasized innovation. This led to an expansion in the types of paper that the corporation made, including the use of wood pulp. Preparation for new methods required different equipment and eventually the construction of another facility. In 1886, Kimberly & Clark opened the Telulah Mill in Appleton, investing 250,000 dollars in a risky endeavor by introducing a new papermaking technique to the United States. Despite the skepticism of their competitors in the local paper industry, the corporation's experiment using the sulphite method succeeded, and the Fox River Valley factory became the

Howard Kimeldorf, *Battling for American Labor: Wobblies, Craft Workers, and the Making of the Union Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). Richard Edwards argues that Taylorism sought to improve efficiency on the shop floor and productivity through the use of scientific management techniques. However, he also claims that "the real objective was to wrest from workers control over special knowledge." Edwards, *Contested Terrain*, 99; and Gerard Hanlon, *The Dark Side of Management: A Secret History of Management Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

⁷⁹ "Clark's Work Philosophy," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 23, 1952.

first of its kind in the nation. Diversification was a central component of the Big Four's hold over the paper market.⁸⁰ With successful rag and straw-production already underway, the company's expansion into wood pulp only added to its power. This momentum permitted the corporation to undertake its greatest commercial project, the erection of a "townsite" that the owners named Kimberly.⁸¹

Maintaining a loyal and steady workforce became the fourth and arguably the most important facet of Kimberly & Clark's business strategy. While the corporation had capital, influence over the local economy, and a well-executed papermaking process, it still dealt with an intractable reality—no paper mill owner in the valley had found a way to manage the lives of workers in a way that maximized productivity. Industrialists struggled to create an effective method for handling spirited, unruly, or underproductive workers, and none was as ambitious as the Kimberly settlement. Whether or not this evolution in scientific management would solve corporate challenges with labor remained unclear, however. Could a planned community make workers abide by the guidelines of owners and managers? Although Kimberly was not formally incorporated as a village for another two decades, in 1888 the Kimberly & Clark Co. began selling houses and lots, renting properties, and building a hotel along the Fox River, not three miles north of Appleton. Central to the development of this company town was the newly constructed mill, the first in the valley designed by a professional architect, A. B. Tower, who promised the most efficient use of both machinery and labor. Emphasizing progress in the region, the Big Four's application of scientific management to the design of a village garnered them strength, provided enormous opportunity for local boosters, and brought a whole new

⁸⁰ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 109-26.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

industrial vision to the Fox River Valley. Company towns like Kimberly offered a creative way to deal with rebellious workers by instilling capitalist economic values not only on the factory floor but also in the community.⁸²

Although they lacked the freedom of skilled workers in rag-paper mills, scientifically managed factory employees still maintained some control on the shop floor, and they determined the use of their own free time. This unsupervised aspect of working-class life created anxiety for industrialists, because they wanted to keep their workforce accessible and focused on production. Whether through covert methods, like corrupting a product, or more overt tactics, like refusing to complete a task, workers fought to maintain their dignity, often risking their jobs, if not their lives. One practice that business owners found particularly disturbing was vagrancy. Some workers could not find housing and ended up living on the streets. While corporately controlled towns like Kimberly could provide a solution, not all workers wanted to establish permanent residency. Indeed, transience allowed workers to switch jobs or skip town in search of other employment when they did not agree with management or wanted a change of social scenery. Whatever the reason behind working-class itinerancy, factory owners needed bodies to run their

⁸² Ibid., 113-19. The Paine Lumber Company also had a townsite with row-style homes, boardinghouses for single men, and a hotel for seasonal employees. There was a company store for gathering and purchasing necessary goods, often on credit from the company, and a bank where employees could invest their minimal earnings. Edward L. Paine, the owner, also started a Methodist church in one of the buildings of his local factories. He hoped to encourage a strong and faithful work ethic amongst his employees. Then in 1872, he financed the building of a permanent location near his home on the north side of the Fox River. As one of the trustees and the central donor to the project, he supervised the building process. The logic behind these developments emphasized employer control and was meant to keep workers focused on the shop floor and indebted to the company. For evidence of Paine Lumber Company housing, see *Winnebago County Directory*, 72. On lumber barons and their use of company stores, housing, banks, and churches throughout Wisconsin, see Robert C. Ostergren and Thomas R. Vale, eds., *Wisconsin Land and Life* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 229-32. For more on company housing and the methods that capitalists used to keep their workers tied to the interests of industry, see Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in North American West, 1880-1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 68-69, 174-75.

businesses. As a result, owners encouraged settlement and teamed with local law enforcement and government officials to create a municipal framework that limited worker mobility.⁸³

With the necessary raw materials, buildings conveniently located along the river, and the capital required for the technology and machinery to process wood into consumable products, mill owners only lacked one element central to their commercial quest: a steady, ambitious, and disposable supply of labor.⁸⁴ This predicament would continue to cause challenges for factory owners from the late nineteenth through the first three decades of the twentieth century. By 1892, the Fox River Valley boasted 22 paper mills and the industry boomed with its access to successful lumber businesses just to the south at Oshkosh. The Fox River Valley became one thriving industrial complex from Lake Winnebago all the way downriver to De Pere, where the Fox filtered into Green Bay.⁸⁵ Although focused on wood products rather than paper production, the Paine Lumber Company of Oshkosh, like the Kimberly & Clark Company, represented the immense industrial development of the region. Unaffected by the national depression of the 1890s, both the paper and wood interests in the valley needed a stable and plentiful labor supply in order to sustain a high level of factory output. Both industries demanded immense productivity and controlled costs, and thus owners emphasized low wages.⁸⁶ This combination of corporate demands made it difficult to maintain a workforce. As a result, in an effort to attract

⁸³ According to Todd DePastino, “male homelessness so haunted the body politic between the end of the Civil War and the onset of the Cold War that it prompted an entirely new social order.” The appearance of increasing numbers of vagrants on the streets “signaled a crisis of the home that was always also one of nationhood and citizenship, race and gender.” DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*, xviii-xix.

⁸⁴ Summers, *Consuming Nature*, 53; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 194-200.

⁸⁵ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 285.

⁸⁶ Crane, *The Oshkosh Woodworkers’ Strike of 1898*, 32-38.

workers, promoters advertised the progressive character of the region. Meanwhile, industrialists and municipal officials continued to construct a political infrastructure that supported lucrative industry, thriving corporate capitalism, and an increasingly rigid social order. They did do in order to secure profits but also to manage their cultural environment in ways that reflected their everyday morals and perspectives on proper lifestyle choices.

A Civilizing Mission

In 1870, the *Green Bay Weekly Gazette* editor wrote to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior: “We are agitating here through the local press the best plan of getting rid of the Oneidas.”⁸⁷ He also complained publicly in his column that there was a “large, unproductive and non-taxpaying property in our midst.” Referring to the Oneida Indian reservation as an “eyesore,” the editorial reflected a widespread opinion shared by white settlers and established elites in the Fox Valley well before Congress passed the Dawes Severalty Act in 1887.⁸⁸ Even before the policy became national law, local politicians and business leaders praised Washington D.C. bureaucrats for the prospect of allotment, viewing the policy as a symbol of social progress. One factor that complicated the expansion of capitalism in the region was the presence of Wisconsin Indians. The Oneida and Menominee people who occupied land in the area did not align their daily lives in accordance with the rhythms championed by industrial elites.⁸⁹ Instead, they picked and chose

⁸⁷ George E. Hoskins, “The Oneidas,” *Green Bay Weekly Gazette*, January 29, 1870. Also see James W. Oberly, “The Dawes Act and the Oneida Indian Reservation of Wisconsin,” in *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment: 1860-1920*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and L. Gordon Lester (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 184-199, cited material on 188.

⁸⁸ Hoskins, “The Oneidas.”

which aspects of corporate capitalism and settler colonialism to incorporate into their lives in ways that reflected the importance of their cultural values and material survival.

Until the 1850s, French fur traders served as the primary European presence in a region dominated by Ho-Chunks and Menominees (Oneidas arrived from the East in the 1820s, and the U.S. government subsequently pressured Ho-Chunks and Menominees to allow Oneidas land).⁹⁰

The rise of the paper and wood-products industries and the movement westward of wageworkers following the Civil War, however, changed the social landscape and placed all Indian lands at risk.⁹¹ In direct competition with European and American homesteaders were investors who wanted the potentially profitable territory along the banks of the Fox River. As local industry gained power in the area, federal treaties, violent confrontations, and rampant disease created an opportunity for land speculators who sought to acquire coveted indigenous lands and use local Indians as laborers.

⁸⁹ On local support for allotment of Oneida land by business leaders and local politicians, see Oberly, "The Dawes Act and the Oneida Indian Reservation of Wisconsin," 185-95.

⁹⁰ On the history of the Ho-Chunk Nation in Wisconsin and the Fox River Valley in particular, see Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001), 40-45. Scholar John Boatman explains that at the Treaty of the Cedars, negotiated in 1836 along the Fox River near Green Bay, the U.S. government forced Menominees to surrender another 4,184,320 acres, including land in Outagamie County that federal officials had specifically reserved for them in an 1831 treaty. In 1838, U.S. authorities required Menominee Indians to move to the Minnesota, Kansas, and Iowa territories. In the same year, a smallpox outbreak diminished the Menominee population to 3,000 individuals. By 1848, the U.S. held all remaining Menominee land. Finally, in 1854, at the Treaty of Keshena Falls, the reservation along the Wolf River became a permanent home for Menominees, when they agreed to give up other disputes against the U.S. government. John Boatman, *Wisconsin American Indian History and Culture: A Survey of Select Aspects* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1998), 47-50.

⁹¹ On Menominee patriotism and participation in the Civil War and conflicts between Wisconsin Indians and white settlers in the 1870s-1880s, see David Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination: History of the Menominee Indians Since 1854* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 17, 30, 38-45. On the ways in which the Civil War "helped depopulate the [Oneida] reservation of its young men and shattered the lives of many who returned from battle," see Hauptman and Lester, *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment: 1860-1920*, 13-14.

This created two interconnected problems for paper mills owners and lumber barons, one related to workers and the other to raw materials. First, American Indians controlled access to the majority of the vast pine forests situated just north of local factories, and capitalists relied on this lumber to make their products. Federal allotment, however, offered a solution, because the policy encouraged the commodification and sale of timber. Thus, when officials sought to regulate land use on Indian reservations, factory owners supported U.S. government tactics. Second, employers wanted access to a steady pool of pacified workers to run their operations and viewed neighboring Indians as a threat to social stability. So, when middle-class reformers sought to define civility and cultivate moral order among local Indians, businessmen applauded their efforts. Throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century, industrialists supported programs that fostered private property ownership and a cultural climate that would stifle challenges to corporate development.⁹²

One of the first methods that capitalists devised to achieve their goals was to support local industrial education that promoted settled family life, temperance, and a gendered division of labor. By the late nineteenth century, due to urban growth and the increasing prominence of the local paper industry, capitalists became preoccupied with maintaining order in the Fox River Valley. Concerned about creating a climate conducive to their interests, mill owners looked to charitable organizations and clergy to encourage a moral framework among workers. This included supporting programs that focused on “civilizing” American Indians.⁹³ In Appleton, for

⁹² On the intersection between Indian land dispossession and capitalism in the U.S., see David A. Chang, “Enclosures of Land and Sovereignty: The Allotment of American Indian Lands,” *Radical History Review* 109, no. 109 (2011): 108-19; Frank Pommersheim, *Broken Landscape: Indians, Indian Tribes, and the Constitution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 125; and Rebecca Tinio McKenna, *American Imperial Pastoral: The Architecture of U.S. Colonialism in the Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 92-93.

instance, businessmen sought to maintain a community that featured a sober and settled lifestyle. Having developed around Lawrence University, the city had strong ties to Methodism. The man who funded the college, Amos Lawrence from Boston, wanted the institution to sit somewhere along the banks of the Fox River and placed it under the direction of Methodist missionaries.⁹⁴ The founding of the institution attracted white migrants to the area even before the development of the wood-products and paper industries, and the influx of people meant that the city became the seat of government for Outagamie County.⁹⁵ Following Yankee customs, officials elected a village marshal to encourage sobriety and proper social behavior among residents, and prominent families as well as area industrialists took pride in the pious New England heritage of Appleton. Local elites and social reformers, however, would soon find this image hard to uphold.⁹⁶

The first European families to settle in the region in the 1850s were primarily Protestants from the eastern United States, but immigrants from Germany, Scandinavia, Holland, and Ireland soon followed. The influx of newcomers created both possibilities and liabilities for factory

⁹³ By adopting the habits and values of local elites and their middle-class supporters, Indians could demonstrate their fitness for Euro-American society. Stephen Kantrowitz argues that “on the basis on their adoption of a wide range of American practices and customs: republican government, education, labor, literacy in English, and what they called ‘the dress and habits of civilized men,’” Indians sought access to U.S. citizenship. Kantrowitz, “‘Citizen’s Clothing’: Reconstruction, Ho-Chunk Persistence and the Politics of Dress,” in *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States*, ed. Adam Arneson and Andrew R. Graybill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 245. Dress was an especially important component of Indian assimilation efforts among Ho-Chunks in Wisconsin. For instance, when Mountain Wolf Woman recalled her childhood, she claimed, “I made myself into a white person” by dressing in Euro-American clothing and learning to speak English in an Indian boarding school. See *Mountain Wolf Woman, Sister of Crashing Thunder: The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*, ed. Nancy Oestreich Lurie (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966), 121.

⁹⁴ “Letter from the Secretary of the Interior,” 15 February 1854 and 18 January 1879, Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

⁹⁵ Nettekoven, *Appleton, Wisconsin Law Enforcement History*, 6-7.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

owners.⁹⁷ Employers needed workers but also craved order. Industrialists increasingly relied on scientific management to run their factories, and they applied these ideas as well to how their workers spent their time away from the shop floor.⁹⁸ Encouraging their employees to avoid saloons, and instead attend church and spend time with their families, industrialists benefitted from supporting social reform efforts in local communities. Paper mill owners attended and donated to churches and programs that they believed would provide a model of acceptable public behavior for their workers.⁹⁹ Fortunately for industrialists, Lawrence College and the Young Men's Christian Association worked in tandem to support similar cultural values, including faith, temperance, and industry.

Workers built Lawrence in an area that the founder believed was in need of moral reform. Institutional records indicate that Amos Lawrence pursued the promising commercial site along the Lower Fox River, viewing the location as an opportunity to “elevate and improve all classes.”¹⁰⁰ The powerful rapids of the waterway offered many advantages for businesses, which he believed would attract jobless wage earners in search of work. Anticipating the likely industrial developments that would soon occur in the region, the wealthy Bostonian hoped that the college would provide an “opening, for the promotion of good morals and education among the promiscuous crowds of emigrants in a portion of the country where it’s most needed, and

⁹⁷ Theodore Roemer, *St. Joseph in Appleton* (Appleton, WI: Theodore Roemer, 1943), 3-6; Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 202; and La Vern J. Rippley, *Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 15-16.

⁹⁸ Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, 33-44.

⁹⁹ Robert W. Ozanne, *The Labor Movement in Wisconsin: A History* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1984), 173-75.

¹⁰⁰ To reflect the language of documents from the late nineteenth century, I use Lawrence College, Lawrence Institute, and Lawrence University interchangeably. “Lawrence College Alumni Record, 1857-1922,” pp. 30-31, n.d., Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

also, for the benefit of the numerous tribes of uncivilized nations in the west, and the half civilized which are permanently located near the spot.”¹⁰¹ Thus, the college targeted the children of local elite families as students but also sought to instruct “both sexes of Indians and Germans” by way of a preparatory department.

Lawrence also had a unit devoted to educating teachers, which administrators hoped would help future settlers and “uncivilized” populations instruct students in their own ethnic neighborhoods. Along with focusing their sights on the primarily Roman Catholic German immigrants flooding into the area to fill jobs as construction workers and canal builders, Lawrence educators looked to the nearby Oneida reservation for pupils.¹⁰² This project was in line with the expansion of local business interests, which depended on a power hierarchy that valued certain behaviors and groups of people over others.¹⁰³ For example, American Indians who did venture into the Fox Valley found it difficult to find housing and employment due to discrimination in an area that placed them at the bottom of the social ladder. Those who left their reservations were generally of mixed ancestry or had either run off or been cast out for various reasons. Most were landless and poor, with limited industrial skills. Others disagreed with their families over the use of communal resources, and some wanted to try their luck in the surrounding cities. According to one observer in the late 1870s, the Oneidas who found themselves on the streets of Wisconsin communities were “half-starved, naked [and]

¹⁰¹ “Lawrence College Alumni Record, 1857-1922,” pp. 30-31.

¹⁰² Ibid. German and central European immigrants, in general, were more familiar with “inexpensive, state-subsidized education; the small, liberal-arts college was entirely foreign to their experience.” See Roemer, *St. Joseph in Appleton*, 3.

¹⁰³ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 202-10.

destitute.”¹⁰⁴ While this was not the case for all Fox River Valley Indians in the late nineteenth century, and the image was one meant to demean and marginalize indigenous people, to the extent that it described reality it provides a bleak representation of what capitalist progress meant for indigenous peoples and their communities.¹⁰⁵ This created problems for employers who desired cultural tranquility in the region and believed that wayward Indians would cause political unrest and impede social progress.¹⁰⁶

Fortunately for social reformers, Methodists already had begun to establish a relationship with Oneidas, hoping to spread Christianity. The missionaries also advocated a settled and sober lifestyle.¹⁰⁷ As a result, some Oneidas had begun to employ Euro-American farming practices even before the allotment efforts of the federal government. By 1877, for instance, the Oneida had 5,000 acres under cultivation, just under a tenth of the total area of the reservation.¹⁰⁸ As historian Doug Kiel explains, Wisconsin Indians made informed choices about which aspects of U.S. colonialism they wished to accommodate.¹⁰⁹ Individuals and families raised hogs and

¹⁰⁴ Boatman, *Wisconsin American Indian History and Culture*, 152-55.

¹⁰⁵ Historian Doug Kiel examines the complexity of Oneida interactions with capitalism and the business community in the Fox River Valley. He explains how Oneidas had shaped their surroundings long before Euro-Americans brought industrial progress to the region, and how corporate incursion brought on by the wood-products industries encouraged further negotiation with the dominant culture. Although a large percentage of the indigenous population experienced dispossession and poverty due to white settler infiltration into their communities, some Oneida Indians embraced capitalism and the “civilizing” missions of area industrialists and middle-class social reformers. Doug Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment: Oneida Progressive-Era Politics and Writing Tribal Histories,” *Ethnohistory* 61, no. 3 (2014): 419-44.

¹⁰⁶ Bieder, 164.

¹⁰⁷ “Lawrence College Alumni Record, 1857-1922,” pp. 30-31.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas H. Ryan, *History of Outagamie County* (Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association, 1911), 1384-85.

¹⁰⁹ Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment,” 419-20.

sheep, harvested grain, and grew corn as well as seasonal vegetables, and some Oneidas even supported the temperance movement and sought U.S. citizenship.¹¹⁰ While indigenous people often resisted such “civilizing” efforts, the changes in daily life that some Oneidas made signaled to missionaries as well as local elites that this particular group of Indians was superior to those who more actively opposed Euro-American practices. As one elite area resident claimed, “they had advanced rapidly in civilization—as rapidly as they probably ever would—and it was believed by many that now would be the opportune time to absorb them as U.S. citizens.”¹¹¹

Similar to Indian assimilation programs around the U.S. at the time, the philosophy was that Oneida participants would return to the reservation, bringing with them the social customs and cultural values that they had acquired. Since Outagamie County included approximately half of the Oneida reservation, Lawrence faculty members sought federal funding to board and “educate” a select group of Oneida Indians.¹¹² Methodist missionaries worked with college officials to recruit participants into the preparatory institute, which the U.S. Department of Interior agreed to fund through the Office of Indian Affairs.¹¹³ This process required support from the Oneida. Although there were Indians who had no interest in sending their children away to an American educational institution, others viewed it as an opportunity to achieve financial security for their families and community. Tribal leaders differed in their perspectives

¹¹⁰ Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 1384-85.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1384.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 1385.

¹¹³ “Letter from the Secretary of the Interior,” 15 February 1854 and 18 January 1879, Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

on the degree to which their people should participate in U.S. society, and Indian education was a key topic of debate in this regard.¹¹⁴

Those who did support Euro-American schooling believed that Oneidas needed to take an active role in the American political economy. The students, referred to as both “scholars” and “Indian children,” received schooling in academic subjects and participated in commercial training, which prepared them for industrial work.¹¹⁵ This surely benefitted employers in the paper and wood-products industries who were in need of laborers. All Lawrence students, whether at the preparatory school or the college, learned Methodist tenets of cooperation and faithfulness, which eased concerns of factory owners who feared an unruly workforce.¹¹⁶ To some tribal members, these skills offered a solution to concerns about unemployment and poverty on the reservation. Yet others hoped that Lawrence Institute would promote Christian morality and respectable family life.¹¹⁷

A central component of Indian as well as German schooling at Lawrence was a commitment to an educational curriculum that encouraged a gendered division of labor and society.¹¹⁸ Like the majority of coeducational normal schools in the late nineteenth century, Lawrence permitted minimal social interaction between men and women. Instead, the college

¹¹⁴ Doug Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment,” 428-32.

¹¹⁵ “Lawrence Catalogs, Oneida Students, LU Archives.”

¹¹⁶ Ibid.; Ozanne, *Labor Movement in Wisconsin*, 175; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 223-29.

¹¹⁷ As Doug Kiel explains, not all Oneidas viewed efforts to “civilize” and assimilate indigenous people as negative. Some welcomed reformers and industrialists to the reservation with the hope that this would help alleviate Indian poverty, while others believed that capitalism was the best route for Oneida self-determination. Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment,” 428-32.

¹¹⁸ “Letter from the Secretary of the Interior,” 15 February 1854, Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952.

promoted “a Christian education” and reinforced Victorian understandings of separate spheres.¹¹⁹ For women, this could mean taking a post as a teacher devoted to educating Indian youth or working as a seamstress, thereby promoting Euro-American clothing styles.¹²⁰ The expectations for Oneida men, on the other hand, emphasized their need to be breadwinners for their families. Rather than learning domestic skills, male students at Lawrence focused on technical training and preparedness for jobs in the expanding industrial world of the Fox River Valley. Some Oneida men pursued religious education, hoping to return to the reservation as leaders who encouraged Christian teachings and a settled lifestyle.¹²¹ Methodist missionaries claimed that others, such as those who remained in and around Appleton, would contribute to the industrial workforce in the area. Henry Cornelius, for example, upon graduating from Lawrence, pursued a job with the shipping industry in nearby DePere.¹²²

In contrast, his nieces, Eliza and Lydia Cornelius, would return to the Oneida reservation, bringing what they learned back to their community and thereby continuing the social objectives of the institution. Although college administrators thought that her “advancement was slow” initially due to her lack of “character” and inability to learn the English language, Lydia had

¹¹⁹ Christine A. Ogren, “Where Coeds Were Coeducated: Normal Schools in Wisconsin,” *History of Education Society* 35, no.1 (Spring 1995): 4-6; and Pamela Ruth Paulsen, “Women at Lawrence University: The First Seventy-Five Years, 1849-1924” (unpublished honors project, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI, 1983), 1-10.

¹²⁰ Lawrence University faculty hoped that Oneida women would take over the education of young children on the reservation from the Euro-American Methodist women who had been the first teachers. Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 1383. On the role of dress in determining the level of Indian civility among Ho-Chunks in Wisconsin, see Kantrowitz, ““Citizen’s Clothing,”” 246-49.

¹²¹ Kantrowitz explains how Quakers took on a similar civilization project in Nebraska by trying to make an “industrious and sober people” out of the Indians on the Winnebago Reservation there. Kantrowitz, ““Citizen’s Clothing,”” 249.

¹²² “Lawrence College Alumni Record, 1857-1922,” pp. 30-31.

apparently impressed them with her “progress” after her eight years at the institution.¹²³ By the end of her stay, they thought she had adjusted academically and “developed also socially and morally” to become “very ladylike in her deportment.” While attending the college, they noted, “she [had] become accustomed to various kinds of domestic matters, in which she [offered] excellent proficiency and skill.” College administrators viewed her demeanor as civilized and capable. According to those who supported the program, her “education [was] having a perceptible and most salutary effect on her father’s family” and would be “beneficial to the tribe more generally.”¹²⁴ Lawrence officials believed that they had instilled acceptable values in students like Lydia. By promoting Euro-American gender norms, Oneida students advanced a cultural order that supported hearty industry and capitalist development.¹²⁵ Yet they decided which aspects of industrial capitalism and settler colonialism to adopt, and by doing so, they influenced the social landscape of the region in ways that reflected their persistence and beliefs.

Indeed, by the early 1880s, there was evidence of the influence that assimilation tactics had on the Oneida reservation. Beyond the increase in Euro-American farming methods, several Oneidas adopted Methodist teachings, including an emphasis on abstinence from alcohol. One leader who had a profound connection to the rise of Methodism and civilization efforts on the reservation was head chief Jacob Cornelius. For example, in September 1877, at a meeting of

¹²³ “Letter from the Secretary of the Interior,” 25 October 1875, Students, Native Americans.

¹²⁴ Lydia Cornelius died not long after leaving Lawrence University. She would have been about 22 when she passed away on the Oneida reservation on February 26, 1881. She seems to have completed her studies in the spring semester of 1879, and first moved to Oshkosh, perhaps to attend or teach at the normal school there. So she did not return directly to the reservation, as the program at Lawrence had groomed Oneida women to do. The circumstances under which she moved back near her family are unclear. See “Lawrence Catalogs, Oneida Students, LU Archives,” n. d., Students, Native Americans.

¹²⁵ For more on Indian schooling in Wisconsin and on the Oneida reservation in particular, see *Report of the Indian School Superintendent to the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1902), 13.

the Forest Temperance Society of the Six Nations that took place on the Oneida reservation, Cornelius gave a speech on the evils of alcohol consumption.¹²⁶ He also addressed a crowd in Appleton when Lawrence started its program educating Indian youth. Thanking “his white brothers” for their missionary efforts and praising the college for its work with “Oneida children,” he boasted the progress that Oneidas were making in “civilization and religion.” He sent a number of kin to Lawrence for preparatory and industrial schooling in the years following this speech, including the first Oneida graduate from the institute.¹²⁷ The *Appleton Crescent* raved that having mastered the English alphabet, “his standing as a student and a man [was] first-class.”¹²⁸ The first several as well as the last five Oneida pupils to attend the institution under the federally funded program all had the surname Cornelius.¹²⁹

The transition away from Oneida education at Lawrence coincided with an accelerated effort to foster Indian assimilation on a national scale.¹³⁰ In 1881, the same year that the college lost its funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Thaddeus Coleman Pound, a U.S. congressman from Wisconsin, expressed concern to his fellow politicians in Washington D.C. about the increasing conflict between obstinate American Indians and white immigrants who

¹²⁶ Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 1385.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 150-51.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1384.

¹²⁹ “Lawrence Catalogs, Oneida Students, LU Archives,” n. d., Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

¹³⁰ Scott Laderman, “‘It Is Cheaper and Better to Teach a Young Indian than to Fight an Old One’: Thaddeus Pound and the Logic of Assimilation,” *American Indian and Culture and Research Journal* 26, no. 3 (2002): 85-111, cited material on p. 85. The loss of funding for Oneida pupils hurt the enrollment of Lawrence as well because the bulk of the student body attended the preparatory program rather than the actual university. At the time that the Department of the Interior stopped supporting Indian education, there were 256 students taking high school classes, with only 102 enrolled in college courses. See “Lawrence College Alumni Record, 1857-1922,” pp. 30-31.

were trying to move west. An advocate of Indian schooling, Pound and his allies in the nation's capital masked their goals for ending indigenous access to land in reformist language emphasizing cultural improvement. Supporters viewed education as a way for the federal government to influence the actions of Indians toward settlers as well as a method to consolidate all territory in the contiguous United States.¹³¹ Only a few years later, in 1887, Congress passed the Dawes Severalty Act, which initiated federal allotment of reservation land and encouraged civilization programming similar to the kind that Oneida youth had received at Lawrence.

The funding, however, would not come from the Department of the Interior this time, but rather from the selling of reservation lands. Federal officials hoped that Indians would use revenue from the sales to pay for schools for Native youth. As historian Scott Laderman notes, “while allotment tried to break up the reservations as obstacles to progress, education was seen as the key to making progress.”¹³² Thus, the legislation solved two aspects of “the vexed Indian problem,” one related to land and the other to assimilation. By encouraging private property ownership and Euro-American farming methods, supporters of the Dawes Act helped foster a free market capitalist economy that promoted Christianity and a patriarchal division of labor.¹³³

¹³¹ Laderman, “It Is Cheaper and Better to Teach a Young Indian than to Fight an Old One,” 86.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 88.

¹³³ C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa explores the intersection between efforts to assimilate Indians and the dispossession of indigenous lands. Social reformers of the 1870s and 1880s, along with government policymakers, sought to encourage private property, capitalism, and Euro-American notions of civilization through American Indian education programs and legislation like the General Allotment Act of 1887. Genetin-Pilawa draws on the work of Francis Paul Prucha, who claims that governmental policies like allotment and assimilation were products of a “Christian nation” that relied on “Christian men and principles” to guide legislation. Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 65-75, 112-16, and 179-81. On the implications of the allotment program nationally, see Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976); and Leonard A. Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land: The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981).

Eradicating Indian cultural practices was not a smooth process, however, given that not everyone welcomed outside authority over indigenous life. For instance, even those who adapted to Christianity often did so by mixing their own religious practices with Methodist teachings. According to historian Robert E. Bieder, “old beliefs in witches, herbal medicines, and curing ceremonies, as well as funeral practice, served as a link between acculturated Oneida and their Iroquois past.”¹³⁴ Despite the influence that outsiders believed they had over the local indigenous population, Indians chose which aspects of Euro-American life to adopt. This was the case with allotment as well. Indeed, almost two-thirds of those who lived on the Oneida reservation signed a petition protesting the federal allotment of their land. According to one early Appleton settler, Thomas Ryan, the document suggested that “because [the Oneida] were not to have absolute control of the lands allotted nor the rights of citizenship for twenty-five years, their present status would remain unchanged. They were [open] to allotment if these objections were removed.”¹³⁵ Oneidas resisted American paternalism by expressing their frustration with federal oversight. Through their determination to shape the parameters of government involvement in their affairs, Fox Valley Indians complicated capitalist designs. Not all agreed about how to interact with U.S. officials, however, which threatened their unity.

Although many Indians did not support government involvement in their affairs, a portion of those with the most power over reservation lands believed that assimilation and allotment efforts were positive developments. For example, a hereditary tribal council made up of twelve chiefs had a significant influence over land use and the laws governing Oneidas.¹³⁶ In

¹³⁴ Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960*, 164-65. On U.S. government attempts to curb non-Christian Indian religious practices, see Pommersheim, *Broken Landscape*, 186-90.

¹³⁵ Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 1385.

January 1883, an Oneida delegation went to Green Bay to meet with local white officials about the possibility of opening the reservation to outside industry and commerce. From that gathering, Oneida elders decided to cooperate with federal authorities on land tenure measures and U.S. citizenship efforts.¹³⁷ This group of leaders believed that promoting individual private property and free market economic values was the best solution for combating poverty and creating wealth among Indians. Thus, those select few who had the most say over the use of natural resources supported opening up reservation lands to industrial development and federal assimilation programs, even though a majority of Oneidas wanted to replace this tribal council with town and county governments. These disputes weakened their autonomy and increased non-Indian settlement, resulting in further land loss.¹³⁸

Indeed, the federal emphasis on Euro-American farming practices and private land ownership contributed to the division of reservations and dispossession of indigenous resources among Indian communities throughout the region. For instance, although, federal officials

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ The delegation consisted of A. P. Cornelius, Eli Scandinaven, Joseph Silas, and E. J. Cornelius. See Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 1385.

¹³⁸ This was an ongoing debate on the Oneida reservation well beyond the end of the nineteenth century. While the entirety of the Wisconsin Oneida reservation became subject to division and oversight by the federal government, those with the best land continued to resist taxation of their property until at least 1917, with the creation of the Federal Competency Commission. See Laurence M. Hauptman, "The Wisconsin Oneidas and the Federal Competency Commission," in *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment*, 200-10. As late as 1912, the Oneida nation petitioned the Department of Indian Affairs to stop taxing lands in severalty. Oneida tribal officials at Green Bay claimed that this process resulted in homelessness, and expressed concern that those in poverty could end up becoming a "charge upon the public." Through continued resistance against the trust patenting of their land and refusal to pay their property taxes, Oneida Indians complicated matters for local industrialists who hoped to buy reservation land for corporate expansion. See "Summary of Events," *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal* 84-85 (1912): 336. On the continued local effort to encourage farming and free market capitalism among Oneida Indians, see Angela Firkus, "Agricultural Extension and the Campaign to Assimilate the Native Americans of Wisconsin, 1914-1932," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 9, no. 4 (October 2010): 473-502.

provided homesteads of up to forty acres for those remaining in the Fox River Valley, the majority of Ho-Chunk families lost their farmland. When they could not afford county property taxes, even those who chose individual ownership and were able to pay their expenses found farming difficult. Their lands were either not contiguous or infertile, which made a cost-effective operation nearly impossible.¹³⁹ In the end, the majority of Ho-Chunk lands ended up in the hands of developers, and those who lived just east of Lake Winnebago experienced a similar fate. Smaller indigenous communities, including Brothertown, Stockbridge, and Munsee Indians, felt pressure to move westward out of the Fox River Valley.¹⁴⁰ As the wood-products industry gained traction in the late 1870s, corporate developers and factory owners took advantage of allotment of Indian lands to purchase lucrative forest plots to fuel their lumber-reliant corporate enterprises.¹⁴¹

A similar situation awaited Menominee Indians, but they chose different tactics to deal with the expansion of industry in the region. Even before federal allotment, local indigenous

¹³⁹ Jessica A. Shoemaker, “Complexities’ Shadow: American Indian Property, Sovereignty and the Future,” *Michigan Law Review* 115, no. 4 (2017): 492-95.

¹⁴⁰ Stockbridge, Munsee, and Brothertown Indians experienced pressure from timber interests similar to that faced by their Oneida and Menominee counterparts. They had valuable pine forests that lumber barons coveted. Although they attempted farming, the soil on their land was swampy and served better for growing trees. As a result, they ended up losing the majority of their land to timber interests prior to allotment. Those who did not initially lose their allotments could not pay their taxes. Those who did not die from starvation or disease sought employment in white settlements and refuge with friends and relatives on the Oneida reservation. See Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 117-24.

¹⁴¹ On the connection between industrial development and the loss of Indian lands in Wisconsin, see Nicholas C. Peroff, *Menominee Drums: Tribal Termination and Restoration* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 11-12; Robert E. Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960: A Study of Tradition and Change* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 164-66; and Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 119-26. Oneidas experienced pressure from Green Bay mill developments, paper and woodenware manufacturers, as well as shingle processors who desired the hardwood forests of the Oneida reservation; see Hauptman and Lester, *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment*, 5. Menominees also faced pressure from these same interests; see Beck, *Struggle for Self-Determination*, 3.

people looked to the U.S. government for support in maintaining their land. In the case of the Menominee, efforts to prevent the loss of their timber stands to industrialists began in the 1860s, with requests to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for protection against the private acquisition of their reservation.¹⁴² Just fifty miles north of the Fox River Valley, along the Wolf River, the Menominee pine forests sat in an advantageous site for local mills. The paper and wood-products industries relied on lumber, and factory owners hoped to obtain government permission to log the reservation without tribal consent. So, when federal officials initiated an allotment policy and tried to divide Menominee land for individual sales, Indian elders resisted these efforts. By refusing to comply with the General Allotment Act of 1887 and operating their own lumber mill, Menominees maintained control over the vast majority of their timber.¹⁴³ Their self-activity influenced the economic climate of the region in ways that reflected not only their material survival but also their cultural resilience.

In 1890, Congress approved a sustainable logging operation that permitted Menominees to cut down trees on their reservation and place them up for sale. This agreement included a caveat that they use their revenue to subsidize “civilization” efforts, such as a hospital and poor relief fund, with the U.S. government managing the rest of the income.¹⁴⁴ According to scholar Robert E. Bieder, “the federal government vigorously urged the lumbering off of Wisconsin

¹⁴² Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960*, 160-65.

¹⁴³ Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 90-96. Although Menominees gained permission to cut and market their lumber, their land still remained in trust status with the U.S. government. On the multiple forms of trust status that existed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the ways in which federal Indian agents used their land-management powers differently depending upon the circumstances that they encountered, see Jessica A. Shoemaker, “Like Snow in the Spring Time: Allotment, Fractionation, and the Indian Land Tenure Problem,” *Wisconsin Law Review* 4 (2003): 729-88.

¹⁴⁴ Boatman, *Wisconsin American Indian History and Culture*, 57. On the federal government’s requirements for Menominee use of the timber money for “civilization” efforts, see Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 30-32; and Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 95-106.

Indian reservations and saw it as a positive measure to bring Indian people into American society.”¹⁴⁵ Local business interests also benefitted from this legislation, because it encouraged individual property ownership and the type of domestic social order that industrialists promoted in the Fox Valley. Once they received permission to cut and sell their own lumber, Menominees were able to conserve their land temporarily, but disputes between tribal members over how to use their lumber endangered their unity. The profitable timber stands, along with an Indian-operated mill at Neopit, Wisconsin, helped maintain Menominee livelihood. This prosperity affected Indians unevenly, however, as factions of the Menominee nation viewed timber extraction in competing ways.¹⁴⁶

Through tribal opposition and bureaucratic challenges, the Menominee avoided the division of their reservation but not their people. Lumber sales brought some stability to the reservation but also placed Menominee financial decisions under trusteeship of the U.S. government.¹⁴⁷ Federal officials applauded Menominee participation in capitalist economic exchange, and Fox Valley industrialists conveniently benefitted from the arrangement. Not only did factory owners have access to local timber, but the plan also promoted the settled lifestyle that business owners endorsed in the region. For instance, William F. Vilas, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, claimed that the “removal of the pine from lands belonging to Indians in severalty is no more to be deplored, if they have enjoyed fair compensation for its value, than the clearing of

¹⁴⁵ Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960*, 164.

¹⁴⁶ Both traditionalists and those supportive of industrial development on Menominee land resisted allotment. Although the former led the movement, others disagreed with dividing up land into private property. As a result, both groups refused to comply with the stipulations of the legislation. See Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960*, 162; and Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 95-106.

¹⁴⁷ Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 49.

the forests everywhere before civilized improvement.”¹⁴⁸ Those Indians who viewed extraction as positive and favored this development looked increasingly to federal officials to fund public services like schools, police, and a court system, which angered those who did not appreciate such changes to Menominee values and daily life.¹⁴⁹ Some believed that the commodification of natural resources would further divide Menominee society, while others saw these efforts as a step towards tribal unification.¹⁵⁰

Factionalism and federal oversight of reservation lands led to further disagreements among American Indians well into the twentieth century. Menominees debated what selling timber meant for access to their lands and the influence that outsiders had on Indian livelihood. Some resisted Euro-American social and economic practices altogether. Beyond this disunion was a deep-seated concern over whether or not U.S. government involvement with indigenous matters actually protected the forests of northeastern Wisconsin.¹⁵¹ This uneasiness stemmed from the continued pressure of corporate developers who wanted Native land. The opportunity to buy timber legally from Menominees was not enough for paper barons and wood-products

¹⁴⁸ William F. Vilas to the United States Senate, February 19 1889, U.S., Congress, *Senate Executive Document* no. 128, 50th Cong., 2d sess., 7-8.

¹⁴⁹ This is an example of a larger national obsession with Indian assimilation through the adoption of Euro-American lifestyles, institutions, and ownership practices. See *Report of the Indian School Superintendent to the Secretary of the Interior*, 12-14; and “Improvement of the Indians: Success Follows Division of Their Land in Severalty,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 4, 1888, p. 9. This article makes a connection between preparatory schooling and allotment policy in facilitating Indian incorporation as U.S. citizens, as does House Committee on Indian Affairs, *Indians Upon the Oneida Reservation in Wisconsin*, report prepared by Mr. Tom Hudd, 50th Cong. 1st Sess., 1888, H. Rept. 2079, 1-2.

¹⁵⁰ Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960*, 61-64.

¹⁵¹ Larry Nesper, “The Trees Will Last Forever: The Integrity of Their Forest Signifies the Health of the Menominee People,” *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* (March 1993), accessed on April 6, 2020 at <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/trees-will-last-forever-integrity-their-forest-signifies>; Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 6, 24, 46, 72-73, 98; and Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 28-32.

factory owners. Rather, industrialists would continue to find extra-legal ways to obtain lumber from the reservation as well as from areas that local indigenous peoples once inhabited.¹⁵² Wary about the meanings of their trust relationship with the U.S. government, Menominees advocated self-government and Indian control over tribal resources. They disagreed, however, about the best route to achieve these goals.¹⁵³

In the Fox River Valley, federal intervention hastened a process of indigenous land dispossession already underway and solidified a racial divide between “white” settlers and “red” Indians. Although a large portion of farmers and industrial workers arriving to the region were not yet U.S. citizens themselves, in most cases they were eligible for naturalization. By contrast, U.S. law actively excluded Indians from full inclusion in the national body politic.¹⁵⁴ And in the Midwest, de facto segregation and local laws furthered the discrimination that federal law prescribed. American Indians found themselves under full authority of the U.S. government, their sovereignty and national citizenship denied.¹⁵⁵ Their already substantial loss of territory

¹⁵² Boatman, *Wisconsin American Indian History and Culture*, 57-58; Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960*, 160-61; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 30-32; and Peroff, *Menominee Drums*, 10-14.

¹⁵³ Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 120-25.

¹⁵⁴ The Nationality Act of 1790 granted citizenship to free white persons with acceptable morals, which conflated race and suitability for self-government. Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 37; Mel van Elteren, *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical History of Domestic and Global Influence* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2006), 53; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 7. This perspective continued, at least until the Indian Citizenship Act passed in 1924. Even before passage of the law, however, some Indian people gained U.S. citizenship in other ways, like paying taxes, serving in the military, accepting land allotments, and through intermarriage with whites, see Maria del Mar Farina, *White Nativism, Ethnic Identity and U.S. Immigration Policy Reforms: American Citizenship and Children in Mixed Status, Hispanic Families* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 15-20; William J. Bauer Jr., *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 109-29; and Peroff, *Menominee Drums*, 109-21.

¹⁵⁵ Laderman, “It Is Cheaper and Better to Teach a Young Indian than to Fight an Old One,” 85.

increased steadily after allotment, as developers sought Indian lands to cultivate cherry orchards and extract timber. Stockholders and speculators clamored to acquire more territory for what investors believed were the most important industries in the area, and federal agents colluded with corporate investors to separate Fox Valley Indians from their land.¹⁵⁶

U.S. government attempts to civilize and assimilate Indians contributed to this capitalist design. Allotment meant that buyers saw potential profits from lucrative farming and industrial enterprises, while American Indians were cut off from economic livelihood and their “traditional institutions.”¹⁵⁷ According to scholar Alyosha Goldstein, by “placing allotments into trust status” and dividing reservations into individual private properties, the Dawes Severalty Act “in fact not only facilitated further land loss by direct sale and the appropriation of ‘surplus’ land by the federal government, but also accelerated sales to non-Indians by tax forfeiture.”¹⁵⁸ In effect, the Dawes Act challenged Native self-determination by eroding tribal sovereignty and undermining the political authority of indigenous nations. This reinforced a racial hierarchy that gave preference to white settlers and situated Indians at the bottom of the local social ladder.¹⁵⁹

Despite encountering prejudice and land dispossession, however, Wisconsin Indians selectively chose which elements of non-indigenous lifeways to embrace, and their efforts

¹⁵⁶ Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 1240. On collusion between land speculators and federal Indian agents, see Hauptman and Lester, *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Laderman, “‘It Is Cheaper and Better to Teach a Young Indian than to Fight an Old One,’” 85.

¹⁵⁸ Alyosha Goldstein, “On the Reproduction of Race, Capitalism, and Settler Colonialism,” in *Race and Capitalism: Global Territories, Transnational Histories*, ed. Ananya Roy, pp.1-10, accessed on November 1, 2019 at <http://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/Race-and-Capitalism-digital-volume>.

¹⁵⁹ Shoemaker, “Like Snow in the Spring Time,” 755; and Daniel McGrath, “The Model Tribal Probate Code: An Opportunity to Correct the Problems of Fractionation and the Legacy of the Dawes Act,” *Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice* 20, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 403-29, cited material on 423.

influenced the parameters of corporate progress in the region. As scholar Doug Kiel argues, a major component of Native self-determination was the continuation of debates about the role of colonial power in Indian life.¹⁶⁰ Under intense scrutiny and subject to increasing national and local regulations, Oneidas, Menominees, and other local indigenous peoples tried to implement modern government services on their reservations, while maintaining their kinship practices and cultural values. In these ways, they successfully avoided total subordination to the U.S. government, white settlers, and local business interests; although they lost vast portions of their territory.¹⁶¹ Even in the face of these defeats, as historian Angela Firkus explains, Wisconsin Indians, “adopted or rejected these social, economic, and political assimilation efforts during the Progressive Era according to their own circumstances and goals.”¹⁶² Thus, they persisted in their negotiations with federal officials over the use of indigenous land and resources, which would continue to complicate attempts to impose industrial development and moral order in the region.

By the late nineteenth century, due to urban growth and the increasing prominence of the local paper and wood-products industries, capitalists and reformers became preoccupied with maintaining social stability in the Fox River Valley. The national attempt to assimilate Indians coincided with a local effort to uplift workers morally, and industrialists benefitted from these efforts. The increasing number of outsiders filtering into the region influenced a movement to

¹⁶⁰ Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment,” 421-23.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 422-28; and Angela Firkus, “Agricultural Extension and the Campaign to Assimilate the Native Americans of Wisconsin,” 473.

¹⁶¹ Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment”, 422-28; and Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960*, 156-65.

¹⁶² Firkus, “Agricultural Extension and the Campaign to Assimilate the Native Americans of Wisconsin,” 473.

encourage Victorian gender norms among area residents. Methodist missionaries and Lawrence College faculty members saw the cultural significance of Indian education and developed a preparatory program that encouraged a lifestyle conducive to corporate expansion.¹⁶³ Even after the program lost federal funding, local business elites continued to profit from U.S. government involvement in Indian affairs through allotment policy. The Dawes Act shaped indigenous life in the Fox Valley by dictating that “heads of households” participate in individual property ownership, which reinforced an understanding of the nuclear family values that local factory owners embraced.¹⁶⁴ As a result of this legislation, Wisconsin Indians lost a large percentage of their land to settlers and speculators, though they continued to maintain control over their culture and belief systems as well as a portion of their natural resources.¹⁶⁵

The General Allotment Act of 1887, which sought to force free market capitalism upon U.S. indigenous populations, aided local industrial designs because it effectually divided reservation land into small sections of private property.¹⁶⁶ Factory owners were able to buy so-

¹⁶³ William Francis Raney, “The History of Lawrence University, 1847-1925,” n.d., Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

¹⁶⁴ *Annual Report of the Commission of Indian Affairs to the Department of Interior* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), 658-60.

¹⁶⁵ Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 118; Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment,” 422-28; Firkus, “Agricultural Extension and the Campaign to Assimilate the Native Americans of Wisconsin,” 500-02; Oberly, “The Dawes Act and the Oneida Indian Reservation of Wisconsin,” 184-96. In later chapters I discuss the creative ways that Wisconsin Indians adapted to the social and economic changes brought on by industrial expansion. Despite allotment, Menominee and Oneida Indians maneuvered their way into the labor market in the Fox Valley, finding their niche in the timber, farming, and textile industries. Throughout the twentieth century, they participated in wage work while continuing to maintain Oneida and Menominee values. For a comparative look at the ways in which American Indians interacted with capitalist economic exchange well into the twentieth century despite land loss, see Bauer, *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here*, 130-55; and Colleen O’Neill, *Working the Navajo Way: Labor and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 1-10.

¹⁶⁶ Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 112-14. Although the General Allotment Act of 1887 forced private property ownership upon Wisconsin Indians, this did not mean that indigenous people

called “surplus” land, and they secured access to local reserves, thereby reducing the price of timber. Subject to taxation and foreclosure, Oneidas lost significant land to non-Indians, and other area indigenous people ceded large portions of their territory to homesteaders and investors under the direction of U.S. officials.¹⁶⁷ By the end of the nineteenth century, eastern capitalists had purchased most of the land that Indians lost to allotment. This left little fertile soil for Wisconsin Indians and white settlers who were looking to feed their families, let alone those hoping to make income from cash crops like wheat.¹⁶⁸ Thus, federal Indian policy created a scenario favorable for businessmen to acquire the resources necessary to fuel their commercial operations.

Conclusion

Beginning in the 1870s, the paper and woodworking industries gained strength and became the center of economic life in the Fox River Valley. Factory owners sought access to land and resources to achieve their twin goals of technological progress and social improvement.

had always shared resources in the past. On the spectrum of land use practices and understandings of ownership among American Indians, see Kenneth H. Bobroff, “Retelling Allotment: Indian Property Rights and the Myth of Common Ownership,” *Vanderbilt Law Review* 54, no. 4 (May 2001): 1559-623. Allotment did not simply replace one form of land ownership system with another but rather uprooted tribal governance structures. This process, according to legal scholar Jennifer Shoemaker, “created massive poverty, not prosperity,” by placing Indian decisions over land use under federal control. Shoemaker, “Complexities’ Shadow,” 493.

¹⁶⁷ On Oneida experiences with private interests in their timber and the influence that the Dawes Act had on their lives in Wisconsin, see Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment,” 422-28, and “The Oneida Resurgence: Modern Indian Renewal in the Heart of America” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012), pp. 10-30.

¹⁶⁸ Beck, *Struggle for Self-Determination*, 8-9; Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 9-11; and Boatman, *Wisconsin American Indian History and Culture*, 57-58. On the effects of land loss on American Indians following the implementation of federal allotment policy, see Shoemaker, “Like Snow in the Spring Time,” 730-33; and Pommersheim, *Broken Landscape*, 185.

Since the U.S. government had relocated a majority of local Indians, the region had a sparse population. An intermittent pattern of white settlement already existed across Wisconsin Indian lands, but developers sought access to indigenous timber for extraction. Along with territory, local industry relied on a steady and pacified pool of workers, which depended upon the promotion of a “civilized” cultural order by area politicians, religious officials, and university faculty. This social project created a system that actively excluded communal understandings of property and the value that Wisconsin Indians placed on the shared use and protection of their forests. Despite their efforts to work within this framework, emphasis on individual land ownership resulted in loss of resources, and local indigenous people found themselves pushed to minority status in the region.¹⁶⁹ This created an opening for increased corporate development, though businessmen did not always achieve their goals.

Instead, I argue that the first people to complicate this vision of untrammelled capitalist expansion in Wisconsin were American Indians, who did not want to sell their land and who often refused to live according to the parameters set by government bureaucrats and moral reformers. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, allotment policy decreased Indian access to their resources. This phenomenon coincided with an end to national assimilation efforts when, according to scholar Bill Ong Hing, federal officials decided that indigenous people “could not attain the levels of accomplishment of the white race.”¹⁷⁰ Area employers

¹⁶⁹ On the reliance of corporate development on racial capitalism, see Goldstein, “On the Reproduction of Race, Capitalism, and Settler Colonialism,” pp. 1-4; Jodi Melamed, “Racial Capitalism,” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 76-85; Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein, “Colonial Unknowing and Relations of Study,” *Theory & Event* 20, no. 4 (2017): 1047-49; Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 144; and Nikhil Pal Singh, “On Race, Violence, and ‘So-Called Primitive Accumulation,’” in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, ed. Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin (New York: Verso, 2017), 57-58.

capitalized on these government efforts. Territorial dispossession had helped to discipline American Indians and separate them from white settlers along racial lines. By urging private property ownership and the “cultivation of home virtues,” land division facilitated a set of social norms and economic relationships that helped to police and pacify workers on the basis of gender as well.¹⁷¹ Allotment created fragmentation among Wisconsin Indians, and capitalists supported this project in order to maximize their profit margins and influence the cultural climate in the Fox Valley.¹⁷² Local industrialists had defined a set of community standards that rested on faithful Christianity, sobriety, and white settled family life. Yet, I argue that American Indians successfully challenged this framework, both actively through their economic decisions, and through their continued existence in the region. Rather than passively accept the limits that United States colonization had placed on them, local indigenous peoples decided which aspects of their new social world to adopt, as they carefully negotiated with federal officials and navigated the realities of capitalism. By doing so, I claim that they influenced a social and economic atmosphere that refused to fully exclude their cultural values and material survival.

¹⁷⁰ Bill Ong Hing, *To Be An American: Cultural Pluralism and the Rhetoric of Assimilation* (New York: New York University Press), 22.

¹⁷¹ Merrill E. Gates, “The Next Great Step to Break Up Tribal Funds into Individual Holdings,” *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (New York: Lake Mohonk Conference, 1900), 120.

¹⁷² On fragmentation and “fractionation” and its social meanings and legal implications, see McGrath, “The Model Tribal Probate Code,” 407-10; Shoemaker, “Like Snow in the Spring Time,” 754-58; and Shoemaker, “‘Complexities’ Shadow,” 492-95.

Chapter 2

With Justice on Their Side: Working-Class Struggles to (Re)create Community in the American Midwest

The monster falsely called Progress was presently to come along with his oily promises . . . foul with ashes, tin cans and garbage.

Edna Ferber, *A Peculiar Treasure*, 1939

Edna Ferber wrote nostalgically about her hometown. By relying on her memory to craft stories, she used “paper-mill lore” and her “girlhood years spent in the Fox River Valley” as inspiration for her books.¹ She described the exorbitant wealth of industrialists and how they made their fortunes by “raping of the forests” and abusing workers. The experiences of women, especially those who worked for a paycheck, influenced the trajectory of her fiction, including one of her most celebrated novels, *Come and Get It*.² In her portrayal of the paper industry, Ferber illustrated the ways that ethnicity and national origin, as well as gender, influenced the employment and social lives of area residents. Her story focuses on a Wisconsin lumber tycoon and factory owner, Barney Glasgow, who carelessly profits from the mistreatment of his workers.³ Embedded in the popular narrative, which would later become a Hollywood film, was a political message about the plight of America’s workers. Ferber provided her readers with a lens into the industrial world of early twentieth-century United States society, including the struggles of working-class women in the Midwest.⁴

¹ Edna Ferber, *A Peculiar Treasure* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1939), 66.

² Blanche Colton Williams, “Edna Ferber,” in *Our Short Story Writers* (1920; New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., 1941), 148.

³ Betty Brainerd, “Among the Lumberjacks,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 24, 1935; J. E. Smyth, *Edna Ferber’s Hollywood: Americans Fictions of Gender, Race, and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press), 155-57.

⁴ Eliza McGraw, *Edna Ferber’s America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013) 28-35; and Smyth, *Edna Ferber’s Hollywood*, 40-43, 158-59.

Her main character, Glasgow, climbs his way up from being a humble lumberjack to become the leader of the local logging industry.⁵ He believes that wood-pulp mills offer the superior way to make paper. In these factories, the industrialist is “king” of his “steady [and] serious” employees, skilled male workers.⁶ The wood-pulp mills remind him of being outdoors, while the rag factories smell of acids that reduce old rags to pulp.⁷ Although Glasgow owns a lucrative rag-paper operation, he despises the industry. He dislikes everything from the materials involved to the people who work there. Glasgow hates “the rags piled mountain high” and “loathes the rag sorting bins over which the girls” stoop. Primarily Polish and Bohemian immigrants, his workers at the rag-paper factory are mainly women who live on the “other side of the tracks or over on the Flats,” away from the wealthier residents.⁸

Despite his prejudices, Glasgow still owns rag-paper mills. He rarely visits them, though, preferring to frequent his wood-pulp mill in Butte des Morts, where he also lives. The only time that Glasgow goes to his Grand Chute plant is when something out of the ordinary happens, like “an accident, a fight, or a premature baby.”⁹ For instance, Glasgow’s mill manager calls on the owner because one of the “Polack girls” severs her thumb in the sorting room. Apparently, the woman runs the “guillotine,” as workers commonly call it, a machine that shreds rags to prepare them for paper production. The mother of five children, Poli Krupa has operated the contraption without a safety mechanism since she was fifteen years old. Pregnant again, she has worked

⁵ Edna Ferber, *Come and Get It* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1934), 28.

⁶ Ferber, *Come and Get It*, 37.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹ *Ibid.*

herself nearly to exhaustion.¹⁰ Glasgow, however, views the event as a normal part of a hard day's work. Instead of attending to his suffering employee, he decides to stay at his wood-pulp mill, not wanting one of the "girls in the rag room" to interrupt him with something unpleasant.¹¹ The powerful industrialist benefits financially from his rag-paper factories but keeps his physical distance from them. Although he relies on young women and children to stand for hours in factories carrying out menial and grimy tasks to yield his fortune, he does not value them as workers. For him, labor signifies expertise and skilled workers are white and male.

Ferber's story offers a fictional account of the exploitation, discrimination, and injustice entrenched in an industry that provided local capitalists with so much profit. *Come and Get It* offers a window into the lives of industrial workers and the actions of factory owners who believed they brought progress to the region. Her descriptions of industrial waste, poor labor conditions, and shop-floor injustices highlight the greed and prejudice of paper magnates and lumber barons who live on "Millionaires' Row."¹² For instance, she explains that underneath the elite Butte des Morts community where Glasgow lives, whose name that translates "hill of the dead," sit the Indian burial grounds for which French explorers named the site. Alluding to a local history of indigenous land dispossession, Ferber also exposes the vast disparity of wealth there when she claims, "the town of ten thousand inhabitants was buttery with money; but the butter was concentrated in one huge golden lump at the end of town."¹³

¹⁰ Ibid., 41-42.

¹¹ Ibid., 40.

¹² Ibid., 57.

¹³ Ibid., 28.

Come and Get It depicts the interconnectedness of industrial development, the devastation of nature, and the backbreaking labor of workers in the Fox River Valley. Paper mill owners and woodworking manufacturers manipulate local resources to create their fortunes at the expense of their employees and the health of area families.¹⁴ The creation of a community like Butte des Morts demonstrates to eastern elites that businessmen in “the West” also have taste and respectability. Wealthy residents boast, “Bewdamore’s got more millionaires according to its population than any other town in the whole United States.”¹⁵ For mill owners like Glasgow, the “making of paper was one of the most important acts of civilization.”¹⁶ Yet for Ferber’s working-class characters, the wood-products enterprise represents corruption and greed, because the success of the industry relies on the sacrifices of local laborers.¹⁷

As Ferber’s story suggests, progress in manufacturing depended on a system of inequalities and exclusions that shaped the lives of workers in the region. The wealth of a select few came at the expense of the bodies and spirits of their employees. This chapter analyzes these disparities but also shows how laborers responded to their subordination. I discuss workers’ origins and the opportunities that they sought in Wisconsin as well as the challenges that they

¹⁴ Ibid., 30.

¹⁵ Ibid., 28.

¹⁶ Ibid., 48.

¹⁷ In his study of early republican Baltimore, historian Seth Rockman explains how capitalism has relied on “multiple, simultaneous, and overlapping forms of inequality” that have led not to class consciousness but rather to “common commodification.” Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 10-11. Thus, rather than tell the stories of prosperity and privation separately, I tell them together. Capitalists relied on the daily labor of others to create their wealth, and industrial prosperity depended on the everyday struggles of workers in the Fox River Valley. Ferber’s *Come and Get It* captures that reality. For more on the unequal relationship between labor and capital, see David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers with Democracy and Free Labor during the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 50.

encountered on their journey. Although diverse in religion, language, cultural values, and citizenship status, the working people who came to the Fox Valley had dreams that they hoped to cultivate and understandings of progress that they sought to protect. Some came alone and others with families. While a portion hoped to settle, many planned to make money and travel on. A number of migrants had participated in labor militancy prior to their arrival, and almost all of them had experienced joblessness and unsafe living situations in their former homelands.¹⁸ Either way, I argue that their religious values and cultural practices upset the corporate designs of area employers. Indeed, through their everyday self-activity newcomers changed the social landscape of the region in ways that reflected the preferences of workers and their beliefs.

Poverty was not new to workers in the Fox River Valley, yet they aspired to change their economic circumstances, and these desires influenced how migrants approached difficulties in their workplaces and neighborhoods. Not all workers disagreed with the perspectives of their employers but most believed that they should receive fair compensation for their labor and equitable treatment in local communities. These principles encouraged resistance to oppressive treatment at work and defense of ethnic practices and leisure activities in local communities. In some cases, workers looked to their representatives in local and state government to alleviate their woes.¹⁹ Yet others joined social movements in an effort to better their economic circumstances. As a result of these everyday battles, I maintain that working-class people

¹⁸ Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 59-65.

¹⁹ David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925*, (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1987), 84-85; and Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours For What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 117-21, 157-58.

profoundly influenced the cultural climate and political trajectory of the Fox Valley, despite the continued domination of business owners over the regulation of public life in the region.

Industrialists wanted to maintain a steady supply of workers in order to make a profit, but their employees had their own motivations for moving to the Fox Valley. When their goals and lifestyles did not align with those of area businessmen, working-class people responded with a number of different tactics that included changing jobs and going on strike.²⁰ Wisconsin laborers wanted not only to survive but also to enjoy their time away from local mills.²¹ These desires challenged capitalist expansion and understandings of order in Wisconsin. The mass influx of eager laborers increasingly included not only single transient men looking for seasonal work but also women and children who wanted to remain permanently in the area. In some cases, having a pool of workers from a variety of backgrounds allowed industrialists to pit their employees against each other to keep them from organizing unions. This tactic did not always work, however. Instead, labor activists from multiple ethnicities and different religions found ways to join forces and confront corporate control in the region. Their presence on the shop floor and in surrounding communities compromised social stability in ways that challenged the power of employers. Yet, as I argue, in other instances working-class activism actually reinforced the moral inclinations of local factory owners, which called for a settled community composed of nuclear families and a workforce that was white, skilled, and male.

This chapter traces these developments. I begin by discussing the ethnic backgrounds of migrants who traveled to the Fox River Valley to fill the post-Civil War demand for cheap labor.

²⁰ Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 50-65.

²¹ Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours For What We Will*, 1-10, 117-20; and Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 35-40.

Then, I explore how working-class cultural values and entrepreneurial endeavors disrupted the corporate designs of business owners as well as the moral framework promoted by area elites. Finally, I examine key labor protests and the effect these demonstrations had on the political atmosphere in surrounding communities. The outcome of these struggles influenced understandings of who counted as a worker in the region, at least until U.S. involvement in World War I. Local and state bureaucrats paid attention to working-class demands, and as a result, industrialists eventually lost their exclusive hold over government. Resistance against employer restrictions on worker livelihood had both immediate and gradual effects on residents' daily lives, and the methods and goals of labor militancy also had important cultural ramifications. Working-class self-activity was central to the social landscape of the region; and as I demonstrate, everyday struggles influenced life beyond the factory, including the parameters of a progressive political culture not only in Wisconsin but also nationally.

Settling the Valley

The growth of the papermaking and wood-products industries physically changed the landscape of the Fox River Valley region, but the social transformation of the area was just as profound. The expansion of industrial capitalism and increased settlement that accompanied it recreated the social terrain in ways that threatened the supremacy of local businessmen and their way of life. Local communities developed differently, depending upon the recruitment strategies of employers and their perspectives on moral order. Yet, newcomers also brought their own set of values with them to Wisconsin, and their political affiliations and religious practices did not necessarily align with those of factory owners and their allies. Migrants brought their diverse

customs and belief systems with them, and they planned to maintain them. Many had already experienced government repression and employer domination before and were unwilling to accept it in their new home. Instead, workers spoke out against unfair treatment on the job and fashioned their communities to reflect their preferences. By doing so, working-class people influenced the shape and meaning of progress in the region.

Employers attempted to create an environment that protected the profitability of their businesses as well as their social privilege but had difficulty managing the desires and demands of a constantly changing workforce. Meanwhile, immigrants had their own ideas about labor and leisure, and they brought past experiences with political dissent to their workplaces and neighborhoods. Resistance to corporate control came in various forms that did not always include overt shop-floor activism. Workers protested against poor labor conditions and prejudice in their communities. They wanted the opportunity to continue practicing their cultural values, including an ability to speak and learn in their native languages and to worship in their own religious institutions. Their persistence in realizing these aspirations not only upset the corporate framework designed by economic elites but also influenced the local social landscape.

Even prior to the acceleration of the wood-products industry in the 1870s, Fox Valley capitalists sought workers to operate their machinery. Fortunately for factory owners, stalwart Republicans controlled not only local but also state politics.²² These businessmen supported the

²² There are a number of primary sources and several scholarly studies that discuss the entanglement of business and politics in Wisconsin in the nineteenth century as well as the control that corporate interests had over the Republican Party until the rise of the progressive branch at the turn of the century. On the influence that railroad and lumber magnates had on local and state legislation, see William R. Taylor to George H. Paul, Cottage Grove, WI, November 26, 1873 and December 7, 1873, George H. Paul Papers, Box 6, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, WI; William R. Taylor, Governor, "To the People of Wisconsin," Executive Department, Madison, May 21, 1874," *Wisconsin State Journal*, May 22, 1874, pp. 2; Robert M. LaFollette to Nils Pederson Haugen, Washington DC, July 6 and July 14, 1894, Nils Pederson Haugen Papers, Box 39, State Historical Society of Wisconsin,

forced seizure of land from American Indians and advocated a message of free labor that relied on access to white wageworkers and an ardent opposition to slavery.²³ After capitalizing on the confiscation of the majority of territory from Wisconsin indigenous people, industrialists looked again to their allies in state government for the resources needed to fuel area development. This required a labor force that hopefully would contribute to the system of social order that mill owners had created as well as help reproduce the moral framework that they had fought to protect during the Civil War. Politicians praised the efforts of their Union brothers, former combatants who worked together to make money and foster a stable cultural climate, and this camaraderie influenced how local bureaucrats went about drawing people to the region as well.²⁴

As Civil War veterans, unemployed transients, and European immigrants filtered into Wisconsin, they planned to start small businesses, take positions in area factories, and establish family farms. Despite the promises of recruiters, however, newcomers did not encounter the abundant resources, fertile soil, and the friendly atmosphere advertised by government agents and their corporate counterparts.²⁵ Some working-class people thrived as small business owners,

Madison, WI; Nils Pederson Haugen to A. T. Torgerson, Stoughton, WI, August 6, 1894, Box 39, Letterbook 9, Nils Pederson Haugen Papers; Robert Booth Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes: An Electoral History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 50-65; Kenneth C. Acrea Jr., "Wisconsin Progressivism: Legislative Response to Social Change, 1891 to 1909" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1968), 50-67, 240-50; and Herman J. Deutsch, "Disintegrating Forces in Wisconsin Politics of the Early Seventies: Railroad Politics," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 15, no. 4 (Summer 1932): 391-411.

²³ David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872* (New York: Knopf, 1967), 47, 82, 406; and Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), ix-xiii.

²⁴ "Appletonian Antiquities," *Appleton Post*, December 10, 1868; John Nelson Davidson, *Negro Slavery in Wisconsin and the Underground Railroad* (Milwaukee, WI: Parkman Club, 1897), 40-46; and Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 33-38.

²⁵ Increase Lapham, *Statistics, Exhibiting the History, Climate and Production of the State of Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin Board of Immigration, 1867), 30; and Christina A. Zeigler-McPherson, *Selling America: Immigration Promotion and the Settlement of the American Continent, 1607-1914* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 87.

and others acquired land necessary to feed their families and sell goods in local markets. Most, however, found themselves in some sort of industrial work, often stringing together multiple jobs to survive. Not only did they receive low wages for long hours, working-class people labored in dangerous conditions with little appreciation for their efforts.²⁶ Rather than create a tax structure that helped pay for public improvements or contribute to social welfare, businessmen promoted a philosophy of individualism rather than collectivity among local laborers. Meanwhile, boosters countered negative impressions of communities by emphasizing the area's technological achievements and insisting that the Fox River Valley welcomed newcomers.²⁷

For instance, in 1867, the Wisconsin State Board of Immigration released a pamphlet that touted the attractiveness of the region for settlement. Although government produced, local factory owners benefitted from this publication. Appearing in German, French, Dutch, Welsh, Swedish, and Norwegian by the end of the century, the pamphlet attracted workers from these

²⁶ On the long hours and low wages of local factory workers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Fox Valley, as well as the poor conditions under which they toiled, see *Wisconsin Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics, Biennial Report, 1887-1888* (Madison: Wisconsin Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1988), 94; "Boy Who Was Killed," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, June 24, 1898; "Switchman Strike: Lakeshore and Western Railroad," *Kaukauna Times*, April 18, 1890; "End of Strike Case," *Kaukauna Times*, December 1, 1899; "Strike at Pulp Mill," *Kaukauna Sun*, July 25, 1907; "Drillers on Strike," *Kaukauna Times*, July 26, 1907; "Sympathetic Strike," *Kaukauna Sun*, July 25, 1907; "Correspondence Little Chute: Little Chute Pulp Mill Strike," *Kaukauna Sun*, June 6, 1907; "Paper Mill Strike: Combined Locks Paper Mill," *Kaukauna Sun*, June 3, 1904; "Voted to Strike: Appleton Brotherhood of Papermakers," *Kaukauna Sun*, April 17, 1903; "May Cause Strike: Kimberly Clark Paper Company," *Kaukauna Times*, August 1, 1902; "Return to Work: Boilermakers Strike," *Kaukauna Times*, July 11, 1902; "The Strike is Settled: Thilmany Paper Company," *Kaukauna Times*, April 25, 1902; "Carpenters May Strike: Unionized Carpenters of the Fox River Valley," *Kaukauna Times*, May 17, 1918; "The Strike Settled: Interlake Mill, Appleton," *Kaukauna Times*, November 17, 1916; "Strike Grows Serious," *Kaukauna Sun*, July 6, 1916; "Big R. R. Strike Impending," *Kaukauna Sun*, July 23, 1914; and "Fail to Settle Strike," *Kaukauna Sun*, July 27, 1916.

²⁷ On municipal improvements of Fox Valley cities, including sanitation, schools, water works, cemeteries, and drainage, see Robert P. Porter, compiler, *Report on Valuation, Taxation, and Public Indebtedness of the United States: Tenth Census of the United States*, vol. 7 (Washington DC: U.S. Government, 1884), 153, 761; and George E. Waring, Jr., compiler, *Report on the Statistics of Cities: Tenth Census of the United States*, vol. 19 (Washington DC: U.S. Government, 1887), 645-49, 675-80.

ethnic groups to the Fox Valley. The author, Increase Lapham, argued that of the “cheapest of all mechanical powers available for useful purposes, few are more important than that of the Fox River.”²⁸ This statement appealed to migrants, as did the promise of fertile farmland and access to timber. Lapham claimed that the area had “an adequate amount of wood for the purposes of civilized life,” which created a prime opportunity for homesteaders.²⁹ By drawing a connection between a strong work ethic and a comfortable livelihood, the promotional booklet assured settlers that with “prudent economy,” they could support their families and educate their children.³⁰ State bureaucrats touted the commercial environment and cultural climate that migrants would encounter as they ventured to the Fox Valley, and industrialists relied on this government promotion to find workers to fill positions at their factories.

Local industry boomed following the Civil War, and employers went to great lengths to enlist people to work on railroads and in the wood-products industry. Indeed, area businessmen paid promoters to design pamphlets that bragged about the progressive features of the region.³¹ Throughout the 1850s, besides American Indians, a majority of Fox Valley residents were either from the eastern U.S., France, England, Germany, or Scandinavia. Soon, though, during the 1860s, the building of dams and canals along the river brought workers from Holland and Ireland to help with large construction. Although many stayed, some of these laborers moved further west in search of better wages and working conditions.³² Then, between the 1870s and 1910s,

²⁸ Lapham, *Statistics, Exhibiting the History, Climate and Production of the State of Wisconsin*, 5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

³¹ See, e.g., Alexander James Reid, *The Resources and Manufacturing Capacity of the Lower Fox River Valley* (Appleton, WI: Reid & Miller, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1874), 41.

the area experienced a rise in population and increased urbanization, along with a change in ethnic and religious makeup that included Catholic immigrants from eastern Europe.³³

Both corporate-sponsored boosters and Wisconsin immigration officials accelerated their efforts during this time of mass immigration. Knowing that they were in competition with their counterparts across the nation, these recruiters hoped to strengthen the local economy by encouraging settlement through personal relationships and chain migration.³⁴ They hoped that this would attract workers who shared understandings of labor and social etiquette similar to those who had migrated to the Fox Valley in earlier decades. Midwestern boosters were aggressive speculators, and they traveled to the eastern U.S. and Europe in an extensive search for laborers.³⁵ According to historian Christina A. Zeigler-McPherson, following the Civil War,

³² On movement to the Midwest and West for better wages and working conditions, see Jacob A. Riis, *The Making of an American* (New York: Macmillan, 1901), 27; and DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*, 11.

³³ Although not designated as its own category in the U.S. Census at the time, there is also evidence of Syrian migrants in Appleton Police Department records. For instance, see “Appleton Police Arrest Book, 09-20-1881 to 12-31-1892,” pp. 1-40, Appleton Police Department Records, Appleton, WI. In these same documents, there are alleged criminals from Austria, France, Ukraine, Switzerland, Belgium, Russia, Bohemia, Hungary, Italy, Greece, Ireland, England, Canada, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, as well as others listed as “Jew,” “Negro,” “Oneida,” “Menominee,” and “Red.” For more on immigration to Wisconsin during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Thomas Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York: The Free Press, 1983), 113-20. On migration to the Fox Valley specifically, see La Vern J. Rippley, *Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 15-17, 80-81.

³⁴ Chain migration occurred during from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when workers decided to settle and sent for their family members and friends from their homelands to join them in the U.S. See June Granatir Alexander in “Staying Together: Chain Migration and Patterns of Slovak Settlement in Pittsburg Prior to World War I,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 1, no. 1 (1981): 56-83. According to historian Charles William Calhoun, chain migration occurred when “successive immigrants linked by kinship or acquaintance followed one another like links in a chain, not just to America but a particular place there where an immigrant was already established and might even have a job waiting the new arrival.” See Calhoun, *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America* (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2007), 81.

³⁵ Francis A. Walker, compiler, “Population by Race, Sex, Nativity,” in *The Tenth Census of the United States*, vol. 1 (Washington DC: U.S. Government, 1883), 425; “Color or Race, Nativity, and Parentage,” in *Population: Thirteenth Census of the United States*, vol. 1 (Washington DC: U.S.

states, including Wisconsin, produced propaganda, “opened offices in port cities,” and “took out advertisements in European newspapers” in search of immigrants who worked hard, supported republican institutions, and desired U.S. citizenship.³⁶ Government pamphleteers focused their efforts on a “desirable class” of immigrants from northern Europe. State officials claimed that people from Germany, Scandinavia, and Great Britain were more suitable residents for the physical geography and economic life of the area than their southern and eastern European counterparts. For example, to explain why he did not recruit from other parts of Europe, immigration commissioner Ole C. Johnson explained that Wisconsin was “heavily timbered” and “need[ed] the industrious, hardworking yeomanry of the old world” to help clear the land and perform “hard labor.”³⁷

A belief in white, northern Euro-American cultural superiority and a national fear of “foreigners” shaped Wisconsin’s immigration policy and the recruitment efforts of boosters.³⁸ As a result, beginning in the 1860s, Scandinavians and Germans came to the region in large numbers. Factory owners used immigration agents to lure Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian

Government, 1910), 226; and “Reports by States,” in *Population: Fifteenth Census of the United States* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government, 1930), 1320-40. On the ways in which Wisconsin government officials sought to encourage immigration to Wisconsin, see Zeigler-McPherson, *Selling America*, 77-80.

³⁶ Zeigler-McPherson, *Selling America*, 77.

³⁷ *Immigration Report of the State of Wisconsin, 1871* (Madison: Wisconsin State Legislature, 1871), 241. For more on this prejudicial policy, see *General Laws Passed by the State of Wisconsin, 1867* (Madison: Wisconsin State Legislature, 1867), 122; Kate Asaphine Everest, “How Wisconsin Came by its Large German Element” (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1892), 32; *Annual Report of the Board of Immigration, 1880* (Madison: Wisconsin Legislature, 1880), 6; Kendrick Charles Babcock, “The Scandinavian Element in the United States,” *Americana* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1914): 1-238, quoted material from page 88.

³⁸ On nativism and the presumption of white cultural superiority in the U.S., see David R. Roediger, *Working Towards Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White, The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 68-88; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 158-66, 331-37; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 40-50.

immigrants to the area by offering them farmland, and then placed them in unskilled positions in paper mills.³⁹ Yet other Scandinavian newcomers came on their own accord, and over the course of the next two decades, these transplants spread throughout the local labor market. Although they witnessed varying levels of ethnic prejudice, the growing economy relied on their toil and consumption in order to function. Due to ethnic stereotypes about their work ethic, religion, and cultural values of sobriety and a settled lifestyle, Scandinavians migrated to the area with less difficulty than their southern and eastern European counterparts. Neenah, for instance, had a large number of Norwegian and Danish newcomers, who founded their own churches and lived throughout the four wards of the city. While the majority first labored in factories, many established roots by participating in politics and becoming active in fraternal organizations.⁴⁰

³⁹ Wisconsin State Board of Immigration, *Wisconsin, What it Offers to the Immigrant: An Official Report Published by the State Board of Immigration of Wisconsin* (Madison: State of Wisconsin, 1879), 8-16. Recruiters used promotional literature that they supplied through their offices in New York and Chicago and distributed all over Europe to advertise the quality farmland in Wisconsin.

⁴⁰ For a map of city wards, see *Map and Platbook of Winnebago County Wisconsin* (Chicago: Gorman and Sudea, 1909), 37. For a list of ethnic churches and fraternal organizations, see *Winnebago County Directory* (Oshkosh, WI: John V. Bunn, 1900), 10-19. Local church histories provide important information on the community involvement of Scandinavian immigrants in the Fox River Valley. For instance, see “Program to be given at the Congregational Church South Kaukauna, Wisconsin,” May 26, 1907, Church Records, Kaukauna Public Library; and Ann Sager, *With God’s Grace: 100 Years of Faith: A History of Saint Paul Lutheran Church* (Neenah, WI: St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Inc., 2012), ix-xvi, 3-5. St. Paul’s was an English-speaking church established by first and second-generation Scandinavian immigrants in 1912. They took pride in what they viewed as the forward-thinking nature of their institution. One can view the church’s first constitution at St. Paul’s in its original form or in *With God’s Grace*, 3. Another important detail offered by this local source is an account about the owner of the Kimberly & Clark Co., Charles B. Clark, who was also the mayor of the city. According to church historian Ann Sager, Clark “had his hands fully trying to control gambling and reverse a reputation of questionable morals in his city;” therefore, “the building of new churches was undoubtedly a welcome addition to the city for mayor and citizens alike.” Sager, *With God’s Grace*, 7. Not all Scandinavian Americans were Lutheran or even Protestant. Some converted to Catholicism upon marriage. For instance, see Diary entries 1909-1949, May 16, 1929, June 30, 1930, July 5, 1931, July 7, 1931, October 10, 1932, November 12, 1933, Georgetta Anderson (Gibbons) Diary, in author’s possession, Oshkosh, WI. The daughter of Norwegian immigrants, Anderson (Gibbons) grew up in Scandinavia, Wisconsin, a farming community just west of the Fox River Valley. Although her husband was raised Catholic, she did not convert to his religion. Her son Lloyd, however, did convert to Catholicism when he married his

These actions gained them increasing respect from urban leaders. Overall, their social customs did not offend the “old settlers” of the area, who shared a Protestant religious affiliation and a northern European heritage.⁴¹

German Protestants had a similar experience, whether Lutheran, Reformed Christian, or Methodist. They did encounter resistance to their leisure practices, however, particularly their fervent drinking habits. Overall though, because they brought substantial capital with them to the area (especially compared to their Irish and Dutch contemporaries), voted Republican, and had acceptable religious affiliations, most Germans fared well in the region.⁴² As their numbers and social support networks expanded, they grew familiar with local prejudices and accustomed to social norms. Those who were Catholic and from southern Germany, however, did not have as smooth a transition as their Protestant counterparts from the north. Regardless, by the turn of the twentieth century, German Americans became an accepted ethnic group in the region.⁴³

wife, Dorothy Hopkins Gibbons. For more on Scandinavian immigrants in the region, see Rippley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, 77; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories of the Valley*, 209-10.

⁴¹ Although occasionally targeted as radical socialists and tied to communism abroad by stalwart Republicans, Scandinavians faced such stereotyping infrequently compared to immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, see Rippley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, 73-75; David L. Brye, “Wisconsin Scandinavians and Progressivism, 1900-1950,” *Norwegian-American Studies* 27 (1977): 163-93. On the influence of “old settlers” on the local political climate and acceptance of different immigrant groups, see Arnold Nettekoven, *Appleton, WI Law Enforcement History, 1850-2000* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2005), 8-20.

⁴² Wisconsin State Board of Immigration *Wisconsin, What it Offers to the Immigrant*, 3. This did not mean that Germans did not experience ethnic prejudice. For instance, later in this chapter, I discuss the Bennett Law controversy and the campaign against teaching in the German language. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, ethnic Germans and German Americans experienced anti-Catholicism and broader ethnic prejudice, especially during World War I and World War II. For more on Germans in the Fox River Valley, see Virginia Glenn Crane, *Oshkosh’s Woodworkers’ Strike of 1898: A Wisconsin Community in Crisis* (Madison: Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Commission, 1998), 10-15; Glaab and Larsen, *Factories of the Valley*, 207-12; Rippley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, 88-93, 104, 120-37; Michael J. Goc, *Land Rich Enough: An Illustrated History of Oshkosh and Winnebago County* (New York: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1988), 26, 42, and 45-59.

⁴³ *Population: Thirteenth Census of the United States*, 894.

Despite this wave of immigrants, Fox Valley industrialists had difficulty keeping their operations running because of increased demand for paper and wood-products after the Civil War, and they looked to state officials for assistance. As a result, Wisconsin established a Board of Immigration in 1867, which focused on attracting workers from northern and western Europe. In 1871, however, the legislature reduced funding for recruitment efforts. Although there was a nationwide recession, the wood-products industry still boomed, which heightened a local demand for workers. So when bureaucrats voted to shrink the state budget and refused to fund travel costs for agents and immigrants, corporate capitalists took on the task of finding sojourners to fill industrial jobs by hiring private agents. Then, in 1879, state officials voted to revive the Board of Immigration, and those in charge of publicity sought to draw cheap laborers to fuel industrial expansion in Wisconsin.⁴⁴ The act “encouraged immigration from “other states of the union, the Dominion of Canada and Europe,” yet industrialists argued that there should be a greater emphasis on the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When they did not have success petitioning the government, local businessmen funded the printing and distribution of pamphlets promoting the promises of the American Midwest in European regions that were experiencing extreme poverty. They did so while also publishing advertisements in newspapers abroad. Despite the disapproval of members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, these practices contributed greatly to the diversity of Fox River Valley communities.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Laws of Wisconsin*, Chapter 176, March 7, 1879, “An act to establish a board of immigration,” <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/1879/related/acts/176.pdf> (June 29, 2018). On the limited budget, see *Journal of the Assembly of Wisconsin* (Madison: Wisconsin State Legislature, 1882), 25-27, 75-82.

⁴⁵ On Wisconsin industrialists using extra-legal means to recruit workers in southern and eastern Europe, see Zeigler-McPherson, *Selling America*, 77-80. In 1882, the Wisconsin Board of Immigration reported that 25,769 immigrants made Wisconsin their home, with 14,119 from Germany, 3,510 from Norway, 1,558 from Sweden, 1,030 from Denmark, 121 from England, 173 from Ireland, 16 from Scotland, 28 from France, 237 from Holland, 981 from Bohemia, 3,224 from Poland, and 262 from other

Whether traveling from New England or upstate New York, or from northern, eastern, or southern Europe, workers saw industry as a compelling draw. Following the Panic of 1873 and the long depression that accompanied it, the Fox River Valley saw an influx of unemployed people eager for work.⁴⁶ From the late nineteenth century through the first two decades of the twentieth century, as investors poured capital into manufacturing, craft workers and unskilled laborers, as well as farmers, filtered into the region. Desperate for economic relief, these working people filled an industrial need for businessmen who were investing in the future of paper and wood-products. Although industrialists sought to mold their workforce to support corporate expansion, laborers had their own entrepreneurial desires. Millworkers brought employment expectations with them as well, and these did not always align with the goals of local factory owners. Working-class commercial practices and settlement patterns sometimes overlapped with area industrial interests; however, in other instances, labor disrupted the plans of capitalists and their government supporters both locally and statewide.

Some immigrant labor recruiters emphasized abundant commercial opportunities, while others stressed the availability of social services such as libraries and schools to attract people to the region. Fond du Lac was ahead of other cities in this respect, having an abundance of public amenities.⁴⁷ Oshkosh, on the other hand, was slow in implementing municipal improvements.

countries. According to state officials, “the immigrants have been of the best agricultural and industrial classes, and have made material additions to our capital and wealth; see *Journal of the Assembly of Wisconsin*, 26-27.

⁴⁶ On the depression and its national ramifications, including how it sparked movement of workers around the country, see Elliot Robert Barken, *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 375-80; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 270-79; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 16-19; and Jocelyn Wills, *Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators: Entrepreneurial Culture and the Rise of Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1849–1883* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005), 149-52.

For instance, an 1880 census report commented on the lack of waterworks, public parks, and garbage removal in the city.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the smaller community of Neenah did offer these amenities. This was at least in part because the majority of Fox Valley mill owners lived there. But also, the owners of Kimberly & Clark and their local counterparts were concerned with Neenah's aesthetic quality and its reputation as an ordered community that promoted settled sobriety for not only themselves but also their employees.⁴⁹

Beyond encountering deficiencies in local infrastructure, those who migrated to the Fox Valley soon learned that local governments policed entrepreneurial options by placing strict restrictions on the use of city space. For example, municipal officials granted the Appleton City Marshall the power to designate "the authorized stand for such hacks, cabs, wagons, omnibuses." Those who offered these services could only solicit customers in that area, which could move without warning. Only if a person acquired "special permission from the common council,"

⁴⁷ On Fox Valley public services, see "For Big Business: Fond du Lac Capitalists Incorporate for Immense Enterprises," *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, July 30, 1898; *Report on Valuation, Taxation, and Public Indebtedness of the United States: Tenth Census of the United States*, 153, 761; and *Report on the Statistics of Cities: Tenth Census of the United States*, 645-49, 675-80. These reports provide information on Oshkosh and Fond du Lac. On public works in Appleton, see *Wright's Appleton City Directory* (Milwaukee, WI: Wright's Directory Company, 1887-88), 17-20; Judson Perkins, "Housing and Sanitary Conditions in Appleton," 4-7, Oscar Schall, "Appleton Water Supply," 8-11, F. E. Miller, "Public Parks in Appleton," Lois M. West, "Charitable Relief Appleton," 71-73, in "A Study of Social Conditions in Appleton, Wisconsin," (unpublished papers, Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin, 1911). There are copies of this document both at the Appleton Public Library and at the Lawrence University Archives.

⁴⁸ *Report on the Statistics of Cities: Tenth Census of the United States*, 645-49, 675-80.

⁴⁹ S.F. Shattuck, compiler, *A History of Neenah* (Neenah, WI: Neenah Historical Society, 1958), 41-56. On the importance of Neenah's public image to local industrialists, see Suzanne Hart O'Regan, *Family Letters: A Personal Selection from Theda Clark's Life* (Neenah, WI: Palmer Publications, Inc., 1983), 15-20-; Sager, *With God's Grace*, 7. This differed from their lumber baron counterparts, who wanted clean water, sanitation, and education for themselves but not necessarily their workers. George M. Paine was especially notorious in this regard, as he believed that the cost of labor should be cheaper than that of lumber. See Thomas Kidd Scrapbook, 1895-1953, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, Wisconsin. For more on industrialists and their perspectives on city services, see Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 20-23, 216-18.

could they “use any other place as a stand for such vehicles.” If one did receive this exception, however, they needed to be aware that “no such stand [would] be allowed in front of premises occupied, when the business of owners or occupants thereof [would be] damaged thereby.” This protected the interests of private property over those of mobile workers, who did not have an established location where they could sell their skills. Additionally, those who practiced these occupations could not “solicit passengers in aloud [*sic*] or boisterous manner or obstruct the crosswalks or sidewalks in the vicinity of said stand or any other part of the city.”⁵⁰ If a person dared to challenge the rule, they could “be subject to a fine of no less than 3 dollars and not exceeding fifty dollars,” or they would find themselves “imprisoned in the county jail not less than ten days nor exceeding sixty days.” This ordinance reflected the local industrial desire to keep streets clear and society organized in an effort to create the greatest financial profit.

Although promoters celebrated the progressive atmosphere of Appleton, the reality was different for unskilled laborers and factory workers who tried to organize or who disrupted the “peace and good order of the city.”⁵¹ The city had no laws that protected workers, and bureaucrats pandered to the demands of capitalists by empowering local law enforcement to guard the investments of mill owners and lumber barons. This included supporting legislation that discouraged social protest or trespassing on private property. Such laws catered to business owners who regularly called on the police to protect their investments. Here again, the City Marshall was an important figure in helping to maintain the efficiency of the local economy. For instance, during times of labor activism and political unrest, “it was his duty to suppress all riots, disturbances, and breaches of the peace” in an effort to restore order. He also had the duty to

⁵⁰ *Charter of the City of Appleton* (Appleton, WI: Appleton Wecker Print, 1887), 161.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

compel city officials and private citizens to aid him in this cause. If they did not agree or he did not cooperate and suppress “disorderly behavior,” there would be fines of “no less than ten and nor more than fifty dollars.”⁵² By employing punitive measures like these, municipal officials expressed not only their commitment to ensuring social stability, but also their desire to keep certain types of people and activities out of city limits.

Government representatives and local elites wanted to attract immigrants who shared the values of those who settled before the Civil War, whereas industrialists also desired employees who supported their corporate aspirations. These interconnected goals shaped who moved to Wisconsin as well as their opportunities. Boosters sought to attract American Protestants of northern European ancestry who desired a life of hard work and Christian faithfulness, especially U.S. military veterans who had fought against the Confederacy. The result of their promotional efforts, however, was much more diverse than they expected. For instance, an 1871 report from the Wisconsin State Board of Immigration indicated an influx of settlers from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, England, Wales, Belgium, Holland, and the eastern seaboard. A good number were Protestant, but many were Roman Catholic.⁵³ There were also newcomers from Poland, Syria, Russia, Greece, Italy, Hungary, and Germany, some of whom were Jewish. Although a

⁵² *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵³ For the perspectives of the state board of immigration on desirable workers, see *Immigration Report of the State of Wisconsin, 1871*, 241. In his 1872 report to the governor of Wisconsin, the commissioner of immigration Ole C. Johnson indicated the importance of industrial expansion in government recruitment efforts. See the *Annual Message of Cadwallader C. Washburn, governor of the state of Wisconsin, and accompanying documents, delivered to the legislature in joint convention on Thursday, January 11, 1872*, accessed on October 21, 2019 at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=turn&entity=WI.V020N02&isize=M>. Boosters targeted Civil War veterans and used the Homestead Act to encourage people to move to Wisconsin. Applicants for 160 acres of public land had to be American citizens, or they could pay 10 dollars to become one, or they could be in the process of filing paper work. Serving for the Union qualified a person to receive the benefit, but a person could not apply if they had fought for the Confederacy. See the Homestead Act, accessed on April 6, 2020 at <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=31&page=transcript>.

portion of newcomers had fought for the Union in the Civil War, most had not participated in the conflict but rather had migrated to the United States recently.⁵⁴

Between 1870 and 1910, the populations of Fox River Valley communities more than doubled, which reflected not only acceleration in immigration but also the increased urbanization of the region.⁵⁵ According to census records, this development reflected Wisconsin statistics more broadly, with the urban composition of the state rising from 25 to 43 percent during those forty years. For example, papermaking cities like Neenah, Menasha, and Appleton emerged as important manufacturing centers that relied on American-born and immigrant workers. As a result, by 1910 the “twin cities” of Neenah and Menasha had 11,815 residents, which more than doubled the 1870 population. Appleton also became an important industrial site, with the number of residents almost quadrupling from 4,521 in 1870 to 16,773 in 1910.⁵⁶ In just one decade between 1870 and 1880, the local population of the city doubled, whereas the ratio between “Native” and “Foreign-Born” in the census remained consistent. With a total population of 4,518 in 1870, 2,990 of Appleton residents were born in the U.S., and 1,528 individuals had come from outside of the nation. Meanwhile, the community transformed by 1880, becoming home to 8,005 people. Nevertheless, the proportion of native to foreign-born

⁵⁴ Francis A. Walker, compiler, *Statistics of the Population of the United States*, vol. 1 (Washington D.C.: U. S. Government, 1883), 466-68 and 480-96.

⁵⁵ “Selected Nativities By County, Winnebago,” “Selected Nativities By County, Outagamie,” and “Selected Nativities By County, Calumet,” pp. 376-77, in *Census of Population and Housing, 1870*, accessed on September 25, 2019 at <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>; “Population for the State and for Counties,” pp. 1050, 1073-74, and 1090-94, in *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*, accessed on September 26, 2019, at <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>; Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 194-97; and Rippley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, 15-22.

⁵⁶ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 197.

remained steady, with 5,655 residents having been born in the U.S., and the remaining 2,350 people emigrated primarily from northern and western Europe.⁵⁷

Thus, during the late nineteenth century, the population of the Fox Valley continued to grow. Neenah's population looked similar to Appleton's during this time, with both the native and foreign-born populations growing steadily and expanding by one third within a decade. For instance in 1870, Neenah had 2,655 residents, with 1,773 "native" and 882 listed as "foreign-born."⁵⁸ By 1880, the population had grown; however, the statistics looked similar, with 2,845 American-born residents, and 1,357 immigrants.⁵⁹ By 1895, the German-born community had increased by only 11 individuals to 710, while the European-born Scandinavian demographic had shrunk from 722 in 1885 to 667 ten years later. Additionally, there were 111 Canadians, 64 people from England, and 60 from Ireland living in Neenah by the end of the nineteenth century. Neenah's foreign-born population was significantly smaller than nearby Menasha's, with 4,313 out of 5,781 people maintaining that they were American-born.⁶⁰ By 1905, immigration from Europe had slowed considerably, with the total combined population of Neenah and Menasha permanent residents decreasing from 12,007 to 11,815 people in 1910.⁶¹

One of the most evident demographic shifts in the region stemmed directly from an influx of immigrants from what census takers called "the German Empire," as well as a cohort of

⁵⁷ "Population, By Race, Sex, Nativity," p. 456 in *Census of Population and Housing, 1880*, accessed on September 12, 2019, at <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

⁵⁸ "Population of Civil Divisions Less Than Counties," p. 295, in *Census of Population and Housing, 1870*; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 201.

⁵⁹ "Population, By Race, Sex, Nativity," p. 456 in *Census of Population and Housing, 1880*.

⁶⁰ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 202-03.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 195; and "Population Reports By States, Nebraska to Wyoming," p. 1068, in *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*.

eastern European workers who sought jobs in the wood-products industries in Oshkosh as well as in nearby Menasha.⁶² Within a decade, the Polish population of Menasha went from almost none in 1885 to 667 in 1895, which was over a quarter of the foreign-born population of the city. Meanwhile, 1,071 people told census collectors that they were originally from Germany, 117 from Ireland, 62 from England, 29 from Scandinavia, and 13 from Canada.⁶³ In 1895, the total population of Menasha was 6,154 people, and 2,106 of them were foreign-born.⁶⁴ Oshkosh also had a large German population. For instance, according to the 1900 U.S. Census, out of a total of 28,284, the city had 7,356 foreign-born residents; 20,614 claimed foreign-parentage; and 4,500 of them reported that they were from Germany. With 237 from Austria and 561 from Bohemia, the only other significant immigrant group was from Denmark, with 395 people claiming it as their nation of origin.⁶⁵ This helps to explain how the local wood-products industry came to rely on German workers, at least initially, as well as the significant changes to the social landscape that resulted from their presence in the region.

Oshkosh expanded immensely at the turn of the twentieth century, especially during the heyday of commercial timber harvesting. For example, according to historians Charles N. Glaab and Lawrence H. Larsen, in 1870, the local population was 12,673; by 1910 there were 33,062 people, making it the second largest city in Wisconsin.⁶⁶ Unlike Appleton, where the ratio of

⁶² The 1870 U.S. Census uses “the German Empire” as an option for foreign-born individuals; however, this category changed to simply “Germany” by 1900. See *Census of Population and Housing, 1870*, p. 535; and “Country of Birth,” *Census of Population and Housing, 1900*, pp. 800-01, accessed on September 10, 2019 at <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

⁶³ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 202.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 203; and “Statistics of Population,” *Census of Population and Housing, 1900*, 868.

⁶⁵ “Population By Race, Sex, and Nativity,” p. 535, in *Census of Population and Housing, 1870*.

“Native” and “Foreign-Born” residents stabilized, between 1870 and 1880 the American-born population in Oshkosh grew by almost 3,000 to 11,094, while the foreign-born population remained similar to what it was in 1870, with the number rising only from 4,541 to 4,654.⁶⁷ During the 1890s, the city’s growth briefly slowed due to declining lumber production in the Wolf River basin. This dissuaded mobile workers from temporarily settling in Oshkosh during the warmer months before heading north in the winter to work in lucrative logging camps.⁶⁸ Instead, those who decided to remain found permanent housing and jobs in wood-products manufacturing, which took over as the principal industry.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, as newcomers contributed to the economic success of area capitalists, immigrant laborers also challenged everyday understandings of corporate order in the city by creating social institutions that reflected their religious inclinations and cultural preferences.

This occurred in communities throughout the region, though in different ways depending upon the desires of factory owners and the workers who lived in each specific location. Between 1890 and 1920, ethnic enclaves appeared throughout Wisconsin, especially in urbanizing areas that continued to rely on water routes to access Menominee timber. For instance, “the Bloody Sixth Ward,” in Oshkosh was not a recognizable neighborhood in 1870, but just a decade later, 2,188 people would call it home.⁷⁰ By 1910, 3,111 workers lived there, and according to a

⁶⁶ “Population Reports By States, Nebraska to Wyoming,” p. 1049, in *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 197.

⁶⁷ “Population, By Race, Sex, Nativity,” p. 456 in *Census of Population and Housing, 1880*, accessed on September 12, 2019, at <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

⁶⁸ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 197.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, Vol. 2* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1884), 1930-33; and “Population, By Race, Sex, Nativity,” p. 456.

resident, Clarence “Inky” Jungwirth, nearly everyone had a connection to the lumber industry and knew someone who had worked for the infamous factory owner George M. Paine.⁷¹ German immigrants were predominant in this neighborhood, which was also where most unskilled laborers who settled in Oshkosh resided. In the introduction to the collection of oral histories that he gathered to commemorate the community, Jungwirth claims that during the 1890s, the Sixth Ward was a political district that segregated immigrants from the craft workers who lived on the opposite side of the Fox River.⁷² For example, he quotes a newspaper article that ran in the local *Oshkosh Dispatch*, which emphasized that “in the north and northwest quarters of the city live a number of English speaking woodworkers. They are usually better circumstanced than are their foreign-born brethren of the south side.”⁷³ Jungwirth also explains how “stubborn Germans,” “drunken Irishmen, and “dumb Pollacks” occupied the Sixth Ward, surviving on barely one dollar a day.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, their skilled Anglo-American associates could afford to purchase “large houses, such as that one sees in a prosperous farming community.” These skilled workers also had a “pleasure resort” called “North Park, a pleasant grove washed by the beautiful waters of Lake Winnebago.”⁷⁵ Jungwirth suggests that craft workers not only earned better wages than their immigrant counterparts, but also had significant bargaining power in

⁷⁰ *Census of Population and Housing, 1870*, p. 373.

⁷¹ *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*, p. 1068.

⁷² Clarence “Inky” Jungwirth, *A History of the Bloody Sixth Ward in the City of Oshkosh: A Personal View* (Oshkosh, WI: Clarence Jungwirth, 1991), 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

negotiating the terms of their employment, the conditions in local factories, and the aesthetic qualities of their communities.

Developments in papermaking technology and mechanization meant less reliance on the knowledge of specific individuals, however; and increasingly, managers sought inexpensive laborers who would perform repetitive tasks for long hours with minimal grievances. This created even greater divisions between those who had experience operating complicated wood-products machinery and those whom employers threatened to hire as replacements. In Oshkosh, “boys from between the ages of sixteen and twenty years of age” threatened the competency and masculinity of seasoned woodworkers.⁷⁶ Regardless of the challenges that factory owners faced in finding effective substitutes for certain positions, they secured the help of elected officials and local law enforcement in their quest for profits. For example, during the Oshkosh woodworkers’ strike in 1898, an area newspaper expressed protestors’ concerns, stating, “if the scabs had unlimited access to the mills thanks to the new partisanship and efficiency of the police, the strike policy would indeed be in danger.”⁷⁷ During the late nineteenth century, as immigrant labor filtered into the region, even minimally skilled laborers with low paying jobs found their employment in jeopardy, which momentarily united wood-products workers across ethnic, gender, age, and even occupational lines. Men and women, boys and girls, ethnic Germans and Anglo Americans, who worked as cutters, door-makers, and master finish craftsmen, joined together as a united movement of area residents for improved wages, reduced hours, and better working conditions. Yet, as an influential local newspaper reported, “the police continued to

⁷⁶ Ibid., 8; and “Wisconsin Labor Men Aroused over Infamy at Oshkosh,” *Oshkosh Weekly Northwestern*, June 25, 1898.

⁷⁷ Jungwirth, *A History of the Bloody Sixth Ward in the City of Oshkosh*, 12.

make arrests of the strike leadership with the aim of breaking the back of the resistance.” The factory owners had the support of powerful public officials and employed an effective control mechanism. Thus, apparently, “when the police ordered the haranguing women to disperse and they did not, several were taken to jail.”⁷⁸ Despite resistance, industrialists continued to support increasingly punitive methods of workplace control, including fines and incarceration.

Meanwhile, local ditch diggers, canal builders, and papermakers were imagining their own versions of progress, which reflected the daily social customs and religious practices of their former homelands. For example, in Kimberly, Combined Locks, Kaukauna, and Little Chute, Irish and Dutch laborers worked together to construct and repair locks and bridges along the Fox River.⁷⁹ These newcomers traveled to the region to avoid religious persecution and extreme poverty, and they relied on their churches to help them adapt to their foreign surroundings. The majority of Dutch arrivals, for example, followed their family members and faith to Wisconsin, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. These immigrants settled near a mission that the Roman Catholic priest, Theodore J. van den Broek, had established at Little Chute.⁸⁰ Buying parcels of land and taking up farming, they labored on projects to improve the river and also found jobs in the wood-products industry. The architect of this migration was Father van den

⁷⁸ “Wisconsin Labor Men Aroused over Infamy at Oshkosh.”

⁷⁹ Rippley, *Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, 78-81; and Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 198-201.

⁸⁰ Father T. J. van den Broek, “Journey to North America,” ed. Paul West (Little Chute, WI: Little Chute Historical Society, 2017), 1-6. Also, see Sister Mary Alphonsa Corry, *The Story of Father van den Broek: A Study of Holland and the Story of the Early Settlement of Wisconsin* (Little Chute, WI: Little Chute Historical Society, 2015), 63-74.

Broek, who encouraged settlement and likewise provided leadership and a sense of belonging in a place where bigoted residents viewed Catholics as foreign and undesirable.⁸¹

A rather insular community, Little Chute developed around the Catholic mission there, and residents were almost exclusively of Dutch ancestry. By 1890 the village had 380 inhabitants, who expressed pride in their shared heritage.⁸² This stemmed from experiences with anti-Catholic prejudice in Holland and their resistance against discrimination in their new home. For example, in his recruitment efforts, van den Broek encouraged immigrants to settle together in the Fox Valley. Placing advertisements in Dutch newspapers, he promoted the promising qualities of his Wisconsin colony, yet he also warned that despite the diversity of Protestant sects in the Midwest, those who practiced them “[stood] together in their hatred of Catholics.” The emigrants from Holland had witnessed religious intolerance in Europe and knew, as their priest had cautioned, “it [was] not advisable that Catholics should separate from one another for in unity there is strength.”⁸³ As a result of his call for spiritual and ethnic loyalty, the local Dutch community grew through chain migration. Indeed, by 1900, Little Chute’s Dutch population had increased to 944, and in 1910, the census reported that 1,354 Dutch immigrants lived there.⁸⁴

In 1870, Outagamie County had a population of 753 people from Holland; however, Brown County had the greatest number of Dutch people in the region, with 1,159 residents from

⁸¹ Ibid. Also, see Frans H. Doppen, “The History of the Dutch Catholic Settlement at Little Chute, Wisconsin,” *Catholic Historian* 3 (Winter 1983): 202-25; and Robert P. Swierenga and Hans Krabbendam, “Dutch Catholics and Protestants in Wisconsin: A Case Study in Contrasts and Similarities,” in *Diverse Destinies: Dutch Colonies in Wisconsin and the East*, ed. Nella Kennedy, Mary Risseuw, and Robert P. Swierenga (Holland, MI: Van Raalte Press, 2012), 39-64.

⁸² *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*, 1063.

⁸³ Van den Broek, “Journey to North America,” 28-29.

⁸⁴ *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*, 1063.

Holland.⁸⁵ This was due to Father Van de Broek's efforts, which included not only his ministry to immigrants, but also to Oneidas and Menominees. Van de Broek attempted to "civilize" Fox Valley Indians by promoting the construction of transportation networks and "modern" infrastructure like roads, dams, and Christian schools. Beyond this missionary work with area indigenous peoples, he focused on "taming nature" and cultivating industry, and he tried to cement the presence and expand the influence of his parishioners by becoming involved in local politics and Fox Valley business culture.⁸⁶ He did so by gathering support for Dutch professionals like Appleton attorney John H. M. Wigman. A former Little Chute resident, Wigman was a founding organizer of the Catholic Knights of Wisconsin, a prominent benevolent association in the region. In 1868, he became Outagamie County District Attorney and defended the use of the Bible in local public schools. Then in 1893, he became the U.S. attorney for the eastern district of Wisconsin. Like van den Broek, Wigman urged Dutch immigrants to support each other by involving themselves in their area communities. Meanwhile, he represented the religious convictions and ethnic customs of his "countrymen" in Green Bay and throughout the Fox River Valley.⁸⁷

Likewise, Irish immigrants and their descendants challenged the ethnic composition and social climate of the region. Also Roman Catholic, they established churches and involved themselves in area politics. During the late nineteenth century, some settled in places like

⁸⁵ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 200.

⁸⁶ Van den Broek, "Journey to North America" 25-29; and Corry, *The Story of Father van den Broek*, 9-12.

⁸⁷ Andrew Jackson Aikens and Lewis Amsden Proctor, *Men of Progress, Wisconsin: A Select List of Biographical Sketches and Portraits of the Leaders in Business, Professional and Official Life* (Milwaukee: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1897), 509-10.

Appleton and Neenah but more moved to larger cities like Oshkosh and Green Bay.⁸⁸ In 1870, Brown County had the largest Irish population (1,442 residents) outside of Fond du Lac County (2,572 residents). Meanwhile, Outagamie County had the smallest Irish population (792), whereas Winnebago County had a substantial Irish constituency (1,399).⁸⁹ By 1910, as fewer Irish people moved to Wisconsin and the U.S. generally, Green Bay still had 329 people of Irish birth or descent. According to U.S. Census records, 600 Oshkosh residents were ethnically Irish, while Appleton had 114 foreign-born and 315 Irish Americans.⁹⁰ Fond du Lac had an especially large Irish population, with 252 immigrants and 800 American-born Irish living in the city.⁹¹ Simply through their physical presence and social perseverance, including their religious clubs, fraternal societies, and mutual aid associations, ethnic Americans and immigrants challenged the social makeup and religious dynamics of the area. They also restructured the local cultural atmosphere through the proliferation of Catholic churches in the Fox River Valley.

Between the 1860s and 1910s religious institutions sprang up all around the Fox River Valley, demonstrating the diversity of the people who had migrated there. For example, Green Bay had developed as a Catholic community long before the majority of Irish, Dutch, and German settlers arrived to the region, as had Fond du Lac. Indeed, French Jesuit missionaries came to Wisconsin much earlier, as the fur trade economy boomed along the Fox River. Although primarily unsuccessful among Oneida Indians, these men had a substantial influence among the nearby Menominees. According to an 1874 city directory, “the early history of the

⁸⁸ “Selected Nativities By County, Winnebago,” “Selected Nativities By County, Outagamie,” and “Selected Nativities By County, Calumet,” pp. 376-77, in *Census of Population and Housing, 1870*.

⁸⁹ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 200.

⁹⁰ *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*, 1098.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Roman Catholic Church in the city of Green Bay, and that of the city proper, are so closely related, as to almost entirely forbid any elimination in treating of either the one or the other.”⁹²

By the time of this statement by the priest at St. John’s Catholic Church, the municipality already had two Episcopal, two Presbyterian, one Baptist, and three Catholic churches (one French, one German, and the other Dutch). According to the priest, his church St. John’s, which stood on land formerly owned by the Methodist Society, was in “a flourishing condition,” with 1,300 parishioners and a “membership of 340 families.”⁹³

In Fond du Lac as well, churches were the central component of social life, and Catholic parishes dotted the landscape. The Sisters of St. Agnes were influential in the establishment of the community, as were Methodist missionaries. By 1905, the city had an abundance of options for residents who desired Christian worship. The city offered two Episcopal, one Evangelical, one Evangelical Association, one Congregational, two Lutheran, one Presbyterian, one Baptist, and four Methodist Episcopal churches. Meanwhile, Christian Scientists also had a church; and there was a “People’s Church” as well. Catholicism, however, dominated religious life for a sector of the municipality.⁹⁴ Not only were there four local Catholic parishes, but there were also two schools, a hospital, two convents, and the Henry Boyle Catholic Home for the Aged. The Catholic Knights of Wisconsin had two branches and the Foresters had four Catholic orders. Fond du lac was not an exclusively Catholic city, but it was predominantly Christian.⁹⁵

⁹² Alfred J. Dall, *Green Bay City Directory* (Appleton, WI: Reid and Miller, 1874), 17.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁴ *Wright’s Fond du Lac City Directory* (Milwaukee, WI: Wright’s Directory Company, 1905), 36-38.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

Likewise, Appleton had numerous Protestant churches as well as a small but involved Jewish community. The city had two Hebrew Societies and a Jewish synagogue, Temple Zion. Unlike Green Bay, where Roman Catholics had cultivated an early authority, those who pioneered the wood-products industry in Appleton were Methodist, and they frowned on those who followed papal teachings. Not long after the project to improve the Fox River accelerated in the 1850s, other Christian denominations established a presence in Appleton. For example, already in 1887, the community had one Congregational, one Baptist, one Episcopal, one Presbyterian, one Evangelical Association, and two Lutheran churches.⁹⁶ Yet Methodism remained the primary denomination of area political and economic elites, especially those invested in lumber and its byproducts. In nearby Neenah for instance, where the paper barons John A. Kimberly and Charles B. Clark lived, there were two Methodist churches, and one of them was Danish. As in Appleton, Protestant churches dominated the landscape of the small papermaking city, with Scandinavian immigrants having a significant local influence. With not one Catholic parish, in 1900 Neenah had one Presbyterian, one Universalist, one Seventh Day Adventist, one German Evangelical, a Welsh Congregational, a Welsh Calvinist, and a “Church of the Good Shepard.” Additionally, there were two Danish Lutheran, two German Lutheran, one Norwegian Lutheran, and a Danish and Norwegian Lutheran church.⁹⁷

In Menasha, by contrast, Catholicism was prevalent among the German and Irish millworkers who lived there. With a population of just over 6,000 people in 1900, the industrial center had three Catholic parishes, though there were several Protestant churches as well: one

⁹⁶ *Wright's Appleton City Directory, 1887*, 24-25.

⁹⁷ *Bunn's Neenah Directory* (Oshkosh, WI: John V. Bunn, 1900), 598-99.

Methodist, one Congregational, one German Lutheran, and an Episcopal church.⁹⁸ By 1895, Menasha had one of the largest Polish populations in Wisconsin outside of Milwaukee, with 667 Polish residents, while its “twin city” of Neenah had none.⁹⁹ Poles found work in wood-products manufacturing, such as the Gilbert Paper Company, which employed 22 Polish “girls” as cutters and sorters in the rag room of the plant at 51 cents an hour.¹⁰⁰ This was one of the reasons why Polish migrants encountered prejudice, even from Catholics of different ethnicities. Believing that the newcomers were undermining the livelihood of the working class, local laborers despised Poles for agreeing to toil for long hours and suppressing wage levels. They also looked down on Polish men who worked alongside women and children in the mills. Although Wisconsin prescribed compulsory education for children, workers did not always follow the law. They needed the income of all family members, and some believed that their children benefited from learning the value of labor and skills beyond those offered in schools.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Polish parishioners experienced hostility from Irish and German worshipers at St. Mary’s Catholic Church. In reaction, Polish residents dedicated their own church in Menasha, St. John the Baptist, on August 12, 1888.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Bunn’s Menasha Directory* (Oshkosh, WI: John V. Bunn, 1900), 745.

⁹⁹ Glaab and Larsen, *Factories in the Valley*, 203.

¹⁰⁰ Rag Room Book, 1887-1910, pp. 94-97, Gilbert Paper Company Records, Paper Discovery Center, Appleton, Wisconsin.

¹⁰¹ Michael O’Brien oral history interview with Menasha native Genevieve Schierl, accessed on January 21, 2020 at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/>; Jungwirth, *A History of the Bloody Sixth Ward in the City of Oshkosh*, 8; and Crane *Oshkosh’s Woodworkers’ Strike of 1898*, 8-9.

¹⁰² *Bunn’s Menasha Directory* (Oshkosh, WI: John V. Bunn, 1900), 745; and “St. John Parish History,” accessed on June 8, 2019 at <https://www.menashacatholicparishes.org/st--john-parish-history>.

Oshkosh had the largest Polish Catholic population in the region; though like his paper-baron counterparts in Neenah, Oshkosh industrial tycoon and retired Union Colonel George M. Paine was Methodist. According to his January 15, 1918 obituary in *The New York Lumber Trade Journal*, he was “an active member of the church” that his father Edward had helped establish in the neighborhood where most capitalists and factory managers lived, on the north side of the Fox River.¹⁰³ The impressive religious institution had a parochial school and sat conveniently across the street from the lumber baron’s mansion.¹⁰⁴ By 1900, there were six Methodist churches in the city, though unlike the paper industrialists, the lumber baron did little to convince his employees to convert. Paine relied heavily on Catholic laborers, some of them Irish, but most of them German and Polish immigrants. These workers cultivated ethnic enclaves that centered on religious life.¹⁰⁵ In Oshkosh, there were five Catholic and six Methodist churches, but there were also two Baptist, two Episcopal, two Congregational, two Presbyterian, one Universalist, three German Evangelical, and eleven Lutheran churches.¹⁰⁶ Oshkosh and other Fox River Valley communities had parochial schools as well, which served as important sites of social inclusion and cultural pride. For example, Oshkosh had seven, three of them Catholic and four of them Lutheran.¹⁰⁷ These educational institutions not only reinforced religious beliefs but also the preferred cultural values, and in some cases, the native languages of immigrants. More generally, the presence of immigrants often disrupted the capitalist social

¹⁰³ “Col. George M. Paine: Obituary,” *The New York Lumber Trade Journal*, January 15, 1918.

¹⁰⁴ Jungwirth, *A History of the Bloody Sixth Ward in the City of Oshkosh*, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid; and *Bunn’s Oshkosh Directory* (Oshkosh, WI: John V. Bunn, 1900), 12-15.

¹⁰⁶ *Bunn’s Oshkosh Directory, 1900*, 12-15.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 12.

order and Protestant work ethic that industrialists and their government allies struggled to develop in the region.

As the experiences of Polish immigrants demonstrate, not all newcomers arrived to a welcoming reception. Acceptance depended upon many factors, and political citizenship did not always align with cultural inclusion.¹⁰⁸ A confluence of factors shaped the status hierarchy in the Fox River Valley, including nationality, ethnicity, faith, gender, and skill. Even if a person was born in the U.S., this did not necessarily ensure tolerance in the small industrial communities of the Midwest. Instead, local social arrangements influenced whether or not someone decided to remain permanently in the area. Northern Europeans and migrants from the eastern U.S. could move into the region with little difficulty, taking jobs in a range of industries, especially if they were skilled workers. Meanwhile, eastern Europeans and Catholic immigrants encountered religious persecution and ethnic prejudice. Yet, by the early twentieth century, those who settled found employment and established social institutions, which represented their versions of progress. Securing positions in wood-products manufacturing, they built mutual aid organizations, educational centers, and churches, and they used these ethnic and religious associations to protect and reinforce their values and ensure their economic survival. Their perseverance transformed the cultural landscape of the region, signaling to industrialists that it was time to invent different methods of employer control and public regulation.

¹⁰⁸ On the differences between political inclusion and social equality, see Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 19. On whiteness and varying degrees of access to social citizenship, see Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 230.

Working-Class Persistence and Political Change

Despite the disadvantages they experienced in the late nineteenth century, by the turn of the twentieth century, working-class people would gain a greater public voice in the Fox River Valley. As the population grew and their desires continued to diverge from those of employers, workers began to shape the civic climate in Wisconsin. By opening their own businesses, protesting in support of their educational institutions, and striking against unfair labor conditions, workers' daily choices challenged the corporate environment that area capitalists had designed. Worker militancy and cultural resistance were especially effective in decreasing the political influence of local factory owners. For instance, working-class protests against the 1889 Bennett Law safeguarded the extensive system of ethnic parochial schools in the area, helping to undermine Americanization efforts. Additionally, labor activism caught the attention of government officials from both the Democratic and Republican parties, especially those who recognized the struggles of workers and had their own ideas about limiting corporate influence over state politics. From Oshkosh to Appleton, class conflict unfolded. Workers' efforts to improve their employment situation ultimately influenced the platform of the progressive branch of the Republican Party in Wisconsin.

This political change led to new labor-friendly legislation that also supported the religious institutions and cultural practices of working people. There were limitations to these laws, however, with regard to whose livelihood they secured.¹⁰⁹ Following an 1898 strike in

¹⁰⁹ Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 84-87. On defining labor as white and male and ignoring the contributions of and challenges experienced by African American workers and women, see Ava Baron, *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1-47; Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 5-15; Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2-10 and 335-36; David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working*

Oshkosh and a wave of paper-mill protests in Fox Valley communities in 1902 and 1904, a group of politicians, led by then Wisconsin Governor and later U.S. Senator Robert M. La Follette Sr., promised to improve the lives of workers. Although their efforts created better opportunities for some, they restricted the liberties of others. For instance, state lawmakers crafted legislation that reflected a working-class investment in male supremacy and white nationalism that stemmed from the Union victory in the Civil War.¹¹⁰ The Progressive era reforms that arose as a result of shop-floor insurgencies sought to protect the rights of specific laborers, and did so by defining workers as white, skilled, and male.

Although they had been some of the areas' earliest non-indigenous inhabitants, African Americans had difficulty benefiting from the booming Fox Valley economy in the post-Reconstruction era. Even before the Civil War, area white workers worried about the abolition of slavery. For instance, an editorial in the *Janesville Daily Press* asked, "Will the Negro Come North?" It voiced concerns that African Americans would travel to the region and displace white workers. Those who expressed this belief wanted to keep black migrants in the South and generally voted for Democrats, who ardently opposed abolition. In support of popular appeals, the Wisconsin Senate responded by passing discriminatory legislation that sought to keep African Americans out of the state. For instance, once the Civil War began, state officials called

Class, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 1999), 3-20, and "What if Labor Were Not White and Male? Recentring Working-Class History and Reconstructing Debate on the Unions and Race," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 51 (Spring 1997): 72-95.

¹¹⁰ On manhood and the Civil War as well as the link between military service and citizenship, see Robert Bruce Donald, *Manhood and Patriotic Awakening in the American Civil War: The John E. Mattoon Letters, 1856-1866* (New York: Hamilton Books, 2008), 40-45; Paul Quigley, "Civil War Conscription and the International Boundaries of Citizenship," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 373-397; and Stephen Kantrowitz, "Fighting Like Men: Civil War Dilemmas of Abolitionist Manhood," in *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the U.S. Civil War*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 19-40.

for the “immediate revocation” of the Emancipation Proclamation. Responding to popular opinion, Wisconsin State Senator Edward Keogh urged Abraham Lincoln to repeal the Thirteenth Amendment in order to protect “the moral, financial, and industrial interests of the North.” The state government official expressed the sentiment of his constituents when he claimed that Wisconsin “should not [be] weakened or debased by the influence of a dependent and infirm race.”¹¹¹ This appeal did not send a welcoming message to black migrants.

Despite the hostile environment, African Americans managed to carve spaces for themselves in the Fox River Valley. They had long history in the Midwest, arriving in the late eighteenth century as fur traders and enslaved laborers.¹¹² The Underground Railroad also brought black settlers to the area, some of whom established communities and intermarried with Indians. For instance, in his correspondence on Wisconsin’s fugitive slave law, clergyman John Nelson Davidson explained how in the early 1860s, an African American “put up a shanty and lived [in Calumet] for a time.” But when “his master [came] after him . . . the darkey fled” to a nearby town. The “fugitive” then found refuge on a local Indian reservation. He was not the first to do so, according to Davidson, who claimed, “among the Indians then living at Stockbridge there [was] an admixture of Negro blood.”¹¹³ These black migrants demonstrated that they could survive in the region. Although local government officials and factory owners

¹¹¹ *State of Wisconsin: Journal of the Senate, Annual Session A. D. 1863* (Madison, WI: Atwood & Rublee, State Printer, 1863), 190.

¹¹² John Nelson Davidson, *Negro Slavery in Wisconsin and the Underground Railroad* (Milwaukee: Parkman Club, 1897), 33-35.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 66.

had not intended to attract African American workers, black residents had made an imprint on the social geography of the area even before the formal eradication of slavery in the South.¹¹⁴

Republican officials and factory owners were anti-slavery, but this did not mean that they thought black migrants should live on equal terms with white settlers. Rather, local elites believed that the presence of African Americans would endanger the economic life and social stability of the area by threatening the established racial hierarchy and labor arrangements in the Fox River Valley. For instance, in his 1897 pamphlet on the Underground Railroad, John Nelson Davidson explained that white opposition to slavery in Wisconsin was due to a belief that “it degraded labor.”¹¹⁵ Industrialists worried, contradictorily, that their white employees would collude with former slaves to overthrow management, while Euro-American workers believed that black laborers would undermine wages. In reaction, racist residents sought ways to keep black migrants out of local towns. At the same time, local elites espoused a belief that Anglo-Saxons were biologically and culturally superior, which protected power relations that placed African Americans at the bottom of the hierarchy.

For example, Wisconsin cities passed vagrancy laws that sought to discourage black migrants from settling in the state. On June 21, 1900, the *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, a black newspaper, provided details on the court case of an African American business owner named Henry F. Corbett from Janesville. According to the report, the man spent several months in jail,

¹¹⁴ For example, an African American man established the village of Freedom near Green Bay. See “Freedom Pioneer,” Grignon Collection, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

¹¹⁵ In the late nineteenth century there was a growing belief that the presence of African Americans “degraded labor,” and northern businessmen picked up on this ideology and reinforced it by refusing to hire black migrant workers. Davidson, *Negro Slavery in Wisconsin and the Underground Railroad*, 43-44. On the role of scientific management practices in creating and supporting racism in industrial factories, see David R. Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 140-43.

unable to pay a fine, even though he claimed that he lived and worked in the community. The chief of police, Edward Schumacher, had arrested Corbett under a municipal vagrancy statute and held him in order to collect enough evidence to charge him with attempted murder of a local white couple.¹¹⁶ The article continued, “during Corbett’s imprisonment he was taken very ill,” and after his acquittal, he could not find employment. Apparently, the accusations had destroyed his reputation.¹¹⁷ Thus, African American newspapers warned readers that vagrancy laws allowed police to arrest black people simply for their presence, giving black migrants little protection against incarceration. Likewise, Fox Valley journalists also reported on vagrancy arrests, which created an image of black delinquency in the local white imagination and discouraged black settlement in the region. For instance, on May 17, 1915, the *Appleton Evening Crescent* ran an article titled, “Appleton No City for ‘Cullud Folks,’” which explained how police arrested three men at the local train station, two of them African American and the other Irish. Although the men alleged that they lived in the city, police officers charged all three with vagrancy, sending the two black men “out of town” on a train. Meanwhile, the Irish “tramp” found himself with a \$5.00 fine and a week of “hard labor” at the Outagamie County workhouse.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ “Reverend Cheney is Sued, Henry F. Corbett Brings Suit for \$25,000 Damages,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, June 21, 1900.

¹¹⁷ “Charged with the Crime Corbett Arraigned on the Charge of Murder,” December 28, 1899. For more examples of African American newspapers warning black migrants about Wisconsin vagrancy laws, see “Five Negroes Sentenced,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, August 31, 1899; and “Cream City,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, August 18, 1904.

¹¹⁸ “Appleton No City for ‘Cullud Folks,’” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, May 17, 1915. On the Progressive-era roots of black criminality and the ways in which newspapers reinforced racial stereotypes, see Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness, Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 5-15, 24-25, and 140-43.

By the early twentieth century, this criminalized image undermined the efforts of African Americans searching for employment in the Fox Valley. Even in the most successful industries, black workers came up against social barriers. For instance, despite labor shortages, local trade unions excluded African Americans, and those who did move to small urban communities like Appleton encountered more challenges than they did in larger cities because of the sundown customs and vagrancy laws that proliferated across the post-Civil War northern U.S.¹¹⁹ Factory owners worked with municipal officials to keep black migrants from staying overnight in an effort to encourage “business stability.”¹²⁰ For example, the *Appleton City Charter* called for police to “restrain drunkenness and obscenity, or vagrancy, in the streets or public places, and to provide for the arrest and punishment of the offender or offenders.”¹²¹ The statute directly targeted transient workers, which heightened the difficulty that black newcomers encountered when they sought jobs in the region because of the ways in which police officers unevenly applied the law along racial lines. Black people represented only 2 percent of the population in

¹¹⁹ For examples of unions excluding African Americans in the Midwest, see “Colored Hod Carriers Will Be Given a Place in Labor Day Parade to Show that They Oppose a Separate Union,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 19, 1902; “The Colored People Demand His Removal Because of the Slur on Colored Labor in the Verdict in the Maggie Gaughan Inquest,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 7, 1888; and “Growing--The Labor Day Parade Is Held with Only 1,500 Men Participating--Other Labor Matters,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1893. On this phenomenon in Wisconsin, see John D. Buenker, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 4, *The Progressive Era, 1893-1914* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1998), 196-99; Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1914-1945* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 147. On discrimination against Wisconsin African Americans in the early twentieth century, see Jane L. Collins and Victoria Mayer, *Both Hands Tied: Welfare Reform and the Race to the Bottom in the Low-Wage Labor Market* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 30.

¹²⁰ On sundown customs in the U.S. North, and in Appleton in particular, see James Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: Touchstone, 2006), 65-68, 77.

¹²¹ *Charter of the City of Appleton*, (Appleton, WI: Appleton Weekly Wrecker, 1887), 28. The Appleton Common Council appointed the city Marshall and approved all local police force deputies, then gave these officers the power to regulate public life in the community in whichever way necessary to protect businesses and the health of the local economy, see “The City Marshall,” *Appleton Crescent*, January 18, 1889.

1900. Yet, local deputies regularly arrested African Americans for vagrancy.¹²² For example in 1910, Appleton detained 152 people on vagrancy charges, and 21 of them were African American.¹²³ Meanwhile, there were only 9 black residents in the city, which meant that they comprised less than 1 percent of a total of 16,773 people.¹²⁴ Thus, not only did African Americans represent a tiny minority in the Fox River Valley, but also capitalists and the legal institutions they supported reinforced racial prohibitions.

Although municipal laws and social prejudices influenced who could settle, African Americans nonetheless opened businesses and established institutions that allowed them physical protection and cultural survival. In response to harassment on the shop floor and active exclusion from local hotels and restaurants, black settlers worked independently to make a living as business owners and brave entrepreneurs in a predominantly white community.¹²⁵ For instance, in 1898, Emma Hollensworth placed an advertisement in the *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate* for her barbershop in downtown Appleton. The ad noted that she was “a dealer in all kinds of hair goods,” including “scalp disease treatment.” As this ad suggests, black residents made names for themselves as local hairstylists. They also opened diners and stores, and found jobs as performers, musicians, and domestic laborers.¹²⁶ By doing so, African Americans sought

¹²² *Census of Population and Housing, 1900*, 1097.

¹²³ “Arrest Records, 1910,” Appleton Police Department, Appleton, WI.

¹²⁴ *Census of Population and Housing, 1910*, 1098.

¹²⁵ “Mrs. Hollensworth: Dealer in All Kinds of Hair Goods,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, December 16, 1898; and “E.S. Elmore, Shaving Parlor,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, July 20, 1899; “Around the State: Appleton News,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, December 9, 1898. African Americans in larger urban areas had similar job opportunities in the late nineteenth century; see Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 19, 28, and 89.

¹²⁶ Local white families who wanted domestic help advertised in African Americans newspapers. See “Classifieds,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, April 16, 1903; and “Classifieds,” *Wisconsin Weekly*

to create an inclusive climate for people of color in the Fox River Valley in the face of prejudice and job discrimination. But they also offered services that white patrons desired and that black residents could not find elsewhere. As a result, they helped uplift their community and influenced the racial makeup of the region.¹²⁷

Black workers were not the only group that challenged the hierarchies of the capitalist order in the region through their effort to establish their own businesses. Irish residents did so as well by building upon their experiences as skilled workers in the local textile industry. Although not as lucrative as the wood-products enterprise, woolen goods played an important role in the Fox Valley economy. Appleton Woolen Mills had the largest operation, with \$75,000 of capital invested in a plant that relied heavily on the labor of master spinners.¹²⁸ Aggravated by long hours, low wages, and prejudice on the job, three skilled workers decided to leave the plant to

Advocate, June 29, 1899. Paper barons petitioned the African American newspaper for servants, including the Kimberly and Babcock families, see “Neenah and Menasha Notes,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, December 9, 1898. African Americans found more opportunities in Oshkosh and Fond du Lac, which also had greater populations of black residents; see “Around the State: Fond du Lac News,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, December 9, 1898; “Hiring No Men, Oshkosh Manufacturers Will Not Fill the Places of Strikers at Present,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, May 21, 1898; and “Around the State: Fond du Lac News,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, May 21, 1898.

¹²⁷ On the improved status of African Americans in the Fox Valley due to the persistence of black entrepreneurs, see “Around the State: Appleton News,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, December 9, 1898; and “Around the State: Fond du Lac News,” *Wisconsin Weekly Advocate*, May 21, 1898. On African Americans opening businesses in order to provide themselves with employment and also offer services in their local communities, see Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 19, 28, 86, 205, and 245. On reconfigurations of whiteness in the Midwest during the late nineteenth century, see Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference*, 122-24; and Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 114-19, 180-83.

¹²⁸ *Appleton’s City Directory* (Appleton, WI: Morrow and Gillett, 1889-1890), 11; and *The Blue Book Textile Directory of the United States and Canada*, 14th ed. (New York: Davidson Publishing Company, 1901), 349. Companies sought to keep wages low while maintaining optimal production levels, which could be a difficult equation to manage. Like mills in New England, owners hoped to incur minimal costs, and given high rates of demand, spinners worked long hours. Although going out on one’s own was a risk, the move could produce profits that allowed a skilled worker to make money and manage his own time. On New England spinners and textile workers, see Mary H. Blewitt, “Manhood and the Market: The Politics of Gender and Class among the Textile Workers of Fall River, Massachusetts, 1870s-1880s,” in *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor*, ed. Ava Baron (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 92-95.

start their own textile business in 1874.¹²⁹ Their ability to do so depended upon their citizenship status, ethnicity, skill level, and gender as well as the connections that they had in the local community. The rigid managerial system and increased diversification of products at places like Appleton Woolen Mills frustrated “boss spinners” like John B. Courtney, an Irish American who had worked for twenty years at the local manufacturing firm. Hoping to make a better living and escape corporate control, he purchased an abandoned factory along the Fox River in 1904.¹³⁰

Although the majority of skilled woolen mill workers were of German ancestry, Courtney’s religious beliefs, cultural values, and settled lifestyle helped gain him customers. Running his own factory, Courtney set his own hours and controlled his own labor, while avoiding shop-floor bigotry and strict managerial regulations.¹³¹ Likewise, he benefitted the local working-class population by providing a valuable service, supplying quality textiles for a fair price without always requiring cash payment.¹³² Instead, he bartered with customers by accepting goods and services in exchange for his products. For instance, on December 10, 1909, Courtney accepted a “chicken and two hours of labor” from a customer as compensation for an order of wool batting.¹³³ Exchange systems like this bothered capitalists who sought to manage the area economy and believed that small businesses threatened corporate influence. Despite the

¹²⁹ Interview with Thomas Courtney, April 16, 2018.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid. On the reasons why workers of different ethnicities started their own businesses, helping local communities thrive, see Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours For What We Will*, 9-10, 29-30, and 45-48. On the importance of ethnic stores for building a sense belonging in working-class neighborhoods in the early twentieth-century northern U.S., see Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 188-24.

¹³² Thomas Courtney interview.

¹³³ Company Sales Records, J. B. Courtney Woolen Mills, 1909-10 (unpublished documents in Thomas Courtney’s possession, Appleton, WI), 46.

challenges he encountered, Courtney persisted by relying on his craft, local reputation, and the improving social standing of Irish residents in Appleton. By doing so, he challenged the area's ethnic and religious hierarchy, which helped to transform the social landscape of the region. Although his business sat on indigenous-turned-Methodist land, like most Irish residents, Courtney frequented St. Mary's Church, and his children attended the parochial school there.¹³⁴

Indeed, working-class religious perspectives and everyday cultural practices profoundly shaped the Fox Valley cultural climate at the turn of the twentieth century. For instance, in 1889, local ethnic communities resisted a campaign to Americanize schooling in Wisconsin. In the state legislature, the progressive branch of the Republican Party introduced a controversial bill that sought to limit the ability of immigrants to educate their children in religious institutions, which would have weakened connections to their former homelands and current ethnic communities. Popularly called the Bennett Law, the contentious bill enforced mandatory attendance at either a public or private school for at least twelve weeks a year and required that English be the language of instruction.¹³⁵ This insulted local workers, and they responded in ways that undermined the law and changed public policy in the state. By doing so, working-class people demanded that politicians address their concerns and respect their voices. As a

¹³⁴ Thomas Courtney interview; and Thomas H. Ryan, *History of Outagamie County* (Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association, 1911), 381-82.

¹³⁵ Republicans claimed that they crafted the legislation as a reaction to child labor in factories and concern over non-attendance in public schools. Opponents, however, argued that the law was a direct attack on parochial schooling and the religious practices and social customs of Wisconsin's diverse ethnic population; see Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of the State of Wisconsin for the Years 1887-1888* (Madison: State of Wisconsin, 1888), 17-20. On the Bennett Law and the negative public reaction to it, see "The Repeal of the Bennett Law and one of those Campaign Speeches which set forth the Inconsistency and Tyranny of such Law," *Lutheran Witness* 9, no. 18 (1891): 137-38; "Money to Koerner: Lutherans in the Campaign," *Oshkosh Northwestern*, September 26, 1890.

result, economic elites learned that they had little choice but to include workers in their social blueprint for the region.

In 1890, one year after the legislation went into effect, in response to public protest, Wisconsin Governor William Hoard declared support for the Bennett Law.¹³⁶ He claimed that in order for children to survive in the U.S., they needed education in English. His statement was a reaction to the outcry of the state's large German and Scandinavian populations, who wrote letters to local politicians defending their right to educate their children in their own schools. These complaints expressed a shared belief that state government had overstepped its purpose by interfering in the cultural life of area laborers.¹³⁷ Hoard responded to their anger and frustration by ridiculing parents' decision to send their children to parochial institutions. Yet he did not condemn the practice completely. Instead, he charged that although sufficient in certain instances, faith-based education in a "foreign" dialect inhibited a chance to "bring young children an opportunity to rise according to the ability God [had] given them."¹³⁸ Workers retorted, arguing that their ethnic practices and social lives depended upon their ability to communicate in their ancestral languages.

Protesters claimed that German migrants had been arriving and settling in Wisconsin for almost as long as their counterparts from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark had been establishing

¹³⁶ Another politician who defended the Bennett Law was John C. Spooner, a U.S. Senator and local businessman. A lumber baron, he was one of four key Republicans who influenced the corporate decisions of the U.S. Congress; see "Senator J.C. Spooner on Compulsory Education at the West Side Turner Hall, Milwaukee," Friday, October 3, 1890, Wisconsin Historical Society Pamphlet (61-795); accessed on December 24, 2019 at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=728>.

¹³⁷ "The Bennett Law," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 8, 1899; "Letter from Stevens Point," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, February 7, 1899; and "Letters to the Editor," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, February 12, 1899.

¹³⁸ William Dempster Hoard, "Statement in Support of the Bennett Law," William Dempster Hoard Papers, Mss 232, Box 44, folder 8, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

family farms in the region. Both groups had contributed to the economic prosperity of the Fox Valley and were not going to allow government officials to determine how they structured their lives. Although preoccupied by work and family, dissenters found time to familiarize themselves with politics and politicians, and they felt betrayed by their representatives at the state capitol.¹³⁹ The legislation undermined their cultural and religious practices in ways that sparked direct action.

For instance, on September 26, 1890, *the Oshkosh Northwestern* reported, “there is significant political activity among the Lutherans of the city at present.”¹⁴⁰ Following Governor Hoard’s defensive and ethnocentric reaction to their verbal protests, Fox Valley workers decided to fight back. Church officials and Wisconsin residents throughout the state donated money in support of the Democratic Party. Local newspapers discussed the fundraising and organizational activities of working people, who would eventually oust Republicans from state political offices through collective organizing. Disregarding former disagreements, if only momentarily, German Catholics and ethnically diverse Lutherans worked together to keep government officials out of their social institutions. For example, during the campaign against the bill, an Oshkosh priest, Father Reindl, explained how his church had sent representatives to meet with “the Lutherans” about the law. He claimed that Republicans lacked constitutional authority to meddle with religious education and that although “Catholics had nothing against the public schools,” he

¹³⁹ “Money to Koerner: Lutherans in the Campaign.” Irish Catholics also protested against the law, though not initially. When government officials defended the legislation in ways that were virulently anti-Catholic, Irish workers joined the resistance. Irish workers, who generally voted for the Democratic Party, also supported a repeal measure in order to undermine the strength of Republicans in Wisconsin. See “Our Chicago Letter,” *Deseret Weekly* 40 (1890), 854-55; and “The Outlook,” *The Christian Union* 42, no. 18 (July 1890): 555-56.

¹⁴⁰ “Money to Koerner: Lutherans in the Campaign.”

“insisted that the parochial schools should be left alone.”¹⁴¹ Scandinavian and German Lutherans felt similarly, and struggled to protect their languages and ethnic customs by petitioning their representatives to rescind the legislation.¹⁴² They succeeded, as state officials repealed the law in 1891.

Their activism drew the attention of faith-based groups across the U.S. and shaped the platform of Wisconsin politicians in ways that secured working-class cultural survival. Church publications from East to West, in places like New York and Utah, discussed the anti-Bennett Law movement.¹⁴³ For instance, a Mormon publication praised the successful agitation of German Catholics and Lutherans and highlighted the political repercussions of worker activism in the Midwest. *The Deseret Weekly* noted, “the Bennett Law was erased from the statute books, the Republicans helping to undo it as much as the Democrats.”¹⁴⁴ In their struggle to protect their religious beliefs, protestors petitioned politicians to campaign against compulsory education in English. The Democratic Party responded by adding opposition to the Bennett Law to their state platform.¹⁴⁵ As a result, in 1890, for only the second time since the Civil War, Wisconsin had a Democratic governor and Republicans lost the State House of Representatives as well.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² On Scandinavian resistance against the law, see “The Norwegian Lutherans United: Articles of Agreement to Be Shortly Adopted-Denouncing the Bennett Law,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 12, 1890.

¹⁴³ See “The Repeal of the Bennett Law and one of those Campaign Speeches Campaign which set forth the Inconsistency and Tyranny of such Law”; “Our Chicago Letter”; and “The Outlook.”

¹⁴⁴ “The School Question Again,” *Deseret Weekly* 44 (1892), 768.

¹⁴⁵ For the platform of Wisconsin’s Democratic Party, see *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin* (Madison: Wisconsin State Printing Board, 1891), 394.

¹⁴⁶ On the 1890 victory of the Democratic Party, see *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin*, 558-65.

Workers influenced this shift in political leadership, which simultaneously ensured the long-term protection of parochial education. Both parties knew that Wisconsin's large ethnic populations had cultivated a political consciousness rooted in their cultural customs and religious practices. As one dissenter exclaimed, "the average German did not come to the United States to be Americanized."¹⁴⁷ With a growing population of immigrant workers, politicians could no longer ignore the demands of their constituents. The movement to repeal the Bennett Law had fueled a larger crusade to protect the personal liberties of Fox River Valley residents. As a result, the Democratic platform denounced it, "claiming it was unnecessary, unwise, unconstitutional, and un-American." Meanwhile, elected officials promised to reject the "republican policy of paternalism," and the "tyrannical invasion of individual and constitutional rights." To its opponents, the Bennett Law represented "needless interference with parental rights and liberty of consciousness."¹⁴⁸ Republicans knew that if they were to take back control of Wisconsin politics, they had to listen to workers.¹⁴⁹

Organized workers thus influenced state electoral politics. Yet they still had concerns and would continue to influence legislation through their everyday labor activism. For example, the Oshkosh woodworkers' strike of 1898 was one of the most important working-class protests against factory owners in Wisconsin. It sent a message that workers would demonstrate against unfair labor practices. Newspapers publicized the struggles of local woodworkers and their

¹⁴⁷ "The Bennett Law," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 8, 1899.

¹⁴⁸ *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin*, 394.

¹⁴⁹ Although the Republican Party kept compulsory education on their platform for the 1890 election, government representatives made it clear that they would not interfere with parochial schools or the personal liberties of parents. Nonetheless, Republicans forfeited control of state government to Democrats. See *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin*, 390-92; and "The School Question Again," *The Deseret Weekly* 44 (1892), 768.

efforts to improve working conditions and wages in the Fox River Valley. For instance, the *Chicago Dispatch* ran an article, “White Slaves of Oshkosh are Starved by Republican Masters,” which explained that underpaid laborers were desperate to the point of a work stoppage.¹⁵⁰ The nationwide leader in the production of doors and sashes and home to seven wood-products factories, Oshkosh had earned the name “Sawdust City.” The community also had a reputation for labor exploitation.¹⁵¹ Woodworking employed over 2,000 immigrant workers of Polish, Danish, Irish, and German origin and descent.¹⁵² Like paper mill owners further north, lumber barons stressed efficiency, uniformity, and capital accumulation. With so few employers in the area, wood-products industrialists could fix prices as well as wages in order to keep their costs low. In small, mostly non-union cities like Oshkosh, capitalists maintained workplace power, influencing even those who came to the city in search of work, at least initially. But by the end of the nineteenth century, a rise in demand for wood products gave workers the upper hand. Realizing that their employers depended upon their labor in a time of increased productivity, over 1,600 wood-products workers decided to go on strike.¹⁵³

Through the importation and exploitation of cheap “foreign” labor, Oshkosh had earned the reputation as the “wage slave capital of the world,” but workers refused to accept their

¹⁵⁰ “White Slaves of Oshkosh are Starved by Republican Masters,” *Chicago Dispatch*, May 16, 1898, Thomas Kidd Scrapbook, Wisconsin State Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹⁵¹ For newspaper accounts that describe Oshkosh as the “Sawdust City,” see “Oshkosh Not So Bad As Painted,” *The Daily Northwestern*, January 7, 1901; “Sawdust City Camps,” *The Daily Northwestern*, June 18, 1900; “Lodges Will Consolidate,” *The Daily Northwestern*, March 30, 1903. On labor exploitation in the lumber industry, see “Wisconsin Labor Men Aroused over Infamy at Oshkosh;” and “Strikers to March: They Will Appear in a Body on Principal Streets Monday.”

¹⁵² Wisconsin State Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics, *Eighth Biennial Report, 1897-1898*, 964-67.

¹⁵³ “Have Made the Demand: Oshkosh Woodworkers Up in Arms Now,” *Oshkosh Northwestern*, May 20, 1898, Thomas Kidd Scrapbook, Wisconsin State Historical Society Archives, Madison.

economic situation.¹⁵⁴ Wisconsin newspapers claimed that capitalists were unfairly extracting labor from white workers, treating them worse than African Americans. For instance, one article read, “in Oshkosh the millionaire mill owners have adopted the methods of the old-time owner of the black slave, and these methods are applied to the alleged white freeman with far greater profit to their masters than that received by the men whose policy they have followed.”¹⁵⁵ Thus, journalists who supported white ethnic workers in Oshkosh appealed to readers along racial lines.¹⁵⁶ Despite this highly publicized outcry, protestors did not change the perspective of local industrialists, who disregarded the demands of their labor force. As a result, woodworkers in all seven of Oshkosh’s lumber mills decided that their economic conditions were intolerable.

Laborers had the support of a powerful union.¹⁵⁷ According to Thomas Kidd, the general secretary of the American Federation of International Machine Woodworkers’ Union, which represented the strikers, Oshkosh woodworkers received “pauper wages” from their capitalist employers. He claimed that it “was the first time during his connection with trade unions that the manufacturers [had] ignored a communication from their employees,” and that through this “action in ignoring that communication,” the mill owners had “caused the strike and [were] responsible for it.”¹⁵⁸ Newspapers fueled working-class insurgency by reporting that

¹⁵⁴ “White Slaves of Oshkosh are Starved by Republican Masters.”

¹⁵⁵ “Mammoth Joinery Strike is in Progress.”

¹⁵⁶ Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 85-87; and David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans* (New York: Knopf, 1967), 29-32.

¹⁵⁷ “Situation at Oshkosh: Manufacturers Meet and Discuss Matters but Reach No Decision,” *Omro Journal*, July 7, 1898. Also see Virginia Glenn Crane, “‘The Very Pictures of Anarchy’: Women in the Oshkosh Woodworkers’ Strike of 1898,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 84 (Spring 2001): 44-59, cited material on 46.

¹⁵⁸ “Mammoth Joinery Strike is in Progress.”

industrialists forced laborers “to live on a diet of bread, potatoes and black coffee.”¹⁵⁹ This struggle to survive, along with a booming demand for their product, encouraged woodworkers’ resolve. With increased numbers and the successes of labor activism in regional urban centers like Chicago and Milwaukee, craftsmen and unskilled laborers decided to participate in the fourteen-week job action. They sought to better the situation of their families and community members but also to challenge the hierarchies embedded in the local culture.¹⁶⁰ The supremacy of area industrialists had reached its limit in Oshkosh.

Workers benefited from statewide recognition that Fox Valley factory owners mistreated their workers. As early as 1891, Wisconsin Progressives had spoken out against corruption in the industry. For example, after losing his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Robert M. La Follette Sr. met with U.S. Senator Philetus Sawyer, an Oshkosh lumber baron. During this meeting, La Follette experienced first-hand the corrupt business practices of the Republican leader when Sawyer offered “Fighting Bob” a bribe to fix a court decision for a business associate. Not only did La Follette refuse the offer, but he also came to despise the tactics of corporate employers, whom he believed abused their workers and undermined the social health of Wisconsin.¹⁶¹ Indeed, the Progressive branch of the Republican Party sided with Thomas Kidd and his union members. By the time of the strike, woodworkers had secured the support they needed, which fueled their decision to take action.

¹⁵⁹ “White Slaves of Oshkosh are Starved by Republican Masters. See also Lee Baxandall, “Fur, Logs, and Human Lives,” *Green Mountain Quarterly* 3 (May 1976): 1-111.

¹⁶⁰ “The Strike at Oshkosh: Some of the Plants Operated Under Militia Protection,” *Omro Journal*, June 30, 1898; “He Talked on Strikes: Samuel J. Gompers and the Present Difficulty,” *Enterprise*, June 2, 1898; and “Strikers to March: They Will Appear in a Body on Principal Streets Monday.”

¹⁶¹ Sawyer, a former U.S. Senator and Wisconsin State Assemblyman, was a stalwart Republican who had immense influence over the local economy and political apparatus. ““Uncle” Philetus: Recent Celebrants Now Shot Down by the Militia,” *The People*, July 3, 1898.

The strike soon gained national publicity, especially when Clarence Darrow came onto the scene. The rising attorney brought special attention to the plight of women and children, who labored under the most extreme conditions and received the lowest pay for their work. As wages dropped and hours increased, women replaced men on the shop floor, and skilled laborers lost their jobs to under-aged workers. This, in fact, was a central reason that union members called for the strike.¹⁶² Frustrated by their employers' refusal to negotiate, workers and their supporters chased replacement workers from the McMillen plant, pelting them with eggs and rotting vegetables. When violence erupted and factory owners called the National Guard to the scene, union members ceased their protests. Not only did they find themselves blacklisted from employment in the wood-products industry, but the district attorney, a personal friend of factory owner George M. Paine, also charged three of the leaders with conspiracy to undermine the Paine Lumber Company.¹⁶³ This was a common method that American industrialists used to break unions, by criminalizing and imprisoning their leaders. Darrow was aware of this strategy.

But the labor lawyer had tactics of his own. Hinging his defense of union leaders on the testimony of the Oshkosh Woodworkers' Council and their plea to prohibit women and local children from working in factories, Darrow highlighted the use of female and child labor, tying ideas of freedom to a man's ability to make a living wage and provide for his family.¹⁶⁴ He sermonized, "instead of having the sunshine and the light and the play that children ought to

¹⁶² "Mammoth Joinery Strike is in Progress."

¹⁶³ "Lawlessness Prevails: Oshkosh Strikers and Their Wives Run Rampant Thursday," *Weekly Northwestern*, June 25, 1898; "They're Not Guilty: Verdict of Acquittal Rendered Yesterday Afternoon in the Conspiracy Case," *Northwestern Times Enterprise*, October 27, 1898.

¹⁶⁴ "Labor's Defense: Eloquent and Masterly Speech of Hon. Clarence S. Darrow," *Labor Advocate*, July 1, 1899.

have . . . [they] are set to work in the mills for ten hours of every day.”¹⁶⁵ Although child labor existed across the U.S., Oshkosh mills made especially wide use of the practice.¹⁶⁶ Instead of laboring in a factory, Darrow claimed, children needed education. Throughout the strike, the emphasis was less on boys working in the factories, and more on the labor of girls. Darrow conceded that men had to toil to secure the livelihood of their families, but contended that women and girls did not belong in factories. Echoing the complaints of skilled workers and the American Federation of Labor, he insisted that industrial labor was for men. Darrow argued, “Paine has been able to get machines to do the labor that once required the work of a skilled mechanic—the head of the family,” by taking “the wife from her home.”¹⁶⁷ The lumber barons had gone too far in protecting their wealth. According to the famous lawyer, Thomas Kidd and the dissenting workers were not the conspirators. It was industrialists who ought to have been on trial for their violation of human rights.¹⁶⁸

Darrow’s dramatization caught the jury’s attention. The local court acquitted the union leaders, and although they did not achieve all their demands, the strikers gained the attention of Wisconsin politicians. Unable to force industrialists to ban women from wood-products factories or secure legislation against child labor, Oshkosh woodworkers nonetheless promoted the craft-union belief that wage work was for skilled men. According to Darrow, “so long as

¹⁶⁵ “Argument of Clarence S. Darrow in the Wood-Workers Conspiracy Case,” The Clarence Darrow Digital Collection, Law Library, The University of Minnesota, accessed on November 30, 2019 at <http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/trials.php?tid=11>.

¹⁶⁶ “Stained with Blood: One Man Has Lost His Life in the Woodworkers’ Strike,” *Oshkosh Times*, June 24, 1898; and “Mr. Darrow’s Eloquence: Court Room Filled With Interested Spectators,” *The Enterprise*, October 31, 1898.

¹⁶⁷ Argument of Clarence S. Darrow in the Wood-Workers Conspiracy Case,” 30.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-4.

injustice and inhumanity exist, so long as employers grow fat and rich and powerful through their robbery and greed, so long as they build their palaces from unpaid labor of their serfs, so long as they rob childhood of its life,” Fox River Valley lumber barons were guilty.¹⁶⁹ Wood-products workers were not criminals but citizens, “deprived of their . . . liberty” by corporate avarice.¹⁷⁰ To support his argument, Darrow drew attention to the tragic death of a young man, 16-year-old James Morris, who died after a strikebreaker clubbed him over the head during a protest. This event represented the true crime in the 1898 labor demonstrations, and Darrow used the incident to win the case. The court decision marked an important moment in resistance against employer use of criminal conspiracy charges to stem worker organizing. Although strikers had not secured all of their demands, they did make a significant political statement that reflected working-class cultural attitudes during the Progressive Era.¹⁷¹ Such labor activism nonetheless reinforced a belief that a woman’s place was in the domestic sphere and that children did not belong in factories but rather in American schools. Thus, the strike paved the way for early twentieth-century legislation that defined labor as white and male.

Similarly, in 1902 and 1904, employees at nearby paper mills in Appleton, Neenah, Menasha, Kaukauna, Kimberly, and Little Chute determined that they wanted to work less and make more money to support their families. The United Brotherhood of Papermakers (UBPM) went on strike to fight for fewer hours, especially on the weekend. They worked shifts that ranged from 11 to 13 hours a day, six days a week. Yet, they were most concerned with having Saturday nights off. Rather than propose a specific workday length, they wanted the weekend to

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷¹ “Importance of the Case: Outcome of Conspiracy Trial of Professional Importance,” *Weekly Northwestern*, October 22, 1898; and “They’re Not Guilty.”

rest and rejuvenate with their families.¹⁷² According to a report by a local Oshkosh newspaper, “these faithful workers wanted time to spend at their religious institutions on Sundays, which they believed would help them be better husbands, fathers, and men.” As workers tried to abolish the Saturday night shift, strikes spread throughout the region. Their efforts did gain some improvements for local factory workers. Specifically, paper industrialists agreed to reduce the number of hours that they demanded of their employees and also decreased weekend work. A few years later, however, Kimberly & Clark reinstated the hated Saturday shift due to competition from non-unionized mills, and the UBPM could not convince workers at factories outside of the area to support their strike effort. This undermined the extent of their victory.¹⁷³

Local capitalists ended up renegeing on their promise to give their workers weekend time off, though their initial reason for agreeing to the employees’ demand reflected the local cultural milieu. Paper mills, like wood-products factories, relied on women and children to operate. Yet skilled workers were men, as were union members.¹⁷⁴ A central tactic of the UBPM was to appeal to the belief systems of factory owners. So the union argued that male workers would have more time to spend with their families if they had the weekend off.¹⁷⁵ When one industrialist complained that he thought his workers would spend their time off at local taverns, strikers stressed their commitment to their families as breadwinners. This caught the attention of

¹⁷² Ozanne, *Labor Movement in Wisconsin*, 172-73.

¹⁷³ “Strike Breakers Shoot: Chicago Man Uses Gun When Attacked at Neenah, Wis.,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 21, 1904.

¹⁷⁴ “Corporate Payroll Records, 1895-1910,” Gilbert Paper Company Collection, Archives of the Paper Discovery Center, Appleton, Wisconsin; Wisconsin State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation, *Wisconsin State Board of Arbitration Biennial Report* (Madison: State Printer, 1897-1910), 15.

¹⁷⁵ “May Cause Strike: Kimberly Clark Paper Company,” *Kaukauna Times*, August 1, 1902; Matthew Burns, *History of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1966), 19; and Ozanne, *Labor Movement in Wisconsin*, 173-76.

industrialists like John A. Kimberly, who approved of his workers' demand as long as it did not "lead to a lowering of morals." He argued that "extra time for rest" would make "better husbands, fathers, citizens and Christians."¹⁷⁶ In fact, during the 1904 strike at his mill in Neenah, the capitalist had municipal law enforcement officials close the area saloons to reinforce his philosophy and keep political unrest at bay. He hoped that by listening to worker demands, he could foster moral order in the community where his business operated.¹⁷⁷

Local clergy supported this perspective. For instance, Reverend S. F. Kidder of the First Congregational Church in Menasha stressed the greed and selfishness of factory owners who would not abolish the Saturday night shift. He argued that making workers labor seven days a week without a break "exhausts and tortures the lives of men."¹⁷⁸ Kidder believed that the strikers had God as well as "justice on their side." Along with other area clergy, he crafted a resolution claiming that Fox Valley religious officials were "profoundly convinced that Sunday labor [was] detrimental to the moral and physical welfare of the individual and the community."¹⁷⁹ The strikers, then, stressed their identities as fathers, citizens, and especially as men. In crucial ways, their strategy reinforced the system of social stability that industrialists hoped to foster, one that bolstered industrial expansion and corporate control in the region.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ "The Secret of Good Values and Continued Success," *Appleton Weekly Post*, December 5, 1901; and Daniel Hoppe, "Never on Sunday: The Struggle of Papermakers in the Fox River Valley, 1895-1905," *Voyageur: Northeast Wisconsin's Historical Review* 22, no. 2 (Winter/Spring 2006): 30-31.

¹⁷⁷ "Strike Breakers Shoot: Chicago Man Uses Gun When Attacked at Neenah, Wis."

¹⁷⁸ "Saturday Night Shift," *Menasha Evening Breeze*, November 19, 1895.

¹⁷⁹ "Preachers Pass Resolution on Saturday Night Off," *Menasha Evening Breeze*, January 25, 1902.

¹⁸⁰ "Unfair Labor Practices," *Oshkosh Northwestern*, January 20, 1902.

Although they had difficulty changing their everyday material realities, workers' actions sent a message to state politicians, which led to the emergence of a direct primary voting system.¹⁸¹ Labor protests demonstrated to lumber barons and paper magnates that they could no longer appoint themselves and their allies to government positions through bribes and backdoor agreements. Led by Progressive Republican governor Robert M. La Follette Sr., workers helped push through a referendum that allowed people, not corporate machines, to determine the Democratic and Republican candidates for state political offices. As a result, in 1906, the first primary election took place for local and statewide ballots, and in 1911, the law expanded to include U.S. presidential races. This victory demonstrated to area leaders that through collective struggles on the shop floor and in surrounding communities, working-class people could influence the region's political culture.

Conclusion

Although industrialists had a commercial design for the Fox River Valley, workers resisted the industrial framework that capitalists had created to ensure corporate profits. Working people disrupted employer aspirations by defending their ethnic customs and spiritual beliefs, as well as the pride they took in their labor. Although workers did not achieve all of their goals, they did win greater representation in government as a result of their efforts. The Progressive-era legislation that arose as a result of working-class insurgencies sought to protect the rights of laborers, but these laws defined labor as white, skilled, and male. Indeed, racial segregation operated in the interests of factory owners, who earned the loyalty of their

¹⁸¹ On the rise of the direct primary system, see Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 93-94.

employees by discriminating against black labor. Meanwhile, politicians reinforced popular beliefs that women belonged in the domestic sphere, and white ethnic men embraced a working-class version of patriarchal citizenship that only they could possess. Regardless of these drawbacks, I argue that everyday labor activism paved the way for an array of reforms that came about in the early twentieth century. Through their everyday self-activity working-class people struggled to create a world that reflected their versions of social progress, and they were diverse but always intentional in their daily choices about where to worship and how to relax and enjoy their lives. Thus, I maintain that it was not only through their physical presence but also their cultural persistence that area workers influenced the political terrain of the Fox River Valley.

Chapter 3

Policing Vagrants and Vice: Working-Class Leisure and Criminality in the Progressive Era

Queer how a woman goes to pieces over a man. She was the best bet in Chicago until that curly-haired tramp threw her down.

Edna Ferber, *Show Boat*, 1926

In 1904, while working as the first woman reporter for the *Appleton Crescent*, Edna Ferber crossed paths with the famous vaudevillian, Harry Houdini, at a local drugstore. Not long after their encounter, she wrote an article about her experience. Born Erich Weiss in Budapest, Hungary in 1874, the popular magician misleadingly claimed that he was an American by birthright and a Fox Valley native. He embraced his Wisconsin roots and shared this pride with the young journalist, claiming that his visit to the region was for rest and “renewing old associations.” During their makeshift interview at the College Avenue pharmacy, Ferber also asked Houdini about his family. She was especially interested in learning about his father, who had been the first Jewish religious leader in Appleton. Ferber wrote that “of Rabbi Weiss, who [had] died, [Houdini spoke] just as affectionately and reverently” as he had of his beloved mother. Houdini nostalgically reflected on the “little office” where Jewish residents met to worship with his father prior to the construction of the local synagogue, and he chuckled that this was also where he “used to get [his] spankings.” His recollections of Rabbi Weiss impressed the Appleton reporter, who asserted, “in these days of rush and hurry and often disrespect for old age, it is pleasant to hear such filial words” about a parent.¹

Ferber wrote a glowing review of her conversation with Houdini, which emphasized his kind manners and his fine public comportment. For example, she claimed that while

¹ “Is Master of Locks and Bolts: Harry Houdini Talks Entertainingly of His Travels,” *Appleton Crescent*, July 23, 1904.

“imagination pictures a Sampson, massive, towering with enormous hands and feet . . . and shoulders and limbs like pillars of rock,” the international celebrity was instead “a medium sized, unassuming, pleasant faced, young fellow with blue eyes that were inclined to twinkle.”²

According to Ferber, rather than parading around as a brutish and unkempt social nuisance, the stereotype of vaudevillians in the early twentieth century, Houdini was a sophisticated and charming professional. This representation undermined local tropes that painted performers as lazy tricksters, projecting a positive image of the escape artist who would later become president of the American Society of Magicians.³

Fortunately, the release of this story occurred at an important cultural moment, when working-class leisure practices were under legal pressure to get in line with the moral order promoted by area capitalists and their allies in government.⁴ Ferber insisted that Houdini was

² “Is Master of Locks and Bolts: Harry Houdini Talks Entertainingly of His Travels.” From the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century, there was an ongoing public discussion about the morality of vaudeville. While the content of performances often suggested otherwise to audiences, promoters tried to create a pure image of the entertainment, citing the family-friendly atmosphere of vaudeville theatres. See “Note and Comment,” *New York Dramatic Mirror*, December 25, 1897; “Note and Comment,” *New York Dramatic Mirror*, December 11, 1909; “Whoterats Declare War: Battle with Vaudeville Trust Opens with a Strike,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 22, 1901; “The Boom in Vaudeville,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 21, 1902; “A Sardou Revival: Fashionable Folks Go to See ‘Nos Intimes,’” *New York Times*, November 11, 1891; “At the Vaudevilles,” *New York Times*, November 17, 1901; “Features in the Vaudevilles,” *New York Times*, May 6, 1902; “Features in the Vaudevilles,” *New York Times*, May 20, 1902; “In the Vaudevilles,” *New York Times*, November 5, 1901; “Where Vaudeville Bills are Given in Yiddish,” *New York Times*, December 28, 1902; “With Vaudeville Folk: Some Amusing Features of the Keith and Circle Bills,” *New York Times*, May 13, 1903; “Slocum Benefit Raises \$3,000: Grand Opera House Packed at Vaudeville Entertainment,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1904; “At the Combination Houses,” *New York Times*, October 2, 1904; Andrew L. Erdman, *Blue Vaudeville: Sex, Morals, and the Mass-Marketing of Amusement* (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2001), 1-7; and John Dimeglio, *Vaudeville U.S.A.* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1973), 48-49.

³ “From the Archives: Magician Harry Houdini Succumbs,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 1926.

⁴ The Appleton City Charter makes clear which types of activities city officials did not want within municipal limits, including gambling, prostitution, drunkenness, fortunetelling, begging, loitering,

not only a gifted entertainer but also a “chatty and readable” writer for the *New York Dramatic Mirror* who “was well paid for this work.” The illusionist was not a fake or a thief; rather, he was a man who had “made his own fortune,” and who “from a poor fatherless boy [had] grown to wealth and ease.”⁵ By stressing that he epitomized midwestern middle-class civility, Ferber’s description of Houdini countered local prejudices, which held that Jewish fortunetellers and eastern European showmen were swindlers, phonies, and perhaps even criminals.⁶

Instead, the article underscored the entertainer’s self-made financial success, his ardent patriotism, his faithfulness as a husband and son, and his ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Houdini was not a lawbreaker or a “freak,” but “an American” who was “loyal to his country.” Ferber stressed that his wife accompanied him “everywhere in his foreign travels.”⁷ She reported that he had defended himself against accusations that he had

and tramping. See *Charter of the City of Appleton* (Appleton, WI: Appleton Wrecker Print, 1887), 127-30.

⁵ “Is Master of Locks and Bolts: Harry Houdini Talks Entertainingly of His Travels.” Ferber’s characterization of Houdini countered beliefs that the hyper-masculine working-class showman undermined idealized white, male, middle-class respectability. She suggested that not all vaudeville performers and magicians were criminals; rather, they could be professionals depending upon their physical attributes and the seriousness of their art. See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 52-53.

⁶ On fortunetelling as a crime that resulted in fines and incarceration, see *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1887), 127. Social reformers focused on eradicating vaudeville shows and establishments that permitted fortunetelling in their efforts to create moral order in the Midwest. See Miss Sadie American to Howard Teasdale, October 15, 1913, Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16, Records of the Legislative Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison. For examples of men charged with fortunetelling as well as arrests of eastern European and Jewish men for mysticism and unlicensed showmanship that continued well into the twentieth century, Appleton Police Arrest Book, 09-20-1881 to 12-31-1892, pp. 1-40 and Appleton Police Arrest Book, 1910-1913, pp. 80-110, The Appleton Police Department Records, Appleton, WI.

⁷ “Is Master of Locks and Bolts: Harry Houdini Talks Entertainingly of His Travels.” Houdini mentions his affinity for Germany and German people, whom some city officials and local law enforcement viewed as uncivilized and inclined to immoral behavior, especially regarding alcohol consumption. One narrative claims that Houdini’s father lost his position at the local Jewish synagogue due to complaints that he offered services in German, though this is questionable given the large number

“[consented] to establish a school of burglary” in England, even though “noted thieves and bank robbers” had requested that he do so. Yes he also boasted that “no house or bank would be safe from prying hands if he revealed” his methods of fleeing from “the chains and bolts and bars and handcuffs” that kept neighborhoods protected and convicts incarcerated.⁸ Beyond his desire to produce a popular impression of himself as a law-abiding professional and a responsible American citizen, the vaudeville star highlighted another profound message that his performances sent to fans across the U.S. and aboard—an unrelenting quest for freedom.

Houdini challenged the status quo and stood in opposition to the tactics of law enforcement officials. For instance, when asked what “the most difficult escape he ever made was,” Houdini referenced his break from the Siberian Transport: “I was placed in the great vault, usually assigned to political prisoners, and when the great door was shut, I had the hardest time in my life, perhaps, releasing myself.” Despite this difficulty escaping one of the harshest detention facilities in the world, Houdini exclaimed that “it only took [him] 18 minutes to walk out, [as he faced] the dazed officials.”⁹ The “strong man” had emancipated himself from incarceration. This signaled to audiences that that there were ways to flee situations that appeared inescapable.¹⁰

Houdini was a cultural icon who, despite his “undesirable” Jewish ethnicity and “vulgar”

of German migrants in the Fox Valley at the time. See Kenneth Silverman, *Houdini!!!: The Career of Erich Weiss* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 17.

⁸ “Is Master of Locks and Bolts: Harry Houdini Talks Entertainingly of His Travels.”

⁹ Ibid. On Houdini’s efforts to professionalize magicians, see Harry Houdini, *The Right Way to Do Wrong: An Expose of Successful Criminals* (Boston: Harry Houdini, 1906), 1-4, 96-100, and *Miracle Mongers and Their Methods* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1920), 1-5; Silverman, *Houdini!!!*, 430-65.

¹⁰ “Other 5 – No Title,” *New York Times*, February 16, 1900; and “Is Master of Locks and Bolts: Harry Houdini Talks Entertainingly of His Travels.”

occupation, embodied the complexities of gender expression in the industrial U.S. Though an immigrant, he claimed an American identity, even as he constantly battled for social acceptance. To admirers like Ferber, the entertainer represented the sexually appealing qualities of working-class masculinity but also embodied the gentility of ideal white manhood. For instance, the reporter declared that “she was allowed to feel his forearm, which [was] amazing, as massive and hard as a granite pillar.” Although impressed by the affection he expressed for his mother and the elegance of his writing, Ferber also implied that she was as mesmerized by the strength of Houdini’s neck, which was “large and corded.”¹¹ Her description of the illusionist sheds light on expectations for male workers in Wisconsin, who needed both brawn and social etiquette to succeed economically in the Fox Valley. Factory owners required long hours of their employees, who labored under difficult shop-floor conditions. Meanwhile, during their free time, workers found themselves limited in their leisure activities by employers who sought to manage local expressions of manhood.¹² Everyday cultural activities, religious practices, and labor activism had changed the social landscape of the region in ways that gained working-class people a greater public voice. Yet, this new cultural terrain reinforced an image of white industrial manhood and encouraged factory owners to invent new methods of control. The feats of vaudevillians like Houdini reminded Fox Valley residents that they could resist, even under

¹¹ Ibid. Although Bederman discusses the differences between middle-class manhood and working-class masculinity, my project is more in line with the work of Thomas Winter. I argue that the industrial manhood that came about as a working-class ideal in the early twentieth-century in the Fox River Valley stressed strength and skill on the shop floor but also settled domesticity and a patriarchal authority rooted in sobriety and settled family life. See Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 16-20; and Winter, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 110-20.

¹² On employers’ desires to manage local understandings of gender, especially manliness, see “Saturday Night Shift,” *Menasha Evening Breeze*, November 19, 1895; “Preachers Pass Resolution on Saturday Night Off,” *Menasha Evening Breeze*, January 25, 1902; and “Unfair Labor Practices,” *Oshkosh Northwestern*, January 20, 1902. On the intersection of leisure activities and understandings of manhood, see Winter, *Making Men, Making Class*, 115-17.

challenging circumstances.

Working-class activism led to an expansion of law enforcement mechanisms, which sought to limit worker mobility and define the boundaries of ideal family life in the region. This reform impulse was not isolated to Wisconsin; indeed, a mission devoted to extinguishing social “evils” swept across the U.S. during the first decades of the twentieth century under the banner of Progressivism. Newspapers referred to the activists who pursued it as “vice crusaders.” They conducted campaigns in cities throughout the nation, publishing reports and pursuing investigations to expose the “immoral” activities of local laborers.¹³ For capitalists, managing worker behavior was time consuming. Thus, businessmen welcomed the support of private individuals and public officials who advocated for their corporate cause.¹⁴ Promoting the twin pillars of science and progress, social reformers joined forces with government officials not only to alleviate poverty but also to eliminate undesirable recreational activities from local communities. This led to an expansion of law enforcement that broadened police power and

¹³ On the activities of “vice crusaders” and concerns of Progressive reformers, see Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 163-70; Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 60-68; Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 3-6; Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 177-81; Jennifer Fronc, *New York Undercover: Private Surveillance in the Progressive Era* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 3-10; Emily Skidmore, *True Sex: The Lives of Trans Men at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 165-69.

¹⁴ Owners looked to local police departments to watch over their factories and protect their property; they were constantly preoccupied with keeping “thieves” and “tramps” away from their plants. See “A Police Station,” *Appleton Crescent*, May 22, 1886; “Tramp Shoots a Policeman,” *Appleton Daily Post*, June 24, 1903; “Need of More Policemen is Demonstrated by Petty Thefts and Disorder,” *Appleton Crescent*, August 1, 1903; “Plenty of Work for Railway Officer in Freight Yards,” *Appleton Daily Post*, September 26, 1903; Day Book of the City of Appleton, 1911, p. 131, Appleton Police Department Records, Appleton, WI. One former Appleton police officer suggested deputizing boys to keep crime out of local mills; see “Deputize Watchmen is Ames’ Policy,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, April 14, 1913.

transformed detention tactics. Simultaneously, these developments strengthened rules that sought to restrain working-class movement and institutionalize acceptable uses of free time.¹⁵

Workers however, challenged the methods of those who hoped to maintain a particular version of social order. As I demonstrate, labor resistance came in various forms that did not always include union organizing or overt workplace activism. There were those who embraced the perspectives of their employers and welcomed communal norms that encouraged settlement, sobriety, faith, and loyal U.S. citizenship. But there were others of the same socioeconomic class who did not share these values. The expansion of police power resulted in new forms of coercion on the part of local elites that broadened the reach of the Fox Valley criminal justice system through increasingly “modern” methods of incarceration. By tracing this process, this chapter unearths the local origins of the carceral state in the U.S. Midwest.¹⁶ State statutes like the 1911 Desertion and Nonsupport Act and the 1913 Linley Law institutionalized anti-vice measures across Wisconsin. However, they did not gain the support of local workers, especially those who were most affected by the regulations.¹⁷ Despite the strength of the political machine that took hold in the Fox Valley during the Progressive era and the profound influence of

¹⁵ “Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914,” pp. 84-90, 147-57, accessed on August 16, 2019 at <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/26835>; Police Record is Remarkable: Appleton Will Compare With Any City in the County,” *Appleton Weekly Crescent*, April 1, 1905; and “Need of More Policemen Is Demonstrated by Petty Thefts and Disorder.”

¹⁶ Historian Simon Balto calls for work that seeks to understand mass incarceration not only from above but also below, and my work is a response to this appeal. See Simon Balto, “The Carceral State’s Origins, from Above and Below,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 14, no. 4 (December 2017): 69-74.

¹⁷ On the Linley Law, which sought to eradicate sex work and vice in Wisconsin, see “Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914,” pp. 84-90, 147. On the 1911 Non-Support Act, which sought to protect women against desertion and local children from neglect, see Wisconsin State Legislature, *Wisconsin Session Laws: Acts, Resolutions, and Memorials* (Madison: State of Wisconsin, 1911), 731-33.

supporters, already struggling working-class people refused to give up and continued to practice outlawed activities.¹⁸ To explain this tendency, I analyze police logs, prisoner registers, and arrest records to demonstrate the values and activities that working-class people cherished and the lengths they went to protect their social customs and cultural pastimes. Ultimately, I argue that by refusing to allow their employers, law enforcement officers, or politicians to decide how they chose to use their free time, Fox River Valley workers changed the political landscape of the region in ways that reflected their daily preferences and persistence.

Regulating Recreation and Managing Mobility

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, as migrant workers journeyed to the Fox River Valley, capitalists supported local reform efforts to Americanize immigrants. They did so in an attempt to create an industrious and loyal workforce. As donors lost interest in funding Indian education, Lawrence administrators shifted their emphasis on moral improvement to cultivating social order among white ethnic laborers. This project aided area factory owners, who hoped to influence the work ethic and leisure practices of new employees. As early as the 1880s, however, university officials worried that not enough newcomers had taken advantage of the institution's educational opportunities.¹⁹ For instance, German settlers did not attend Lawrence.

¹⁸ "Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914," pp. 18-25, 103-18; and Prostitute's Testimony, Milwaukee, July 13-18, 1914, Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, pp. 113-16, accessed on August 20, 2019 at <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/63591>.

¹⁹ "Lawrence College Alumni Record, 1857-1922," pp. 30-31, n.d., Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI; and Thomas Truesdell, "In the

In some cases, they could not afford to do so; but more often, they relied on their own churches, social groups, and fraternal organizations for their schooling, welfare, and entertainment. As a result, few working-class residents participated in preparatory training, let alone pursued college degrees. Thus, faculty members were unsure of how to gain greater influence over immigrant lives.²⁰ Moreover, the recent influx of “foreigners” who were looking for jobs in the expanding paper and wood-products industries, only contributed to a corporate desire to provide ethical guidance to Fox Valley working-class people.

As historian Kathy Peiss notes, a side effect of mass industrialization and urbanization was the emergence of a commercialized leisure sphere, where workers spent their wages on activities that employers viewed as corrupting. This included forms of entertainment that brought men and women together, which created anxiety among capitalists and moral reformers who worried about sexual impropriety.²¹ In reaction to this concern, Lawrence College in Appleton established one of the first Young Men’s Christian Association chapters in Wisconsin in 1870.²² The Y.M.C.A. provided a framework for social activists who sought to encourage civility and productivity among factory laborers. Devoted to “aggressive Christian work,” like the national association, local Y.M.C.A. chapters sought to raise the “moral standard” in the surrounding community.²³ Although the work remained religious in focus, the movement was

Shadow of Madison: Wisconsin Liberal Arts Colleges in the Progressive Era” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1996), 84.

²⁰ “Lawrence College Alumni Record, 1857-1922,” pp. 30-31, n.d., Students, Native Americans, 1847-1952.

²¹ Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 7-8, 163-67.

²² C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), 274.

²³ “YMCA,” *The Ariel* (1897), pp. 102, “YMCA, articles and publications, 1893-1985,” Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

less interested in salvation and more concerned with providing a civilized cultural environment for wayward young workingmen.²⁴ In reaction to concerns about the detrimental leisure pursuits and drinking habits of immigrant workers, Y.M.C.A. volunteers sought to encourage alternative forms of recreation and socializing that promoted cultural and economic uplift among industrial employees.²⁵ To do so, the organization offered Bible classes and Sunday school services at churches in working-class neighborhoods, which encouraged “fellowship and association” in a Christian setting.²⁶ Hoping that these activities would make religious institutions “the social centers for the districts in which they [were] situated,” the organization encouraged greater faithfulness and order among workers in the paper industry.²⁷

By promoting cooperation rather than confrontation, the Y.M.C.A. benefitted factory owners and their commercial goals. Capitalists and their supporters in municipal government believed that these social reformers helped to ameliorate the vice and political unrest associated with large-scale factory employment. As a result, leaders supported the association and invested in its mission. For instance, in 1888, a second area chapter opened in a building near Lawrence campus, with branches popping up later throughout the region, including in Oshkosh, Neenah-Menasha, and Green Bay. Although the local university and Appleton organizations had separate identities, they worked together on social improvement projects, and each Y.M.C.A.

²⁴ A central goal behind the reform missions of the Progressive Era was to police the lives of people whose gender expression and sexual practices did not conform to heteronormative settled family life. See Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How A Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 86-91; and Clare Sears, *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 56-60.

²⁵ “YMCA,” *The Ariel* (1897), pp. 102-103.

²⁶ “Report of the Y.M.C.A. Student Secretary,” pp. 6-7, YMCA and YWCA, articles and publications, 1893-1985, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

focused its efforts on providing a moral framework for industrial workers that was in line with the college charter.²⁸ For example, Lawrence staff set the standards for the reform activities supported by the institution, and they expected students to follow its disciplinary parameters beyond campus. According to the university handbook, living by “Christian ideals” meant not “frequenting . . . bar-rooms, groceries, billiard saloons, or similar places of resort [or] attending theatrical exhibitions, balls, or dances” either at school or out in the community.²⁹ This guideline mirrored the desires of factory owners who hoped to restrict such amusements, believing that these leisure practices would exhaust the bodies of their employees.³⁰ When business owners saw workers heading to saloons rather than home after work, they looked to social welfare organizations to curtail these habits.³¹

Social reformers did not limit their efforts to working-class men, but also targeted women. For example, local chapters of the Young Women’s Christian Association had similar goals to their counterparts in the Y.M.C.A., including the one that Lawrence chartered in 1884.³²

²⁸ “Lawrence University Salutes the Centennial Year of the Appleton Y.M.C.A.,” n.d., YMCA and YWCA, 1893-1985, Vertical File, Lawrence University Archives, Appleton, WI.

²⁹ *Eighteenth Annual Catalogue of Lawrence University, 1867-68* (Appleton, WI: Lawrence University, 1868), 37-38. Copies at the Lawrence University Archives, Seeley G. Mudd Library, Appleton, WI.

³⁰ On corporate efforts to control the bodies of workers, as well as the strategies that workers used to reclaim their psychic and physical selves, see Tera Hunter, *To ‘Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ava Baron, “Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian’s Gaze,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 69 (Spring 2006): 143-160; and Ava Baron and Eileen Boris, “‘The Body’ as a Useful Category for Working Class History,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 23-43.

³¹ “The Secret of Good Values and Continued Success,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, December 5, 1901.

³² “Y.W.C.A.,” *The Ariel* (1897), p. 104; and “Report of the Y.M.C.A. Student Secretary,” p. 7. For more on the influence of commercialized leisure on working-class women, see Lizabeth Cohen,

Y.W.C.A. leaders encouraged women workers to stay away from saloons, billiards, dance halls, and other popular venues that encouraged social “evils.”³³ Activists wanted to change working-class leisure practices in order to uplift factory workers morally. Social reformers hoped to “teach standards of womanly deportment and respectability” that would counteract the corrupting elements of the working-class entertainment scene.³⁴ The possibility that women factory workers would take up sex work was a primary concern of industrialists and government officials. Thus, the Y.W.C.A. sought to curtail working-class vices by endorsing “rational recreation” that kept women away from bars and hotels.³⁵ Despite the actions of such organizations to regulate alcohol consumption and curb sexual deviancy, their efforts were generally unsuccessful.

Additionally, the Fox Valley branches of the Y.M.C.A. promoted a larger “sense of gender” that emphasized proper comportment and separate spheres. As historian Thomas Winter explains, by encouraging a “higher ideal of manhood, rooted in values of Christian brotherhood and service,” the Y.M.C.A. contributed to a cultural climate that accommodated industrial

Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 176-78; Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 7; Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, 8-16; and Elizabeth Alice Clement, *Love For Sale: Courting, Treating, and Prostitution in New York City, 1900-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 4-12.

³³ “Y.W.C.A.,” *The Ariel* (1897), pp. 104 and “Report of the Y.M.C.A. Student Secretary,” pp. 7.

³⁴ “Y.W.C.A.,” *The Ariel* (1897), p. 104.

³⁵ *Ibid.* Religious organizations and women’s clubs sought to influence the social behaviors of young women all over the Fox River Valley. See Mayor Charles B. Clark, Neenah to Senator Howard Teasdale, October 9, 1913; S. S. Little, City Clerk, Menasha to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 26, 1913; Eleanor J. Taylor, Green Bay to Senator Howard Teasdale, October 8, 1913; and Mrs. J. H. Sturdavant, President of the Woman’s Club, Oshkosh to Senator Howard Teasdale, February 6, 1914, Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16. Kathy Peiss discusses this effort as well. See Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 165. On fears of factory labor leading to immorality among women, see Senator Howard Teasdale to Jess Halsted, Interscholastic Debate Coach, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, February 21, 1914, Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16; and Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914, pp. 85-86.

development.³⁶ Factory owners desired tougher industrial workers and better family men; and area leaders supported this effort, believing that it would dissuade people from engaging in political radicalism and cultural vice.³⁷ For instance, one Presbyterian minister in Neenah sermonized about the evils of liquor and preached that young men needed to change their leisure pursuits or potentially experience social “ruin.”³⁸ The Y.M.C.A. also emphasized that women should focus on domesticity rather than socializing. Despite these efforts, men consumed beer and whiskey and gathered with women at public houses, fairgrounds, and dance halls to socialize and relax after a long workday. More generally, working-class people in the Fox Valley continued to drink alcohol, gamble, and participate in a world of illicit pleasure.

As a result, the Appleton Common Council made continued attempts to increase the size and expand the power of the municipal police force. Fortunately for capitalists and reformers, local law enforcement focused on monitoring working-class leisure pursuits and daily activities. For example, according to the *Appleton Weekly Crescent*, the record of the Appleton Police Department in “patrolling the business section of the city” was “remarkable.”³⁹ In an effort to preserve “the good public order” with “only seven officers,” the force proved its ability to guard taverns, which kept “perversion” out of the community. According to the news report, this

³⁶ Winter, *Making Men, Making Class*, 7.

³⁷ See “Police Nab Hold-Up Man,” *Appleton Daily Post*, April 4, 1905; and “Patrol Ought To Be Covered,” *Appleton Daily Post*, August 18, 1905. The Appleton City Charter demonstrates this as well; see *Charter of the City of Appleton*, (1887), 27-30. Historian Clifford Putney’s study of the Progressive era concept of “muscular Christianity” shows how the Y.M.C.A. encouraged workers to use their bodies not just as “a tool for labor” but a “tool for good . . . on behalf of social progress and world uplift.” Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 5-7.

³⁸ “Preachers Pass Resolution on Saturday Night Off,” *Menasha Evening Breeze*, January 25, 1902.

³⁹ “The Police Record is Remarkable.”

demonstrated that the small municipality could “compare with any city in the country” when it came to the effectiveness of its law enforcement. With the mayor serving as the chief of police, the city had more “arrests and convictions” in “comparison with the number of crimes and misdemeanors reported” in surrounding cities.⁴⁰ Moreover, even though Oshkosh and Green Bay had larger criminal justice budgets, the newspaper claimed that Appleton was the safer place to live. Elites took pride in this assertion, and thus supported investment in local policing.⁴¹

On August 8, 1906, the *Appleton Evening Crescent* ran an editorial claiming that Harry Houdini had attempted to escape the Outagamie County Jail during his visit to the area, but was unsuccessful. Apparently, the detention center was faultless, built as “a burglar-proof and tool-proof prison” that made freedom a “physical impossibility.” Even Houdini, who had released himself from hundreds of penitentiaries throughout the world, maintained that “not a man living could . . . get out of one of those cells without assistance.” According to the famous vaudeville performer, the “jail [was] as near perfect as any in the country.” This endorsement from the “Hand Cuff King” allowed municipal officials to boast about the superiority of the detention system in the city. They used Wisconsin media outlets to share the accomplishments of the

⁴⁰ Ibid. On the influence of the mayor as chief of police, see *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1887), 167.

⁴¹ Thomas H. Ryan, *History of Outagamie County* (Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association, 1911), 387. For instance, Winnebago County, where Oshkosh was the seat, had seven times the taxpayer money devoted to police protection as Outagamie County did. See *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin State Printing Board, 1909), 394. Green Bay was the seat of Brown County, which also allocated a greater portion of the city budget to law enforcement; see “The Policeman On His Beat,” *Appleton Daily Post*, July 23, 1904. The Common Council controlled the publication of city business, which gave municipal officials significant influence over the image of the community in the local press. Representation of Appleton in the early twentieth century indicated its safety, order, and beauty. See *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1907), 93-95; *The Municipal Code of Appleton* (1918), [unnumbered, introduction]; “Anti-Spit Law Observed,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, June 21, 1906; “Arrests Three Vicious Tramps,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, September 15, 1906; and “Appleton Must Pension Police,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, July 25, 1907.

Appleton Police Department with the broader public.⁴² They did so to gain popular approval of a pro-business agenda that sought to funnel more taxpayer money toward protecting the investments of area industrialists. Although they regularly opposed the allocation of county funds for local infrastructure, they were happy to support keeping streets clear of disruptions that inhibited commercial exchange and corporate profit.

For example, paper-mill owners supported the construction of an updated jail that not only insured the safety of their property but also reflected the progressive image of Appleton.⁴³ Given that Houdini was a professional escape artist, his inability to traverse the steel “clamp locks” of the Outagamie County lockup showed how innovative the jail’s design was compared to others in the U.S. and abroad.⁴⁴ The success of the new construction suggested to newspaper readers that Fox River Valley elites knew how to keep the area free from crime. Moreover, since Houdini was a working-class icon who resisted all methods of restraint, his failure to overcome the advanced technologies of the Appleton jail signaled to readers that government bureaucrats were serious about public safety, and all workers might be subject to forced confinement if they did not abide by the moral framework of their employers.

Ever since the establishment of a local police force in the early 1880s, area capitalists had looked to law enforcement officials to guard commercial interests and manage the behaviors of

⁴² “Hand Cuff King at the Local Jail,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, August 8, 1906.

⁴³ On the influence that local businessmen and bankers had on the flow of taxpayer dollars to the Appleton Police Department, see “What Powers A Policeman Has,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, January 9, 1908; “Calls For A Big Burly Policeman,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, January 30, 1908; “Winchesters For Appleton Police,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, October 28, 1909; “Appleton Must Pension Police “Police Salaries May be Changed;” “Addition to Police Force, but no Action Taken on Chief Today,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, July 23, 1913; “Cells Are Promised By End of Next Week;” and “Two New Men on Police Force.”

⁴⁴ “Hand Cuff King at the Local Jail.”

industrial workers in Appleton and adjacent communities. Having influence over the city common council and the county board of supervisors, bankers, paper barons, and lumber tycoons had indirect control over public policy.⁴⁵ Thus, while initially the Appleton police department had only two patrolmen, as the working-class population grew and diversified and wood-products investments became increasingly lucrative, factory owners wanted more officers to protect their property from the potential vandalism of “vicious tramps” and “foreign thieves.” The desire of monetary gain fueled business, but as important to mill proprietors were cultural control and social order. This influenced legislation and law enforcement mechanisms that Fox Valley elites supported as well as the tactics that they used to gain public approval.⁴⁶

Thus, factory owners welcomed the campaign to allocate more financial resources to law enforcement.⁴⁷ At the same time, the local press heightened concerns that “outsiders,” “bandits,” and “bank robbers” threatened the safety of Fox Valley residents.⁴⁸ Emphasizing the need to

⁴⁵ Appleton Common Council, *Annual Report*, March 31, 1908; “Police Promotions Made This Morning,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, April 1, 1910; and “Rifles Needed.”

⁴⁶ “Arrests Three Vicious Tramps;” “Motorcycle for Police,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, August 10, 1911; “Expect Shake Up In Police Department,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, January 3, 1912; “Police Salaries May be Changed;” “Addition to Police Force, but no Action Taken on Chief Today,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, July 23, 1913; “Cells Are Promised By End of Next Week;” “Junction Is To Get Policeman,” and “Two New Men on Police Force.” For more examples of the influence that area industrialists had over the activities of the Appleton Police Department, see “Winchesters For Local Police,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, October 28, 1909; and the Outagamie County Sheriff’s Office, Register of Prisoners, 1895-1955, pp. 5-30.

⁴⁷ On industrialists benefitting from the efforts of policemen, see Day Book of the City of Appleton, February 22, 1912, pp. 85 and May 1, 1912, pp. 201; “Deputize Watchmen is Ames’ Policy;” and “Patrol Ought To Be Covered.”

⁴⁸ “Officer Fires At Fleeing Man,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, September 10, 1908; “Officer Wins in Race With Two Car-Breakers,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, June 20, 1912; “Robber Runs Into Waiting Policeman,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, November 14, 1912; “Army Deserter Is Arrested by Garvey,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 21, 1913; “Suspicious Men Driven From City,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, June 14, 1913; “New Station Has Horror For Tramps,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, December 4, 1914; “Drunk Was Not Found At Station This Morning,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, December 8, 1913;

defend “manufacturing districts” against tramps and thieves, newspapers publicized a corporate appeal to put more police officers on duty. For example, according to an article from April 1, 1905, the Appleton police force had so far provided the area with exemplary service, but “[they could] not work all of the time.”⁴⁹ There were not enough patrolmen in Outagamie County, which complicated capitalist plans to maintain industrial peace. Appleton had an image of being more successful than other Fox River communities in preventing social deviancy; yet, industrialists claimed that taxpayers needed to fund an expansion of local police power.⁵⁰ In support of their plea, businessmen contended that workers engaged in corrupting leisure pursuits regardless of their illegality and the negative view of employers.⁵¹

Government bureaucrats worried that drunkenness provided a gateway for betting, prostitution, and vagrancy, and local newspapers reaffirmed these beliefs. Fox Valley reporters claimed that crime and social disorder were the result of the heavy drinking associated with spectator sports. For example, as early as July 6, 1872, the *Appleton Crescent* ran a story claiming that there had been “a drunken row at Frank Wertz’s saloon, third ward.” Luckily, as the article explained, law enforcement suppressed the dispute, adding “there was also an attempt to get up a prize fight in a ravine in this city, but Marshal Burk, as usual, ‘happened around’ and

“Tramps Keep Shy of City Bath Tub,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 14, 1914; “Use Motorcycle in Rounding up Bums.”

⁴⁹ “Police Record Is Remarkable.”

⁵⁰ “City Marshall Will See You Monday,” *Appleton Daily Post*, February 1, 1905; “Junction Is to Get Policeman,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, June 27, 1915; “Officers Bring In Hoboes From Junction Last Night,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, July 21, 1914; “Will Ask for Two More Policemen,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 16, 1915; “Drunk Thinks City Has A Queer Police Force,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, July 20, 1915; and *Wright’s Appleton City Directory* (Milwaukee: Wright’s Directory Company, 1925), [unnumbered, introduction].

⁵¹ “Police Will Have No Mercy Tonight,” *Appleton Daily Post*, October 31, 1905; and Ryan, *History of Outagamie County* 380-86. In 1873 Appleton elected a new city council, which according to a newspaper report, was “composed of some of [Appleton’s] most experienced and fiscally responsible local business men, see “The New Council,” *Appleton Crescent*, April 5, 1873.

‘arrests superseded blows.’⁵² As the account suggests, police responded to events like these by cracking down on aggressive displays of masculine competition. Incidents of public intoxication did not decrease, however, and patrolmen had difficulty addressing all of the problems caused by “the hoodlum element.”⁵³ Municipal authorities could not ensure the safety of city streets. As one newspaper questioned, “how [could] Appleton manage to jug her disorderly and burglarious visitors with but one night patrolman?”⁵⁴ Reports like this supported calls for a larger police force, a new station, and the professionalization of law enforcement. This would become a more popular opinion as the nineteenth century ended and the Progressive era state gathered strength in Wisconsin.⁵⁵

Although capitalists wanted to restrict urban entertainment venues and rural saloons, they had little success in doing so. The workers who frequented them had no intention of stopping, and investors in these “lewd” businesses enjoyed a lucrative home market. The economic benefits of commercial leisure activities and the desire of consumers to participate in them meant that industrialists and public officials had a hard time controlling working-class social behavior. Yet, they worried about the reputations of their communities. For example, according to a

⁵² “On Sunday There Was A Drunken Row at Frank Wertz’s Saloon,” *Appleton Crescent*, July 6, 1872.

⁵³ “Hoodlum Element,” *Appleton Crescent*, April 24, 1886.

⁵⁴ Untitled, *Appleton Crescent*, May 20, 1876.

⁵⁵ On the need for a more police officers, see “Our City Officers,” *Appleton Crescent*, March 31, 1877; “A Policeman Needed,” *Appleton Post*, December 1, 1887; “Our City Police,” *Appleton Crescent*, October 10, 1891; “New Policemen,” *Appleton Daily Post*, April 9, 1903; and “Need of More Policemen Is Demonstrated by Petty Thefts and Disorder.” On the constant debate over the local police station and its resources, see “A Police Station,” *Appleton Crescent*, May 22, 1886; “Hand Cuff King at the Local Jail,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, August 8, 1906. On the professionalization of policemen, see “Three Were Examined,” *Appleton Crescent*, March 10, 1898; “Civil Service Appointments,” *Appleton Crescent*, March 19, 1898; “Rigid Rules Govern Police,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, May 9, 1913; and “Vaughn Named Police Captain,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, November 5, 1913.

history of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Neenah, Charles B. Clark "had his hands full trying to control gambling and reverse a reputation of questionable morals in his city."⁵⁶ Indeed, the more people watched and bet on recreational events, the more difficult the regulation of these undertakings became.⁵⁷ As a remedy, industrialists launched sports leagues to discourage neighborhood fights from ending up on the shop floor, and they cultivated a cooperative and familial atmosphere among employees. Ironically, efforts to discourage gambling and alcohol consumption by sponsoring corporate football and baseball teams had the opposite effect.⁵⁸ Workers wagered their earnings and drank together during and after games. For instance, the owner of the Gilbert Paper Company in Menasha, William Gilbert Sr., worked with his three sons to encourage camaraderie through basketball and baseball, and these teams were popular among employees. To the dismay of the capitalist, however, he found his workers "wagering on their breaks," which led him to ban the activity on company grounds. He wanted them to play

⁵⁶ Ann Sager, *With God's Grace: 100 Years of Faith: A History of Saint Paul Lutheran Church* (Neenah, WI: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Inc., 2012), 7.

⁵⁷ On anti-vice campaigns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Wisconsin, see Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 359-60; Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914, pp. 85-86; Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16; and "The Secret of Good Values and Continued Success." On these efforts nationally, see Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*, 6-7; Fronc, *New York Undercover*, 3-10; Skidmore, *True Sex*, 165-69; Winter, *Making Men, Making Class*, 45-50; Sears, *Arresting Dress*, 2-10, 38-39; Louis Moore, *I Fight for a Living: Boxing and the Battle for Black Manhood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 5-10. On the difficulty that officials had regulating these activities, see "Appleton Police Arrest Book, 09-20-1881 to 12-31-1892," pp. 45-62; "Police Make Good Capture," *Appleton Daily Post*, October 22, 1903; "Ed Fox Makes Suggestion," *Appleton Daily Post*, October 22, 1903; and "Drunk Forgets His Identity," *Appleton Daily Post*, March 20, 1905.

⁵⁸ Untitled, *Neenah Gazette*, July 15, 1875; and Charles N. Glaab and Lawrence H. Larsen, *Factories in the Valley: Neenah-Menasha, 1870-1915* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1969), 215. The Appleton Common Council banned gambling in the late nineteenth century; yet, law enforcement had difficulty regulating the practice of betting on sports. See *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1887), 25-30, 127-29; *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1907), 97-99; and *The Municipal Code of the City of Appleton* (Appleton, WI: Appleton Wrecker Print, 1918), 263-64, 440-42.

“team sports” to build “a family atmosphere,” not to encourage “social vice.”⁵⁹ Regardless of fines, arrests, and warnings from their employers, area residents continued to place bets, drink alcohol, and support the local sex-work economy. This reinforced calls to allocate more resources for the regulation of area nightlife.⁶⁰

Along with trying to eliminate gambling and prostitution at Fox River Valley hotels and taverns, mill owners and local elites feared that “tramps” found sanctuary in such venues. In reaction, police officers waited outside of dance halls and billiard parlors to cite those who bought and sold physical intimacy and to apprehend individuals for vagrancy. For example, on January 1, 1870, the *Appleton Post* reported that City Marshal Ed C. Foster had “arrested two very suspicious looking characters” outside a local bar. A few days later, the officer “made two similar arrests in Oshkosh.”⁶¹ Then, on August 13, the *Appleton Crescent* ran an article claiming that “the city lockup [was] ready for visitors,” and was “just the place to stow away men who [were] guilty of indecorum.”⁶² Reports like these reminded readers of the constant threat of incarceration for those who lived beyond the limits of acceptable morality in the Fox Cities. Transience persisted, however, either because people could not afford a permanent residence or did not desire to keep one.⁶³

⁵⁹ “The Gilbert Paper Community” *Gilbert Paper Company Newsletter*, April 12, 1908. Copies of the company newsletter are housed at the Paper Discovery Center, Appleton WI.

⁶⁰ “Police Salaries May be Changed,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, April 8, 1913; “Addition to Police Force, but no Action Taken on Chief Today,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, July 23, 1913; “Cells Are Promised By End of Next Week,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, December 13, 1913; “Two New Men on Police Force,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, August 12, 1914; and “Junction Is To Get Policeman.”

⁶¹ “Our Very Efficient City Marshall,” *Appleton Post*, January 1, 1870.

⁶² “The City Lockup Will Be Ready For Visitors In A Few Days,” *Appleton Crescent*, August 13, 1870.

As the demand for wood products heightened, vagrancy became one of the primary issues that preoccupied factory owners in the region. Seeking to distance their communities from the reputation of nearby Oshkosh, capitalists honed in on restricting the behaviors of local workers. Meanwhile, newspaper reports that referred to Oshkosh as “Sin City” reinforced the need for these efforts. For example, on February 12, 1902, the *Chicago Tribune* ran an article titled, “Salvation Army Gives Up Attempt to Save Oshkosh,” which described local corruption and the extravagant leisure scene in the city. Describing the “battle” against “immorality” as a military operation driven by zealous religious missionaries, the report claimed that volunteers “had given up and abandoned” the “Wisconsin town.” According to the account, there was no ridding the city of debauchery. Thus, “after fourteen years of close and diligent labor to save Oshkosh, the Salvation Army [had] given it up and retired from the field.”⁶⁴ Although factory owners in wood products benefitted from the seasonal labor of lumber workers, this practice startled paper industrialists, who argued that mobile laborers jeopardized the safety of local residents.⁶⁵ For instance, the *Appleton Post* ran an article calling for a “special” patrolman “during the wood

⁶³ On the prevalence of “tramps” and instances of vagrancy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see “Resisted Arrest,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, March 12, 1891; “Nearly Locked Up,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, March 16, 1891; “A Day Policeman—Necessary for a Forceful Patrolman Demonstrated on Sunday,” *Appleton Crescent*, December 19, 1891; “THE ‘BOO’ GANG,” *Appleton Daily Post*, April 25, 1901; “BOTH WERE DRUNK,” *Appleton Daily Post*, June 4, 1901; “STRANGERS ARRESTED,” *Appleton Daily Post*, June 4, 1901; “Mackville Man Knocked Out,” *Appleton Daily Post*, September 30, 1903; “Man Escapes from Police,” *Appleton Daily Post*, October 14, 1903; and “Police Get ‘Bum Steer,’” *Appleton Daily Post*, December 5, 1903.

⁶⁴ “Salvation Army Gives Up Attempt to Save Oshkosh: Battle Against Sin in Wisconsin Town Is Abandoned and Battalion Retreats After Fourteen-Year Struggle,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 12, 1902.

⁶⁵ Oshkosh had gained a national reputation for moral corruption and cultural indecency, and paper barons wanted to distance their communities from that popular image. See “What They Say,” *New York Times*, February 10, 1888; “Oshkosh’s Increased Fame,” *New York Times*, February 26, 1899; “Tales of Oshkosh,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1901; and “Oshkosh Scene of Religious Activity,” *Chicago Defender*, November 27, 1915. As historian Todd DePastino explains, the “extraordinary volatility of the late-nineteenth-century . . . heightened by seasonality and dramatic boom-bust cycles, made unemployment a routine feature [of daily life].” DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*, 66.

selling season” to “keep the crossings clear of lumbering farmer lads,” so that “when a lady [came] along,” the officer “could shove them out into the into the street.” As the report explained, “a gentleman” was necessary, since “a lady [did not have] the strength to do it.”⁶⁶ Indeed, local elites viewed transient men as such a nuisance that by 1887, Appleton officials had already made vagrancy illegal, which empowered police to make arrests.⁶⁷

This vagrancy ordinance worked to the advantage of Fox Valley capitalists. It could protect business investments and wealthy residents from trespassing and theft, as authorities frequently responded to requests from factory managers to remove “loiterers” from corporate property. For instance, according to Appleton police records, on February 17, 1912, at 3:00 a.m., a police officer responded to a call from a representative of the Atlas Paper Mill, who claimed that there was a man in the office “lying on the floor drunk,” and the superintendent “wanted him arrested.” The officer complied and took the alleged criminal to the station and “locked him up” overnight for being a “tramp.”⁶⁸ Although public intoxication was against the law, it was punished only by a fine of one dollar and no corresponding sentence. Meanwhile, law enforcement officials had several options for punishing vagrancy violators, which included larger fines, forced confinement, involuntary labor, and the expulsion from the area. They also used the law to encourage a settled family lifestyle among local residents. On December 3, 1911, patrolman Bloomer answered a call to pick up Ben McKinney, who had fallen down drunk in front of a saloon. After a doctor tended his wound, the “trespasser” received a ride to his nearby

⁶⁶ “A Policeman Needed,” *Appleton Post*, December 1, 1887.

⁶⁷ *Appleton City Charter, 1887*, 28.

⁶⁸ Day Book of the City of Appleton, February 22, 1912, p. 85.

home to be with his wife and children. This “special treatment,” however, was not the case for every person who broke the vagrancy statute.⁶⁹

The outlawing of transience not only protected the property of local businessmen but also aided them in keeping their factories profitable and undesirable people out of the Fox Valley. For instance, on January 3, 1906, a newspaper reported that “Officer Bloomer had the distinction of capturing the biggest tramp ever locked up in Appleton.” The alleged vagrant, “who weighed no less than three hundred pounds,” claimed that he “was a working man [en route] to Rhinelander [Wisconsin] where he [expected] to secure employment.” Since he was a “Swede” who only needed a “refreshing night’s rest,” police officers released him the next morning, when he promised to be on his way to the northern part of the state.⁷⁰ By contrast, at 11:45 p.m. on May 1, 1912, officers Morris and Wagner “arrested 3 bums [for] sleeping in a barn at Graf’s Manufacturing Plant,” and these men received 30-day sentences of “hard labor” at the county workhouse.⁷¹ Then, on December 21, 1910, police brought Richard Pérez to court for selling cigars without a license and charged him with vagrancy, fining him for violating community business practices and declaring that he did not belong in Appleton.⁷² Following his removal, on September 16, 1911, officials “picked up an old man who [police officers said was] a Spaniard who said he was going to Mexico.”⁷³ Although the 1910 U.S. Census did not list any individuals with Spanish surnames living in Appleton, local law enforcement agents clearly

⁶⁹ Day Book of the City of Appleton,” December 3, 1911, p. 171.

⁷⁰ “Bloomer Gets Biggest Tramp,” *Appleton Daily Post*, January 3, 1906.

⁷¹ Day Book of the City of Appleton, May 1, 1912, p. 201.

⁷² Day Book of the City of Appleton, December 21, 1910, p. 49.

⁷³ Day Book of the City of Appleton, September 16, 1911, p. 145.

found and chaperoned such people out of the region. For instance, on April 18, 1912, two men “left town” after authorities released them. Officer Fox had arrested the “Cubans” for selling cigars. The report did not indicate whether or not they had a license, but it did suggest that the entrepreneurs were “tramps,” who were not welcome in Appleton.⁷⁴

Local capitalists did not want “peddlers” or “junk dealers” disturbing corporate progress and urged patrolmen to keep these “troublemakers” out of the city. As a result of this policy, the train station became a highly policed borderland where transient workers and area residents struggled over the meanings of belonging in the region. Police department records indicate that the vagrancy statute was a flexible law enforcement tool that kept unwanted people out of the area.⁷⁵ For example, in 1892, the *Appleton Crescent* published the “City Marshall’s Annual Report,” which indicated that police arrested 241 “vagrants” and transferred them to the Outagamie County workhouse. Arrest logs indicate that these “vagrants” were overwhelming Irish (112) and German (123), though 6 were English. Police also “rounded up 527 tramps” in addition “to the above who received partial aid (lunches) and were driven out of town without being taken before any magistrate.”⁷⁶ Almost any laborer could experience arrest; it was their sentencing that differed, depending on the police officer. According to the language of the ordinance, it was an equal opportunity law; however, police logs reveal that officers targeted

⁷⁴ Day Book of the City of Appleton, April 18, 1912, p. 197.

⁷⁵ Day Book of the City of Appleton, 1908, p. 120.

⁷⁶ DePastino claims that while “German-, English-, and native-born men all found their places in the great army of tramps, the Irish wayfarer became a common Gilded Age stereotype, one that gained strength and currency toward the end of the century. He also explains that although African Americans viewed geographic mobility as a sign of freedom, tramps and hoboes actively excluded black citizens from their ranks. Moreover, African Americans were more likely to experience expulsion from local communities than a jail sentence. See DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*, 14-15.

single “foreign” men “who looked suspicious.” For instance, in the month of February 1908, 20 out of the 30 arrests by the Appleton Police Department were on charges of vagrancy, and only two were deemed “American.” All of these men had to pay 5-dollar fines, and the 18 Irish men also went to the county workhouse for five days each.⁷⁷

While the law-and-order policies of city officials expelled itinerant men for “public safety purposes,” vagrancy regulations also created a state-sanctioned method for managing working-class behavior.⁷⁸ Newspapers repeatedly reported on the need for more officers to keep public places free from “tramps” and “hoodlums” and to decrease instances of “rowdyism and incivility” in Appleton.⁷⁹ To do so, the municipality gave police unlimited search and seizure powers, and patrolmen obsessively apprehended “loiterers” and “peddlers,” charging them with vagrancy.⁸⁰ Additionally, Appleton lawmakers granted local authorities with the power to “regulate the exhibitions of common showmen, or shows of any kind, or the exhibition of caravans, circuses or theatrical performances . . . and to grant licenses to such people as they deem[ed] proper.”⁸¹ On December 19, 1891, a report from the *Appleton Post* boasted that

⁷⁷ Day Book of the Police Department of the City of Appleton, 1908, 124-25; and “Record of Prison Labor Performed, 1913-circa 1933,” vol. 1, pp. 5-10, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Archives and Area Research Center, Green Bay, WI.

⁷⁸ According to Wisconsin convict labor law, “If a person refuse[d] to work diligently [they may have been punished] by being placed in solitary confinement therein not to exceed ten days for each refusal to do so work, the period of such confinement being discretionary with the superintendent, and shall receive bread and water only during such time.” See U.S. Congress, Senate, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Federal and State Laws Relating to Convict Labor*, 63rd Cong., 2d sess., vol. 17 (Washington DC, Government Printing Office, 1914), 224-25.

⁷⁹ See “Have Special Park Police,” *Appleton Daily Post*, August 2, 1904; and “Has Been a Tramp for Forty Years,” *Appleton Daily Post*, February 18, 1905.

⁸⁰ See *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1907), 166.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24-28. Carnival and fair grounds especially worried reformers and local law enforcement officials. Thus, they especially patrolled these locations, because they believed that they bred vice, see

“Appleton was the most orderly city in the state according to its population, but it [would] not retain this reputation if young loafers” remained in the area. To combat this threat, there was a capitalist call for “a policeman to patrol the business part of the city,” and within the month, the Appleton Police Department hired two new patrolmen.⁸²

These officers went right to work managing city streets. For example, on April 9, 1892, Officer F. W. Hoefler arrested a 36-year-old single man named John Metzel. His alleged crime was being a “tramp.” Although he was the sole Jew listed in the municipal arrest records for the entire month, he was not the only person accused of vagrancy. Appleton police charged 23 individuals with the crime during April. But Metzel was the only peddler. Other cases ended in anything from acquittal to a sentence of 30 days in jail. City officials gave Metzel one hour to leave town.⁸³ By 1902, vagrancy cases went down to 5, which represented only 2 percent of arrests for the year. Although less frequently, police still apprehended men for transience in the early twentieth century. For instance, on February 5, 1912, at 1:30 a.m., Officer Fox “took Jake Mohr out of Smith’s Livery barn.” According to police records, although the suspected vagrant claimed that “he had been working there [for a while],” his former employer asserted that he had discharged Mohr, “which led to [his] arrest and inability to stay in the city.”⁸⁴ Without jobs and

Day Book of the City of Appleton, 1911, p. 135; and Miss Sadie American to Howard Teasdale, October 15, 1913; Anonymous letter to Teasdale, September 13, 1913, Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

⁸² “A Day Policeman,” *Appleton Crescent*, December 19, 1891.

⁸³ “John Metzel,” Day Book of the City of Appleton, April 9, 1892, p. 68.

⁸⁴ “Jake Mohr,” Arrest Records of the City of Appleton, 1912, pp. 183, Appleton Police Department Records, Appleton, WI. Local police made a concerted effort to protect the personal property of area industrialists, which was a significant factor behind the vagrancy ordinance; see Day Book of the City of Appleton, 1912, pp. 178.

permanent places to live, transient workers danced around the lines of illegality simply by traversing the city.

Local criminal justice tactics made life difficult for mobile laborers and “undesirable” people who did not conform to the moral framework industrialists prescribed.⁸⁵ Likewise, social reformers and municipal officials worked in the interests of capitalists to keep vice and “sin” out of the Fox River Valley, which stigmatized certain working-class cultural practices. Meanwhile, newspaper reports and government warnings amplified anxieties about predatory tramps and encouraged residents to notify the local police of suspected criminal activities on city and private property. These regulating strategies sought to protect corporate profits by encouraging the recruitment of a workforce that practiced a lifestyle of sobriety and settled families. Yet, workers resisted these limitations on their daily lives. By doing so, they influenced the cultural climate of the region to reflect their cultural values and the ways in which they enjoyed life.

Irresponsible Men and Incurable Women

Despite concerted efforts, Fox River Valley law enforcement mechanisms were not powerful enough to overwhelm the itinerant population, and police officers could not completely prevent working-class people from participating in local nightlife. Thus, employers could not effectively manage the recreational activities of area residents or the settlement practices of their workers. Instead, newcomers brought their values with them to the region, imprinting the social landscape with their beliefs. Their persistence changed the cultural atmosphere of the Fox River Valley and thereby challenged the framework of corporate order espoused by factory owners.

⁸⁵ *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1907), 28.

Workers resisted the preferred family structure of industrialists as well as legislation restricting everyday leisure pursuits by continuing to break municipal laws. Regardless of fines and arrest, working-class people disregarded the warnings of their employers. They kept betting on sports, consuming intoxicating liquors, and participating in sex work. Local authorities could punish individuals for visiting drinking establishments or participating in illegal cultural pursuits, yet government officials did not succeed in curtailing these behaviors.⁸⁶ Thus, workers challenged the local legal system in ways that protected their ability to enjoy their favored leisure activities, thereby maintaining some control over their daily lives.

In response, anxious capitalists and moral reformers sought different tactics to foster respect for social order, including support for legislation created by state politicians to regulate working-class life.⁸⁷ Specifically, the 1911 Desertion and Nonsupport Act, which outlawed abandonment in marriage, and the 1913 Linley Law, which outlawed prostitution, reinforced the desires of Fox Valley industrialists by encouraging settled family life.⁸⁸ Yet both failed in their

⁸⁶ “What Powers A Policeman Has,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, January 9, 1908; “Paroled Man Captured By The Appleton Police,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, August 20, 1908; “Police Will Have No Mercy Tonight,” *Appleton Daily Post*, October 31, 1905; and “Calls For A Big Burly Policeman.”

⁸⁷ “Police Chief Gets Order From Board,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, February 8, 1912; “Police Salaries Must Be Changed,” April 8, 1913; and “Rigid Rules Govern Police.”

⁸⁸ According to the Desertion and Nonsupport Act, as of July 7, 1911, “any person who shall, without just cause, desert or willfully neglect or refuse to provide support and maintenance of his wife in destitute or necessitous circumstances, without lawful excuse, desert or willfully neglect or refuse to provide for the support and maintenance of his or her legitimate or illegitimate minor child or children under the age of sixteen years in destitute or necessitous circumstances, shall be guilty of a crime.” Wisconsin State Legislature, *Wisconsin Session Laws: Acts, Resolutions, and Memorials* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, State Printer, 1911), 731-32. The Linley Law stated that “whoever shall erect, establish, continue, maintain, use, occupy or lease any building or part of any building for the purposes of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution, or permit the same to be so used, in the state of Wisconsin, shall be guilty of a nuisance.” See, the “Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914,” 90.

goals, demonstrating the influence of worker self-activity in the region. Local elites sought to regulate drinking, gambling, and child support, and did not succeed fully in their efforts.⁸⁹

The movement to professionalize patrolmen and their daily comportment was part of this social mission. Not all residents wanted to fund the project, however, and the Appleton Police Department had difficulty retaining enough qualified officers who followed the guidelines set by the mayor. Government bureaucrats had little control over the conduct of police officers when they were “on the beat.”⁹⁰ Meanwhile, municipal authorities had trouble finding a committed marshal and reliable deputies, since these jobs obligated patrolmen to monitor large geographic areas for long hours and low wages.⁹¹ Local newspapers reported on these challenges as well as the frustration of industrialists. For example, on August 18, 1905, the *Appleton Daily Post* ran an article titled “Patrol Ought to Be Covered,” which explained the necessity of policing the local business district.⁹² Then on January 30, 1908, the *Appleton Weekly Post* called for “a big burly policeman” to protect the “property of factory owners.”⁹³ But the city encountered trouble maintaining “quality” officers, which led to regular police dismissals for “unacceptable”

⁸⁹ On complaints made by local elites, see “Burglar is Busy Again,” *Appleton Daily Post*, November 9, 1903; “Patrol Wagon Has A Busy Year,” *Appleton Daily Post*, January 5, 1904; “Arrest Hobo For Begging,” *Appleton Daily Post*, March 18, 1904; “More Kicks on City Park.”

⁹⁰ “Officer Harry Ames Quits The Local Police Force,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, March 11, 1909; “Policeman is Dismissed,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, January 20, 1911; “Officer Will Bloomer on Trial this Afternoon,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, February 8, 1911.

⁹¹ “Calls for a Big Burly Policeman,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, January 30, 1908; “Police Promotion is Being Arranged,” *Appleton Daily Post*, March 29, 1910; “Addition to Police Force, but no Action Taken on Chief Today;” “Policeman Sees Awful Tragedy,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, July 28, 1910; and “Patrol Wagon Has A Busy Year;” “Expect Shake Up In Police Department, One Is Discharged, Another Suspended,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 20, 1912. For more on the challenges of daily policing efforts, see “Michael Wagner Jr., Officer Hired,” Day Book of the City of Appleton, October 11, 1911.

⁹² “Patrol Ought To Be Covered,” *Appleton Daily Post*, August 18, 1905.

⁹³ “Calls for a Big Burly Policeman.”

behavior while on the job, including betting and drinking at area taverns. For example, on February 9, 1911, the *Appleton Weekly Post* ran a story about a “complaint filed by the chief of police Fred Hoefler,” against William Bloomer, for “conduct unbecoming an officer.”

Apparently a local resident alleged that he “witnessed the patrolman at a bar drunk,” which violated a municipal ordinance.⁹⁴ Thus, even working-class law enforcement challenged the legal system, demonstrating the widespread resistance to the Fox Valley morality campaign.

The expectations of early twentieth-century policemen differed from those who had served on the force previously. The earlier cohort of officers included “experienced and careful business men” who had fewer daily law enforcement duties. Not only were these patrolmen faithful followers of their government representatives, but they also carried out the desires of industrialists in the community.⁹⁵ For instance, on March 19, 1902, the *Appleton Evening Crescent* reported on the death of “beloved” former Appleton patrolman, Luke Golden, who “spent his boyhood and early manhood” in the city before joining the local force. Not only did he “protect the property of area residents” before he left to work as a lieutenant in Chicago, but he did this in his new position as well. According to the *Appleton Evening Crescent*, Golden’s “record as an officer was spotless.” He “was one of the survivors of the Haymarket riot, being in the first company who charged the mob and precipitated the throwing of the murderous bomb.”⁹⁶

In contrast, Progressive era patrolmen did not share the personal connections that their

⁹⁴ “Officer Will Bloomer on Trial this Afternoon.” On the municipal ordinance outlawing the public drunkenness of police officers, see *The Municipal Code of the City of Appleton* (Appleton, WI: City Council, 1907), 170. For another example of this type of legal violation, see “Officer Misconduct,” Day Book of the City of Appleton, January 19, 1912.

⁹⁵ Ryan, *History of Outagamie County*, 353; “James Golden Was Appointed City Marshal,” *Appleton Crescent*, January 16, 1886; “The New Policeman,” *Appleton Crescent*, April 24, 1886; and “The Marshalship,” *Appleton Post*, December 9, 1886.

⁹⁶ “Lieutenant Luke Golden is Dead,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, March 17, 1902.

predecessors had with local capitalists, and they had different priorities rooted in the cultural values of their ancestral homelands and ethnic communities. For example, in 1911 all four local patrolmen were Irish or German immigrants, who did not view drinking or tavern culture as immoral or worth criminalizing. They overlooked infractions against alcohol regulations and anti-vice laws or decided to leave the force altogether.⁹⁷ For example, on March 11, 1909, Officer Harry Ames quit the Appleton Police Department, “deciding to return to his job as a traveling salesman.”⁹⁸ He cited, “not being interested in enforcing the laws that he did not agree with,” as his reason for leaving.⁹⁹ Thus, the popularity of working-class recreational activities and police participation in these very activities undermined the ability to restrict them.

In reaction, industrialists and their allies in municipal government relied on newspapers to influence public opinion about the expansion of the criminal justice system, highlighting the charitable contributions of area police. For instance, on April 8, 1907, the *Appleton Evening Crescent* reported that the Outagamie County Sheriff, Captain W. J. Baker, and his deputies offered a service to residents by “supplying housing during times of economic” instability.¹⁰⁰ Appleton bureaucrats argued that jails provided shelter when factory workers did not have homes,

⁹⁷ “Michael Wagner Jr., Office Hired,” Day Book of the City of Appleton, October 11, 1911; “Expect Shake Up In Police Department, One Is Discharged, Another Suspended,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 20, 1912; “Fred R. Morris, Patrol Driver Hired,” Day Book of the City of Appleton, January 26, 1912; “The Motorcycle Officer Arrested,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, April 30, 1912. This Progressive-era desire to curtail vice was not only a local but also a nationwide obsession. See Sears, *Arresting Dress*, 2-10; Skidmore, *True Sex*, 165-169; and Fronc, *New York Undercover*, 3-10.

⁹⁸ “Officer Harry Ames Quits The Local Police Force.”

⁹⁹ “Bloomer Takes Ames Place on the Local Police Force,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, November 1, 1909; and “Harry Ames Leaves the Police Force,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, March 4, 1909.

¹⁰⁰ “Captain W. J. Baker,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, April 8, 1907. For more examples of Appleton police providing shelter to “vagrants,” see “Use Motorcycle in Rounding up Bum,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, August 29, 1912; “Open Bids For A New Police Station,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, May 20, 1915; and “Police Station Is To Have A Kitchen,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, June 25, 1915.

and thus called for a new facility. This campaign fueled investment for hiring more patrolmen and buying more weapons as well as building a “modern” detention facility.¹⁰¹ For instance, in 1911, local officials hired a police commissioner, built a county lockup, and added four more officers for a total of seven on the force.¹⁰² Meanwhile, by January 20, 1912, the *Appleton Evening Crescent* reported that “one [was] discharged” for drunkenness and “another was suspended” for “conduct unbecoming an officer.”¹⁰³ Regardless of the laws they had to uphold, local police continued to break them, expressing their own cultural preferences.

Thus, Fox Valley elites who wanted to manage working-class life looked to Wisconsin state officials to craft restrictions on “immoral” entertainment and harsher punishments. Municipal vagrancy law kept people incarcerated only briefly, with the maximum tenure for any violation being fifteen days at the Outagamie County Jail.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, beginning in 1911, with the passage of the Uniform Desertion and Nonsupport Act, municipal judges could sentence men for up to two years of hard labor.¹⁰⁵ By apprehending men for failing to provide for their wives and children, Fox River Valley officials attempted to impress “family values” on area

¹⁰¹ “Rifles Needed;” “Juvenile ‘Boos’ Fined In Court Members of Tough Gang in West End Arrested For Disturbing the Peace,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, October 22, 1908; “Paroled Man Captured By The Appleton Police,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, August 20, 1908; “Police Station an Old Ladies’ Home,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, May 4, 1911; and “Bloomer Gets Biggest Tramp.”

¹⁰² “New Officers and an Updated Station,” Day Book of the City of Appleton, August 17, 1911.

¹⁰³ “One is Discharged, Another Suspended,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 20, 1912.

¹⁰⁴ *The Municipal Code of the City of Appleton* (1907), 443.

¹⁰⁵ On the Desertion and Nonsupport Act, see Wisconsin Legislature, *Wisconsin Session Laws: Acts, Resolutions, and Memorials*, 732; Darrell L. Peck, “The Status of Uniform Laws in Wisconsin,” *Marquette Law Review* 39, no. 1 (Summer 1955): 35-54; and John J. Sampson, “Uniform Family Laws and Model Acts,” *Family Law Quarterly* (Fall 2008): 673-85. On the implications of nonsupport laws in the Midwest, see Michael Willrich, “Home Slackers: Men, the State, and Welfare in Modern America,” *Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 460-89.

residents.¹⁰⁶ For example, on November 18, 1913, the county sheriff's office committed a German American papermaker named Albert Krueger to one year in jail on charges of abandonment. At 5'6" and 150 pounds, he possessed a valuable skill that the "nail spilt" on the index finger of his left hand suggested to the arresting authorities; he knew how to operate complicated paper mill machinery. Therefore, even while incarcerated, Krueger was released to work for local factories, which paid for the maintenance of his wife and children. At the same time, he settled his debts with area businesses, all while he fulfilled his sentence.¹⁰⁷ Yet, upon his release authorities again indicted him on desertion. Apparently he "refused to work at the Kimberly & Clark plant in Appleton." Despite his "wife's plea to release him," on January 13, 1914, police had again incarcerated him for another "year of hard labor."¹⁰⁸

Similarly, on September 14, 1915, Outagamie County officers arrested a "light-skinned Hollander" named Leonard Peters and charged him with abandonment. A pulp-maker, he spent a year in the county jail, during which time he left during the day to earn money for the upkeep of his wife and child.¹⁰⁹ He had been an employee of the Combined Locks Paper Company, outside Little Chute, but had failed to report to his job consistently. Thus, officers detained him. During the court hearing, Judge Ryan declared that Peters had to work in order to meet societal expectations of "fatherhood" and "manliness." A husband's failure to support his "dependents" provided an opportunity for employers as well as their government supporters, who sought to

¹⁰⁶ *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1907), 127-30.

¹⁰⁷ "Record of Prison Labor Performed, 1913-circa 1933," vol. 1, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 12. On the emergence of abandonment laws and the criminalization of the delinquent male breadwinner, see Martha May, "The 'Problem of Duty': Family Desertion in the Progressive Era," *Social Science Review* 62, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 40-60; and Willrich, "Home Slackers."

¹⁰⁹ "Record of Prison Labor Performed, 1913-circa 1933," vol. 1, p. 21.

shape the labor force.¹¹⁰ Yet like Krueger, upon release, Peters again broke the abandonment law by failing to “pay for the maintenance of his wife and children,” which brought him back to the county lockup. When Judge Ryan asked why the pulp-maker did not work at Combined Locks Paper Company while he was out of jail, Peters explained, “he did not like it there.” Although they were aware of the risks, Fox River Valley workers protested morality legislation by actively breaking state and municipal laws.¹¹¹

Another inmate at the Outagamie County Jail who authorities arrested for abandonment on October 16, 1915, was a German immigrant and farm hand with a “dark” complexion, Charles Noack. A social “derelict,” the inmate had “bad habits,” according to police and Appleton residents, who reported that he chewed tobacco, smoked, and drank heavily. He also had “illegitimate dependents,” children he allegedly had failed to support.¹¹² Although court officials charged both Albert Krueger and Charles Noack with identical crimes, the two detainees suffered different consequences. Both were sentenced to one year, but Krueger’s punishment required that he return to the mill where he once worked as an employee. Officials did not require him to stay overnight at the county jail; rather he could head home after his day of work.¹¹³ By contrast, Noak did not possess a skill that afforded him the same privileges.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ “Record of Prison Labor Performed, 1913-circa 1933,” vol. 1, p. 5. The Appleton charter also gave local judges the ability to “impose hard labor inside or outside of such jail, but within the ‘jail limits,’ as established, and the common council shall, by ordinance regulate the mode and manner of performing such labor, and the officer or officers who shall control such prisoners; and the form of commitment may be varied accordingly.” See *Charter of the City of Appleton* (1907), 74. On the frequency of violations against municipal ordinances, see “Local Police Must Look Active to Bay,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, June 2, 1913; “Lazy Drunk Refuses To Work,” *Appleton Daily Post*, September 23, 1904; “Two More Fall Prey to City’s Motorcycle Cop,” *Appleton Weekly Post*, June 13, 1912.

¹¹² “Record of Prison Labor Performed, 1913-circa 1933,” vol. 1, p. 25.

Instead, the sheriff's office forced him to work on and off at local farms and in area factories as an unskilled laborer. Despite this coerced toil, the prisoner did not earn enough to pay off his debts. Unlike Krueger, Noak spent his nights at the county jail. These men experienced varying degrees of freedom while incarcerated, even though both were repeat offenders.¹¹⁴ Seeking to shape the social order, factory owners and mill managers attempted to manipulate worker behaviors, yet they could not always do so. Rather, working-class people continued to break the law. In short, the 1911 Desertion and Nonsupport Act aided the corporate trajectory of local capitalists by endorsing a particular version of a family unit. Yet, it did not stop people from violating the state statute.¹¹⁵

Given the popularity of working-class leisure activities and the failure of local residents to abide by elite standards of settled life, Fox Valley industrialists and moral reformers joined a nationwide campaign devoted to extinguishing prostitution and social indecency. In Wisconsin, this led to the formation of the Teasdale Vice Committee and the enactment of the Linley Law in 1913, which outlawed sex work statewide. Organized by senators Howard Teasdale, Victor Linley, and Robert W. Monk, the committee investigated what caused "social evil" and exchanged letters with politicians, area clergy, and businessmen, whom they hoped would

¹¹³ Ibid. During the Progressive era, criminal justice practices focused on reforming delinquent husbands and fathers in order to reintroduce them as productive breadwinners into heteronormative capitalist society. Those who proved that they could perform this version of industrial manhood could gain lighter sentences for "good conduct." See Michael O'Hear, "Good Conduct Time for Prisoners: Why (and How) Wisconsin Should Provide Credits Toward Early Release," *Marquette Law Review* 98, no. 1 (2014): 487-553, esp. 494-97.

¹¹⁴ "Record of Prison Labor Performed, 1913-circa 1933," vol. 1, p. 25.

¹¹⁵ Between 1913 and 1915, the Appleton municipal court judge, Thomas Ryan, sentenced over 150 men to one year of hard labor on charges of abandonment under the 1911 Desertion and Nonsupport Act, and at least 20 of them were repeat offenders. See "Record of Prison Labor Performed, 1913-circa 1933," vol. 1, pp. 1-160.

support the cause.¹¹⁶ Although these politicians did receive feedback from Fox Valley residents who worried about vagrancy, sex work, and drunkenness, their efforts to minimize drinking, heterosocial fraternizing, and “inappropriate” recreation failed.¹¹⁷ The Linley Law read, “whoever shall erect, establish, continue, maintain, use, occupy or lease any building or part of any building for the purposes of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution, or permit the same to be so used, in the state of Wisconsin, shall be guilty of a nuisance.”¹¹⁸ It required that district attorneys cite injunctions against these “lewd” establishments and enforce the law.¹¹⁹

As newspaper reports and correspondence from vice committee records suggest, early twentieth-century attempts to tame the behaviors of “irresponsible men” and “wild women” proved ineffective because of overt resistance on the local level.¹²⁰ For instance, on January 23, 1913, the *Appleton Evening Crescent* claimed that although she was “not a vaudeville actress,” Rose Olsen, “showed a destructive disposition” when she revealed her “acrobatic power” and displayed a “wicked” tendency towards wandering at night. Green Bay authorities had arrested

¹¹⁶ For the letter that the committee sent to municipal politicians throughout Wisconsin, see “To the Honorable Mayor of City Addressed from Senator Howard Teasdale,” Sparta, September 17, 1912, Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹¹⁷ See the “Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914,” 88-89.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*; “She Sings the Dublin Rag,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, June 17, 1911; “Amusements,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, November 11, 1911; “Amusements,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, July 1, 1911; “Green Bay Girl is Picked Up By Police,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 23, 1913; Mayor Charles B. Clark, Neenah to Senator Howard Teasdale, October 9, 1913; Mayor Winford Adams, Green Bay to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 26, 1913; American Federation of Women’s Clubs, South Kaukauna to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 10, 1913; Lawyer R. L. Clark to Senator Howard Teasdale, Oshkosh, February 14, 1914. See all these letters in the Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

her for being “incorrigible.” A Polish immigrant, Olsen “paraded around” the Fox Valley “under a Swede name.”¹²¹ Despite the threat that her behavior posed, police officers assured residents that “the sheriff returned home with her later in the day.” Although she attempted to pass as Scandinavian, municipal officials recognized her eastern European demeanor when they encountered her roaming “on the streets at 1:30 o’clock [in the] morning.” Apparently, the Brown County sheriff called, requesting that the chief of the Appleton Police Department release the “girl” to him so that he could arrest her for the crime.¹²² Despite efforts to police the behaviors of area residents, working-class people continuously challenged local laws, overwhelming municipal officials who sought to regulate the conduct of working-class lives.

According to Senator Teasdale, members of the state vice committee knew “that nearly every city and hamlet” had conditions conducive to commercial sex. He hoped to work with “broad minded men and women in [Wisconsin cities who had] seriously considered various plans, or means of remedying” so-called social vices that permitted its existence.¹²³ Since the Linley Law required local district attorneys to grant injunctions for violations of the statute, he wanted to connect with individuals he could count on “to compel police officers to make arrests” and encourage municipal judges to close down “houses of ill fame.”¹²⁴ To do so, he sent letters

¹²¹ “Green Bay Girl is Picked Up By Police,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, January 23, 1913.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ “To the Honorable Mayor of City Addressed from Senator Howard Teasdale.”

¹²⁴ Ibid. The Linley Law, “was an injunction and abatement law,” which required cooperation in closing down prostitution businesses. For example, the law stated “when a nuisance as defined in the above section exists in any county, the district attorney, or any citizen of such county may maintain an equitable action in the name of the state and abate and perpetually enjoin and restrain every guilty person thereof from continuing, maintaining, or permitting such nuisance. Upon verified complaint and evidence, when required by the court showing the nuisance to exist, naming the party guilty, and upon three days’ notice, a temporary injunction is granted restraining the continuance of the nuisance until trial. If [the] injunction is granted upon action begun by public officials, no bond is required. In other cases it [is by]

around the state in order to “get the true facts” on the prostitution industry. His audience included “ministers, woman’s clubs, aid and charity organizations, relief societies, [and public officers, including] District Attorney, City Attorney, Police Officers, Juvenile courts and County courts, and some of the leading men and women acting individually for the uplift of humanity.”¹²⁵ Despite this regulatory strategy, the commission did little to encourage local enforcement of the law.¹²⁶

Over the course of two years, the government representatives who sat on the Teasdale Vice Committee received hundreds of letters indicating the extent of sexual debauchery all over the state. For example, on September 20, 1913, the mayor of Stevens Point, F. A. Walters, wrote to state Senator Teasdale to express his opinion that “the general moral tone” of workers in the area was “better than a quarter of a century ago.” He did not believe that the local prostitution market represented a “terrible condition that [was] growing,” but rather, he thought that the problem in the state had “lessened . . . although it [was] still bad enough.”¹²⁷ The number of commercial leisure establishments that permitted sex work had decreased, but another venue had recently “crept in,” which indicated to Walters that efforts to eradicate the selling of sex were necessary for maintaining social stability and morality in his city.¹²⁸ Yet, he lamented that attempting to rid the area of “street walkers” was like dealing with “rodents.” The mayor

the discretion of the court.” Thus, without local support, state officials had no way of enforcing the law. See, “Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914,” 90.

¹²⁵ “To the Honorable Mayor of City Addressed from Senator Howard Teasdale.”

¹²⁶ Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914, p. 85.

¹²⁷ Mayor F. A. Walters, Stevens Point to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 20, 1913, see Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

complained, “in about the time that you think that you have them under control they pop up serenely in another quarter.” He commiserated with Teasdale, complaining, “what can be done to enable people to control their passions is almost beyond me.” Rather than expose sex workers, Walters put Teasdale in touch with religious officials, social reformers, and municipal authorities, whom the mayor trusted would provide the senator with information about the “social evil.”¹²⁹

Elsewhere in the Fox River Valley, the vice commission also encountered difficulty securing support from local politicians as well as residents. For example, on September 25, 1913, Winford Abrams, the mayor of Green Bay, responded to inquiries from the legislative committee suggesting a list of officials who might help with the effort, which included a directory of “very prominent people” who had “a great interest” in eradicating undesirable activities from their municipalities. This list included five religious officials, the chief of police, a criminal court judge, a former mayor of the city, and three local insurance agents from Northwestern Life. Yet, Abrams acknowledged the popularity of prostitution and the challenges associated with managing it.¹³⁰ Similar correspondence came in from Neenah, Menasha, Kaukauna, and Oshkosh.¹³¹ The mayor of Fond du Lac said he was aware that there was a “house of ill fame” in his city, but gave no indication that he planned to shut down the

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Mayor Winford Adams, Green Bay to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 26, 1913.

¹³¹ Mayor Charles B. Clark, Neenah to Senator Howard Teasdale, October 9, 1913; S. S. Little, City Clerk, Menasha to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 26, 1913; Mrs. J. A. Strathearn, President, American Federation of Women’s Clubs, South Kaukauna to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 10, 1913; and Lawyer R. L. Clark to Senator Howard Teasdale, Oshkosh, February 14, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

operation.¹³² In each case, Fox Valley mayors suggested that they opposed prostitution, but they also did not actively involve themselves in regulating it. For instance in Appleton, municipal code outlawed the practice, offering a relatively light punishment; however, police officers rarely made arrests. According to a 1907 revised local ordinance, “every person who shall resort to, frequent or become an inmate of any house of illfame [*sic*], common bawdy house, brothel or otherwise disorderly house, or shall enter any hotel, boarding house, rooming house, or other building for purposes of prostitution, lewd, immoral, or otherwise disorderly practice or conduct shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”¹³³ Yet city records list no arrests on those charges during the entirety of that year.¹³⁴

Meanwhile, vice committee correspondence with local residents indicates that the sex industry was alive and well in Appleton, and like most nightlife in the area, commercial sex took place at local drinking establishments and allegedly involved authorities.¹³⁵ For example, on January 8, 1915, an area industrialist, Walter L. Kannia, wrote to R. H. Hillyer, a clerk for the commission, on the situation in his city. The capitalist wanted “a state police department,” since the municipal authorities were ineffective against prostitution. He opined, “our largest as well as a number of the smaller cities today have police in office who permit certain laws to be violated, such as gambling of both poker games, and crap dice games, nickel slot machines, beer being

¹³² Mayor F. J. Wolff, Fond du Lac to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 25, 1913, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹³³ *The Municipal Code of the City of Appleton* (1907), 442.

¹³⁴ “Annual Report,” Appleton Common Council, 1907, pp. 5-6, Municipal Records, City Clerk’s Office, Appleton, WI.

¹³⁵ R. H. Hillyer to Walter L. Kannia, January 6, 1915 and January 11, 1915; and Mary Davids, Appleton Civic League to Howard Teasdale, February 2, 1915, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

sold practically within the dance halls, and houses of ill fame running on the quiet in cities where they have been ordered closed up.” He also charged that after “speaking with some fellows in a certain town, I asked whether the houses were running, one of them said that they had been closed up, and the other said ‘yes closed up, but running on the quiet.’” Apparently local police allowed the operations to continue “out of fear that they might get in bad with owners,” and because they frequented these places themselves.¹³⁶

Newspaper reports indicated the regularity with which Appleton patrolmen visited locations that sold alcohol and took part in consumption. Already in 1887, Appleton had 2 temperance societies, but also 1 brewer, 2 beer bottlers, 1 billiard hall, 10 hotels, 3 restaurants, and 40 saloons.¹³⁷ By 1894, the city directory listed 5 beer bottlers, 2 brewers, 1 brewer’s agent, 15 hotels, 1 restaurant, 59 saloons. There were no longer any temperance societies.¹³⁸ In 1910, there were 62 saloons in the city, and there were 38 arrests for drunkenness. But local police haphazardly managed commercialized leisure.¹³⁹ In 1915, the city marshal suspended four out of six Appleton patrolmen at once for “behavior unbecoming an officer.”¹⁴⁰ Meanwhile, another officer quit the force after paying a fine for visiting a tavern while on duty. James McLaughlin

¹³⁶ Walter L. Kannia to R. H. Hillyer, January 8, 1915, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹³⁷ *Wright’s Appleton City Directory* (Milwaukee: Wright’s Directory Company Publishers, 1887), 184-203.

¹³⁸ *Wright’s Appleton City Directory* (Milwaukee: Wright’s Directory Company Publishers, 1892), 206-31.

¹³⁹ *Wright’s Appleton City Directory* (Milwaukee: Wright’s Directory Company Publishers, 1910), 231; and J. W. Proper Harness, “Saloons in Appleton,” in “A Study of Social Conditions in Appleton, Wisconsin,” (unpublished paper, Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin, 1911), 103.

¹⁴⁰ “Police Force is Short Four Officers,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, February 19, 1915; “Police Are Called to Get Police,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, February, 20, 1915; “Report of the City Marshal, December 31, 1915, Municipal Records, City Clerk’s Office, Appleton, WI.

“told the chief that he would take up his former vocation of sheep shearing, there being far more money in that than walking the beat.”¹⁴¹ On February 22, 1915, the *Appleton Evening Crescent* reported that “John Maack, acting night sergeant, was suspended from the police force [the previous] morning by Chief Garvey [after] being charged with being at R. Griffith’s Saloon, 777 College Avenue, with women on Saturday night.”¹⁴² Police officers also participated in local tavern culture, demonstrating its influence on the Fox River Valley social climate.

As the Teasdale Committee report claimed, in 1914, there were only 14 counties out of 77 that permitted women in taverns, and Outagamie was one of them. Moral reformers maintained that allowing heterosocial interaction around alcohol led to prostitution. Still, drinking establishments remained wildly popular in Appleton. Indeed, according to a 1910 study, the people who frequented “saloons came from all classes of society—farmers, working men, businessmen, college students, and preachers’ sons.”¹⁴³ A detective explained, however, that he met racial hostility while investigating sex work in the city. On December 18, 1913, in a letter to Teasdale, “W” apologized for the illegibility of his correspondence. The detective “had a hard time finding accommodation” and a decent place to do his work, so he had to use two different ink colors to finish his letter.¹⁴⁴ He said that the “folks of the so called white races” who lived in the city did not like that he had “darker skin.” He said that if it were summer, “he would prefer sitting in the park” over interacting with local residents. According to W, they

¹⁴¹ “Another Policeman is to Quit Force,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, February 12, 1915.

¹⁴² “Another Police is Suspended,” *Appleton Evening Crescent*, February 22, 1915.

¹⁴³ J. W. Proper Harness, “Saloons in Appleton,” 104.

¹⁴⁴ “W.” to Howard Teasdale, Appleton, Wisconsin, December 18, 1913, Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

thought that he was a “negro,” though in fact he was a “half breed.” Not only did he encounter difficulty in his search for lodging, but he also experienced harassment when he entered private businesses and attended social events. He could not wait to leave Appleton, hoping that people in Green Bay, “as it [was] a larger place,” would be more hospitable. Although he could tell that “white slavery” existed in the city, he also discovered that “Indians, Japanese, and all other brown races [like Mexicans] and Negroes would fare pretty hard” if they tried to live there.¹⁴⁵ Although a welcoming to an array of residents, working-class leisure establishments did not serve African Americans or others who could not pass as white.

Green Bay did not treat W as well as the undercover officer had hoped, but he did discover an extensive network of local “vice operations.”¹⁴⁶ In response to this new information, Teasdale scolded Brown County District Attorney Myers E. Davis: “I do not understand the non enforcement of the morals laws, either by your office or by the sheriff, and would ask you to suggest some means by which these laws of the state may be enforced by the officers charged with that duty.”¹⁴⁷ The senator wanted immediate action against “the houses of prostitution.” A letter from a concerned citizen that he received in April 1914 only heightened his contempt for local politicians in the Fox Valley.¹⁴⁸ The letter was from a female “moral educator” who alleged that the Green Bay “mayor did not count the votes of women who wanted the ‘resort shut down’ on Jefferson Street,” even though 300 of them had signed the petition for closure. She protested that “he told them that it was easier to run a city with open [prostitution] houses than

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ “W.” to Howard Teasdale, Appleton, Wisconsin, December 20, 1913.

¹⁴⁷ Howard Teasdale to Brown County District Attorney, Myers E. Davis, April 10, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

segregation.” The mayor noted that the “evil place [she had] mentioned was just four or five blocks from City Hall and [was under] the protection of city officials.”¹⁴⁹ Apparently, commercialized recreational activities were so widespread in the region that local politicians hesitated to interfere with them.

Even the Brown County District Attorney Davis had failed to cooperate with the state commission, which made state regulation of “vice” in Green Bay and surrounding communities nearly impossible. According to Teasdale, local judges defended the entertainment pursuits of working-class residents by “allowing saloons and dance halls and theaters and other places to stay running in violation of the law, [even though they] were closed by order of the District Attorney.” The state senator hoped that if a district attorney had “reasonable assurance that crimes [were] being committed,” he would “assist the sheriff legally in ferreting out those facts.”¹⁵⁰ Clearly, there were sex workers providing services in the area. Teasdale also explained to Davis in frustration that he thought “it would be very much better if the statutes expressly stated the definite duties of the area District Attorneys” to protect the interests of “300 women and citizens of Green Bay.” Still, the Brown County official shielded working-class leisure outlets, because he knew that they were popular.¹⁵¹

Meanwhile, government representatives in nearby Algoma defended the entertainment practices of their local residents, believing that they were good for the municipal economy and did not threaten the health of the city. According to Mayor M. W. Perry, the efforts of the Vice

¹⁴⁹ Class of the Ladies, Green Bay to Senator Howard Teasdale, April 19, 1914; and Senator Howard Teasdale to the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Green Bay, April 24, 1914, Teasdale Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁵⁰ Howard Teasdale to Myers E. Davis, April 29, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

Commission were “detracting the attention of fanatics and the press to something that cannot be prevented by investigation or law.” Although he supported vice legislation and lauded “honorable examples of citizenship,” Perry argued that the effort to eradicate the “White Slave” traffic was “one of the humbug ideas of what [were] called Progressive” policies. He said that the “movement [was] all a farce.” Rather than police the lucrative leisure activities of his constituents, Perry sought to protect the “many [who were] beyond redemption” from harassment by state officials. Teasdale’s “cronies,” he suspected, were not “holier than thou” and they needed to stay out of the personal lives of his local residents. Whether or not he agreed with their recreational choices, Perry identified with his working-class constituents and guarded their freedoms. His resistance to state use of the Algoma City Hall for interrogations demonstrates that Fox Valley workers influenced the perspectives of local politicians.¹⁵²

In some instances, however, state attempts to form relationships with local leaders and area residents succeeded. In Neenah, for example, state officials had more luck gathering support for the Linley Law and the vice commission than in most Fox Valley communities. For example, already in 1913, a Mrs. Adella M. White was working to uncover the “bad condition of affairs” in “resorts” in Neenah, aiding the cause by sending Teasdale regular reports. She appreciated the work of the vice commission, but also offered suggestions for her fellow investigators. Teasdale agreed with her that they “needed to do better reporting on inmates.” He encouraged her to focus on this aspect of the mission, claiming: “please get after a few of these when you can conveniently so that we can keep in general touch on this subject, as these causes which bring these girls here or on account of which they remain are to my mind a vital part of

¹⁵² M.W. Perry, Algoma to Senator Howard Teasdale, September 20, 1913, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

this operation.” White also explained to Teasdale that the city did have “certain houses used for assignation purposes” that police permitted by not closing them down. She knew that Neenah’s mayor wanted to “improve the reputation of his city,” but he needed the support of local authorities.¹⁵³ Thus, White’s testimony supported Teasdale’s suspicion that “the problem came from inefficient law enforcement officers and irresponsible district attorneys.”¹⁵⁴

The atmosphere in nearby Menasha especially demonstrated his point that it was “private citizens” who “were overindulgent and too prone to let law breaking pass unpunished” that contributed to the popularity of working-class amusements.¹⁵⁵ For example, the city had at least “two well known sporting houses” that accommodated “12 prostitutes,” with one owned by “Edna Camp on 3 Clay St.,” and the other by “Glen Carlton at 289 Clay St.” There were at least two other “suspicious places” in the community as well, both located on Main Street. The “Eagle Cafe and the Royal Cafe” were on the “vice route.” Committee records also urged that “Childs Corners & Lake Shore” in Menasha “needed to be under close surveillance.”¹⁵⁶ As the committee records suggest, these leisure establishments remained in operation because customers, by frequenting them, discouraged their government officials from cracking down.

For instance, from Berlin, a small Fox Valley community just outside of Oshkosh, in August 1913, a concerned citizen wrote that a man by the name of “Smokey” was “keeping a bad

¹⁵³ Senator Howard Teasdale to Mrs. Adella M. White, December 17, 1913, Series 173, Box 16; and Mayor Charles B. Clark, Neenah to Senator Howard Teasdale, October 9, 1913.

¹⁵⁴ Senator Howard Teasdale to Mrs. Adella M. White, December 20, 1913, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* See, Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914, pp. 85.

¹⁵⁶ “Vice Route Sheet,” September 20, 1913, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

house.” Meanwhile, Berlin’s mayor, Edmund M. Fitzmaurice, explained that the cousin of the chief of police ran the “house of ill fame” there. Rather than “turn his family member in,” the law enforcement officer had municipal authorities “safeguard her” and took money in exchange for his efforts. Moreover, according to the mayor, the popular brothel keeper purchased large quantities of alcohol and, as a result, “the Brewery Co. [would] protect her.”¹⁵⁷ The “madam” had created her own network of support and protection in the city, which encouraged local politicians to tolerate her commercial venture. As one resident claimed, if he “[made] complaints against his neighbors who are doing wrong,” he risked “business ostracism, even to [the extent] of boycotting.”¹⁵⁸ In these ways, then, Fox Valley workers shaped the cultural landscape to reflect their preferences. Although the members of the Teasdale Committee made some progress with sympathetic local leaders and social activists worked tirelessly to promote state nuisance laws, the campaign met severe challenges.¹⁵⁹

Working-class people refused to change their recreational habits. For example, in Fond du Lac, Mrs. L.V.H. explained the shenanigans of “a young girl” who was “running around with a married man who [had] a family” to Fox Valley vice investigator Adella White. Several “ladies” in the community wondered if “this committee could do something in regard to the matter.” The investigator claimed that L.V.H. informed her that there was an “immoral child”

¹⁵⁷ Mayor Edmund M. Fitzmaurice to Senator Howard Teasdale, Berlin, September 20, 1913, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; and Report and Recommendations of the Legislative Vice Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, 1914, pp. 86.

¹⁵⁹ George Werner, Y.M.C.A. Appleton to R. W. Monk, February 24, 1915, Series 173, Box 16, Records of the Legislative Committee to Investigate the White Slave Traffic and Kindred Subjects, the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

who was “boasting that she [had] broken up more homes than any other girl in town.”¹⁶⁰ She claimed that there were also “fellows [who] bring girls” to a local “hotel” above a “Chinese laundry, next door to which is a saloon.” This was a “bad place,” but it remained popular. The selling of sex persisted due to local demand. In addition, “the lack of sufficient income [caused] many girls [to enter] a life of illicit prostitution.” Zona Gale of the Wisconsin Women’s Suffrage Association asked, “why should we expect the working girl to be content with merely enough to keep her from starving and freezing?” This was the “economic reason” for prostitution. Gale noted that some of these “women want and have quantities of pretty clothes and much money to spend,” while “others want and have money and leisure for recreation—why should he expect [the working] girl to be content with neither?” Thus, Gale argued that the sex industry endured because everyday people experienced poverty and desired pleasure.¹⁶¹

The efforts of everyday workers, including those who sold physical intimacy for a living, were instrumental in weakening state efforts to dismantle the Fox Valley nightlife scene. For instance, several Oshkosh women who participated in sex work disagreed with the anti-vice movement and continued to sell their commodity, despite threats against them. According to Dr. Julia Riddle, on December 1, 1913, “Neenah’s mayor [had] ‘put the lid on’ and cleaned his city.” She hoped that Mayor John Mulva would soon do so in Oshkosh.¹⁶² Not long after, on March 11, 1914, Senator Teasdale wrote back to Riddle, encouraging her to talk to the Winnebago

¹⁶⁰ Adella M. White, Neenah to Howard Teasdale, August 20, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁶¹ Zona Gale, Portage to Howard Teasdale, January 23, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16. On the practice of “treating” for economic and pleasure related purposes, see Clement, *Love For Sale*, 4-12.

¹⁶² Dr. Julia Riddle, Oshkosh to Howard Teasdale, December 1, 1913, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

County district attorney and the mayor of her city. He asserted: "I do wish you would inform them that as officers they were elected for the express purpose of enforcing the laws. Else better stop paying them their salary."¹⁶³ Apparently, vice reigned all over Oshkosh, and most of the "bad houses and saloons," which served as places "where prostitutes gathered," were women-run businesses. For example, according to Teasdale, "Mrs. Nellie Merry, 360 Division Street, usually known as Calamity Jane, lets her rooms out for this purpose, says she has a good trade, for she is well known." Likewise, he alleged that Emma Graves had "a regular parlor sporting with three inmates and a hustling housekeeper." She allegedly charged customers two dollars, "and [took] half the girls make." He noted that Graves "was worried on account of the vice investigation." According to Teasdale, with the protection of local politicians, Oshkosh nightlife flourished.¹⁶⁴

Yet on April 29, 1914, Teasdale told Riddle that he was "happy to learn that the mayor closed the houses" in Oshkosh. However, he worried that the "inmates" of these establishments "refused to accept furnishing positions."¹⁶⁵ According to Riddle, these "working women" were not interested in factory labor, and instead were taking positions "tending bar" and in domestic labor. For example, Ella Stewart, an "inmate of a house on 7th St.," decided to help her "former landlady" by "selling beer and whiskey." Although she could no longer keep "regular inmates," Jess Gokey kept her business open for "couples who [visited together] there for the afternoon or

¹⁶³ Senator Teasdale to Dr. Julia Riddle, Oshkosh, March 11, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁶⁴ Senator Teasdale to Dr. Julia Riddle, Oshkosh, March 25, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁶⁵ Senator Teasdale to Dr. Julia Riddle, Oshkosh, April 29, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

evening for a good time.” The local doctor explained to Teasdale that despite the actions of the mayor, Oshkosh residents continued to participate in commercialized leisure, and she did not think that prostitution had ended. Indeed, on June 24, 1914, a vice investigator went to Nellie Merry’s, and although “she claimed that she herself [was] strictly decent,” she admitted “that her house [had] been, and [was] only an assignation house.” Next, the detective “followed a call to Mrs. Gokey’s place, which [sat above] William Vulkman’s saloon,” and saw the proprietor, who was a “prostitute of a very low order.” She and her sister, Miss Grace Rose, “visited with men for immoral purposes,” and Vulkman “shared in the profits of the business that he secured for Mrs. Gokey.”¹⁶⁶

Although it was formally illegal, sex work was profitable and continued in the city. The investigator continued his report to Teasdale, recounting how he went to “William Puekke’s saloon, which [was] a meeting place for boys and girls” and was “a real H—hole.” A “very tough class frequented the place,” though they “did not rent out rooms there.” His next stop was Feinreich and Stopper’s saloon, where “there were no rooms,” yet “two young girls were recently arrested.” Then he visited Mrs. Fellows at the Commercial Hotel, where she “[was] a cook.”¹⁶⁷ She claimed that she would “have nothing to do with a man in the day time.” But she was “a free drinker and [was] willing to go out any evening for \$1.00.” Working-class people also took their amusements outside, gathering in area parks. For example, the same day, the “spy went to the South Side Park at 6:00 P.M., where it was custom for a number of young girls to loiter until midnight.” He also visited Electric Park, “where he met eight girls who were willing to have intercourse for a stipulated sum.” According to his summary, “many young girls from 12

¹⁶⁶ Vice Detective G. E. to Howard Teasdale, June 24, 1914, Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

to 17 years of age could be seen on the seats with men and boys, embracing and kissing each other.” He also overheard that “young men speak of these parks as ‘Lovers’ Paradise’ and they are certainly on a level with their reputation.” He noted, “young girls meet young men in the park and then walk outside of the parks where they linger on the grass for the evening.” These were popular local “resorts.”¹⁶⁸

There was also Menominee Park, “which [stretched] along the lake,” and had “picnic grounds,” where “there [were] no lights and young men and girls [retired] together.” This part of the grounds was “covered with heavy timber.” Still, the informant “found many couples at 2:00 A.M.” Park workers told him that it was “nothing unusual to see young girls and young men leaving this resort at daybreak.” This was the fault of “park commissioner Ed. Burkhart, who [had] police power, but seldom [went] over to the grounds to ascertain just how things are going.” The vice investigator thought that “there should be special policemen for the parks by all means.” In sum, he thought that the city of Oshkosh was not doing enough to enforce the Linley Law.¹⁶⁹ His work suggested to Teasdale that Fox Valley officials were failing to clear the landscape of prostitution and its related social vices. Working-class participants in the activities maintained control over cultural practices in the region.

Not all Fox River Valley residents agreed with industrialists and moral reformers about the evil influence of commercialized leisure. Rather, working-class people actively participated in recreational activities that their employers and reformers did not see as acceptable behavior. In fact, at the height of the Progressive era, even police officers supported the leisure pursuits of everyday people, which reinforced their popularity. As Senator Teasdale and his commission

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

learned, not all government officials believed that sex work was a problem, and they offered little help in trying to eradicate it in the region. Although Teasdale believed that the people who participated in these “undesirable” activities were “criminals,” the residents who enjoyed them felt differently.¹⁷⁰ Not all women were sober, and they did not all plan to live as the wives of male breadwinners. Settled family life was not an immediate goal for every member of the local community; for some, it was meant for a future moment. Despite pressure from state politicians, working-class people had their own ideas about progress, and they rejected the image of morality and sexual propriety that area capitalists embraced. By doing so, they shaped the local cultural landscape to reflect the preferences and everyday pleasures.

Conclusion

As I have explored, during the late nineteenth century, working-class people began to diversify the cultural landscape of the Fox River Valley, and their employers responded by constructing innovative ways to maintain the economic and social supremacy of local elites. Through their connections to powerful politicians, Wisconsin industrialists backed laws that sought to minimize specific types of commercialized leisure among their labor force. Factory owners did so by encouraging the hiring of police and petitioning for public funding to expand the local criminal justice system. In an effort to control their employees’ time and direct it towards capitalist profit, industrialists looked to create a coerced labor force, which included building modern detention facilities and the implementation of municipal ordinances that

¹⁷⁰ Senator Teasdale to Dr. Julia Riddle, Oshkosh, March 11, 1914. Teasdale Vice Commission Correspondence, Series 173, Box 16.

outlawed unemployment and entrapped incarcerated workers in a form of debt peonage that bound prisoners not only to the authority of businessmen but also to a particular lifestyle. By charging men with vagrancy, drunkenness, and abandonment, I argue that Fox Valley officials attempted to reform them in order to foster a sober and settled industrial manhood. Transience frustrated capitalists, but worker mobility created vibrant social worlds of immense diversity. Meanwhile, beliefs about appropriate expressions of gender and sexuality as well as the behavior of women in public settings played a role, as did their daily economic needs. Workers did what they needed to do to survive and enjoy their lives. Thus, I assert that when government officials tried to outlaw prostitution in urban entertainment venues and rural saloons, they could not effectively enforce the law. Women who sold sex continued doing their jobs, showing the extent to which capitalists failed to control the local leisure scene in the way that they intended. I argue that despite their attempts to regulate working-class amusements, factory owners could not manage them. Through their everyday persistence, workers effectively shaped the social and political climate of the region in ways that reflected how they chose to enjoy their daily lives.

Chapter 4

A Cooperative Effort: Life, Liberty, and Protest in Wisconsin's Dairy Country

At five in the afternoon you start out and at nine you are in the Haymarket . . . in the morning, you are ready when they come.

Edna Ferber, *So Big*, 1924

On April 28, 1925, the *New York Times* reported that prize-winning novelist Edna Ferber had donated her \$1,000 “Pulitzer Award to Needy Writers.” Having won the “best American novel in 1924” for *So Big*, Ferber readily “turned the check over to the Authors’ League Fund for the care and assistance of old, sick and needy artists and writers.”¹ The donation demonstrated not only her philanthropy, but also her awareness of the financial challenges and emotional struggles of all working-class people. This was a central theme in her writing. Rather than emphasize the value of one form of labor over another, she sought to capture the similarities that factory workers, housewives, peddlers, grocery men, performers, and sailors had as toilers who built the American nation.² Her novels put characters of seemingly unrelated backgrounds in conversation with each other in ways that demonstrated their connections as human beings as much as their distinctiveness as individuals.

Ferber frequently brought urban dwellers together with people who lived in the nearby countryside. For instance, in her novel *So Big*, heroine Selina Peake moves from downtown Chicago to the village of High Prairie on “a venture” to teach local school children.³ Although in

¹ “DONATES HER \$1000 PRIZE: Edna Ferber Gives Pulitzer Award to Needy Writers,” *New York Times*, April 28, 1925.

² On Ferber’s ability to “characterize the uniquely American spirit,” see Louis Bromfield, “Edna Ferber,” *Saturday Review of Literature* 12, no. 7 (June 1935): 10-11. Also see a similar description of Ferber’s writing in Judy Cornes, *Sex, Power, and the Folly of Marriage in Women’s Novels of the 1920s: A Critical Study of Seven American Writers* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2015), 120.

close geographical proximity to the industrial metropolis, the residents of the Dutch American farming community appear vastly different to the young woman than city dwellers.⁴ Initially, Selina views the daily habits of her pupils' parents as shockingly provincial and even culturally backwards; yet, when she meets the family who will board her during her time in the agrarian Midwest, she finds that she needs to alter her belief system in order to better acclimate to her new social environment. For instance, when living at the house of the "Hollander" Klass Pool, Selina experiences an "icy" life, with not even "an available kettle of hot water at 6:30 A.M." As a result of the relentless "arctic atmosphere" of the "prairie farmhouse," Selina has to give up her ritual of a morning bath, and "was grateful for an occasional steaming basin of water at night and a hurried piecemeal bath by the mythical heat of the drum."⁵ This is not the last time the "city girl" encounters challenges in rural America. Rather, Ferber charts the myriad strategies that Selina develops to maintain dignity as a cosmopolitan "lady" who navigates a farming world that is hostile to independent women.⁶

Throughout the novel, Ferber explores how the country-school teacher experiences gender discrimination, especially after she becomes the widow of a local farmer. Not only does Selina notice the difficulties that women in general face as they try to make a living in an agricultural patriarchy, but she also experiences similar injustice in her attempts to maintain her own economic livelihood. For example, after her Dutch husband Pervus De Jong dies, she travels to Chicago to sell her fruits and vegetables at Haymarket Square only to find that she

³ Edna Ferber, *So Big* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1924), 14.

⁴ Ferber placed High Prairie ten miles outside of Chicago. Ferber, *So Big*, 14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

cannot participate in aspects of the local commercial culture. She successfully endures the four-hour trek and spends the night in her wagon, noticing the “gas lights” and men playing “cards and dice” on the streets. Yet, Selina comes up against a financial roadblock.⁷ When she and her son, Dirk, proudly direct their horses into the city to advertise their harvest, they do not receive a warm welcome.

Instead, an ethnic German farmer confronts them, telling Selina that she cannot park in a vacant spot; as she backs her team into the space, the angry man barks, “Heh, get out of there you . . . You can’t go in there, missus.” Despite his taunting, she maintains her position, and while onlookers search for her “husband,” Selina prepares to sell her goods. In reaction, the disgruntled elderly farmer exclaims, “woman ain’t got no business here in Haymarket, anyway. Better you’re home night time in your kitchen where you belong.” Rather than give up on her mission, Selina bravely responds, “don’t talk to me like that, you great stupid! What good does it do a woman to stay home in her kitchen if she’s going to starve there, and her boy with her!”⁸ Although she does not feel welcome as a single woman alone with her young child in the marketplace of the city that she once called home, country life has toughened Selina. She has learned that she cannot rely on anyone, and that only through hard work and determination can she keep herself and her son alive.

Likewise, in the short story “Farmer in the Dell,” Ferber describes the Chicago market district and the surrounding hinterland of turn-of-the-twentieth century America. In her description, she focuses on the challenges that people experience as they traverse the border

⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁸ Ferber, *So Big*, 123.

between rural and urban life.⁹ To do so, she narrates the everyday anxieties of “Old Ben” Westerveld, a retired farmer who moved to Chicago after thirty-three years of working the land. Using his daily struggles as her lens, Ferber reveals the deep sense of loss that families who sold their farms experienced during the World War I Era.¹⁰ Ferber recognizes that the fighting in Europe indisputably fueled industry and increased urbanization, which helped bring economic prosperity and consumer modernity to successful farmers in the Midwest. At the same time, however, this phenomenon did not always translate into everyday happiness for agricultural producers. Instead, her characters find themselves trapped in a transformed cultural landscape where they feel that they only partly belong.

Not only were understandings of time and labor different in the city but the leisure activities were too. For example, Ben wakes early every morning, “every muscle taut, every nerve tense.” He simply cannot “loll.” Despite his attempts to fit into city life by “taking it easy,” when he realizes that he is no longer on his farm, “a great wave of depression [sweeps] over him.” Rather than going to tend to his cattle, “he has nothing to get up for,” and his wife urges him to go back to bed.¹¹ But he cannot ignore his work ethic or desire to return to the familiarity of rural social life. According to Ferber, “at picnics and neighborhood frolics Ben could throw farther and run faster and pull harder than any of the other farmer boys who took part in the rough games.” The former country youth believes that these events allowed male

⁹ James P. Robert, *Famous Wisconsin Authors* (Oregon, WI: Badger Books Inc., 2002), 32; and Julia Goldsmith Gilbert, *Ferber: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1978), 355. On the hinterland as a rural space not separate from but intimately linked to nearby industrial communities, see William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 8-19.

¹⁰ Edna Ferber, “Farmer in the Dell,” *Collier's* 64, no. 10 (Fall 1919): 5-6, 30, 42, and 44-47.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

agricultural workers to join together and demonstrate their manliness by participating in competitive games based on dramatic expressions of physical strength. Urban men, by contrast, have different understandings of enjoyable recreational gatherings that do not center on family involvement but rather on liberation from wives and children. Ben views these forms of relaxation as irresponsible and foolhardy.¹²

As a result of his distaste for living in Chicago, when his son Dike returns from serving in the Great War, Ben decides that he is going to move back to the farm. When his wife resists, he demands, “you’re goin’ back Bella,” and “you’re goin’ run the house the way I say.”¹³ He can no longer condone the disorder of the city, where everyone makes jokes about farmers. Ben needs the protection of a community that “knew and respected him.” In the end, Bella agrees with him, though she is not going to join her husband. She urges him to return without her, claiming “there isn’t a bigger man-sized job in the world. It’s where you belong.”¹⁴ As Ferber’s story suggests, although they depended upon each other for economic survival, country dwellers and city residents had difficulty cohabitating.

Although a fictional account, “Farmer in the Dell” sheds light on the perspectives of people living in the agrarian Midwest during the World War I era. Ben’s claim that “this year’s wheat crop [is] going to win the war” would have resonated with rural Wisconsin residents.¹⁵ For instance, in the Fox River Valley, dairy farmers worked endlessly to produce milk and its byproducts to show their support for the war effort, though this did not necessarily bring them

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³ Ferber, “Farmer in the Dell,” 47.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

economic prosperity. Instead, farmers had to mortgage their land in order to purchase equipment, which contributed to the debts that they had difficulty repaying. Thus, beginning in the 1920s and worsening in the early 1930s, when the Great Depression hit, economic change unrelentingly affected farmers across the United States. As more people went bankrupt and lost their family farms, those who managed to maintain their local dairy operations became increasingly suspicious of the nationwide movement to regulate milk markets and corporatize the industry, especially when it came to the role of the U.S. federal government in this effort.¹⁶

Although many wished to remain neutral during World War I, and some even traveled to Europe to fight for the Central Powers' cause, Wisconsin farmers were overwhelmingly patriotic in their commitment to providing food for U.S. soldiers, and many sent their children to battle on the Western Front. Like Ben Westerveld, Fox Valley dairy producers anxiously waited for their sons to return home safely. And despite their poverty, they purchased Liberty Bonds to express their support for the war effort. Their allegiances changed, however, following the armistice. As young soldiers journeyed back across the Atlantic Ocean, their fathers had their own war to wage on home soil. When the domestic economy collapsed and farmers risked losing their land, their loyalty no longer centered on supporting American efforts abroad but rather on the survival of

¹⁶ On dairy farmers becoming increasingly suspicious of the “corporate” activities of the federal government in the decades following World War I, see Ann Folino White, *Plowed Under: Food Policy Protests and Performance in New Deal America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 71-80; Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor’s Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 180-85; Richard M. Valelly, *Radicalism in the States: The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the American Political Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 9, 26-35, 63-70; Theodore Saloutos, *The America Farmer and the New Deal* (Ames: Iowa State University, 1982), xv-xvii; Hugh T. Lovin, “The Fall of Farmer-Labor Parties, 1936-1938,” *Pacific Northwestern Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (January 1971): 16-26; John Shover, *Cornbelt Rebellion: The Farmer Holiday Association* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 15-21; and Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, *Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951), 374-80.

rural families.¹⁷ This chapter explores their struggle for material livelihood as well as the underlying social customs and cultural values that fueled farmers' political activism.

The Jazz Age fostered a new wave of radicalism in the Fox Valley, which lasted from the end of World War I through the 1930s. Frustration with the unfulfilled promises of loyalty campaigns, disenchantment with industrial capitalism, and animosity toward corporate expansion in agriculture sparked an upsurge of grassroots activism that reflected the economic values and social practices of working-class residents. Along with the industrial workers who participated in the resistance against the prohibition of alcohol, people from the nearby countryside also took part in the movement. Ethnicity and religion influenced residents' views on drinking liquor, and the state had a large German American population as well as many Roman Catholics who did not view the consumption of alcohol as immoral. As I demonstrate, even if they did not personally drink beer or whiskey, these folks generally did not support the criminalization of the custom. Those who opposed the ban on alcohol did so as an expression of their cultural beliefs. Thus, by analyzing the daily activities and social activism of Fox Valley workers, I argue that they were persistent about their demands for fair treatment. Therefore, they challenged the control that their employers and government officials had over working-class leisure pursuits in the region.

Next, I discuss how dairy farmers manufactured strategies to fight Prohibition, as they simultaneously demonstrated against the low price of milk. In order to explain the development of these two seemingly disparate social movements, I have divided this chapter into two parts. First, I discuss the conflicting perspectives of Fox Valley residents on U.S. involvement in World War I and the experiences of German immigrants and their descendants in the region. Then I explore the drive to force Liberty Bonds on Wisconsin farm owners and the experiences

¹⁷ Saloutos and Hicks, *Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939*, 181-86.

of local soldiers. Focusing on their support of the war effort, I explain how agrarian people believed that their endless labor in the fields reflected their firm commitment to American citizenship. Finally, in the second half, I narrate the local campaign to undermine Prohibition as well as the collective attempt to gain the price-of-production for dairy products.

Overall, I maintain that workers' militancy changed the local social landscape in ways that reflected their everyday values. During the early 1930s, workers in the Fox River Valley were radical in their demands for social and economic inclusion, and their efforts helped shape the parameters of the New Deal state. Highlighting the government violence associated with these protests and the community efforts that went along with them, I investigate the social and political visions of dairy farmers and their urban counterparts, as well as the systems of corporate control that sought to suppress their movements. Ultimately, I argue that through their self-activity, including their struggles for cultural freedom and economic survival, Fox Valley workers had profound political influence in the region in ways that inspired the rise of Wisconsin's Progressive Party.

Wartime Politics, Prejudice, and Patriotism

Fox Valley farmers and their family members played a crucial role in World War I, as young working-class men from throughout the region participated in deadly battles overseas. Indeed, Wisconsin residents, even those who experienced consistent discrimination in their daily lives due to their gender, religion, or ethnicity, contributed to the national endeavor, whether they intended to or not. Although the majority of the German American population did not initially support the cause, federal pressure, media disparagement, and overt bullying by local

businessmen and their supporters in municipal government encouraged citizens, and those seeking that status, to celebrate U.S. involvement in the fight against authoritarianism in Europe. For immigrants who were newcomers to the area, as well as their descendants, the Great War was a confusing time along financial, political, and especially, cultural lines. Certainly, the event created an opportunity for technological progress and increased wealth, but at a significant price. Rural workers risked their economic livelihood to support soldiers abroad, and their patriotism reflected the everyday values and material necessities of their families and community.

Before, and even after, U.S. entry into the military conflict in Western Europe, ethnic identity and an attachment to former homelands played a profound role in a person's stance on U.S. involvement in the war. For examples, German and Irish Americans maintained a neutral perspective on the war, as did Austrian, Belgian, Polish, and Scandinavian immigrants.¹⁸ At the same time, there were other members of these groups who went overseas to enlist and support their relatives who still lived in Europe, including fifteen ethnic Germans from Appleton.¹⁹ Additionally, there were area residents who lost family and friends who fought for the Central Powers. Indeed, according to a report released by the *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, William Alvers, a local farmhand from Fond du Lac received word from his mother about the human devastation in his hometown of Hamburg, Germany. In portions of the letter that the newspaper published, she claimed that "all [his] schoolmates and friends [were] either killed or wounded," and "most of the fellows [that] he knew [there] were dead. [His] brother was badly wounded,

¹⁸ Richard L. Pifer, *The Great War Comes to Wisconsin: Sacrifice, Patriotism, and Free Speech in a Time of Crisis* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2017), 31-42; and Brad Larson, *All the Hometown Boys: Wisconsin 150th Machine Gun Battalion in World War I* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 1-12.

¹⁹ Pifer, *The Great War Comes to Wisconsin*, 37.

and [his] brother-in-law [was] at the point of death in a local field hospital.”²⁰ Likewise, other articles from Fox Valley newspapers described the brutality that German citizens experienced during the war. For example, on August 26, 1914, the *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern* reported that “German women [had] been stripped [and] dragged through the streets by their hair, when naked, and shamelessly abused” by Belgian soldiers who were fighting for the Allied cause in France.²¹

Fox Valley ethnic communities worried that anything besides neutrality toward the atrocities in Europe threatened their ability to access cultural citizenship in the United States. Indeed, over half of the population in both Outagamie and Winnebago counties had either foreign-born parents or were actual immigrants. According to the 1915 *Wisconsin Blue Book*, in Calumet County, which had a population of 16,461 people, only 6,425 were “native white, native parentage,” and of the 53,151 people who lived in Brown County, 17,056 had parents who emigrated from Europe, and 8,847 were born there. Statistics were similar for all areas in the Fox Valley region, where over two-thirds of local residents identified with a nation other than the U.S., at least ancestrally.²² Not only did this reality challenge the Wilson administration’s campaign for 100% Americanism, but Wisconsin politicians took note of the allegiances of their ethnic electorate. Consequently, some state officials did not immediately support the war effort, and some never ended up doing so, demonstrating the deep local controversy surrounding U.S. involvement in the tragic conflict.²³

²⁰ “Substitute Was Killed,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 15, 1914.

²¹ “England Fears for Men in Battle in Belgium While No News Is Obtained,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, August 26, 1914.

²² *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1915* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Co., 1915), 105, accessed on May 25, 2019 at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=header&id=WI.WIBlueBk1915>.

For instance, on May 18, 1917, when Congress authorized federal officials to raise a national army through conscription, Senator Robert M. La Follette Sr. publicly spoke out against the war. He claimed that American participation would not only hurt Wisconsin workers and make corporate capitalists wealthier, but also that the majority of his constituents did not support intervention in European affairs.²⁴ Although the percentage of the population that was immigrant had decreased somewhat since prior decades, the state still had a significant number of people who strongly identified with a distant nation. These included ethnic Germans as well as Scandinavian immigrants and Irish Americans who desired neutrality. In some cases, members of these groups expressed outright opposition to the conflict.²⁵ Yet during a period of intense hostility towards “foreigners,” after the U.S. Congress voted to declare war on Germany on April 6, 1917, Fox Valley residents overwhelmingly demonstrated their patriotism. In fact, by the war’s end, Wisconsin had sent over 118,000 soldiers to Belgium and France, and agricultural workers and industrial laborers throughout the Midwest put their dollars and bodies into defending the U.S. abroad. Even though the state was the first in the nation to report for all four of the available draft registrations and to organize a State Council of Defense, fear of disloyalty haunted workers, especially those who had spoken out against war from its onset.²⁶ Thus,

²³ On the 100% Americanism campaign and the complicated stance of Wisconsin government officials see, Pifer, *The Great War Comes to Wisconsin*, 2; Larson, *All the Hometown Boys*, 55, 176-82.

²⁴ On La Follette’s resistance to U.S. military expansion and involvement in World War I, see Nancy C. Unger, *Fighting Bob La Follette: The Righteous Reformer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 239-62; Matthew Rothschild, “Fighting Bob La Follette: Visionary American Leftist,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 3 (July 2011): 362-68; and Peter Dreier, “La Follette’s Wisconsin Idea,” *Dissent Magazine*, accessed on May 12, 2019 at https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/la-follettes-wisconsin-idea.

²⁵ On identifying with an ethnic homeland, see La Vern J. Rippley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 71-93, and 94-113.

although local families had sacrificed their children and livelihoods to support U.S. troops, they still worried about appearing uncommitted to the cause, and understandably so.

Indeed, on December 13, 1917, *Life* magazine published a cartoon that characterized Senator La Follette as a traitor. By depicting the German emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, pinning medals on the government official, the satirical artwork suggested that “Fighting Bob” was anti-American and pro-Central Powers.²⁷ After his oratorical attempts to defeat Wilson’s call for U.S. involvement in the war, the progressive Republican politician received hate mail and death threats as well as negative media exposure.²⁸ This public reaction to the Wisconsin senator created great anxiety among German Americans who owned farms and worked in wood-products mills throughout the Fox Valley. Given that Congress had passed the Espionage Act on June 15, 1917, which made it illegal to interfere with the U.S. war effort, people in general expressed their disagreement with American involvement in Europe carefully.²⁹ The subsequent Sedition Act of 1918 made speaking out against the conflict a federal crime, with a heavy fine and potential prison sentence.³⁰ Nonetheless, socialists, progressives, and radical isolationists throughout the

²⁶ Fred L. Holmes, *Wisconsin’s War Record* (Madison: Capital Historical Publishing Co., 1919), 13.

²⁷ Anti-La Follette Cartoon, *Life*, December 13, 1917, accessed on October 21, 2019 at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM3272>.

²⁸ On the harassment that La Follette received as a result of his opposition to the war and expansion of the United States military, see Unger, *Fighting Bob La Follette*, 50-60, 239-50; and Rothschild, “Fighting Bob La Follette,” 362-68. On La Follette’s public reaction to U.S. involvement in the war, including the Armed Ship Bill, see Robert M. La Follette, *The Armed Ship Bill Meant War* (New York: The Emergency Peace Federation, 1917), 3-15, accessed on October 21, 2019 at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t0wq0sq8w;view=1up;seq=3>.

²⁹ On the Espionage Act and the public fear that it created, especially for immigrants, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Land: Patterns of American Nativism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 196-210. See the act, accessed on October 22, 2019, at http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3904.

state continued to protest the expansion of the U.S. military and the horrific loss of human life that resulted from the intervention.³¹ A vast majority, however, rallied in support of the national cause, wanting to limit any questioning of their patriotism. As several local residents publicly stated, La Follette's anti-war diatribe did not represent the views of all Wisconsinites.

For example, in reaction to accusations that his state was an anti-war haven that harbored traitors, Governor Emanuel L. Philipp retorted in a public address he gave in October 1917: "We have a large German population, which as a class, will rank with any other nationality for patriotism not only in this State but in other States." To support his claims, the politician explained how Wisconsin had contributed significantly to the Victory Liberty Loan (Liberty Bond) campaign, including members of the state's ethnic communities. For example, in Oshkosh, he argued, "a city with a large German population, the bulk of which is classed German workingmen, the Second Liberty Loan already [had] been oversubscribed."³² Then he explained that in the "German city" of Milwaukee, residents had been very generous, giving over 12 million dollars to the effort. Even in Superior, "which [had] a population greatly augmented by persons of foreign birth, [specifically] Germans and Scandinavians," residents had

³⁰ For the Sedition Act of 1918, see http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3903, accessed on October 22, 2019. [I seem to have messed this note up, but it didn't make sense the way it was. Fix it.]

³¹ On Wisconsin Socialists and farmers speaking out against World War I, see "Why Are We In This War," *Milwaukee Leader*, June 20, 1917; "Farmer Charged with Pro-Kaiser Talk on Trial," *Eau Claire Leader*, July 23, 1918. On isolationists and why they did not support the war effort, see Walter J. Trattner, "Julia Grace Wales and the Wisconsin Plan for Peace," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Spring 1961): 203-13; and Karen Falk, "Public Opinion in Wisconsin during World War I," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (June 1942): 389-407; "Correspondence from Pastor Krenke to Governor Philipp," Folder 1, Box B4, Emanuel L. Philipp Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

³² "For Love of America," *American Monthly* 7 (October 13, 1917): 221-23, quoted material on 221.

oversubscribed to the Liberty Bond crusade.³³ Thus, according to the governor, local immigrants and their descendants were not treasonous, but loyal U.S. patriots.

Regardless of the public support that they expressed for the Allied cause, however, ethnic Germans and other European Americans became the primary target for venting national fears about espionage, and Wisconsin residents found themselves especially apprehensive about this anti-foreign xenophobia.³⁴ Even though agricultural producers and paper-mill workers struggled tirelessly to demonstrate their loyalty and economic support of the war effort, they worried about their livelihoods and status within the Fox River Valley employment scene. Also, these men and women wondered if they would lose their ability to practice their preferred social behaviors and leisure pursuits in the public arena. This followed the long history of overt discrimination that ethnic Wisconsinites, especially Germans, had encountered in their attempts to continue their habitual forms of education, worship, and socializing in their native languages. For example, in a letter that he sent to Governor Philipp, a Lutheran pastor stated that the Knights of Liberty, a pro-World War I organization, had been attacking German parochial schooling. He continued, claiming that not only did these anti-immigrant groups threaten the ability of German Americans to educate their children but they also endangered the freedom of residents who openly practiced their “divine services in the German Language.”³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “For Love of America,” 221; R.B. Pixley, *Wisconsin in the World War: Wisconsin Activities in the World War* (Milwaukee: Wisconsin War History Company, 1919), 196-222; and Holmes, *Wisconsin's War Record*, 16. On the effort to discount “pro-Germanism” and show support of the war effort, see *The Wisconsin Loyalty Legion: State Secretary's Report, Mass Meeting Minutes, Annual Meeting Minutes, President's Address* (Milwaukee: Wisconsin Loyalty Legion, 1918), 14-38.

³⁵ “Correspondence from Pastor Krenke to Governor Philipp.” On ethnic immigrants and the loss of aspects of their cultural and religious values during the World War I nativist upsurge, see Higham,

Thus, despite a shared desire to protect their cultural institutions, Fox Valley residents, especially ethnic Germans, lived in fear of a resurgence of the nativist hysteria that they had experienced in the late nineteenth century.³⁶ This was not paranoia; rather, World War I sparked rampant ethnocentrism and political censorship that spread across the U.S. and culminated in the Red Scare, which lasted well into the 1920s.³⁷ Although ethnic Germans had lived in Wisconsin since at least the 1850s and contributed greatly to the local economy, they continued to struggle for cultural tolerance and social inclusion. Even though Germans were diverse in religion, politics, and leisure activities, the pervasive prejudices against Marxism and drinking alcohol as well as anti-Catholicism, cast all Germans as suspected criminals and possible spies.³⁸ The recent admission of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe had shifted the spotlight somewhat away from ethnic Germans. But this did not last. Even prior to official U.S. entry into the war in 1917, the specter of the “Hun,” which became a symbol for a conspirator, haunted the daily lives of German immigrants and their descendants. Thus, they occupied a nation that

Strangers in the Land, 338-42; and Christopher Sterba, *Good Americans: Italian and Jewish Immigrants During the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 143-48.

³⁶ On the nativism of the late nineteenth century and how it affected ethnic Germans, see Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 12-68.

³⁷ On the cultural prejudices that ethnic Germans experienced in Wisconsin during and following World War I, see *Wisconsin Loyalty Legion*, 6-10; Pixley, *Wisconsin in the World War*, 127-48, 318-25, and 355-57; “Correspondence from Pastor Krenke to Governor Philip.” On nativism and the Red Scare, see Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 222-79; John Laslett, *Labor and the Left, a Study of Socialist and Radical Influences in the American Labor Movement, 1881-1924* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 271-300; Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1-3, 37-41, 75; Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 2, 11, 220-28, 254; and Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 6, 149-50, 201-07; Elizabeth McKillen, *Making the World Safe for Workers: Labor, the Left, and Wilsonian Internationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 10 and 66-86.

³⁸ “Professor of Northland Tarred and Feathered: Taken from Room by a Mob,” *Ashland Daily Press*, April 1, 1918; Ripley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, 100-110; Pixley, *Wisconsin in the World War*, 315-318; and Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 172-209.

viewed them as likely emissaries of the “totalitarian fascists” in Europe.³⁹

Likewise, negative newspaper reports about German Americans heightened safety concerns among the Wisconsin ethnic population. Simultaneously, these media accounts reinforced a criminalized representation of the enemy “Hun” in the U.S. popular imagination. For instance, on June 15, 1916, the *New York Times* published an article titled “Crush Disloyalty, Cries the President: 25,000 at Washington Cheer Speech Attacking Hyphenates for ‘Political Blackmail.’”⁴⁰ Having recently participated in a preparedness parade in Washington D.C., President Woodrow Wilson followed the public spectacle with a lecture in which he warned, “there is a disloyalty active in the United States, and it must be absolutely crushed.” According to the *Times*, the president had accused “a very small minority” of attempting “political blackmail” by threatening the unity of U.S. residents around national security and involvement in World War I. The rest of the report, however, revealed a much different motivation for fostering anxiety about the existence of “foreigners” among American residents. With the next presidential election looming, the *Times* suggested that Wilson was worried that his recent shift from neutrality to possible U.S. entry into the war would hurt his chances at the polls. Thus, in order to gain constituents and protect his office, he encouraged suspicion of anyone who would not support American soldiers if government officials decided to declare war. According to the

³⁹ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 147-48 and 208-29; Pixley, *Wisconsin in the World War*, 127-48; *Wisconsin’s Loyalty Legion*, 8; “Charges Made of Disloyalty,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, July 11, 1917; and “State News,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, August 20, 1918. On national charges of conspiracy and disloyalty, see “Spurns Disloyalty Charge: Blankenburg Defends the ‘Friends of German Democracy,’” *New York Times*, February 9, 1918; “30 Years for Disloyalty: Connecticut Sergeant Had Threatened to Surrender to Germans,” *New York Times*, March 6, 1918; and “Disloyalty Bill Denounced as Gag: Would Muzzle the Press and Smother Criticism of Government,” *New York Times*, April 5, 1918.

⁴⁰ “Crush Disloyalty, Cries the President: 25,000 at Washington Cheer Speech Attacking Hyphenates for ‘Political Blackmail,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1916.

report, Wilson intentionally sparked national distrust of anyone who planned to vote against his re-election, especially if they were German American “traitors.”⁴¹

Not long after this accusation, following Wilson’s successful reelection and U.S. entry into the war, the prejudices that had existed during his campaign expanded into the world of American education. For instance, on May 18, 1918, the *New York Times* published another article entitled “German Teacher On Trial for Disloyalty: Miss Pingol Admits Wearing Picture of Kaiser’s Grandfather in Manual Training.” This article told readers that German Americans were using their elite positions as teachers to endorse their political positions and, as “supposed educators” were actually promoting the ideals of a foreign, dictatorial nation. These “traitors” spread propaganda opposing the “Americanization” efforts of the U.S. government. Then on June 27, 1918 the *New York Times* ran another expose on A. M. Pingel, whom the Board of Education in Los Angeles dismissed for using “the German language.” This article, “Dismiss German Teacher: Members of Education Board Drop Miss Pingol for Disloyalty,” explained that the Board of Education had voted 4 to 0 in favor of releasing the educator from her position at Brooklyn Manual Training High School and further firings, thus warning against expressions of “pro-Germanism” among teachers.⁴²

⁴¹ Ibid. For more on Wilson’s crusade against “hyphenated” Americans, see “German Press Here Severe On Wilson: President’s Utterances On Disloyalty and Anarchy Stir Up Comment, *New York Times*, December 9, 1915; “Wilson ‘Enticements’ Anger the Kaiser: Disloyalty Not to be Attributed to the German People, He Asserts,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1917; and “Wilson Deprecates Talk of Disloyalty: Tells Congressman Dyer He Is Confident of Integrity Of Citizens of German Blood,” *New York Times*, August 4, 1917; and Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 198-200.

⁴² “Dismiss German Teacher: Members of Education Board Drop Miss Pingol for Disloyalty,” *New York Times*, June 27, 1918. See also “German Teacher On Trial for Disloyalty: Miss Pingol Admits Wearing Picture of Kaiser’s Grandfather in Manual Training,” *New York Times*, May 18, 1918. On another instance of an educator expressing pro-Germanism, this time in Wisconsin, see “Former Fall Creek School Head Jailed on Espionage Warrant,” *Eau Claire Leader*, October 20, 1918. The article explained how the former principal and postmaster in the village of Fall Creek, Henry A. Degner, found himself arrested on account of alleged disloyalty for attacking a Liberty Bond salesman and circulating

Meanwhile in northern Wisconsin, on April 1, 1918, the *Ashland Daily Press* published an account of mob violence against a German American educator. According to the story, titled “Professor of Northland Tarded and Feathered,” local police officers responded to a call that there had been a disturbance just outside of Ashland. A group of “nearly a dozen masked men [had] taken Professor E. A. Schimler, teacher of languages at Northland College” to “a lonely spot about half a mile from the city, stripped [him] of his clothing” and covered him with “a substantial coat of tar and feathers.”⁴³ The suspects then left the educator without his coat and trousers, and they also stole his watch. Schimler told authorities that he had no idea who his attackers were or why they decided to publicly humiliate him. The report continued, claiming that college officials “[said] that [the professor was] a very efficient teacher and that there [was] absolutely no evidence that he was disloyal in words or actions.” Calling Schimler not a traitor but rather an American citizen, the writer stated that the mayor of Ashland was offering “a reward of \$100 for information that [would] lead to the arrest and conviction of any of the members of the mob that tarred and feathered Professor Schimler.”⁴⁴ This report demonstrated that although there was community opposition to such discrimination and violence, German immigrants and their descendants were at risk of wartime prejudices.

literature that opposed the war. A subsequent report explained his situation further, including his denial of the attack as well as his sentencing and \$15,000 fine for committing a federal crime. See “Degner Given Hearing; Held to Grand Jury, *Eau Claire Leader*, October 23, 1918.

⁴³ “Professor of Northland Tarded and Feathered: Taken from Room by a Mob,” *Ashland Daily Press*, April 1, 1918.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* This was not the only tar and feather incident in Ashland. Not even two weeks after the Schimler report, local police received notification that another German American, Adolph Anton, had a similar experience, having encountered masked men who took him from his home and stripped him, tarred and feathered him, and left him without his clothing and without transportation. This was the fourth time that the same group of men had performed this humiliating act in response to the alleged disloyalty of their victims. Although municipal authorities knew who at least two of the perpetrators were, officials failed to charge anyone with a crime for their acts of anti-German hysteria. See “Another Tar and Feather Party is Staged,” *Ashland Daily Press*, April 11, 1918.

Wisconsin newspaper reports also revealed that area farmers found themselves fined and incarcerated for alleged disloyalty. For example, on July 23, 1918, the *Eau Claire Leader* ran a report chronicling the trial of Christian Yearous, a Grant County farmer whom federal authorities “indicted on five counts for alleged statements in advocacy of Germany’s cause in the war.”⁴⁵ According to the story, there were only two witnesses to Yearous’s unpatriotic statements. A “young farmer” named Oscar Slaight confirmed the statement of John Sisley. Apparently the three farmers were having a conversation about U.S. intervention in the war when Yearous declared: “This is a rich man’s war. It will never end till [*sic*] all the money is gone. The *Tuscania* had no business upon the water. They got what they deserved. Americans have done just as bad things as Germany did to Belgium.” The defendant’s lawyer, however, Ralph Jackman of Madison, claimed that the plaintiff’s accusation against his client stemmed from a longstanding dispute between the two farmers over a land deal that occurred when both lived in Iowa. Yearous was not a criminal or conspirator of Germany but rather an American citizen “who had seven children,” including a son “who [was] fighting in France as a volunteer soldier.” Regardless of his contributions to the U.S. war effort as a farmer and father, the grand jury charged Yearous with committing espionage.⁴⁶

Moreover, local Wisconsin newspapers revealed that even prominent state residents of German ancestry were in danger of arrest for disloyalty. Indeed, on the same day according to an account by the *Eau Claire Leader*, a drug store proprietor “pleaded guilty to violating the Espionage Act” in Judge A. L. Sanborn’s branch of the U.S. district court. The indictment against Charles Naffz charged that the German American had said in front of several witnesses:

⁴⁵ “Farmer Charged with Pro-Kaiser Talk on Trial: Defendant is Native American and Has Son in Service,” *Eau Claire Leader*, July 24, 1918.

⁴⁶ “Farmer Charged with Pro-Kaiser Talk on Trial.”

“this is a mere capitalists’ war. The morals taught by the Kaiser and the government of Germany are superior to those taught by the United States. If the common people knew what was going on in Washington they would rebel.” Despite his alleged slanderous claims against the U.S. government, the jury decided not to sentence Naffz to prison on federal charges of espionage.⁴⁷ Perhaps his standing as an elite community leader influenced the court’s decision to drop the accusations against him. Regardless, the newspaper report demonstrated that speaking out in opposition to the American war effort was unacceptable, especially if a person was ethnically German. Instances like these suggested to readers that foreign enemies and totalitarian spies existed among them.⁴⁸

Thus, even though Wisconsin had contributed considerably to the Liberty Bond movement and began the first “meatless and wheatless” campaigns to support the war, state officials still felt the need to respond to claims of disloyalty by organizing County Defense Councils.⁴⁹ Area leaders believed that the combination of La Follette’s public anti-war protests and the state’s large ethnic German population created a threat to the economic livelihood of area residents. In an effort to protect the financial opportunities that World War I provided for businessmen as well as their workers, local politicians argued that the state needed to put all local resources behind the military cause. As a result, not only did Wisconsin become the first to

⁴⁷ “Charles Naffz, Madison, Admits Pro-Kaiser Talk,” *Eau Claire Leader*, July 24, 1918.

⁴⁸ For more newspaper reports on Central Powers’ spies and disloyal ethnic Germans in the U.S., see “Women War Spies,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1916; “Militia Opens Secret Wars on German Spies,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 27, 1917; “Local Realty Man Seized as War Plotter: G. H. Jacobsen Arrested—Spies Are Taken in Many Cities,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 1917; “Editorial of the Day: On Way to Discourage Spies,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 18, 1917; “German Spies in America,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 1917; and Arthur Sears Henning, “300,000 Spies of Germany Scoured U.S.: Secret Agents Kept Tab on Wilson,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 14, 1918.

⁴⁹ Holmes, *Wisconsin’s War Record*, 16.

initiate the defense movement on the county level, but also, Fox River Valley elites and their supporters in municipal government worked to raise the most money in support of U.S. soldiers. Throughout the war, newspapers reported on which cities contributed more to the nationwide Liberty Bond campaign. For instance, on April 11, 1918, the *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern* reported that “over six hundred communities” from across the U.S. “were claiming an honor flag for exceeding [the] quota on subscriptions.” According to the article, smaller cities and rural townships led the way in contributions, including those in the Midwest, and Wisconsin was at the forefront.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, state representatives boasted that by launching a food conservation program, Wisconsin had provided an effective model for federal officials to introduce a national plan that would effectively feed the soldiers and civilians.⁵¹

Yet, although Wisconsin residents had passed every loan quota and exceeded their goals in all nationwide war campaigns, there were state residents who continued to believe that local officials and private citizens needed to intensify wartime patriotism. In the Fox River Valley, as a response to concerns about local German spies, municipal authorities formed local Defense Councils to help ensure allegiance to the U.S. Likewise, community members organized gangs of vigilantes that they tasked with coercing local immigrants into supporting the American military effort. One central goal of this homegrown movement was to raise money for the Allied troops abroad, and the primary target was German Americans. For instance, according to a *Capital Times* report from December 21, 1918, several ethnic German farmers had reported complaints to “C. B. Ballard, a newly elected member of the [state] legislature and the Society of Equity in Outagamie County.” Consequently, he “laid before officials of the department of

⁵¹ Ibid; Pixley, *Wisconsin in the World War*, 197-226; *Wisconsin's Loyalty Legion*, 7-8; and Wisconsin Food and Drug Administration, *United States Food Administration, Wisconsin Division, Release, March 1-April 21, 1918* (Madison: State of Wisconsin, 1918), accessed on May 20, 2019, at <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/59047>.

justice [these] city affidavits concerning assaults made on farmers . . . during the recent Liberty Loan drive.” Governor Philipp had these documents, and the victims of these offenses wanted “action for the prosecution of the perpetrators of these attacks.”⁵²

This same Madison newspaper report, titled “Affidavits in Mob Violence Cases Are Placed Before Justice Department Officials,” listed the grievances of seven different Fox River Valley farmers of German descent. For example, August Julius of Greenville, explained how on October 18, 1918, he went to the Grange Hall to a special meeting on account of [his] neighbors funeral,” and on his way home “with his wife and child” he noticed that there were nine or ten autos blocking the road to his house. Julius, who was 32 and lived with his parents on their farm, claimed “that when he got out of his vehicle, two men ‘closed around him like a vise.’” One man asked him his name and also wanted to see his father, “meanwhile some one stopped the engine on Julius’s car.” Then one of the assailants, Steve Balliet, owner of a “Supply Co. in Appleton” told the farmer to “sign [his name for] \$1,100.00 for [his] father’s Liberty bond.” Julius responded, “how can I sign up for him as I signed my share when the committee men [were] around [and] my allotment [was] \$100.00.” Balliet retorted, “if you don’t sign up we will take you along and send you to France.”⁵³ The vigilantes were threatening to drag Julius into combat, despite his clear commitment to the war effort through his daily agricultural labor.

After intimidating him with a disloyalty sentence if he did not forge his father’s name, August Julius alleged that the men turned their aggression on his wife. In his narration of the event, she said to the men, “How can [we pay you]? We haven’t got the money!” At this point

⁵² “Affidavits in Mob Violence Cases Are Placed Before Justice Department Officials: C. B. Ballard Turns Documents Over to Federal Building Men Here; Tell of Mob Violence,” *Capital Times*, December 21, 1918.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

one of the [vigilantes] responded to [her], “borrow it . . . or we’ll take you along too.” As their baby cried, August Julius alleged that as “[his] wife tried to pull [him] out of the crowd.” His aggressors told him, however, “that they would not let [him] go home if they staid [*sic*] there until morning.” Next, August Julius claimed that “they pushed [him onto] to [his] car and forced him to sign up [his] father’s allotment [which was] \$1,100.00.” They told the dairyman that if his father did not, he “would have to pay up.” The men instructed the young farmer to have his father John Julius meet them in Appleton the next morning to withdraw the funds, and assured him that if no one paid, they would “be out [there] tomorrow afternoon [to] get [him]!”⁵⁴

Later that day, this same “mob” traveled just down the road to the farm John Julius’s brother, Christ Julius, looking for Frank, who was August’s cousin. At 28, Frank Julius lived on his parent’s farm, and “was working his own field,” when these men arrived and told him that “they were out for the Liberty loan and that [he] had not taken his full allotment.” Yet, the dairy farmer claimed that he “told [the vigilantes] that [he] had taken all that he could at the time.” In response, the Fox Valley elites asked him again, “[a]re you going to sign up?” He told them that he “had taken all [he] could for the fourth loan and they went away.” Later that evening, Frank Julius alleged, “a bunch of autos came into [his] yard and made a racket.” The men were looking for him, but he was not home. However, his sister told him that while she “was outside, two of the men sneaked into the house through a back door, and when she went in a bunch of them” ran in and “put their cigars out on the floor.” Frank’s father, Christ Julius, demanded that they leave, but they refused. Instead, they talked loudly, “stamping [their] feet and clapping [their] hands.” According to Frank, one of the men said to his father “I suppose you are going back to see the Kaiser pretty soon.” But Christ Julius replied, “I am going to stay here and I am not a Kaiser

⁵⁴ Ibid.

man.”⁵⁵ The dairy farmer claimed that he was a loyal American, who contributed to the military conflict through his daily labor.

According to Frank Julius, these men said that they were with the Council of Defense, that they were threatening local citizens into making greater Liberty bond contributions, and that the Appleton Chief of Police, George T. Prim, was with them. When Frank Julius returned home, the men “grabbed him and tried to pull him out of the house,” breaking a table and plate. His “mother and sisters tried to hold [the vigilantes] back,” but one man “kicked [Frank Julius’s] mother [and another] struck one of [his sister’s] on the head and pushed [Frank] out of the house and told [his family] to get into the Chief’s car,” which they did. These aggressive local elites finally left his rural home after Frank agreed that he would meet them in Appleton the following morning to pay them, even though he had already “donated to the Red Cross fund and in church for the boys in camps. Had bought war savings stamps, took a bond in the second loan, the full allotment for the third, [and] as much of the fourth as [he] felt he could.” Frank Julius did not view himself as pro-German; rather, he felt that he had contributed all that he could to the U.S. war effort through his labor and the capital he already donated.⁵⁶

Two of the seven men who shared their stories with C. B. Ballard had Julius as a surname, and even though the five remaining accusers came from different local families, all were ethnic Germans and each had a similar account of their mistreatment. For example, Greenville farmer H. A. Holeman reported that on October 17, 1918, while he was working in his field, he “saw a crowd of about 18 men walking towards” him, claiming they were “the [local] Council of Defense.” One of the men, area capitalist Steve Balliet, told Holeman that the

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

farmer had two options, to “sign up for [a] full allotment” or end up on a “black list.” Holeman replied that he could not afford to give more money to the war effort, and, he would prefer to have them think that he was “pro-German and a slacker” than not have enough money to support his wife and children.⁵⁷ According to Holeman, the intruders claimed that if he did not agree to pay the rest of his allotment and instead signed his name to the disloyalty document, after the war ended, U.S. government officials would deport him to Germany. Moreover, the farmer stated that his aggressors questioned his masculinity, with one of the men scolding, “a man like [Holeman] ought to be kicked out of the country” for not thinking “much of his wife and children.” Holeman disagreed, asking the men to leave his home, which they did. But Holeman’s said that the “same crowd of men” arrived the next evening, while he “was up alone [and] the rest of the family [had] all gone to bed.” They wanted to take him away; meanwhile, the farmer explained that his “wife had got up and she come out of the bed [and told] them no he is not going along. Then a man who [he] did not know pushed [his wife] down on a chair and told her to keep still or [the men] would take [them] both along.” The assailants maintained that the only way that they would not “tar and feather” the couple was if Holeman signed up for the rest of his allotment. The farmer agreed because, as he put it, “the children were crying and half scart [*sic*] to death.” When the men finally left, Holman maintained that “they said now we’ll see some more of your friends.” Holeman did not want to provide more funding for the war effort, not because he was unpatriotic or anti-American, but because he had already offered all he could afford. If vigilantes had not trespassed on his property, the Chief of Police with them, the farmer would have kept his money to support his family and maintain their dairy farm.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The same *Capital Times* newspaper report listed the affidavits of four other Fox Valley farmers. The paper printed their experiences with the Outagamie County Council of Defense, as well as a rebuttal statement from two of the men that several of the farmers had listed as members of the enforcement posse. For instance, in reaction to accusations of intimidation, a “Mr. Keller” argued, “we regret that anything giving even a semblance of coercion should have occurred. But it was a question [of] whether Prussians or Americans were going to rule this country.” He continued, “these [ethnic German farmers] talk about constitutional rights, but they keep silent on constitutional duty. They would never have been called on, night or day, if they had done their duty at first or shown even a willingness to do it.”⁵⁹ He contended, “our men did not call on them as a matter of pleasure,” but the farmers were “not only refusing to do their duty, they were misleading others in their neighborhood who otherwise would have backed up the Liberty bond issue.” Likewise, the chairman of the organization’s leadership committee, the powerful area businessmen Stephen Balliet, supported Keller’s defense of the “mob’s” actions. He verified that the men who interrogated the farmers were not thugs; rather they included “the chief of the Appleton police department, an Army training officer from Lawrence College, a prominent hotel man in Appleton, [a respected area] physician, and several business and professional men.” Balliet maintained that the alleged “gang” did nothing to intimidate local farmers, but rather encouraged German “conspirators” to become American patriots.⁶⁰

This heated exchange demonstrates how contested understandings of loyalty were in the Fox Valley and how central occupation, location, ethnicity, and generation were to a person’s

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

perspective on U.S. involvement in World War I.⁶¹ For instance, farmers claimed that they had not benefitted as much economically as factory workers had from the war, and instead of financial prosperity, the global conflict had brought them debt and disillusionment. Midwestern dairymen struggled to demonstrate that their daily contributions to the military effort meant as much if not more than the labor of their industrial counterparts who lived in urban centers.⁶²

Throughout the World War I era, ethnic Germans and their descendants experienced bigotry and outright violence that exposed their vulnerability as U.S. citizens and discouraged them from maintaining their social customs and religious practices.⁶³ Thus, in places like Greenville, where the County Defense Council ambushed Fox Valley farmers for contributions to Liberty Bonds, the war remained unpopular. They had volunteered their time and resources to show their support for the country, but ethnic German farmers remained outsiders not only in Wisconsin but

⁶¹ On the intersections between understandings of loyalty and social identity in the U.S. during the war, see Sterba, *Good Americans*, 35-45, and 63-66; David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 12-25; Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5-15; Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All!: Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 18-35; Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 15-20, 63-65, and 104-42; and David Mislin, "One Nation, Three Faiths: World War I and the Shaping of 'Protestant-Jewish-Catholic America,'" *Church History* 84, no. 4 (December 2014): 828-62.

⁶² On the debt and disillusionment of midwestern dairy farmers during and soon after World War I, see White, *Plowed Under*, 72-75; "Lessons from Farm Meeting Valuable," *Janesville Daily Gazette*, April 3, 1915; "When They Visit a County Fair They Show Somewhat Different Characteristics," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 3, 1916; "Price Situation is Serious," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 26, 1917; "Crusade is Made for the Fourth Liberty Loan By A County Squad," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 14, 1918; "The Farmers Position: An Omro Man Describes it," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, March 22, 1919; "Farmers and Water: A Suggestion Born of Conditions In This Valley," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, May 9, 1919; "Farmers and Labor Not in Accord," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, June 17, 1919; and "The National Debt," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, July 8, 1919.

⁶³ "Affidavits in Mob Violence Cases Are Placed Before Justice Department Officials."

also throughout the nation.⁶⁴

Although Fox Valley dairy farmers focused on agricultural production and most did not experience active combat during World War I, their sons often did. In fact, the majority of those who joined the Allies in Europe were working-class men between the ages of 18 and 31. Of the over 118,000 Wisconsin residents who served, at least 10,500 of them died during their deployment or shortly upon their return.⁶⁵ Local men who did spend time fighting trench warfare together in France developed a collective identity based on military participation and a connection to their hometowns. As letters sent from soldiers to family members during their time overseas suggest, Fox Valley doughboys developed close bonds as a result of their solidarity in protecting each other from a shared foreign adversary, Germany.⁶⁶ They also show the pride that soldiers took in their communities as well as the financial struggle that working-class families faced during the war. Ultimately, this correspondence reveals that local men fought for survival but also to protect their everyday freedoms in the Fox River Valley.

For instance, on August 6, 1918, a soldier named Alfred from Kaukauna wrote to his mother, “I am writing you a few lines to let you know I just got your loving letters and surely

⁶⁴ Ibid. On the complexity of patriotism during the World War I Era, especially for ethnic Americans, see White, *Plowed Under*, 4-7, and 70-79; Sterba, *Good Americans*, 5-19, and 27-48; Ford, *Americans All!*, 16-44; Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 208-11; Richard Rubin, *The Last of the Doughboys: The Forgotten Generation and Their Forgotten War* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2013), 253-56; G. J. Meyer, *The World Remade: America in World War I* (New York: Bantam Books, 2016), 149-56, and 222; Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 230-35; and Frances H. Early, *A War Without War: Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 83-87.

⁶⁵ Holmes, *Wisconsin's War Record*, 19.

⁶⁶ On World War I soldiers developing bonds during to their time abroad as well as their connections to their hometowns, see Sterba, *Good Americans*, 170-85; and Larsen, *All the Hometown Boys*, 106-13.

was glad to hear from home once more.”⁶⁷ He continued, “say mother you said the Royals were going to drop me a letter. I wish they would as I love to get letters from my home town.” Not only did he indicate his longing for Kaukauna, but he demonstrated his Christian faith when he wrote, “I am out of the hospital again and am glad of it, so don’t worry the good Lord is taking care of me and I am trusting in Him, just as you say.”⁶⁸ He explained how he “was in the same battle with young Feller and the rest of the boys from home, and have been in another since. My company is on the front row.” Finally, he nonchalantly revealed the danger that the Fox Valley unit faced in the trenches, “I was there for a few days but was sent back to the lines as I had no gas mask, so I could not stay there.” Alfred worried not only about the torrential rain, but also about his exposure to toxic chemicals. His letter suggests the real physical threat of war but also the intense daily labor that it involved. For example, he claimed, “I was company clerk in the company orderly room for a few days, sure is a hard job.” He did not mind, though, since he worked for the financial well being of his family. “So you are getting my allotment, well, I am glad,” he told his mother. As long as he received letters from his hometown and contributed to the economic security of his community, he was satisfied.⁶⁹

Similarly, Martin Vanden Broek, who served with Company I, 28th U.S. Infantry in France, fought to support his family but also to defend his everyday cultural freedoms in Kaukauna. He wrote his mother and father on July 11, 1918, expressing his affinity for rural Wisconsin and his friends and family who remained there. For example, he exclaimed, “I

⁶⁷ “Alfred to his Mother,” September 3, 1918, accessed on November 1, 2019 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

received your letter and was surely glad to hear from home,” noting, “I suppose the farmers are cutting their hay now.”⁷⁰ Like Alfred, he casually indicated the perils of war, writing, “give the neighbors my regards, especially Mrs. Stiber, whose Johnny was in the hospital while I was, but he was not wounded.” He also referenced the violence of military conflict, while implying his patriotism, asserting, “I suppose you had a big time on the Fourth. I spent [it on] the front line trenches and believe me, we had all the fireworks we wanted.” Then he continued, “I think the Germans sure got all the shells they wanted for I heard some of them calling for help but all they got was the shells they wanted from our artillery, for the artillery just kept on shooting for ours.” Finally, he finished his story, “I think the Germans knew that the Americans were having their Fourth of July.” Before he said goodbye, he told his parents, “I am glad that you got that money that the government is sending you.” The Fox Valley soldier was doing his duty for his nation, and in exchange for his labor he was proud to provide for his family.⁷¹

Meanwhile, John Van Den Broek, who was a member of Company H, 127th U.S. Infantry in France, wrote a letter to his family on June 16, 1918. He served with several of his Kaukauna compatriots in the Rainbow Division, “which was in the thickest of the present splendid fighting.” Not unlike the correspondence of his fellow soldiers, John downplayed the severity of what he witnessed in Europe. For example, he wrote, “the other night one of the boys in our company was shot through the arm but he will be fine. He was in No Man’s land when it happened.” He continued, “if we get back safe we can tell of some awful sights we have seen. I am as fat as ever and feeling fine. If only my ankle would be as good as before I broke it.”⁷²

⁷⁰ “Martin Van den Broek to his Mother and Father,” July 11, 1918, accessed on November 1, 2019 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Reassuringly, he wrote, “don’t worry about us for in case we get shot or hurt they will notify you, for the Chaplain of our regiment will take care of that and see that you are properly notified as he goes right to the front with us.” As his letter implied, the trenches created challenges but did not overly concern the Wisconsin doughboys. John’s faith helped him, as he “went to church [the day before] and then again in the evening.”⁷³ He fought for his survival but also to protect his everyday religious freedom and his beloved hometown in the Fox River Valley.

John voiced a genuine affection for his family and friends in Kaukauna as well as a commitment to punishing Germany for “the awful sights to be seen in France.” Like other soldiers he worked alongside men he knew. For instance, he wrote, “I now work in the kitchen and whom do you suppose I met the other day? Billie Zeiting the fellow with whom I went hunting at Sturgeon Bay.” He also reported seeing “George Wunrow the other day,” who had “sent all his best regards” to the Van Den Broeks. In addition, John indicated his farming background when he asked, “are there a lot of strawberries this year?” He also urged his mother to tell his younger brother that “he should keep the potato bugs picked off so that the potatoes will grow good” and warned, “tell him if he don’t help you work good this vacation, I won’t fetch the Kaiser’s whiskers along with me for him.”⁷⁴ For John, his struggles overseas represented his investment in his rural community. As he hopefully told his parents, “Christmas I may be back home, if we have success in licking the Germans.” Letters home like this one included details about soldiers’ home places and reflected a desire to protect daily life in the Fox

⁷² “John Vanden Broek to his Mother and Father,” June 16, 1918, accessed on November 1, 2019, at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid. See also “John Vanden Broek to his Mother and Father,” July 2, 1918, accessed on November 1, 2019 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

Valley and the financial survival of their families.⁷⁵

Soldiers expressed a connection to their ancestral backgrounds and religious identities, and they articulated how their cultural values influenced their military service. For instance, Mrs. Arnold Van Dinter received a letter from her son Earl, who was stationed in Bodendorf, Germany, explaining that his Dutch language skills helped him to build solidarity with his European counterparts and bridge different cultures on the Western Front. For example, he claimed that he got “along fine here as [his] Holland talk” gave him “a chance to talk with the people when [he] needed something.”⁷⁶ In another letter, Earl expressed concern, “I am learning the German Language quite fast as if we stay here a while I will not be able to talk to Grandma when I get back as this language is a little different.” He also worried about the health of his family in the wake of the influenza pandemic of 1918 and asked, “how are all the family at home?” He hoped that all was well with his mother and “that the Flu spare [her] as the war had [him].” Meanwhile, he reminisced, “I took a walk over to the Rhine River yesterday . . . and it reminded me a lot of the good Old Fox at home.”⁷⁷ Like his Kaukauna compatriots, Van Dinter’s letter conveys that soldiers’ ideas of loyalty stemmed from the pride they had in their ethnic heritage and their desire to protect their Fox Valley community.

⁷⁵ Ibid. For more examples of Fox Valley soldiers taking pride in their hometowns and wanting to defeat Germany, see “Found His Hunting Mate,” *Kaukauna Times*, June 22, 1918; “German Prisoners Tickled,” *Kaukauna Times*, September 6, 1918; and “With the Colors,” *Kaukauna Times*, August 2, 1918.

⁷⁶ “Earl Van Dinter to his Mother,” December 18, 1918, accessed on February 20, 2020 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

⁷⁷ Ibid. For more on the epidemic in Wisconsin, see State Board of Health, *Twenty-Eighth Report of the State Board of Health of Wisconsin* (Madison: State of Wisconsin, 1920) 20-22; and Steven B. Burg, “Wisconsin and the Great Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 84, no. 1 (Autumn 2000): 36-56. On the pandemic in a national context, see Nancy K. Bristow, *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

Similarly, Van Dinter's brother John's letter to their mother reflected a strong connection to his Dutch ancestry and Roman Catholic religion. He began by stating, "I received your letter of October 24 and was glad to hear that you are all well and only hope the Lord will keep you that way." Then, he noted that on the "night before Christmas it snowed quite a bit and the ground was white on Christmas morn but it did not last long," and also that he "went to mid-night mass." Next, he listed all of the European cities that he had visited and explained that the Rainbow Division had arrived at Bodendorf, where he thought that they would spend Christmas. He continued, delighting that the German municipality was "quite some place to stay," and assuring his mother that he was "getting along fine and dandy out [there] and [was] enjoying himself immensely." He ended his letter with the hope that his family was well and that "the Lord" would be with them.⁷⁸ John concerned himself with the health of his family members and signaled his pride in their shared cultural identity.

As letters between Kaukauna soldiers and their relatives demonstrate, Fox Valley residents had a significant investment in the war effort. Indeed, when John Van Den Broek, who had just been wounded on the Verdun Front for the second time, found his brother on a "Missing in Action paper," he wrote home to his family lamenting that the news about Martin was "tough." He said he would send them the list where he saw his brother's name. After explaining that he had been "hit in the calf of the leg and underwent an operation on October 7," John wrote, "I don't suppose you have heard from Washington whether Martin was killed or captured. It surely is hard luck but the papers say the war may be over by New Years, which I hope will be

⁷⁸ "John Van Dinter to his Mother," January 1, 1919, accessed on February 20, 2020 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

the case.”⁷⁹ Then he sent his condolences to his family about his brother, and turned to his material concerns, noting, “I have seven months pay coming to me at present so if the war comes to an end I will have something.” He closed his letter by sending sympathy about news from home, stating, “that was quite the accident they had in Combined Locks!” John’s father Theo worked at Combined Locks Paper Mill, where on August 2, 1918, there had been a fatal accident that left an industrial laborer, John Welhouse, dead and others severely injured. John was aware that as difficult as his current life was, everyday challenges continued for the working-class people in Kaukauna. Although Van Den Broek grew up on a farm, he came from a region dominated by papermaking, on which the livelihood of his city depended.⁸⁰ His letters suggest that the economic survival of the Fox River Valley depended upon his labor, and he struggled to enact his version of patriotism by ensuring the survival of his community.

Nonetheless, despite efforts of government officials and local businessmen to pressure state residents into supporting the war, Fox Valley workers expressed divided allegiances due to their ethnic identities. Throughout the U.S. military involvement in Europe, newspapers ran reports on the behavior of German Americans as well as the harassment they experienced because of their complicated perspective on the war. Despite their disagreements with U.S. participation, however, ethnic German farmers continued to supply local industrial families with

⁷⁹ “John Vanden Broek to his Mother and Father,” November 1, 1918, accessed on December 5, 2019 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

⁸⁰ “Fatal Accident,” *Kaukauna Times*, August 2, 1918; and “Fatal Accident,” *Kaukauna Times*, August 9, 1918. On other accidents at that factory, see “John Menting Dies at Combined Locks,” April 19, 1917, *Kaukauna Times*, July 26, 1917; and Jacob Verbeten, “Accident at Combined Locks,” *Kaukauna Times*, October 10, 1919. On the prevalence of accidents in the paper industry broadly, see “Records of the Office of Compensation and Working Conditions 1891-1990,” *Records of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1885-1995*, accessed on January 10, 2020 at <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/index-numeric/201-to-300.html>; “Labor Legislation of 1919,” *Labor Statistics Bureau Bulletin*, 277 (January 1921): 349-51, and 362-67; and Robert W. Ozanne, *The Labor Movement in Wisconsin: A History* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1984), 125-29.

commodities for processing and direct consumption. Meanwhile, Dutch American soldiers wrote letters home to Kaukauna expressing their version of patriotism, which stemmed from their loyalty to their families and local community. Indeed, throughout the Fox River Valley the lives of city dwellers were deeply intertwined with their rural counterparts. At times, in fact, the men who labored in the fields also toiled in wood-products plants with their brothers, fathers, and sons, while their wives, sisters, and daughters either worked alongside them or in nearby textile mills.⁸¹ Given that laboring was a family affair, the region had not only a unique economic landscape but one that depended significantly on U.S. participation in World War I.⁸² Wisconsin workers understood that they needed to support the cause not only to ensure their economic livelihood but also to defend the ethnic customs and cultural values of their hometown communities. By doing so, they shaped the local social landscape to reflect their prejudice and everyday cultural preferences.

Working-Class Cultures, Criminality, and Resistance

On June 28, 1919, President Wilson signed the Treaty of Versailles, which formally ended World War I. Next, he began his personal crusade to establish global order in a way that

⁸¹ Michael O'Brien, Oral History Interview with Al Kass, Menasha Local History Collection, accessed on June 12, 2019 at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/WebZ/FETCH?sessionid=01-48292-234668723&recno=2&resultset=2&format=F&next=html/nffull.html&bad=error/badfetch.html&entitytoprecno=2&entitycurrecno=2>; and Oral History Interview with Ole Jorgensen, Neenah Public Library Local History Collection, accessed on June 15, 2019, at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/WebZ/FETCH?sessionid=01-48292-234668723&recno=30&resultset=2&format=F&next=html/nffull.html&bad=error/badfetch.html&entitytoprecno=30&entitycurrecno=30>; and "With the Colors," *Kaukauna Times*, August 2, 1918.

⁸² On the conflicting loyalties of Wisconsin residents during World War I, see Pifer, *The War Comes to Wisconsin*: 30-50; and the Scrapbook of Mrs. Gregory Deering, Helen Van Epern's Grandmother, Kaukauna Public Library, Kaukauna, WI.

emphasized peace, using a framework that promised the continued health of the U.S. economy. The military conflict had fueled industrial capitalism in America, and federal officials sought to reinforce the profitability that U.S. involvement had sparked. Thus, they strategized about how to best organize an international system based on trade partnerships and cooperation, as well as the rebuilding of Europe. As Wilson concerned himself with world affairs, however, especially the creation of the League of Nations, his constituents had different, more local priorities.⁸³ Overall, Wisconsin benefitted economically from the war, but that wealth did not translate evenly to all residents.⁸⁴ Women had entered the workforce in large numbers to support the industries that powered the fighting, and their hard labor contributed to the expansion of a heterosocial landscape that gave them more access to pleasure and personal freedom. Similarly, racial and ethnic minorities had gained greater opportunities for financial success through their participation in the domestic wartime economy. Despite these increased prospects, dairy farmers continued to suffer from low milk prices, and industrial workers throughout the Fox River Valley continued to struggle for their material survival. Meanwhile, area nightlife boomed, and workers enjoyed the region's commercialized leisure scene. And yet, former soldiers returned to a place where they could no longer legally buy liquor. The doughboys who were fortunate enough to return home alive encountered a social world different from the one that they had left behind.

⁸³ On Wilson's campaign for the League of Nations, as well as a discussion of the economic objectives behind his desire to create a system of international trade partnerships and cooperation, see Leroy G. Dorsey, "Woodrow Wilson's Fight for the League of Nations: A Reexamination," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 107-35; John Milton Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations 1920-1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-20, 25-50, and 107-50.

⁸⁴ On the economic effects of World War I on Wisconsin, see Holmes, *Wisconsin's War Record*, 159-162; David Zonderman, "Over Here: The Wisconsin Homefront During World War I," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 77, no. 4 (Summer 1994): 295-300; and Pifer, *The War Comes to Wisconsin*, 15-25, and 172-74.

The war's end brought uncertainty to many in the Fox Valley. Young men who served abroad did not necessarily find the financial benefits that had been promised in exchange for military service. They had difficulty finding jobs, and in most cases, could not redeem their veterans' bonuses, the payment federal officials promised them for participating in the conflict. Although the majority of farmers stayed in the U.S. during the war, a few sold their land or left it to family members to manage while they served their country overseas. Also, some returning soldiers had parents who owned farms. As the ability to maintain a modest and profitable farm became more challenging, local agricultural workers watched as families lost land to banks and had to sell off equipment at auctions. Meanwhile, area residents saw corporate entities acquire large tracts of property by purchasing adjacent farms and merging them. As a result, many former farmers took jobs as industrial laborers and moved to nearby municipal centers. Yet, others chose to stay in rural Wisconsin and continued to fight for their livelihood.⁸⁵

Farmers especially struggled after the war, and ethnic Americans and immigrants did not always gain the acceptance they expected, given their support of the war effort. Although World War I loyalty campaigns had an Americanizing effect on local residents, Fox Valley workers did

⁸⁵ On people moving from agricultural work to industrial labor in Wisconsin and the Fox River Valley, see John D. Buenker, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 4: *The Progressive Era, 1893-1914* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 136-40; and Paul Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 5, *War, a New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 133-36, 360-63, and 576. On these changes nationally, see Raymond A. Mohl, *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1985), 18-21; David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 411-64; Camille Guérin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and the American Dream: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 100-22; Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 184-90; Carl R. Weinberg, *Labor, Loyalty, and Rebellion: Southwestern Illinois Coal Miners & World War I* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 11-20; and Sharon McConnell-Sidorick, *Silk Stockings and Socialism: Philadelphia's Radical Hosiery Workers from the Jazz Age to the New Deal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 160-80.

not relinquish their preferred leisure activities and spiritual practices without protest; and they resisted what they viewed as attacks on their cultural identities through myriad avenues.⁸⁶ Working-class activism manifested not only in union halls and farmer cooperatives but also during recreation and at communal gatherings. Not only men but also women and children played crucial roles in working-class political demonstrations. Because the labor movement relied heavily on the coordination and participation of farmer and factory-worker families, socializing was a crucial component to the success of these endeavors. Whether expressed at church, a park, a community center, a homestead, or a barn dance, working-class cultural values, both rural and urban, had important political meaning throughout the interwar era.

Regardless of where they worked, the church that they worshiped in on Sundays, or where they lived, the Fox Valley soldiers who survived World War I were doughboys: They were American veterans who deserved all of the privileges that U.S. citizenship and military service garnered them. Thus, when they left Europe and returned to their Wisconsin communities, they were disillusioned by the injustices that continued to exist back home. Although they had fought against authoritarianism abroad, they witnessed examples of state-sanctioned control that reminded them of the totalitarian regime that they helped to overthrow in Germany. Moreover, they did not encounter the economic prosperity and social inclusion that they had expected upon their return. Not only did some of the economic challenges, political repression, ethnocentrism, and religious intolerance they faced before continue, but after the war

⁸⁶ On the war's "Americanizing effect" on immigrants in the U.S., see Marcus L. Bacher, "Culture, Coercion, and Patriotism: The German-American Experience in San Francisco during World War I," *EX POST FACTO: Journal of the History Students at San Francisco State* 18 (Spring 2009): 61-81; Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, xiii-xvi; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 43-55; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 196-210; Rippley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, 94-113; and Sterba, *Good Americans*, 3-4, 143-66.

these prejudices culminated in the Red Scare.⁸⁷ As a result, Fox Valley workers worried over the survival of their social institutions, especially with the concerted governmental attack on Wisconsin's two most precious liquid commodities, milk and alcohol.

As young men returned home to a changing social landscape, military officials thanked working-class parents for their contributions to the war and praised the manhood of Fox Valley soldiers. For example, John Van Den Broek's mother received a letter from Lieutenant Justin V. Kohl, which explained, "in a few days your soldier will receive his honorable discharge and start for home. He is bringing back many fine qualities of body and mind which he has acquired or developed in the Military." The officer continued, "the Army has done everything it could do to make him strong, fine, self-reliant, yet self-controlled. It returns him to you a better man." Kohl declared that John's mother could do her "duty" by "keeping alive the good qualities he is bringing back from the Army, in making him as good a citizen as he has been a soldier." According to the lieutenant, in Mrs. Van Den Broek's hands and John's, rested "the future of [their] country."⁸⁸ Before he closed, Kohl promised that the young soldier would "receive all pay due to him," and finally maintained, "as his Commanding Officer, I am proud of Him."⁸⁹ Despite this praise and the financial assurance embedded in the message from the lieutenant, the economic situation in the Fox Valley would quickly change, making it difficult for former soldiers to perform the manly expression of citizenship that the military had instilled in them.

⁸⁷ On the era of political repression that occurred between 1917 and 1920 that historians refer to as the Red Scare, see Griffin Fariello, *The Red Scare: Memories of the American Inquisition* (New York: Avon Books, 1995); Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts*; Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 149-206; and Sterba, *Good Americans*, 5, 196, 202-09, and 248-69.

⁸⁸ Lieutenant Justin V. Kohl to Mrs. Van Den Broek, January 17, 1919, access on January 10, 2020 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Likewise, their cultural inclusion was in jeopardy. With dancehalls and saloons closing, working-class people could no longer legally purchase liquor.⁹⁰

Even before the official end of the fighting, on November 18, 1918, Congress passed the temporary Wartime Prohibition Act. Then came the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920. The U.S. government also approved the National Prohibition Act (or Volstead Act), enabling legislation that enforced a permanent ban on the manufacture and sale of alcohol across the nation. Although the Eighteenth Amendment did not officially go into effect until 1920, the Volstead Act created the enforcement mechanism that gave federal bureaucrats and local authorities the legal permission to make arrests. Even without constitutional permission, beginning on January 16, 1919, those politicians and law enforcement officials who supported the Prohibition movement initiated an intensive crusade to close down any leisure operation that appeared to encourage or condone the consumption of intoxicating spirits.⁹¹ People who supported the re-legalization of alcohol, those whom newspapers referred to as “wets,” believed that the law served the hegemonic purposes of the federal government. They claimed that the act represented yet another “fascist” scheme of corporate employers and corrupt capitalists who controlled the majority of wealth in Wisconsin and the nation.⁹² For industrial

⁹⁰ On business closures and local efforts to enforce the law, see “Prohibition Rally,” *Kaukauna Times*, October 5, 1922, “Dry Laws Teeth Close with a Snap,” *Kaukauna Times*, July 7, 1921; “Officers Raid Moonshiners,” *Kaukauna Times*, May 17, 1923; “Bishop Rhode Favors Prohibition Amendment,” *Kaukauna Times*, September 9, 1921; “John Stopped By Prohibition Agents,” *Kaukauna Times*, August 20, 1925; “Federal Men Are Busy In This Section,” *Kaukauna Times*, July 26, 1929; “Buchanan Resident Assessed Big Fine On Liquor Charge,” *Kaukauna Times*, February 19, 1929; “Still Raided Near Little Chute,” *Kaukauna Times*, October 1, 1929; and “Hold Four to Grand Jury in Fed Dry Case,” *Kaukauna Times*, October 18, 1929.

⁹¹ Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (New York: Scribner, 2010), ix, 1-3, and 120.

workers who lived in the Fox Cities, as well as their rural counterparts, Prohibition revealed the deep-seated bigotries of the elite “drys” who supported the legislation. Although there were working-class people across the U.S. who backed the law, in the Fox River Valley the Volstead Act was wildly unpopular. Protestors argued that the legal ban on alcohol demonstrated that despite their loyalty to the U.S. during World War I, ethnic German and Irish American residents remained second-class citizens in the region.⁹³

Letters home from John Van Den Broek’s fellow soldiers demonstrate how participation in the military conflict fueled anti-German prejudice and a belief in the inferiority of “old world” ethnic customs. For example, on December 28, 1918, Alfred Wagnitz wrote home to his fellow parishioners at Christian Endeavor of the Reformed Church in his hometown of Kaukauna. He sent this letter to his minister, Reverend E. L. Worthman, with the hope that he would read it to the congregation and give the soldier’s “regards to all the people in church.” Demonstrating how the war had reinforced his disdain for German people and their cultural practices, he claimed, “Germans will have some sense before we leave this country, they have to be in bed by 9 p.m. and all lights are out or we will shoot them out.”⁹⁴ He despised their behaviors and punished them by making “German girls wash [his] clothes and shine [his] shoes,” even when they did not

⁹² “Federal Agents Raid Farm Still,” *Kaukauna Times*, March 3, 1921; “Alcohol Seized at New London,” *Kaukauna Times*, July 24, 1931; “Kaukauna Men Bound Over For Trial,” *Kaukauna Times*, March 8, 1932; and “Prohibition Agents Stage Another Raid,” *Kaukauna Times*, October 2, 1931; “Vandenberg Being Held on Liquor Charge,” *Kaukauna Times*, October 24, 1933; “Legislature Still Far From Liquor Control Solution,” *Kaukauna Times*, January 1934; “Agents Raid Home; Invited to Supper,” *Kaukauna Times*, September 6, 1934; “Hilbert Farm Is Visited By Federal Men,” *Kaukauna Times*, March 8, 1935; and “Local Farmer in Court After Raid,” *Kaukauna Times*, March 20, 1936.

⁹³ “Referendum Election To Be Held,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, November 20, 1920; “Referendum Election To Be Held,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, August 31, 1920; “Says Eighteenth Amendment is Contrary to the Principles of the United States Government,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, February 23, 1929; “Press Opinions Concerning State Enforcement Repealer [*sic*];” and “On the Way to Prohibition Reform,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, Monday, June 3, 1929.

⁹⁴ “Alfred Wagnitz to Reverend E. L. Worthman, December 28, 1918, accessed on March 1, 2020 at <http://kaukaunalibrary.org/military-letters>.

“need shining at all.” Apparently he did not pay them for these tasks, claiming, “they do it with a smile and don’t get a cent for it.” He expressed his national chauvinism, maintaining “they say ‘the old country’ when they talk about Germany and I sure find it pretty old too.” According to Wagnitz, Germans had backward customs, but U.S. soldiers, were making sure that “they find out a lot more about” proper social comportment. He wanted his fellow churchgoers to know that Doughboys were trying to reform the vulgar manners of their military prisoners.⁹⁵ Other soldiers sent similar letters expressing disapproval of German culture to their friends and family members, reinforcing the ethnocentrism that had existed in the Fox Valley before the conflict.⁹⁶ The Volstead Act further reflected this prejudice. But white ethnic workers, who enjoyed drinking alcohol, were not going to accept this cultural hazing. In protest of the law, they continued to practice “the vice” at church picnics and barn dances, regardless of the restrictions that politicians attempted to place on their daily lives. By doing so, they influenced the local cultural atmosphere in ways that reflected how they chose to enjoy their free time.

Meanwhile, at the same time that local workers struggled against Prohibition, there was a revolt against what dairy workers referred to as the “milk trusts.” In a series of three consecutive strikes, between May and December of 1933, local farmers waged a war against the low price of milk. Throughout the interwar era, Fox Valley workers demonstrated their everyday political radicalism by struggling against the unjust role of government officials in managing working-class life. This was a loose political coalition that developed in the decades following World War I, which included workers of all ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations, but was in

⁹⁵ Ibid. “John Vanden Broek to his Mother and Father,” June 16, 1918; “German Prisoners Ticked,” *Kaukauna Times*, September 6, 1918.

⁹⁶ “John Vanden Broek to his Mother and Father,” June 16, 1918; and “German Prisoners Ticked,” *Kaukauna Times*, September 6, 1918.

constant flux due to the diversity of its participants. There were agricultural producers and farmworkers; migrants and industrial laborers; socialists, radicals, anarchists, and conservatives; and Republicans as well as Democrats.⁹⁷ Their militancy challenged the New Deal state to regulate life in ways that mirrored their preferences. Their level of success in maintaining their goals rested on cooperation, which at times proved difficult for those with competing interests. Regardless of disagreements, the militant activism that transpired during the early 1930s in Wisconsin demonstrated that local residents insisted upon the right to express their cultural values through their participation in their favorite leisure activities. Likewise, they defended their occupations and material survival by insisting that federal officials give them the opportunity to earn enough income to ensure their livelihood. Unsatisfied with the actions of the U.S. government, local residents demanded representation as American citizens. By doing so, they changed the local social landscape to reflect their everyday beliefs.

The line between the lives of factory workers and local farmers was blurry throughout the 1920s in the Fox River Valley, because of their shared investment in World War I and their dependence on one another for cultural and material livelihood. The daily activities of area residents reveal that like their rural counterparts, industrial laborers also cultivated the land, sometimes keeping gardens or small farms. If they could not produce their own food, they often

⁹⁷ According to one local historian, “sentiment for farmer-labor cooperation was strong in the Fox Valley, which was also the center for the milk pool.” A. William Høglund, “Wisconsin Dairy Farmers on Strike,” *Agricultural History* 35, no. 1 (January 1961): 24-34, see quoted material on page 30. On the diversity of the farmer-labor political coalition, see James J. Lorence “Gerald J. Boileau and the Politics of Sectionalism: Dairy Interests and the New Deal, 1933-1938,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 71, no. 4 (Summer 1988): 276-95; and Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 5, 410-11, 425-26, 445, 542-43. On the movement nationally, see John L. Shover, “The Farmers’ Holiday Association Strike, August 1932,” *Agricultural History* 39, no. 4 (October 1965): 196-203; Thomas Kriger, “Syndicalism and Spilled Milk: The Origins of Dairy Farmer Activism in New York State, 1936-1941,” *Labor History* 38, no. 2-3 (Summer 2010): 266-86; and James T. Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance: Politics of the New Deal* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993).

bought their meat, dairy, and produce directly from relatives and friends.⁹⁸ Although commodity prices peaked in 1919, they soon plummeted following the armistice. By 1930, the value of dairy was below pre-World War I levels.⁹⁹ As a result, people worked together to cope with their daily financial struggles, which meant that everyone played a role in the family economy. Young children labored alongside their parents in the fields, waking early to feed chickens and milk cows, while teenagers took jobs in local mills.¹⁰⁰ Area farmers like Walter Hobson hired “hands” to do daily tasks on their land while they worked at nearby factories, especially fellow veterans who had trouble securing steady work. Survival was a cooperative effort during these difficult financial times, and hard labor was an expectation of every member of the Fox Valley working-class community.¹⁰¹

A shared identity as ethnic Americans encouraged communal collaboration among local residents. As Menasha native, Henry Jankowski explained in an interview about his childhood, “Poles, at that time, and even today, they were hardworking people, Germans too. They had chickens, they had pigs, dairy cows, and they did their own butchering.” He continued, explaining how during the Great Depression he “used to haul sawdust from Racine and Third, with a dog and a sled” to earn extra income. Meanwhile, his parents “smoked their hams and

⁹⁸ On food culture in the region, see “Interview with Henry Jankowski” and “Interview with Al Kass,” Neenah and Menasha Oral History Collection, Neenah Public Library, Neenah; Clarence “Inky” Jungwirth, *A History of the Bloody Sixth Ward in the City of Oshkosh: A Personal View* (Oshkosh, WI: Clarence Jungwirth, 1991), 17 and 110-12; and Interview with Dick Hobson, Town of Lind, Wisconsin, August 9, 2018.

⁹⁹ On farm products prices, see “Average Annual Wisconsin Milk Prices With Index Numbers, 1900-1931,” and “Prices Paid Wisconsin Producers for Certain Farm Products, 1910-1930,” *Wisconsin Crop and Livestock Reporter* X, no. 1 (January 1931): 1-3; and Alice Kelly, ed., “Cooperative Marketing in Wisconsin,” in *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1931* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Co., 1931), 31-36.

¹⁰⁰ Jankowski Interview.

¹⁰¹ Hobson Interview; Interview with Philip Rhyan, Town of Lind, Wisconsin, August 9, 2018.

sausages, and they would bring their hay into the barn, and when they would use it, they would use a scythe with a cradle on it.” At times they traded their goods with neighbors, with each family having a similar operation in their backyard.¹⁰² Thus, working-class people who lived in the Fox Cities understood the challenging aspects of rural labor and valued the work of those who lived in nearby farming communities. This helped build solidarity and fueled collective resistance against what they believed was a governmental attack on their social customs and everyday economic needs.

Jankowski’s testimony also reveals another commonality between urban and rural workers, specifically, their participation in the local leisure scene. For example, he described how Fox Valley residents, who lived in both city and surrounding countryside, got together at churches and in bars like his father’s Racine Street tavern to talk about wages and shop-floor conditions, as well as farm commodity prices. According to the Fox Valley resident, the saloon was a popular gathering place, with a sign that read, “Jankowski’s, poor man’s friend, if you want a good big beer, stop right here.” Apparently people did. Next, he explained that the bar also supplied cheap food: “Dad would just go to the local meat market and grab a ring of bologna, so folks could grab a slice to eat with their liquor.” Regardless of the federal ban on alcohol, industrial workers and dairy farmers still gathered at local bars and used this free time to discuss their daily challenges during the Depression.¹⁰³

A shared military experience and desire to socialize brought working-class men together. For example, Jankowski emphasized that there were “lots of [W.W.I.] Vets” who frequented his Dad’s business. He explained that they worked all different jobs, and they used the bar to

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

discuss their everyday lives. His interview stressed that such socializing crossed boundaries: “didn’t matter, German or Pole, the war brought them together as Americans. They were Eagles, the Moose, the Elks, the Falcons, and my father was a charter member of the American Legion.” The war brought working-class men from all over the Fox River Valley to such “local waterholes,” where they actively resisted Prohibition by consuming alcohol. Continuing, Jankowski recounted that the American Legion had a hall, where “they had weddings, good times, gathering, and my Dad would bring the liquor and the cigars; he was 50 years with the Legion. We had meetings every month, and we discussed how hard the times were.”¹⁰⁴ As Jankowski expressed, during the Depression, local residents from both the city center and nearby rural communities experienced economic desperation. His account reveals that having a shared history of military service brought these Fox Valley “folks” together for entertainment and to express their financial woes.

Menasha resident Al Kass echoed similar memories of economic struggle and social assembly among Fox Valley working-class residents, explaining that during the 1930s, “times were hard.” He maintained, “sometimes you would only work 2 or 3 days, and you only got paid every two weeks.” At the woodenware box plant, “the foremans [*sic*] and superintendents didn’t know how to handle people.” He alleged that managers “didn’t treat you like a human being; instead, they would just get rid of you.” Sometimes, he asserted, “they would bring people into their offices and beat them.” As a result, he recalled, “we decided to organize a union.” This was at the Menasha Wooden Ware Company, where the Pulp and Sulphite Union became one of just two industrial unions in the Fox River Valley wood-products industry and served as a primary source of working-class pride. According to Kass, “there was only one more union in

¹⁰⁴ Jankowski Interview; and Hobson Interview.

the industry other than craft unions at the time that we organized.”¹⁰⁵ During the 1930s, workers joined together across skill lines to ensure their economic survival and everyday dignity. They did so in protest against egregious management practices that sought to keep area ethnic workers at the bottom of the Fox Valley social ladder.

Deplorable working conditions brought industrial laborers together in collective action against what they believed to be unfair treatment. They organized a militant union that supported workers through several labor protests. For instance, in 1934, Menasha woodenware workers went on strike for a month. As Kass explained, “the work was getting really good then, and the coopers went on strike for two days. The company told us, no one goes home for dinner, and they brought food in for us.”¹⁰⁶ He remembered, “we got wind of it that they were going to lock us out, so we contacted people on the picket line and our organizer, and they told us to go on strike, so 13 of us walked out and the rest stayed.” According to Kass, “the next day everyone went to the picket line except about 8, and there were 120 people working there at the time. Those 8 weren’t part of the union.” But eventually, he recalled, “we got everyone to stop,” which created “a lot of anger between the company and the union.” According to Kass, the factory owner even “tried to sneak machinery to Oshkosh, and they farmed out some of the

¹⁰⁵ Kass Interview; “Labor Dispute,” *Menasha Record*, June 2, 1934; and Hugh S. Hanna, ed., “Labor Disputes,” *Monthly Labor Review* 39, no. 1 (Washington DC: Department of Labor, 1935), 1146-147.

¹⁰⁶ Kass Interview. For more on industrial protests at the Menasha Wooden Ware Company, see “May Stop Work,” *Menasha Record*, November 29, 1933; “Work Stoppage,” *Menasha Record*, October 28, 1933; “Labor Dispute at Menasha,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, September 22, 1933; S. F. Shattuck, *A History of Neenah*, 348-49; Mowry Smith Jr. and Giles Clark, *One Third Crew, One Third Boat, One Third Luck: The Menasha Corporation (Menasha Wooden Ware Company) Story, 1849-1974* (Neenah, WI: Menasha Corporation, 1974), 84.

jobs they had.” In order to resist the employer attack on their livelihood, the German American claimed, they had no other choice than to protest.¹⁰⁷

Kass asserted that in order to settle their dispute with Menasha Wooden Ware Company, the industrial workers looked to their community members and their Catholic faith for support. During the protest and after, the wood-products laborer recalled his fellow wood-products laborers “would play cards or meet at local taverns to make plans” about workplace resistance. He claimed that “sometimes [they] would meet at the local Eagles’ ballroom, and [they] would have beer and food.” In other words, they used eating and drinking together as an organizing tactic. He remembered, “the company would try to pressure us, to break our union, but we were loyal to each other.” They also looked to their local religious leader at St. Mary’s Catholic Church. The priest talked with the factory owner, Mowry Smith, and “settled [their] strike.” According to Kass, Menasha was a place that “was hard to get acquainted with, because they don’t like strangers.”¹⁰⁸ Being “foreign” was difficult, and white ethnic workers looked to each other for socializing and labor solidarity. As Kass’s recollection suggests, the union was like a family, and the shared religious and ethnic identities of members shaped the parameters of their labor activism in the region.

A commitment to protecting local cultural values and ensuring the financial survival of industrial workers fueled their social protests, as did a shared belief that politicians needed to do more to ensure the rights of Americans, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Following World War I, however, Fox Valley dairymen found that they could not rely on government officials to

¹⁰⁷ Kass Interview; and “Labor Dispute,” *Menasha Record*, June 2, 1934.

¹⁰⁸ Kass Interview; and Shattuck, *A History of Neenah*, 348-49

ease their economic struggles. As a result, they began to form farm cooperatives.¹⁰⁹ Similar to their counterparts in nearby cities, agricultural producers and their farmworkers used cultural venues and communal gatherings as platforms to discuss their financial struggles and enjoy their preferred entertainments. At barn raisings, saloons, and dance halls, rural residents united to discuss agrarian issues and political concerns related to the nationwide depression.

Due to the volatility of unregulated capitalism, by the early 1930s, rural workers were in a state of economic desperation. Dairy farming was a labor-intensive pursuit, and dairy farmers milked cows at the expense of cultivating other crops or raising livestock. Moreover, unlike wheat farmers or cattle raisers, dairy producers dealt with an exceptionally small window of product freshness and therefore of market value, and although milk and its byproducts were in high demand, they were incredibly unpredictable commodities. Prices often fluctuated and most often went down, especially for those who produced dairy products besides fluid milk. In Outagamie County, this latter group represented the majority of farmers.¹¹⁰ When they met at church picnics or area parks, agricultural laborers enjoyed themselves but also used their gatherings to plan strategies that would ease their daily struggles, especially how to increase the price of milk. Thus, they cultivated a shared voice that reflected their values but also their desire for survival.

Dairy farming had been a family practice since Wisconsin shifted from wheat cultivation to an emphasis on milk production in the 1880s. A wave of migrations west after the Civil War brought dairy farmers from the eastern U.S. in search of land to the Fox River Valley, many of

¹⁰⁹ On the history and development of farm cooperatives in Wisconsin, see Oral History Interview with Jean Long Stillman, 1974,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; and Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 5-20.

¹¹⁰ “Organization and Membership Committee Report, May 1932,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

whom had just protested against low milk prices in upstate New York. Along with settlers from New York and New England, by the early twentieth century the region became home to immigrants from northern, western, eastern, and eventually southern Europe.¹¹¹ For these newcomers, dairy farming was primarily a female domain, and as a result, milk production in Wisconsin rested on the labor and knowledge of not only men, but women as well. Even in the 1930s, rural women and their children still participated in dairy production, though they did not generally receive recognition for their labor.¹¹² This was the result of milk marketing by the U.S. government during World War I, as well as the advertising of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool during the 1930s. For example, during the war, the Wilson administration had militarized farmers' labor, with slogans like —“The Man Behind the Plow is the same as the man behind the gun.” Wartime propaganda campaigns equated U.S. farmers to soldiers in order to encourage farmer production during the conflict. After the war ended, Fox Valley agrarian organizations reinforced this masculine image.¹¹³ Thus, by the time of the milk strikes in 1933, the popular image of a dairy farmer was a patriotic and independent white male, which erased the contributions of rural women and created a shared investment in U.S. patriotism.

Members of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool used this characterization of local agricultural producers to promote the interests of dairy farmers and encourage government

¹¹¹ On the history of the dairy industry in Wisconsin, see Richard N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 1: *The Civil War Era, 1848-1873* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 42-82, and 452-55; and Robert C. Nesbit, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 3: *Urbanization and Industrialization, 1873-1893* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985), 1-20, 262-82, and 306-30.

¹¹² Oral History Interview with Jean Long Stillman, 1974, Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 1.

¹¹³ “Address of Mr. Harry Jack of Outagamie County, Wisconsin,” May 17, 1933, Ralph M. Immell Papers Box 1, Folder 6, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

officials to address their concerns.¹¹⁴ For example, in a solidarity chant, members of the local milk pool discussed their contributions to World War I, and mentioned their support of the president of the statewide cooperative. Walter M. Singler, who was a dairy farmer from the village of Shiocton, just outside of Appleton, was the leader of this militant and proud agrarian syndicate. Together, the members would sing: “Now if we all stick with Singler that good stern jolly fellow./We then will show United States that Wisconsin isn’t yellow./When the war was on with Germany the farmer sent his son./He was told that he must fight until the war was won./The farmer and his children stayed home upon their land./They worked from sunrise to sunset with blisters on their hands./All the money that [they] earned [they] gave to Uncle Sam./We were glad to let him use it if he’d return it like a man.”¹¹⁵ Dairy farmers viewed their contributions to World War I as patriotic, and asked that their government recognize this as well by raising and fixing the price of milk. The pride that they had in their efforts and the dignity that they found in their occupation gave them the strength to challenge U.S. politicians to safeguard dairy farmers. Ann Folino White, a scholar of visual culture, explains, “rural men likened their labor and land with self-determination, which is the measure of the democratic subject and so a central tenet of American masculinity.”¹¹⁶ When the Great Depression hit the region, Fox Valley dairy farmers drew on this image of working-class manhood to gain support for their cause.

¹¹⁴ “Dairy Farmer Chant,” Resolutions of National Farmers’ Holiday Association, n.d., 1934 January–June, Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 2, Vol. 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ White, *Plowed Under*, 75. She also argues that “by failing to acknowledge the participation of Oneida men as strikers and Menominee men as strikebreakers during the protest,” both the state and the Milk Pool reinforced the white masculinity of the ideal American dairy farmer. See *Plowed Under*, 174.

Talk of a dairy strike in the Fox Valley began at least as early as the summer of 1932, as dairy farmers met for the first picnic arranged by a local unit of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool on June 15 at Pierce Park in Appleton. The Ladies Auxiliary of the Outagamie County unit of the cooperative took the lead in arranging the event, which focused on the economic plight of local agricultural workers and their families.¹¹⁷ Recognizing the importance of relaxation, area farmwomen hired a band to encourage dancing and organized a basket luncheon. According to a report by the *Appleton Post-Crescent*, one of the central features of the gathering was “a mud turtle race for children between the ages of 8 and 14” whose parents were members of the Milk Pool. The newspaper explained that the “morning highlighted preliminary races and a derby for the early heat leaders in the afternoon, and the winners won prizes.” Displaying an emphasis on cooperation and community, “all children at the picnic received free milk, leaving another 10 tons on supply for any Appleton child who wanted to stop by and drink some.”¹¹⁸ Thus, for Fox Valley farmers, recreation was a family affair that was social but also political. For example, at the picnic, pool members chanted, “Farmer ate the outside of barley wheat and rye./And the inside went to Wall Street to make the rich men cake and pies,” adding “Now this farmer has a mortgage which he cannot meet.” Following their contributions to the Great War, dairy farmers pressured government officials to recognize their struggles and admit that the global conflict had made a few wealthy at the expense of working-class Wisconsinites. Rather than incentivizing rural laborers for their efforts, they sang, “some millionaire is waiting to put him on the street./After all these years of labor the farmer lost all hopes./Because this man

¹¹⁷ “County Milk Pool Unit to Hold Picnic,” *Appleton Post-Crescent*, June 9, 1932.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Borden [a dairy industry executive] had him tied with two-inch ropes.”¹¹⁹ Fox Valley residents knew that local dairy dealers were keeping large milk-products manufacturers profitable by devaluing the price of the commodity. Corporations were gaining wealth at the expense of dairy farmers. Thus, in addition to the communal enjoyment of cooperative events, participants used these collective recreational gatherings to express their daily financial struggles.

Following this event in Appleton, on February 8, 1933, at their headquarters in the city, dairy farmers decided to halt the sale of milk until the state or national government helped them obtain a fair price for their product.¹²⁰ In the 1930s, Wisconsin was the largest dairy producer in the U.S, and there were two tiers of farmers, those who sold fluid milk for drinking, and those who produced it for making butter, cheese, ice cream, and condensed products. The latter generally earned lower profits than the former, and three-quarters of all local farmers fit within this economically disadvantaged category. Given that the majority of dairy producers in Wisconsin sold their milk to corporations to make other products, when they voted to strike, the area farmers who did so were among the most impoverished in the nation.¹²¹

On February 9, 1933, the *New York Times* announced that Wisconsin dairy farmers had arranged a milk strike. By the time of this first action, the state Milk Pool represented more than 11,000 members from 46 counties around Wisconsin. Unlike fluid milk producers, who were mainly from the Milwaukee area, these farmers were not selling directly to consumers in

¹¹⁹ “Dairy Farmer Chant.”

¹²⁰ Membership Records, February 10, 1933, Wisconsin Milk Pool Co-operative records, Box 1, Folder 1; Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹²¹ “Mid-West Dairymen Consider Striking: Price Cutting and Narrowing Markets Place Industry in Bad Position, *New York Times*, February 19, 1933; “Milk Strikes Looms in the Northwest,” *New York Times*, April 16, 1933; Walter Singler to Governor Albert Schmedemen, February 11, 1933, Wisconsin Milk Pool Co-operative records, Box 4, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

markets, and thus were reliant on what they referred to as the “milk trusts.” As prices kept dropping, Milk Pool farmers blamed the dairy companies and crooked dealers for their plight. In order to fight what they saw as corruption, they sought to stop all milk deliveries to dairy manufacturers until they could reach an agreement.¹²² Their demands were simple; they wanted a fair price for their commodities, “equivalent to 40 cents per pound of butter fat, or \$1.40 per 100 pounds of 3.5 test milk, regardless of disposition or usage to which it [was] put.”¹²³ As the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool President Walter M. Singler, explained, dairy farmers had no choice: “they would refuse to sell their milk for an indefinite amount of time.” The strike would begin on February 15 and continue until Wisconsin and the nation recognized their struggles and the Roosevelt administration proposed a viable solution for restoring farmer dignity.¹²⁴

Following this declaration, for one week, Milk Pool members dumped thousands of gallons of milk on the highways of Outagamie, Calumet, Winnebago, Shawano, and Waupaca counties. Meanwhile, local cheese factories and creameries closed in sympathy.¹²⁵ According to the *New York Times*, “the flow of milk to New London was stopped effectively, and this condition was true of some other communities” as well.¹²⁶ But after a week of barricading roads

¹²² “Milk Strike is Arranged,” *New York Times*, February 9, 1933; Membership Records, February 10, 1933, Wisconsin Milk Pool Co-operative records, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹²³ Membership Meeting Minutes, February 11, 1933 Wisconsin Milk Pool Cooperative records, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹²⁴ Ibid; and “Milk Strike is Arranged.”

¹²⁵ “Local Creamery Suspends Operations; In Sympathy With Milk Pool's Strike,” February 17, 1933; and “MILK STRIKE SHUTS WISCONSIN PLANTS: Half of Creameries and Cheese Factories in One County Close as Move Widens,” *New York Times*, February 19, 1933; “Milk Strike Shuts Wisconsin Plants,” *Kaukauna Times*, February 22, 1933.

¹²⁶ “MILK STRIKE SHUTS WISCONSIN PLANTS;” and “The Milk Strike,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, February 23, 1933.

and patrolling highways, the Milk Pool decided to sign an agreement with Wisconsin Governor Albert G. Schmedemen on February 22, 1933. The governor assured the protesters that he would bring their concerns to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as long as they allowed milk transport.¹²⁷ Federal officials did not react, however, and the price of milk remained low, determined by corporate processors and Fox Valley dairy dealers. Thus, local agrarian laborers decided that they had to continue their former revolt.¹²⁸

On May 13, 1933, Milk Pool leaders believed that they had gained the support of the National Farm Holiday Association, a labor organization that represented the rural workers across the U.S. Thus, Fox Valley dairy farmers again announced their plans to strike. According to Milk Pool President Walter Singler, Wisconsin farmers were determined to “sell nothing, buy nothing, and pay nothing” for dairy products.¹²⁹ By May 16, however, the organization was on its own again, as leaders of the Wisconsin Farmers’ Holiday Association and the National Farm Holiday Association decided to retreat from the movement. These organizations tried to represent the interests of a range of farmers who sold different commodities, and some of their members did not support an increase in the price of milk. Also, some farmers applauded the New Deal policies of the Roosevelt administration, such as the Agricultural Adjustment Act, and thus did not want to strike with struggling dairymen. According to Singler, the AAA helped some agricultural producers, who were able to store their goods to sell at a later date. Dairy

¹²⁷ Membership Meeting Minutes, March 21, 1933 and Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, February 21, 1933, Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹²⁸ Membership Meeting Minutes, May 9, 1933, Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹²⁹ Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 13, 1933, Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

farmers, on the other hand, had to milk their cows or they lost capital. They had their money invested in the health of their animals and could not stop production.¹³⁰

Having lost the support of affiliates, on May 17, 1933, the executive committee of the Milk Pool issued a statement to the Wisconsin State Senate, asking for an investigation into the “acts and conduct of the various public officials.”¹³¹ Cooperative leadership maintained that their “demands [had] been ignored.” They alleged that instead of consulting the U.S. president, Wisconsin Governor Albert Schmedemen had acted “in direct violation of his constitutional duties” by calling on state police officers.¹³² Indeed, the protests had become violent, and local government officials responded to the strikers as if they were enemies of the state. For example, after the first milk strike ended in late February, the Outagamie County District Attorney F. F. Wheeler gathered information from the U.S. Department of Chemical Warfare on weapons to use as deterrents against picketing farmers.¹³³ Meanwhile, the Outagamie County Assistant District Attorney Raymond P. Dohr wrote a letter to the president of Lake Erie Chemical Company in Cleveland, Ohio, B. C. Goss, explaining that he needed supplies to use against agrarian strikers if they “became disorderly.”¹³⁴ Dohr ended up purchasing 500 tear gas grenades as well as several hundred “Army Fast Candles,” which were a form of fast-acting

¹³⁰ Membership Meeting Minutes, May 16, 1933, Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹³¹ “Statement by President Walter M. Singler, May 17, Wisconsin Milk Pool Cooperative Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ F. F. Wheeler to U.S. Department of Chemical Warfare, March 2, 1933, Correspondence on the Damages and Violence of the Milk Strikes, Box 1, Folder 3, Judge Dohr Collection, Outagamie County Historical Society, Appleton, WI.

¹³⁴ Raymond P. Dohr to B. C. Goss, March 5, 1933, Correspondence on the Damages and Violence of the Milk Strikes, Box 1, Folder 3, Judge Dohr Collection, Outagamie County Historical Society, Appleton, WI.

dynamite. In addition, he asked the weapons manufacturer to send him 1,000 “Explosive Green Band Gas Grenades” to disrupt the actions of local dairy farmers.¹³⁵ On May 16, 1933, the Wisconsin National Guard placed 2,500 troops “under the command of local sheriffs,” and they used these military-grade weapons to “deal with [the] civil disturbance.”¹³⁶ Rather than support them as local citizens, government officials treated local dairy farmers as if they were criminals.

In reaction to this state-sanctioned violence, Singler scolded Outagamie County authorities, charging that they had coerced area residents into working as strikebreakers. He claimed that politicians had undermined the goals of the dairy farmer movement and threatened the survival of Milk Pool members. Also, he alleged that the district attorney had declared “warfare upon the peaceful farmers, overburdened taxpayers, and oppressed citizens of the State of Wisconsin.” By May 19, 1933, however, Wisconsin dairy farmers lacked public support, and Singler called off the second strike, blaming the “militaristic warfare [impressed] upon the peaceful farmers of Wisconsin [who were] striking for their just demands.” For all the farmers had done for the U.S. during World War I, he could not believe that local government officials would treat Fox Valley agricultural producers that way.¹³⁷ In reaction, he wrote to Governor

¹³⁵ Raymond P. Dohr to B. C. Goss, Correspondence on the Damages and Violence of the Milk Strikes, March 15, 1933, Box 1, Folder 2, Judge Dohr Collection, Outagamie County Historical Society, Appleton, WI. On the use of the Wisconsin National Guard and local sheriff’s deputies, see “Wisconsin Troops Used in Milk Strike,” *New York Times*, May 17, 1933; “Violence Mounts in the Milk Strike,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1933; “Wisconsin Pact Ends Milk Strike,” *New York Times*, May 19, 1933; “Milk Accord Ratified: Three Thousand Farmers Celebrate End of the Strike,” *New York Times*, May 20, 1933.

¹³⁶ Walter M. Singler to Governor Albert G. Schmedemen, May 17, 1933, Wisconsin Milk Pool Cooperative records, Box 4, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; and Wisconsin Troops Used in Milk Strike,” *New York Times*, May 17, 1933.

¹³⁷ Walter M. Singler to Governor Albert G. Schmedemen, May 17, 1933.

Schmedemen, condemning “the Prussianized and un-American methods used against peaceful” dairymen,” questioning the patriotism of the elected official.¹³⁸

After another summer of low milk prices, on October 21, 1933, dairy farmers again called a strike. The next day, the *New York Times* reported, “the action is really but another dramatic gesture based on much the same ideas” that had caused the two earlier labor actions.¹³⁹ This one played out similarly to those that preceded it, with dairy farmers protesting all over Wisconsin; however, Fox Valley dairymen were especially militant in their efforts to halt the transport of milk to dairy processors. For example, they stopped trains and trucks, using milk cans and their bodies as blockades. They bombed cheese factories and creameries; and they continued to dump milk in mass quantities all over the region. According to Milk Pool meeting minutes, sheriff’s “deputies responded by using clubs and tear gas to disrupt farmer efforts.” Newspaper reports praised the efforts of local law enforcement and emphasized the violence, desperation, and disorganization of the farmers. For instance, November 4, 1933, the *New York Times* claimed that dairymen were “arming” and “forming military units.”¹⁴⁰ Yet, the same article also indicated that “the strikers’ demand was for cost of production prices,” which reveals that despite the negative publicity, local farmers were struggling for their everyday survival.

Newspapers painted dairymen as criminals, but also revealed the excessive state violence

¹³⁸ “Statement by President Walter M. Singler,” May 16, 1933, Wisconsin Milk Pool Co-operative Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

¹³⁹ “Farm Pickets Stop Train,” *New York Times*, October 22, 1933.

¹⁴⁰ “Use Shotguns If Necessary To Protect Milk Shipments In Present Farmers Strike,” *Kaukauna Times*, November 4, 1933; “Troops Used in Milk Strike,” *New York Times*, May 17, 1933; “Violence Mounts in the Milk Strike,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1933; “Milk Strike to Start at Midnight,” Governor Says There Shall Be No Violence,” *Kaukauna Times*, May 9, 1933; “Debate on Milk Strike Held Tuesday,” *Kaukauna Times*, March 10, 1933.

used against them. For example, October 31, 1933, the *Kaukauna Times* reported that dealers had planned to “use shotguns if necessary to protect their milk shipments.” Milk Pool records indicate that this actually did happen, and local authorities also threw “heavy objects like horseshoes” at picketers. Strikers resisted by throwing tear gas bombs back at deputies, struggling until November 17, 1933, when they called off the action. They again had difficulty gaining public support, and without the cooperation of all Fox Valley dairy farmers to agree to withhold their milk, strikers could not achieve their goals.¹⁴¹ Roosevelt never set price controls on milk and neither did state officials in Wisconsin. As in the two previous strikes, however, area dairy farmers challenged their criminalized image, and Milk Pool members applauded their loyalty to their cooperative.¹⁴² Despite efforts on the part of newspapers and government officials to defame strikers by suggesting that they were keeping milk from those in need, Milk Pool records suggest otherwise. According to each of their three strike resolutions, the members of the Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool “stood ready, at all times, to supply all the necessary milk and dairy products to the children, hospitals and to the poor, free of charge, during the period of the strike.” They cared about the health of local families, and their “war was against the dealers, not the final buyers.”¹⁴³ These dairy farmers used militant tactics, yet their primary

¹⁴¹ “Kaukauna Free of Farm Strike,” *Kaukauna Times*, “Wisconsin Farm Strike Truce,” *New York Times*, November 18, 1933; and “Use Shotguns If Necessary To Protect Milk Shipments In Present Farmers Strike.”

¹⁴² Membership Meeting Minutes, November 17, 1933, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool Records, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives; Statement by the Milk Pool, March 17, 1933; Statement by the Milk Pool, May 16, 1933; Organization and Membership Committee Report for the Milk Pool, March 17, 1933; Statement of the Arbitration Committee of the Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool, October 21, 1933, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; and “Strikers Dump Wisconsin Milk.”

¹⁴³ Strike Resolution, February 9, 1933; Strike Resolution, May 15, 1933, Strike Resolution, October 21, 1933; Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 2, Folder 3, Wisconsin Historical

commitment was to their communities. Although they did not have the ultimate success that they desired, rural Fox Valley residents participated in a movement to make the New Deal state represent their economic interests. By doing so, they challenged government officials to take their lives seriously and they imprinted their values on the local political landscape.

Meanwhile, dairy farmers simultaneously resisted what they believed was a governmental attack on their everyday lives by actively protesting Prohibition. They did this by regularly gathering at local bars, taverns, and saloons to plan strategies for alleviating their financial struggles. They also continued to dance, regardless of attempts to stop the leisure practice.¹⁴⁴ For example, in Kewaunee County, government officials passed a “ban on dancehalls” in 1923 that proved unpopular among the majority of the population.¹⁴⁵ Rather, “Germans, Bohemians, and Belgium Americans,” believed that the law targeted their ethnic customs, which besides attending church, included “dancing and drinking beer.”¹⁴⁶ The local population was largely Roman Catholic, and residents viewed the “Methodist Church’s decision to outlaw dancing” as an overt threat to their religious affinity.¹⁴⁷ Dance was a major component of everyday social life. For example, following their Saturday wedding ceremonies, one

Society Archives, Madison. On this commitment to local communities, see “Striker Dump Wisconsin Milk,” *New York Times*, May 14, 1933; and Oral History Interview with Jean Long Stillman, 1974.

¹⁴⁴ “Prohibition Rally.” Prohibition of dance was both urban and rural, and it was a nationwide phenomenon. See “County Supervisors Vote to Regulate Dance Halls,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, November 22, 1930; “Pair Charged with Breaking Dance Hall Law,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, September 16, 1927; “Old Council Makes Two More Changes in Zoning Ordinance: Kill Dance Hall Proposition,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, April 28, 1928; “Order Strict Enforcement of Ordinance,” *Appleton Crescent*, May 2, 1931; “Move to Change Methodist Ban on Amusements,” *New York Times*, September 22, 1923.

¹⁴⁵ “Dancing Outlawed,” Kewaunee County Dancehall Ban Collection, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; Interview with Kenny Schaeuble, Little Chute, Wisconsin, July 7, 2019; and Interview with Craig Kons, Kaukauna, Wisconsin, May 7, 2017.

¹⁴⁶ “County Supervisors Vote to Regulate Dance Halls.”

¹⁴⁷ “Move to Change Methodist Ban on Amusements.”

observer noted that “Catholic farmers would enjoy their barn dances.” The ban also threatened Kewaunee County businesses, which relied on recreation that revolved around alcohol sales and the food consumption that accompanied the leisure activity.¹⁴⁸

In response to these injustices, area residents decided to break both laws collectively.¹⁴⁹ Given that the majority of rural working-class people were dairy farmers, they saw the 1924 county ordinance, which sought to restrict their favorite entertainment activity, as a systematic effort to erase rural cultural values. Thus, they protested against it by continuing to dance.¹⁵⁰ As the local “dance official” claimed, “his efforts were unsuccessful.” People “were drunk and some were fraternizing,” and his warnings did “nothing to stop these practices.” Despite his consistent attempts “to regulate the social indecency,” rural consumers purchased alcohol, drank it together, and did so “on the dance floor.” Therefore not only did the ban fail, but it lasted for just two years. Due to the “popular demand for places to dance,” which unfolded alongside the widespread resistance against Prohibition, area residents persuaded “Kewaunee County officials to repeal the ban” in 1925. Similar protests happened throughout the Fox River Valley.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ “They Continue to Dance,” Kewaunee County Dancehall Ban Collection, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; and Interview with Schaeuble.

¹⁴⁹ “They Continue to Dance,” Kewaunee County Dancehall Ban Collection, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; and Interview with Kenny Schaeuble.

¹⁵⁰ On resistance against efforts to control working-class leisure practices, see Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016); Randy D. McBee, “‘He Likes Women More Than He Likes Drink and That Is Quite Unusual’: Working-Class Social Clubs, Male Culture, and Heterosocial Relations in the United States, 1920s–1930s,” *Gender and History* 11, no. 1 (1999): 82–112, and *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy and Leisure Among Working-Class Immigrants in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 13–16; Madelon Powers, *Faces Along the Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman’s Saloon, 1870–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Tera W. Hunter, *To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

¹⁵¹ “Report on the Kewaunee County Dance Ban;” and Interview with Schaeuble.

For example, in Appleton, the efforts to quell dancing never worked either. Although the city had an ordinance that required local businesses to have dance permits, local authorities had limited success enforcing this measure throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The city municipal code of 1887 dictated that law officers could “fine or arrest” any “person licensed to give or hold such a public dance,” if they so permitted “on the premises any vinous, malt, ardent or other intoxicating liquors.”¹⁵² Thus, dance licenses were an effort to limit the amusement but also to restrict alcohol consumption. Rather than stop dancing, however, working-class residents continued, even as “they drank moonshine, gin, wine, and beer.”¹⁵³ During Prohibition, police officers heightened their attempts to enforce this municipal law. Outagamie County officials did not completely outlaw dancing, but they were determined to regulate it. For example, according to the *Appleton Post-Crescent*, on May 2, 1931, the local county board “ordered the strict enforcement of dance halls and roadhouses,” and members wanted them “closely watched.” Their report indicated that “District Attorney Stanley A. Staidl pointed out that the 1 o’clock closing hour was non-negotiable,” and that “the closing hour also [governed] all soft drink parlors, outside of villages and cities, as well dance halls and roadhouses.”¹⁵⁴ Although social reformers and area elites went to great lengths to enforce these regulations, their crusade was unsuccessful. Rather, working-class people from Fox Valley cities and the surrounding countryside protested these measures by continuing to dance and drink

¹⁵² *The Municipal Code of Appleton* (1887), 395.

¹⁵³ Interview with Hobson. See also Oral History of Eldred Van Wormer, History of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool, Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; Phil Peterson Sr., *Northern Moon: Prohibition, Moonshine and the Family Farm* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreatSpace Independent Publishing, 2012); Karen Katers, “Prohibition and Moonshine in Wisconsin” (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003); and “Federal Agents Raid Farm Still.”

¹⁵⁴ “Order Strict Enforcement of Ordinance,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, May 2, 1931.

beer.¹⁵⁵ Not just in public drinking establishments, but also at church picnics and local parks, area residents enjoyed their leisure time, cultivated a shared commitment to their cultural values, and discussed methods to protect them.

For instance, as the wife of a dairy farmer, Georgetta Anderson explained, “besides at church on Sundays,” the barn was the place where rural people congregated for entertainment and socializing. Food was a primary element of these events, but “booze” was essential, and there was always dancing.¹⁵⁶ Most agricultural workers ignored Prohibition and continued to drink alcohol, despite local regulations and the federal ban. “Bootlegging was common” in the Fox Valley, and dairy barns were a common location for alcohol production and consumption.¹⁵⁷ Dick Hobson explained how his family had its summer farm dances where “they served beer and moonshine.” They called their barn “the Hobson Country Club,” and they “charged women ten cents and men thirty” for entrance and “spirits.” Visitors enjoyed “lively conversation about work and politics, and they drank hooch and danced polka.” Thus, at social gatherings, rural people ignored the state suppression of their conviviality, and discussed their frustration with government officials who tried to regulate their daily lives.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. “County Supervisors Vote to Regulate Dance Halls;” “Pair Charged with Breaking Dance Hall Law;” *Appleton Post Crescent*, September 16, 1927; “Old Council Makes Two More Changes in Zoning Ordinance: Kill Dance Hall Proposition,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, April 28, 1928; “Order Strict Enforcement of Ordinance;” “Move to Change Methodist Ban on Amusements.”

¹⁵⁶ Diary entries 1909-1949, May 16, 1929, June 30, 1930, July 5, 1931, July 7, 1931, October 10, 1932, November 12, 1933, Georgetta Anderson Diary, in author’s possession, Oshkosh, WI.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.; Interview with Hobson; Interview with Schaeuble; Interview with Rhyan; Interview with Jack Gibbons, Appleton, Wisconsin, August 12, 2014; Interview with Barbara Bolduan (Jacklin), Appleton, Wisconsin, June 9, 2018; Interview with Carrie Heiting, Town of Center, Wisconsin, June 20, 2019; Interview with Maggie Schaeuble, Grand Chute, Wisconsin, July 7, 2019, “Federal Agents Raid Farm Still.”

Meanwhile in Appleton, area officials blamed the “unregulated dance halls that existed outside the city limits on parental indifference.” As a result of this irresponsible behavior, local “experts claimed that cooperation of parents [was] important” and that “daily education as to recreation needed to be increased.”¹⁵⁹ They believed that this was especially necessary in rural communities, where, they charged, “liquor and narcotics keep the roadhouses running,” adding that “the beach places or shacks or halls out in the country allow all the doings that are forbidden in the city halls,” including dancing. Not only did these rural businesses permit these diversions, but “they [were] rough, cheap, and badly run.” In order to reduce violations against local dance ordinances and ensure that people abided by Prohibition, area leaders targeted working-class people and their entertainment practices.¹⁶⁰ Yet they met little success. Instead, factory laborers and dairy farmers resisted these regulations. Across the Fox River Valley, workers fought back in the voting booth, through petitions, and especially, through the continued use of alcohol.¹⁶¹ As a result, on December 5, 1933, local workers rejoiced when government officials repealed

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Hobson. See also Interview with Rhyan; “Dance Hall Owners Are Up In Arms,” *Sheboygan Press*, November 3, 1937; “County Supervisors to Regulate Dance Halls;” and “Board Expects Fight On Dance Hall Ordinance,” *Appleton Post-Crescent*, February 18, 1931.

¹⁵⁹ “Blame Country Dances For Much of Crime in Which Girls Are Mixed,” *Appleton Post Crescent*, July 22, 1922. See also, “Roadhouses and Parents Blamed for Conditions,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, August 21, 1929; and Interview with Hobson.

¹⁶⁰ “Blame Country Dances For Much of Crime in Which Girls Are Mixed.” See also “Roadhouses and Parents Blamed for Conditions.”

¹⁶¹ “Prohibition Debates Are Prominent Activities in Most of the Communities,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, July 5, 1932; “Only 19 States Could Drink Under Repeal,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 6, 1933; “End of Prohibition,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, November 10, 1933; “Both Sides Sure of Victory in Prohibition Fight,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, February 24, 1933; “W.C.T.U. President Shocked Over Liquor,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 2, 1933; “Constitutional Prohibition Ends This Evening,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 5, 1933; *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 5, 1933; “Supply Scant for Users of Hard Liquor,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 6, 1933; “Prohibition Cases Are Still Pending,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 5, 1933; and Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 5, 94-103.

Prohibition. The Twenty-First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution permitted American citizens to manufacture and sell alcohol, and Wisconsin became the second state to ratify the change. Regardless of efforts to curtail their everyday freedoms, workers from around the Fox Valley, both in area cities and rural communities, came together in protest, in part by continuing to practice their preferred social customs and through everyday self-activity. By doing so, they influenced the parameters of the local political climate and social world. Thus, they sought not only to improve their financial situation but also to ensure their cultural survival.

Conclusion

On December 5, 1933, working-class Wisconsinites celebrated the end of Prohibition. Not only had the Volstead Act become too expensive for taxpayers, but opponents also argued that it violated their rights as citizens. Moreover, Fox Valley authorities had failed to enforce the law and could not keep people from drinking alcohol. Instead, people across the nation kept drinking, leading to the ultimate demise of the Prohibition movement. Efforts to rid the country of liquor would continue, but they did not succeed. Similarly, during the early 1930s, Fox River Valley farmers struggled against state-sanctioned control over their economic lives. Although they did not meet as much success as did those who fought Prohibition, members of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool made a statement to local and federal officials. Working-class people also continued to dance in bars, saloons, and barns all over the region. As I argue, their militancy stemmed from their efforts to maintain the integrity of their social customs and ethnic identities. Following their commitment to the U.S. during World War I, both as producers and as soldiers, local residents, both urban and rural, demanded that their government officials treat them as citizens by recognizing their everyday cultural values and economic needs.

Working-class people emphasized their loyalty to the U.S. and demanded that their government representatives take their lives seriously. Ultimately, I contend that through their persistence both at work and during their free time, local workers changed the social and political landscape of east-central Wisconsin in ways that reflected their daily self-activity. By resisting laws that did not suit their everyday lives, working-class people shaped the political atmosphere of the Fox Valley and influenced the parameters of the New Deal state.

Chapter 5

The Midwestern Roots of McCarthyism: Race, Gender, and Working-Class Conservatism in the Age of Anti-Communism

From his boots to his hat [he] copied [everything] from the Mexican horseman
whose land this Texas had been little more than a century ago.
Edna Ferber, *Giant*, 1952

In 1957, the beloved American writer Edna Ferber again found herself at the center of an examination by the U.S. Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee, which resulted in the interrogation of a French journalist, M. G. Horneferr, who alleged that *Giant* represented “anti-American propaganda.”¹ *Giant* was Ferber’s first major publication since World War II. The novel about a Texas rancher and his rural social world received accolades. Encounters with ethnocentrism, class disparities, and racism frame the compelling narrative, which Hollywood moguls made into a popular movie. Not only did the visual adaptation feature James Dean in his last leading role, but Elizabeth Taylor and Rock Hudson also joined the dynamic cast.² Despite the film’s box office success, Ferber was widely criticized for her fictional account of life in the U.S. Southwest. Although she was applauded for her “Americana” literature before and even after the initial release of *Giant*, the anti-communist hysteria that characterized the 1950s fueled a wave of federal inquiries into the political motivations of such cultural producers.³

¹ Don Graham, *Giant: Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, James Dean, and Edna Ferber, and the Making of a Legendary American Film* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2018), 244-45; and Ann Shapira, “When Edna Ferber Was Accused of Communist Propaganda,” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 17, no. 1 (2008): 16-22. This was not the first time that Ferber underwent anti-communist scrutiny for *Giant*, see “McCarthy Hearing Transcripts: Executive Sessions of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on the Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations,” p. 727, accessed on January 2, 2019 at https://archive.org/stream/McCarthy-Hearing-Transcripts/McCarthy-Vol1_djvu.txt; and United States Cong. Senate Committee, State Department Information Program, Hearings, 83rd Cong. (Washington DC: Government Publishing Office, 1953): 179-85.

² Eliza McGraw, *Edna Ferber’s America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 118-32.

³ *Ibid.*; and Shapira, “When Edna Ferber Was Accused of Communist Propaganda,” 17-20.

Ferber was not immune from this rightwing censorship crusade, which she recounted in her memoir, *A Kind of Magic*: “headlines in black letters two inches high streamed across the pages of Texas newspapers.”⁴ Austin residents believed that “Ferber [was] a liar and a criminal,” and indicated that they planned to catch and “hang her” for slandering their hometown in *Giant*.⁵ Like Jewish American entertainers across the show business industry, Ferber faced discrimination along religious and ethnic lines, even as she personally identified with the inequities that surrounded her in the postwar U.S. Although social commentary had always infused Ferber’s fiction, the emphasis that she placed on greed, patriarchy, and race relations in *Giant* caused a public outcry that she had not yet experienced in her career. For instance, reviewers like John Bustin of the *Austin-American Statesmen* argued that the novel “told a harsh, often inaccurate and always bitter story about Texas and Texans during a trying period of change, and Texans were doubtless justified in finding it a vitriolic and frequently unfounded caricature of a small segment of their state.”⁶ Her description of both oil tycoons and Anglo American workers as ignorant and ethnically prejudiced offended conservative readers across the country, including extremist politicians like Joseph McCarthy. In response to the overt federal attack on her work, Ferber defended her integrity as a professional writer.⁷

⁴ Edna Ferber, *A Kind of Magic: An Autobiography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 173.

⁵ Ibid. On the public scrutiny that Ferber experienced as a result of her portrayal of white Texas in *Giant*, see McGraw, *Edna Ferber’s America*, 120-25; Shapira, “When Edna Ferber Was Accused of Communist Propaganda,” 17-20; and J. E. Smyth, *Edna Ferber’s Hollywood: American Fictions of Gender, Race, and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 220-23.

⁶ John Bustin, “Show World,” *Austin Statesman*, November 9, 1956. Also quoted in *Ferber’s Hollywood*, 214-15; and J. E. Smyth, “Jim Crow, Jett Rink, and James Dean: Reconstructing Ferber’s *Giant*, 1952-1956,” *American Studies* 48, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 5-27, quoted material on page 18.

⁷ Ferber, *A Kind of Magic*: 173.

Likewise, as national media outlets ran articles that questioned the motivations for publishing *Giant*, Ferber maintained that the novel deserved accolades rather than negative judgment. She was proudly Jewish and her affinity for her ancestry shaped her work throughout her extensive career. The rise of Nazism in Germany intensified her association with racial struggle profoundly enough that it drove the messaging behind her first autobiography, *A Peculiar Treasure*. In fact, in the unpublished dedication Ferber wrote, “to Adolf Hitler, who made me a better Jew and a more understanding human being, as he has millions of other Jews, this book is dedicated in loathing and contempt.”⁸ But the author became concerned for her personal safety, and she decided to change this inscription for the final version. As literary scholar Ann Shapira notes, however, “when the war was over, Ferber seemed to have become obsessed once more with the plight of the people who, like Jews, were persecuted because of their ethnicity.”⁹ The result was *Giant*, in which the novelist openly confronts the persistence of working-class poverty and racial segregation in postwar America, using the Texas countryside and the mistreatment of ethnic Mexicans as her lens. The struggle against Nazism and Aryan nationalism affected her writing deeply. Thus, she drew on connections between the genocide of her people and the treatment of racial minorities in the U.S., which she explained in *A Kind of Magic*. Recalling why she wrote *Giant*, Ferber stated, “I think that I went back to Texas because I thought this strange commonwealth exemplified the qualities which must not be permitted to infect the other forty-seven states if the whole of the United States as a great nation was to remain a whole country.”¹⁰

⁸ See this unpublished dedication quoted in Julie Goldsmith Gilbert, *Ferber: Edna Ferber and Her Circle* (New York: Applause Books, 1999), 291.

⁹ Shapira, “When Edna Ferber Was Accused of Communist Propaganda,” 20.

In *Giant*, Ferber suggests that not everyone benefited from the wealth created by U.S. military involvement in World War II. Rather, people continued to suffer economically and also socially based on their religious and ethnic differences. Indeed, in her portrayal of race relations between Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans, Ferber explores the extreme prejudice that poor brown farmworkers experienced when they interacted with wealthy white landowners. For instance, Leslie, the wife of oil magnate Bick Benedict, witnesses the discrimination perpetuated by cattlemen like Uncle Bawley. The Texas rancher explains to her that “about fifty thousand of these wetbacks slip out of Mexico every year, swim or wade the Rio Grande,” and the Border Patrol “can’t keep them out.”¹¹ He continues, “sometimes they’re shot,” and at other times, “they wander around and starve.” Despite his bigotry, Bawley recognizes that “the whole of Texas was built . . . on the bent backs of Mexicans.” Realizing her own racial privilege, Leslie is also conscious of the challenges that face a woman in the U.S. Southwest. Thus, her character suggests that the financial promises and social freedoms of postwar America did not extend to all United States citizens.¹²

Underlying the plot of *Giant* is a story rooted not only in contempt for the long history of Texas racism, but also a rejection of the relentless masculinity that required the concerted investment of Anglo women.¹³ For example, when Ferber reflected on her popular novel, she

¹⁰ Ferber, *A Kind of Magic*, 247. Also quoted in Shapira, “When Edna Ferber Was Accused of Communist Propaganda,” 20.

¹¹ Edna Ferber, *Giant: A Novel* (New York: HarperCollins, 1952), 21.

¹² Ibid. On Ferber’s perspective on limited access to citizenship in post-World War II America, see Steven P. Horowitz and Miriam J. Landsman, “The Americanization of Edna: A Study of Ms. Ferber’s Jewish American Identity,” *Studies in American Jewish Identity* 2 (1982): 69-80; Shapira, “When Edna Ferber Was Accused of Communist Propaganda,” 19-22; and Gilbert, *Ferber*, 289-92.

¹³ On Ferber’s criticisms of post-World War II masculinity and racism in Jim Crow Texas and the U.S. Southwest more broadly see, Smyth, *Edna Ferber’s Hollywood*, 193-95.

explained how the character of Leslie was “a listening and respectful wife.”¹⁴ Indeed, in the novel, when Leslie questions the actions of her husband, Bick, who had acquired “millions of acres” to build his industrial fortune, a local woman advises her to “stop that kind of talk,” or “they’ll be saying you’re one of those Socialists.”¹⁵ Censored by her husband, his business partners, and their wives, Leslie reveals the realities of social marginalization in rural America. *Giant* implied that ethnicity, class, gender, and political affiliation shaped a person’s ability to belong in the region and as a resident of the postwar U.S.

Ultimately, Ferber’s controversial book asked who had access to inclusion during a particular historical moment in a specific place in the North American West. Yet the negative reaction to the storyline of *Giant* reflected the prejudices of those who lived beyond the borders of Texas. Indeed, according to Ferber in *A Kind of Magic*, her upbringing in the Midwest (including Kalamazoo, Michigan; Ottumwa, Iowa; and Appleton, Wisconsin) influenced the content of her fictional narratives.¹⁶ And, despite the film producer’s failure to include important examples of racism and gender disparity that had appeared in the book, the Hollywood version of *Giant* still offered a window into the social landscape of everyday America. Consequently, while the written account sparked judgment, the popularity of the motion picture intensified suspicion of Ferber and the political intentions behind her novel.¹⁷

¹⁴ “Edna Ferber to Ken McCormick,” February 3, 1952, Box 9, Folder 6, Edna Ferber Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison. Also see, Smyth *Edna Ferber’s Hollywood*, 193.

¹⁵ Ferber, *Giant*, 268.

¹⁶ Ferber, *A Kind of Magic*, 66. On the ways in which Ferber’s midwestern upbringing shaped the topics that she addressed in her fiction, see Shapira, “When Edna Ferber Was Accused of Communist Propaganda,” 19; and McGraw, *Edna Ferber’s America*, 28-35, 120-25, and 158-59.

¹⁷ Smyth, “Jim Crow, Jett Rink, and James Dean,” 5-8; and *Edna Ferber’s Hollywood*, 217-22.

In the following pages, I explore the cultural reasons behind the criticisms of *Giant* by conservative politicians like Joseph McCarthy, as well as the ways in which such disparagement represented local racial attitudes throughout rural and urban America. For instance, although geographically separate and economically distinct, there were similarities between the mindsets of Ferber's fictional characters and those of white working-class residents who lived in the Fox River Valley during the mid-twentieth century. The outright hostility that the Hollywood rendition of the book fueled originated not only in national settings like the hearings of the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee but also in conversations that took place in communities across the U.S. This chapter explores why people like McCarthy took offense at popular novels like *Giant* and the role that American participation in World War II played in the political crusade against cultural icons like Edna Ferber. The war created new job opportunities for Wisconsin women as well as for members of struggling racial minority groups in the region. After the war, however, these financial opportunities changed, as white male veterans reclaimed their jobs. This shift in economic opportunity influenced the varied opinions people held of the Hollywood film *Giant*.¹⁸

As I explore, there were gendered and ethnic as well as religious motivations behind the social inclinations of Fox Valley residents. Following the war, their nationalistic outlook on injustice encouraged them to back the reactionary political ideologies that developed in the

¹⁸ On post-World War II society and changing economic accessibility in the U.S. based on gender, race, ethnicity, and religion, see Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 1-10; Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1-12; Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 7-8, 36-37, and 306-07; William P. Jones, *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), 1-7, 69-75, and 156-64; and Gretchen Townsend Buggin, *The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Postwar America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 1-15.

region. I claim that it was not only partisanship, but also the everyday experiences and cultural beliefs of local workers that influenced their electoral choices. This was a complex and contested process. As a result, I have divided this chapter into two parts in order to explain its development. First, I examine the collapse of the local New Deal coalition, which stemmed from the failures of the farmer-labor movement that had dominated politics in the Midwest during the interwar era. To do so, I interrogate the records of the local Milk Pool and the forces that led to the demise of the cooperative movement during the late 1930s. The evidence in these documents suggests that area businessmen sought to undermine the efforts of the Fox Valley progressive movement by infiltrating its political apparatus. But they also reveal how local workers, in cities and the nearby countryside, had struggled to elect public officials that would reflect their preferences, and they were unsatisfied. Dairy farmers and their families continued to suffer throughout the reign of Wisconsin's Progressive Party, which they came to associate with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Democratic Party. As I argue, rural laborers, like their urban counterparts, wanted politicians who protected their cultural values and supported their economic livelihood, regardless of party. Despite obstacles, they continued to struggle for a social climate that permitted them to embrace their beliefs.

Next, I investigate the Fox Valley origins of McCarthyism as well as the downfall of Wisconsin's Progressive Party. Unlike some scholars, I assert that these two disparate political developments had similar roots that at times overlapped but in other cases diverged along the lines of race, gender, and religion. By analyzing the oral histories of women who participated in the World War II effort, both abroad and as workers in the local industrial economy, I uncover the patriarchal and racist principles that fostered notions of belonging in the region. The social values that flourished after the war shaped a public landscape where cultural freedoms did not

extend to everyone. Instead, access to material livelihood as well as daily pleasures reflected conservative aspirations for a settled and faithful Fox Valley family life. This did not lend itself to opportunities for all, but rather reinforced exclusionary ideas about who was an acceptable American in the Upper Midwest. This was especially problematic for members of the local Native population, who despite their contributions to the war effort, found themselves surrounded by discrimination and capitalist encroachment on their land and resources. Yet, as I explain, they struggled to demonstrate their importance to the area's political economy through their persistence. For example, similar to Euro-American farmers, Oneida Indians encountered financial desperation during the 1930s. Although they did not experience the same support from their dairy cooperative as their white counterparts, they managed to keep their rural businesses running. Meanwhile, Menominee Indians struggled to protect their timber from speculators, and they were successful in doing so. I claim that by managing their own sawmill and refusing to restrict themselves to corporate oversight, they created a profitable operation that supported their community. By choosing which aspects of settler colonialism to incorporate into their daily lives, Native Americans continued to thrive in the region. Thus, I argue that through their self-activity, local Indians shaped the social, political, and cultural landscape of the Fox River Valley in ways that reflected their everyday values and material necessities.

New Deal Disillusionment

The Great Depression began earlier and lasted longer for Fox Valley farmers than it did for those who worked in the local wood-products industries. Although U.S. involvement in World War I had improved the plight of dairy producers, this prosperity quickly waned

following peace agreements due to an improved European economy. The demand for American foodstuffs abroad promptly halted, and a surplus of domestic agricultural commodities developed. The subsequent overproduction led to volatility in the local market, which in turn gave milk dealers greater control over prices.¹⁹ In order to alleviate this instability and protect their financial interests, farmers looked to the federal government throughout the 1930s to diminish the power of those who distributed dairy products. Unlike industrial workers, as well as those who cultivated different agricultural commodities, however, people who raised cows and sold milk to suppliers did not receive the economic relief that they needed to survive. Instead, they continued to suffer, which created animosity toward those who benefited from New Deal programs and heightened competition among those dairy farmers who could afford to maintain their businesses.²⁰ Consequently, the uneasy farmer-labor alliance that led to the formation of Wisconsin's Progressive Party splintered. This broken coalition had a polarizing effect on the political constituency of the Fox River Valley.

¹⁹ On the transformation of the economic situation of dairy farmers after World War I, I compare statistics from 1915 and 1919 in "Average Annual Wisconsin Milk Prices With Index Numbers, 1900-1931," and "Prices Paid Wisconsin Producers for Certain Farm Products, 1910-1930," *Wisconsin Crop and Livestock Reporter* 10, no. 1 (January 1931): 1-3. On the market power of milk dealers both before and after the war, see "Oral History Interview with Jean Long Stillman, 1974," Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Main Stacks, Madison; "History of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool," Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; and James J. Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance: Politics of the New Deal*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 5-20; A. William Høglund, *Wisconsin Dairy Farmers on Strike, Agricultural History* 35, no. 1 (January 1961): 24-34; and Eric M. Erba and Andrew M. Novakovic, "The Evolution of Milk Pricing and Government Intervention in Dairy Markets," accessed on August 23, 2019, at <https://dairymarkets.org/pubPod/pubs/EB9505.pdf>.

²⁰ "Mid-West Dairymen Consider Striking: Price Cutting and Narrowing Markets Place Industry in Bad Position," *New York Times*, February 19, 1933; "Milk Strikes Looms in the Northwest," *New York Times*, April 16, 1933; James J. Lorence "Gerald J. Boileau and the Politics of Sectionalism: Dairy Interests and the New Deal, 1933-1938," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 71, no. 4 (Summer 1988), and *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 10-15; and "History of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool," Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool Records.

By 1938, the liberal movement that sought to reinvigorate the national economy was divided; and soon after, Adolf Hitler's rise to dictatorial dominance in Europe changed federal concerns from a focus on domestic issues to the role of the U.S. in World War II.²¹ Originally taking a neutral stance on German atrocities, American industries nonetheless profited from the military conflict. Rapidly shifting production efforts to provide resources to the Allied, as well as Axis forces, caused defense to become a major industry not only in southern and western states, but also in the Midwest, especially in the Great Lakes region.²² Agriculture was as important as the construction of submarines and weaponry to sustaining the fighting. As a result, Wisconsin dairymen flourished. Not only were there fewer farms than during World War I, but also, technological innovations and mechanization fueled financial gain for milk producers.²³

²¹ On U.S. entry into World War II and the shift from a focus on domestic matters to international concerns, see John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1976), 25-30, and 150-52; Gary Gerstle, "The Working-Class Goes to War," in *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II*, ed. Louis Erenberg and Susan Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2-10, and 105-27; Andrew Edmund Kersten, *Race, Jobs, and the War: The FEPC in the Midwest, 1941-1946* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 5-10; Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America During World War II* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2000), 8-19; Justin Hart, "Making Democracy Safe for the World: Race, Propaganda, and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy During World War II," *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 1 (February 2004): 49-84; and Elizabeth Rachel Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Homefront* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 5-10, 46-62, and 118-49.

²² On the defense industry in the Upper Midwest and Wisconsin specifically, see Michael E. Stevens, ed., *Women Remember the War: Voices of the Wisconsin Past, 1941-1945* (Madison: Wisconsin State Historical Society, 1993), 9-30, 49-80, and 85-90; "Suggestions for Block Leaders," Wisconsin Block Plan Organization, Wisconsin State Council of Defense, 1943, accessed on September 1, 2019, at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=1296>; "Wisconsin in first World War faced rationing problems just like today's," *Capital Times*, December 13, 1943; "We of Allis-Chalmers: our women work for victory," West Allis, Wisconsin, Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company, 1942, accessed on January 10, 2020, at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=>; "Suggestions to County Committees of Consumer Interests," Wisconsin State Council of Defense, the State Advisory Committee of Consumer Interests, Madison, 1942, accessed on September 2, 2019, at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=1293>; and Sarah Fayas, "World War II: From the Perspective of Wisconsin Residents" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, 1997).

Despite this success, the majority of Wisconsin residents initially backed a strategy of appeasement and isolationism rather than U.S. participation overseas.²⁴ This perspective changed radically, however, following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. Almost immediately, the American public overwhelmingly supported entry into active combat in Europe.²⁵ The Fox River Valley contributed significantly in human terms to the war effort. The experiences of those who participated or had relationships with those who served would influence how people viewed the parameters of U.S. citizenship throughout the second half of the twentieth century.²⁶

²³ On the importance of agriculture during World War II, see Walter H. Ebling, "Wisconsin Agriculture in World War II," in *Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture Bulletin* 243 (Madison: Wisconsin Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, 1944). Stephanie Ann Carpenter, "Regular Farm Girl: The Women's Land Army During World War II," *Agricultural History* 71, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 162-85; Camille Guérin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 132-35; Lori A. Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the California Farmworker Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 39-74; Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 89-112; and Cindy Hahamovitch, *No Man's Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 22-48.

²⁴ "Isolationism is Not Magic Word, Speaker Asserts," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 6, 1939; "U.S. Should Mind Its Own Business, Declares Speaker," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 6, 1939; "Students Debate Isolation Policy Before Rotarians," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, April 9, 1940; "Collectivism Plan to Assure Peace Is Plea At P.T.A. Meet," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, April 20, 1939; "Opposition to War Is Urged By Green," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, August 28, 1939.

²⁵ On the debate over U.S. entry into World War II after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, see Stewart Yeo, "Letter from December 15, 1941, describing the attack on Pearl Harbor," accessed on September 3, 2019, at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=1646>; "War Opened on U.S.," *New York Times*, December 12, 1941; "U.S. Fliers Score," *New York Times*, December 12, 1941; Craig Nelson, *The First Heroes: The Extraordinary Story of the Doolittle Raid, America's First World War II Victory* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 1-20; Richard F. Hill, *Hitler Attacks Pearl Harbor: Why the United States Declared War on Germany* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 5-15, 29-35, 94-95, and 183-90; and Steve Twomey, *Countdown to Pearl Harbor: The Twelve Days to the Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 11-31.

²⁶ On Wisconsin's contribution to war, see "Gordon Doule Interview with Clarence Jungwirth," accessed on August 25, 2019, at <http://www.oshkoshmuseum.org/Virtual/exhibit6/e60033a.htm>; and Timothy K. Panasuk, "Indian Soldiers Defend the United States," *Fundamentals* 23, accessed on August

The unfulfilled financial promises of American involvement in World War I, and the ensuing collapse of the national economy, sullied the image of federal officials for Wisconsin agricultural producers. Regardless, throughout the interwar era, dairy farmers continued to lobby the Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) administration for greater government involvement in their industry through a concerted campaign to regulate the price of milk. Farmer activism led to the 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act; however, this “Farm Relief Bill” did little to mitigate the poverty of local family operations, especially for those who sold milk for processing into commodities other than fluid for direct consumption.²⁷ Farmers consistently found themselves left out of federal New Deal legislation. Thus, Fox Valley dairymen joined with local industrial laborers to propel the Wisconsin Progressive Party into power across the state in 1934. Local voters knew that former governor Philip F. La Follette and his brother Robert M. La Follette Jr. had a decent working relationship with FDR and hoped that politicians would support working-class causes in Washington D.C. The effects of the Great Depression were widespread, and between 1928 and 1932 farm prices fell by over half.²⁸ According to Walter M. Singler, the President of the Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool, federal leaders had done little to help struggling Fox Valley dairy producers. He hoped that a locally focused political party with the

25, 2019, at <https://www.education.wisc.edu/docs/WebDispenser/soe-documents/indian-soldiers-defend-the-united-states.pdf?sfvrsn=0>; *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1946* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1946), 71-134.

²⁷ “Mid-West Dairymen Consider Striking: Price Cutting and Narrowing Markets Place Industry in Bad Position,” *New York Times*, February 19, 1933; and “Milk Strikes Looms in the Northwest,” *New York Times*, April 16, 1933.

²⁸ On the drop in farm prices and the role that agricultural producers had in the formation of Wisconsin’s Progressive Party, see *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1935* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1935), 47-64; and Robert Booth Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes: An Electoral History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 142-65.

reform-minded La Follettes in charge would help to deter corrupt government officials, in whom rural Wisconsin residents had lost faith.²⁹

Ironically, concerns similar to those that led to the distrust of federal politicians existed within the Wisconsin Progressive Party. Although the La Follettes had run on a platform that sought to undermine cronyism, a segment of Fox Valley leaders and residents doubted whether the brothers practiced the “clean government” that their campaign slogans had promised voters.³⁰ For instance, on July 18, 1935, not even six months after regaining his position as governor of the state, Philip La Follette received a letter from one of his Wisconsin Progressive Party constituents, questioning his commitment to eradicating partisan bribery. Former Kaukauna paper-mill worker and local dairy farmer Anton M. Miller, a proud Social Democrat, expressed his dissatisfaction with developments in the state’s progressive movement.³¹ Specifically, he suggested that corporate interests had been influencing the actions of the La Follette administration. Explaining that he was the current chairman of both the “Farmer-Labor and Progressive League of Outagamie County” and the “Progressive Party precinct organization of Outagamie County,” Miller challenged the governor’s political aspirations as well as his commitment to the local cause. Although respectful, the tone of his letter revealed that factions existed within Wisconsin’s celebrated third party. Miller asserted that La Follette needed to

²⁹ Donald R. McCoy, “The Formation of the Wisconsin Progressive Party in 1934,” *The Historian* 14, no. 1 (Autumn 1951): 70-90; Mark Rhea Byers, “A New La Follette Party,” *The North American Review* 237, no. 5 (May 1934): 401-09; and Robert W. Ozanne, *The Labor Movement in Wisconsin: A History* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1984), 123-36.

³⁰ Concerns about Philip La Follette participating in political cronyism and asserting excessive control over his political associations existed not only in the Fox River Valley but also throughout the state. See Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 142-47; Ozanne, *The Labor Movement in Wisconsin*, 133-36.

³¹ A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette, July 18, 1935, Box 1, Folder 3, Judge Dohr Collection, Outagamie County Historical Society Archives, Appleton, WI.

protect his reputation by distancing himself from those who claimed loyalty to the “Progressives” when they were actually interlopers.³²

The concerns that Miller addressed in his message to the governor were not unlike those expressed a decade earlier by state politicians who had worked alongside La Follette’s father, Robert M. La Follette Sr.³³ Although both men were popular, they also were scrutinized for their excessive professional ambitions and clear attempts to create and control all aspects of a political machine that served their career goals. Indeed, in his correspondence with Philip La Follette, Miller wrote to the governor to “call his attention to the serious situation [that had been] arising in the Progressive Party of Wisconsin.” According to the Outagamie County activist, “there were too many newly made Progressives formerly died (*sic*) in the wool of stalwart democrats or republicans [threatening] to gain prestige and leadership in the Progressive Party.” In effort to explain this phenomenon, Miller recounted how “on Tuesday, July 9th [1935] Professor Albert Franzke and Mr. Carl Smith had [arrived at his] farm to invite [him] to a meeting,” and insisted the farmer “keep [his] mouth shut” about the gathering. After he agreed to attend, Miller discovered that over “half those present [had] never identified with the Progressive movement before,” and that the organizers of the event had not invited “the most loyal and active members” of the party in Outagamie County.³⁴ Instead, Miller explained that

³² Ibid.

³³ Concerns about nepotism in the La Follette Sr. political machine existed throughout Wisconsin in the early twentieth century; see L.T. Crabtree, *The Wayback Club: A Text Book on Progressivism in Wisconsin with An Analysis of Initiative, Referendum, Recall* (Crandon, WI: Crandon Publishing Co., 1913); Robert S. Maxwell, “La Follette and the Progressive Machine in Wisconsin,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 48, no. 1 (March 1952): 55-70; Robert S. Maxwell, *La Follette and the Rise of Progressives in Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1956); 15-20; and Jorn Brondal, *Ethnic Leadership and Midwestern Politics: Scandinavian-Americans and the Progressive Movement in Wisconsin* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 152-56.

³⁴ A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette.

the group of men that had congregated had planned to subvert the leadership of those who already had “worked hard” to maintain “Progressive institutions” in Wisconsin.

The “impostors,” however, claimed that they were working for Philip La Follette and held the gathering at the request of the governor. Apparently, this was not an isolated event, because Miller maintained that a “Mr. Frank Durham of the Durham Lumber Company of Neenah ‘had been touring [Wisconsin] representing himself as speaking for [La Follette’s] administration,’” claiming that he was the governor’s “personal representative” and “was high in the ranks of the new party.” At the Outagamie County meeting, Miller explained how the local industrialist alleged that he was in constant contact with La Follette regarding the network “of leaders and chiefs” from each Wisconsin county who would determine the business activities of the party and ensure La Follette’s longevity as governor. Even though Durham had not affiliated himself with the movement before the rise of the official Progressive Party, Miller complained that the lumber baron and former Republican “had visited [Outagamie] county a number of times on secret missions.” Miller also reported that Durham had insisted that as head of the “state-wide organization campaign,” his honorary appointees would report to him directly on “all matters pertaining to the interests of the Progressive” agenda.³⁵ Although they would comprise a “non-dues-paying [*sic*] membership,” these men would dictate the party platform and determine who would run for local political offices on the Wisconsin Progressive ticket not only in Outagamie County, but throughout the state.

Outraged, Miller explained that “the secret scheme of organization as sponsored by Mr. Durham who claims he has met with one hundred percent success in so establishing such units everywhere has been an undemocratic attempt to force a political dictatorship from the top

³⁵ Ibid.

down.” This was unacceptable to Miller, who had devoted his life to the Progressive cause in Wisconsin. He alleged that Republicans and Democrats, “acting under the guise of the Progressive Party affiliation,” had “captured” political dominance through their economic influence, and it worried the dairy farmer. He wanted to keep the movement “truelly [*sic*] progressive.” Durham’s “record was everything but Progressive.” According to Miller, this flagrant political hijacking would not only give those with financial clout unregulated control over the party, but it would also undermine the central goals of Progressivism in the state. According to Miller, by deliberately and covertly selecting candidates who would further their industrial aspirations, these “associates” threatened democracy in Wisconsin. Next, he appealed to La Follette, maintaining, “Mr. Durham cannot succeed in his despicable attempts or efforts,” and “obliged” the governor “to publically renounce the candidacy of [Durham], a man running for the assembly who claimed [La Follette’s] personal friendship and association.” Finally, Miller warned, “unless these activities are stopped and stopped at once, I can foresee that it may become necessary that this be brought to public light.” As Miller’s letter suggests, local workers wanted area capitalists to stay out of political leadership, especially in Wisconsin’s Progressive Party.³⁶ Dairy farmers and industrial laborers were still struggling; yet local business elites threatened to take over their political party. Thus, Miller urged La Follette to represent the interests of the working-class coalition who put the representative in government office.

In reaction to this “dangerous” meeting in the Fox River Valley, Miller wanted La Follette to make clear to the “new [Progressive] converts” that there was already an organized farmer-labor coalition that existed in the region. Not only was the local agricultural producer an important player in the left-wing alliance in Outagamie County, but Miller knew several popular

³⁶ A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette.

community members who were as committed to the movement as him. The men who were at the recent gathering had slandered his political allies and compatriots in the Progressive Party. For example, Miller alleged that Durham had spoken “critically of Congressmen Thomas Amlie and accused him of being communistic and that he was not working in harmony” with La Follette, and predicted that he would not be reelected again.³⁷ The “bitterness” with which the lumber baron discussed Miller’s political colleagues astounded the Kaukauna dairy farmer.³⁸ As his testimony demonstrates, working-class residents had struggled tirelessly to form a political party that represented their cultural values and economic needs, not those of an elite Fox Valley industrialist. They wanted support in government and were persistent about their demands.

Moreover, according to the Miller, Durham had “attacked the leadership of [District Attorney] Samuel Sigman,” claiming that “he was elected by accident,” and predicting that “he would not be reelected to office again.” Miller reminded La Follette of the “valuable and unselfish service” of people like Sigman, “who did much of the work [in the] persistent fight for the Progressive cause.” Given the popularity and dedication of the Outagamie County District Attorney, Miller implored La Follette to “not only drop [Durham] from [his] confidence but that [he] disclaim [Durham’s] right to represent [La Follette] in the Progressive Movement.” By doing so, the dairymen contended that the Neenah industrialist had accomplished what the “enemies of the Progressive Movement” desired, using the party itself as his vehicle of political

³⁷ Ibid. On Congressman Thomas Amlie and his efforts to improve the economic situation of dairy farmers in Wisconsin, see Lorence, “Gerald J. Boileau and the Politics of Sectionalism,” 120-75; John E. Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette, the Wisconsin Progressives, and the New Deal* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982), 138-215; and Lester Schmidt, “The Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation: The Study of a 'United Front' Movement among Wisconsin Liberals, 1934–1941” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1954), 120-25 and 389-94.

³⁸ A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette.

destruction.³⁹ Miller urged the governor to think about the Fox Valley electorate. Dairy farmers and their urban counterparts had expressed their dissatisfaction with corporate businessmen passing laws that did not benefit local workers, culturally or economically. They needed people like Sigman in office to help protect them. Thus, working-class people would continue their activism until they had politicians who did so.

According to Miller, the “incident in Outagamie County” did not reflect well on La Follette or his political colleagues. Rather, “Mr. Durham [carried] the philosophy of the former conservative,” and was “not interested in a Progressive Party under the leadership of true and tried Progressives of independent thinking.” Instead, the Fox Valley businessman was “anxious to plug the Progressive Party with leadership of the new converts in order, as he put it, to give the Progressive Party the stability of conservatives from the ranks of the professions and business.” Durham did not have “confidence in the rank and file of the Progressive movement.” This posed a significant threat to Miller, who believed that the issue required La Follette’s “immediate action.” The governor needed to stop the assault on local leaders, “who [had] in their own right gained the confidence of their community and the Progressives.” By allowing an imposter to speak on his behalf, Miller thought that La Follette was helping to undermine the support for “already established Progressive groups affiliated with the Farmer-Labor and the Progressive League of Wisconsin.” This was “an organization of rank and file Progressive men and women,” he argued, that worked “in the interests of the Progressive” movement and carried on “the bitter fight to establish the reforms advocated” by the party.⁴⁰ According to Miller’s

³⁹ Ibid. On the role of Stalwart Republicans attempting to undermine the platform of Wisconsin’s Progressive Party, see Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 220-27 and 280; and Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette, the Wisconsin Progressives, and the New Deal*, 154-58.

letter, La Follette's failure to speak out against the corrupt actions of Frank Durham and his associates threatened the values and daily livelihood of workers not only in the Fox Valley, but across Wisconsin. Workers made electoral choices based on their values and ability to ensure their livelihood; by doing so, they shaped the local political landscape to reflect their preferences.

Indeed, the Kaukauna farmer's warnings to the governor foreshadowed events that would transpire three years later when the precarious New Deal coalition fractured in Wisconsin, never to recover. This occurred in 1938, the same year that the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool began to dissolve. Following foreclosures on family dairy operations across the state, wealthier agricultural producers acquired more land, and those who were willing to take on debt invested in new technologies.⁴¹ Since farmers met little success petitioning federal officials for help subsidizing milk prices, and they did not benefit from protections provided by the Wagner Act (the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, which protected organized labor), many became distrustful of the FDR administration.⁴² Wisconsin farmers had looked to La Follette to generate support for rural families among politicians in Washington D.C., and they were increasingly disappointed in him. Not only did they come to associate the governor with the president and his "liberal establishment" on Capitol Hill, but they also disapproved of his blatant and egoistic

⁴⁰ A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette. On infighting within Wisconsin's Progressive party as well as the grassroots origins of the movement, see Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 130-45, 155-62 and 225-27; and "Executive Committee Meeting, January 9, 1935," and "Meeting Report, December 16, 1936," Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison.

⁴¹ "Meeting Report, November 30, 1937," Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison; "Memories of America's Dairyland," August 10, 2016 at <https://wfbf.com/general-agriculture/memories-from-americas-dairyland/>; Paul Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 5: *War, a New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 133-36 and 360-63; and *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1935* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1935), 47-64.

⁴² Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 85-7, 132-35, 207-9, Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 142-145; and 248; and Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette*, 26-32.

political ambitions.⁴³ Additionally, dairy farmers argued that collective bargaining among labor unions diverged from the independently focused, individualistic concerns of dairymen.

Although the rural and industrial workers who supported Wisconsin's progressive movement had identified overlapping goals during the formation of the farmer-labor coalition in the early 1930s, this had changed by the end of the decade.

Despite the success of Wisconsin's Progressive Party in gaining several key government offices throughout the state, those who held these positions did not always share economic ideology or social policy goals. Similarly, the cultural values of their constituencies were diverse and at times in conflict, which created difficulty for local representatives who sought to demonstrate their commitment to the new third party and simultaneously maintain the support of their voting base. Meanwhile, divisions within the progressive movement had developed even before the official founding of the party and La Follette's reelection to the governorship in 1935. Potential dissidents tended to vote for him as their best available option, however, given the generally popular reputation of his family and his significant experience as a professional public servant.⁴⁴ Thus, although they threatened to create an independent farmer-labor party that would represent both the capitalist and collectivist economic desires of their working-class supporters, socialists, populists, and progressives from rural and urban Wisconsin put their joint resources behind Philip La Follette and his political machine. Those who did so believed that together they

⁴³ "La Follettes are Attacked in Talk By Joseph Walsh," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 31, 1936; Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette*, 140-43, 160-78; Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 142-66; and Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 107-12, 173-221.

⁴⁴ As in every major Wisconsin election, the electorate in 1935 was divided. In Appleton, for instance, Albert Schmedemen, La Follette's Democratic challenger, won in every ward of the city, despite the strength of the progressive movement in the region. A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette; *The Wisconsin Blue Book*, 567-618; Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette, the Wisconsin Progressives, and the New Deal*, 79-87, 91-92, 154-58; and "La Follettes are Attacked in Talk By Joseph Walsh."

could foster a united movement against the corporate businessmen who sought to manage the Wisconsin's fiscal trajectory.⁴⁵ As a result of their electoral choices and activism, Fox Valley workers sparked the rise of the Progressive Party in Wisconsin. They had shaped the local political climate to reflect their cultural values and economic concerns.

The official Wisconsin Progressive Party formed in Fond du Lac on May 19, 1934. Just before, however, a radical branch of the labor movement that included dairy farmers, who had participated in or at least backed the efforts of the 1933 milk strikes, announced that they planned to form their own statewide third party. Congressman Thomas Amlie and his allies throughout the state decided that they had enough support from disgruntled agricultural producers and struggling industrial workers not only in the Fox River Valley, but all around Wisconsin.⁴⁶ This coalition, which included Socialists from the northern and eastern regions of the state, formed the Farmer-Labor and Progressive League, which established municipal and county branches and became the foundation of the new party. Indeed, this grassroots alliance of workers, which included a range of occupations and a broad spectrum of economic perspectives and political affiliations, created the electoral strength necessary to catapult Philip La Follette back into the governorship. Despite concerns related to his commitment to a liberal state apparatus, he won the election. He was victorious not only due to his long list of influential

⁴⁵ Glad, *The History of Wisconsin, vol. 5: War, a New Era, and Depression*, 579-85; Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 125-38; "A New Deal in Government As Seen From Day to Day," and "America Looks Ahead," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, November 9, 1934; "La Follette's Platform," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 1, 1934; "Senator Will Talk on Behalf of Candidacies of President Roosevelt and Governor La Follette," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 28, 1936; "Political Potpourri," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 3, 1936, and "La Follette Receives Largest Plurality in His Political Career," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, November 5, 1936.

⁴⁶ Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 129-38; Glad, *The History of Wisconsin, vol. 5: War, a New Era, and Depression*, 437, and 537-53; and "Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the State Board of Directors and Factory Representatives, Green Bay, Wisconsin, August 30, 1940," Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7; "Last Minute State Expenditures Are Reported By Mail," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 28, 1936.

professional allies but especially because of the collaboration and dedication of workers from nearly every locality in Wisconsin.⁴⁷

The goals of the Wisconsin Progressive Party were multifaceted and inclusive by design, though government representatives soon found that they were difficult to sustain. Not long after the formation of the political party, challenges arose that stemmed from the partisan differences, diverse cultural beliefs, and daily economic realities of the party's constituency.⁴⁸ Rural and urban workers had conflicting priorities. Industrial workers primarily benefitted from the shop-floor protections that New Deal legislation created. Indeed, agricultural workers did not have the same need for workplace safety regulations as their urban counterparts, and dairymen wanted to manage what transpired on their land. Thus to progressive-minded farmers, the industrial needs of cities seemed to overshadow rural matters, which created a rift between these two groups in the interwar era. Moreover, the devastating financial effect that the Great Depression had on dairy farmers exacerbated this ideological division. Yet, both sides agreed that despite their contradictory perspectives that they needed to join forces to overcome industrial monopoly.⁴⁹

Given the history of progressivism in the state, radical agricultural leaders knew that farmers' resentful reactions to the success of urban workers only aided the supremacy of large

⁴⁷ *The Wisconsin Blue Book*, 567-618; Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 143-150; A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette; and "La Follette Receives Largest Plurality in His Political Career."

⁴⁸ Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 142-66; and Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette*, 127-62.

⁴⁹ Although the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool sought to bargain for fair prices with the "dairy monopolies," this was different than the collective negotiations that unionized Fox River Valley industrial workers had with their employers, which focused on hours, wages, and workplace conditions. Given that most dairy farmers were family-run operations, they were less concerned with workday length or workplace safety. These differences were leading causes behind the splintering of the progressive coalition in Wisconsin. See Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 5: *War, a New Era, and Depression*, 435-556; "Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the State Board of Directors and Factory Representatives, Green Bay, August 30, 1940," Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7; and "La Follette Receives Largest Plurality in His Political Career."

business owners, especially wealthy local capitalists like the paper barons and lumber tycoons. Meanwhile, the deeply entrenched political power of area economic elites continued to threaten the fragile balance that existed among the disparate factions of this loose partisan coalition. As the letter from Miller to La Follette suggests, although members of the Farmer-Labor and Progressive League and the Progressive Party precinct organization of Outagamie County had worked tirelessly to gain the trust of local voters, their efforts were in jeopardy.⁵⁰ The possibility that the La Follette administration had colluded with former Republicans to undermine the democratic process in exchange for La Follette's political longevity not only threatened the progressive movement but also upset local activists. Evidence of undemocratic and secretive interactions like these fostered suspicion of government officials among the working-class electorate. This was especially the case for those who felt that they did not benefit from the economic reforms of the New Deal.⁵¹ Rural workers needed legislation that protected their economic interests and the realities of their daily lives in agricultural America. Thus, they began to drift away from Wisconsin's progressive coalition and looked towards the Republican Party.

Ultimately, disagreements among members of the farmer-labor coalition over public welfare reflected the differences between those who lived in urban centers and their counterparts in the countryside. Dairy farmers needed government regulation of milk prices in order to stay in business; and unlike urban workers, they did not benefit from unemployment compensation. Their top priority was the maintenance of their farms and earning enough income to feed their families. This required healthy cows, which needed constant milking. Thus, unlike their industrial counterparts, dairy farmers did not want politicians to focus on securing paid time off

⁵⁰ A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette.

⁵¹ Ibid; Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 142-166; Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette*, 127-62; and "La Follettes are Attacked in Talk By Joseph Walsh."

for workers.⁵² Instead, most agricultural producers invested their lives in their land, which in many cases their families had occupied for at least a generation. As a result, their concerns centered on cultivating crops and maintaining cattle. Additionally, given that farmers generally did not have to contend with the daily realities and challenges of city landscapes, funding for amenities like parks, schools, and waterworks were not at the forefront of their political platform. Thus, most farmers were not overly interested in supporting measures for stronger municipal government or improved local infrastructure. They did not believe that they personally benefitted from these community developments.⁵³ Instead, they concerned themselves with ensuring their individual liberties, which included maintaining the economic stability of their farms and protecting their way of life in the local countryside. These matters are what ultimately shaped their choices at the voting booth.

Nonetheless, the close proximity between city and country, and the reliance that the people that lived in these communities had on each other, led to a shared sense of cultural values that helped fuel the success of Wisconsin's Progressive Party. This mutually beneficial relationship had a long history that extended back to the late nineteenth century, when European immigrants began settling in the Fox River Valley in large numbers. During the 1880s, for instance, people who helped tend to their family farms often worked in local factories as well. They did so in order to survive and continued to well into the twentieth century.⁵⁴ Thus, area

⁵² "Political Parasites Worst Problem for Farmers," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, March 23, 1936; "Hoan Vote Cut," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, March 23, 1936; Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 225-32; and Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette*, 151-62.

⁵³ *Ibid*; "Memories of America's Dairyland," August 10, 2016; "Marinette County Picnic, August 16, 1936," Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7; and "La Follettes are Attacked in Talk By Joseph Walsh."

residents valued both forms of labor, understanding that industry and husbandry were interdependent and central to the success of the local economy. This perspective shifted, however, following the outbreak of World War I, when the demand for American foodstuffs spiked drastically. The increased financial investment necessary to acquire more land and the latest technologies, along with the constant physical exertion that dairy farming required, meant that agricultural producers usually did not have time to devote to another job. Thus, as Fox Valley farm sizes increased to meet wartime demands and manufacturing simultaneously expanded to fuel the defense industry, not only did the local economy transform, but Wisconsinites also became increasingly divided along occupational and geographic lines.⁵⁵ Regardless, dairymen knew people who worked in the lumber, paper, and meatpacking industries and continued to interact with urbanites, who were often family members and friends, when they traveled to local cities to sell milk and produce.⁵⁶ Thus, the interdependent relationship between cities and rural America was important in the Fox River Valley, as it shaped the drifting political geography of the region and the Midwest more broadly.

⁵⁴ Michael O'Brien, Oral History Interview with Al Kass, Menasha Local History Collection, accessed on October 15, 2019, at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/WebZ/FETCH?sessionid=01-48292-234668723&recno=2&resultset=2&format=F&next=html/nffull.html&bad=error/badfetch.html&entitytoprecno=2&entitycurrecno=2>; and Oral History Interview with Ole Jorgensen, Neenah Public Library Local History Collection, accessed on October 20, 2019 at <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/WebZ/FETCH?sessionid=01-48292-234668723&recno=30&resultset=2&format=F&next=html/nffull.html&bad=error/badfetch.html&entitytoprecno=30&entitycurrecno=30>; and "Memories of America's Dairyland."

⁵⁵ *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1935*, 47-64; Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 5: *War, a New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940*, 133-36 and 360-63; "Union Party's Candidate Will Give Talk Here," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 28, 1936; "Bob La Follette Will Speak Here Saturday Night," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 28, 1936; and "Memories of America's Dairyland."

⁵⁶ Michael O'Brien, Oral History Interview with Al Kass; and Oral History Interview with Ole Jorgensen; and "Memories of America's Dairyland."

Despite these frequent interactions, rural dwellers did not accept responsibility for the comfort of those who lived in nearby industrial centers. Their primary focus was on ensuring a fair price for their product, as it had been during the milk strikes in 1933. Following the passage of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) dairy farmers became increasingly suspicious of the Roosevelt administration as well as of Philip La Follette, who they viewed as FDR's political ally. Although the AAA included dairy as one of the targeted commodities for subsidization, in reality, this did little to help struggling Fox Valley farmers. Cows required milking, and unless producers decided to sell their animals and shift to a different form of agriculture, the benefit of limiting production was minimal. Also, southern Democrats held significant influence in the House of Representatives and on congressional committees, which concerned struggling midwestern farmers, who were witnessing the South's move from cotton and tobacco to dairy. This created an oversupply, which caused the price of milk to plummet.⁵⁷

Cooperative officials explained the grim situation facing dairy farmers and used it as an organizing tactic at the 4th Annual Milk Pool Picnic, which they held just north of Green Bay on August 16, 1937. Presenters focused their discussion on developing an effective method for "securing for dairy farmers a large portion of the consumers dollar," as well as educating area residents about the connection between New Deal policies and the plight of food cultivators nationwide. For instance, during the gathering, H. F. Dries, Secretary of the Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool, clarified to members that the AAA was actually hurting agricultural producers, while "lining the pockets" of large distributors. Not only had New Deal legislation

⁵⁷ "Marinette County Picnic, August 16, 1936," Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7; "A New Deal in Government As Seen From Day to Day," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, October 5, 1934; Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 225-32; and Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette*, 151-62.

failed dairy farmers by not outlining an effective strategy to keep them in business, but the language of the law was ambiguous as well. This created an opening for large industrialists to claim enormous tax refunds through “legalized steal[ing].” According to Dries, “the Big Four” meatpacking corporations—Armour, Swift, Cudahy, and Wilson—sought to collect over a hundred million dollars in alleged losses that they incurred under the AAA. He claimed that by filing suits against the U.S. government under the “Windfall Tax” provision, food-processing monopolies “managed to weaken the [AAA] so effectively” that corporations could lawfully pass their fiscal liabilities onto consumers.⁵⁸

Thus, during this local meeting of dairy farmers, participants raised questions about the role of federal bureaucracy in everyday life in the rural Midwest. At this picnic, which took place in Beaver, Wisconsin, agricultural producers demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the AAA. They argued that the legislation disproportionately protected the financial interests of corporate food processors at the expense of small-scale farmers and “ordinary” Americans. For example, Milk Pool members argued that with the help of congressional representatives, large industrialists had manipulated the “sloppy” loopholes created by overzealous and inattentive federal officials who “paraded around” claiming that they were “public servants.” According to Fox River Valley dairy farmers, politicians had overstepped their job descriptions by regulating the U.S. economy in ways that protected the interests of Wall Street investors and wealthy businessmen. These rural Americans also argued that the Roosevelt administration appeared

⁵⁸ “Marinette County Picnic, August 16, 1936,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7. For more on this controversial issue see, A.M. Miller to Honorable Philip F. La Follette.

“communistic” in its support of measures that had created a “bloated” government apparatus aimed at corporate control.⁵⁹

In a closing statement at the 1937 Milk Pool meeting, Secretary Dries made an appeal to “farmers not yet belonging to the organization” that they “should join its ranks and help the unit in order to control the dairy industry by the producers.” Members did not need politicians to tell them how to operate their dairy businesses. Rather, they believed that producers should have determined how they managed their property.⁶⁰ Thus, although the cooperative would continue to lobby local representatives and the federal government to ensure “reasonable profits” from their dairy products, they preferred private ownership and individual choice regarding the ways in which they ran their farms. Moreover, they opposed the FDR administration’s partiality towards wealthy southern elites, urban dwellers over rural residents, and manufacturing over agriculture. This stance divided the Progressive movement and foreshadowed the fate of the liberal coalition in the U.S.

Dairy farmers tended to believe that New Deal legislation was based on a “production for use” model, which served as a foundational component of socialism.⁶¹ They worried that by paying farmers to work only when there was a demand for their products, federal officials were not only ensuring the monopoly of milk processors and food distributors, but also, paradoxically, encouraging the spread of communism instead of a slightly regulated form of capitalism. Central to the ideological outlook of local dairy cooperatives were the practical necessities of successful

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “Minutes of the Special Board of Directors’ Meeting, Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool, June 25, 1937,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7.

⁶¹ “1940 Convention: Ladies’ Auxiliary to the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 9; and “Marinette County Picnic, August 16, 1936.”

farming, which required diverse and continuous labor. Farmers did not have the “luxury” of structured vacations or even regular work hours. The means of production were not “predictable” machines, but living beings with inconsistent behaviors that created both regular and varying tasks for their human caretakers. Animal sickness, inclement weather, and infertile soil could cause momentary chaos for farmers and their co-laborers, who were often their children. Management was key to a successful dairy operation, but its organization did not resemble a factory, and capable substitute workers were not easy to acquire.⁶² Farm families did not profit by following industrial rhythms. Rather, they survived by observing agricultural time. This disagreement between industrialists and rural workers over which business standard would best serve Americans represented divergent occupations as well as cultural differences. Fox Valley workers, both urban and rural, wanted politicians who represented their daily realities.

The split represented a shift in ideological thinking about the public responsibility of mutually caring for fellow community members. Although Wisconsin’s Progressive Party had emerged as a result of the social activism of diverse residents who collectively sought economic justice, the movement had evolved into a political machine that increasingly protected a monolithic, conservative, and exclusive version of the American Dream.⁶³ One facet of this vision called for the reproduction of a national image that rejected collectivism and embraced self-reliance in a way that disparaged the redistribution of wealth and relied on the individual responsibility of citizens. At the epicenter of this philosophy was a hatred of socialism, a fear that morphed into a form of anti-liberalism by the beginning of World War II. Concerns about excessive government spending, accusations that state officials pandered to the demands of

⁶² Ibid.; and “Minutes of the Special Board of Directors’ Meeting, June 25, 1937.”

urban dwellers, and paranoia about the role of government in the private lives of Americans spread throughout the rural U.S., notably in the Midwest, as well as in the once politically radical Fox Valley branch of the Wisconsin Milk Pool.⁶⁴

For example, beginning in the mid-1930s, local cooperative officials warned against associating with “spies” that existed within the organization, and actively dismissed members who identified with anti-capitalism. Indeed, in one instance, a devoted dairy farmer from Oshkosh lost his position in the organization for his economic views. According to H. H. Jack, president of the Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool in 1939, T. E. Furman had claimed that “he was an avowed communist,” and therefore was a danger to the association. As a result, the board of directors voted to expel “the traitor” as a public statement about the political perspectives that conflicted with the goals of area dairy farmers. In defense of this stance, “Mr. Jack stated that it is about time that we, as Americans, must take a definite decision as to whether we want communism or nazism [*sic*] in America,” and “that people supporting these foreign isms [*sic*] had no place in America. If they liked it better abroad, they should” have stayed there.⁶⁵

Such vitriolic patriotism and xenophobia characterized factions of Wisconsin’s Progressive Party, which contributed to the decline of the movement and led to the eventual

⁶⁴ “Minutes of the Special Board of Directors’ Meeting, Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool, September 23, 1939,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7. On the former radicalism of the Co-Operative, see “The Spirit of the Farm Wife” and “The Executive Board Takes Action On the Methods Used in Combating Farm Labor,” *The Wisconsin Dairyman’s News*, June 2, 1933. On the breakdown of the farmer-labor coalition, see Lorence “Gerald J. Boileau and the Politics of Sectionalism,” 120-75; Miller, *Governor Philip F. La Follette, the Wisconsin Progressives, and the New Deal*, 138-215; and Schmidt, “The Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation.”

⁶⁵ “Minutes of the Special Board of Directors’ Meeting, Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool, September 23, 1939.” Anne Folino White discusses the white nationalism and male patriarchy embedded in the dairy farmer movement during the early 1930s. I argue that this continued into the late 1930s. With the rise of fascism in Europe, dairy farmers emphasized their commitment to American democracy. See White, *Plowed Under: Food Policy Protests and Performance in New Deal America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 71-80.

downfall of the cooperative. In fact, this is one arena where factory workers and local farmers developed overlapping values by the end of the 1930s. Both groups had a shared identity as Americans who opposed communism. They differed, however, in their perspectives on how liberally the federal government should have regulated the economy. This difference, along with the financial recession of 1938, effectively ended the Milk Pool as an organization and weakened support for the FDR administration in the region, which contributed to the collapse of the New Deal coalition in the Midwest.⁶⁶

As a result, in 1938, Philip La Follette lost the election to maintain his position as governor, which signaled the beginning of a political shift that would occur over the next decade. Different opinions on the role of federal officials in regulating business and distributing social welfare to American citizens created ideological fissures in the fragile alliance. For instance, President J. N. Robbins clarified that one of the key philosophical disagreements between Milk Pool dairymen and their industrial counterparts in his 1940 address: “One striking difference between farming and other business is that the farmer has almost no control over the distribution of his products.”⁶⁷ That was why cooperatives were especially important to agricultural producers. They relied on these organizations for marketing and negotiating milk prices with state officials and the federal government as well as with processors and distributors.

Pool members, on the other hand, could not collectively bargain over shop-floor conditions, wages, or the length of a standard workday like factory workers, who farmers

⁶⁶ Historian James T. Lorence discusses political differences among dairy farmers and industrial laborers undermined their progressive coalition. Where my analysis differs is in my emphasis on the role of World War I in their initial coalition, as well as their shared investment in white nationalism and patriarchy. Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 5-20.

⁶⁷ “Annual Convention Report of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool, June 10-11, 1940.”

increasingly saw as “socialists.” Rather, agricultural producers toiled endlessly and viewed themselves as more manly for doing so. Individualism was a central component of the dairy farmer identity. In this same annual address, Robbins supported a motion to have T. E. Furman removed from the meeting floor for participating in “communistic activities.” Subsequently, the president emphasized the personal “responsibility” of each producer to the cooperative as well as the “independence” of dairymen. They needed each other but were in charge of their own labor. Unlike factory workers, farmers had to be “self-reliant.” Meanwhile, evidence that they had not benefited from the federal bureaucracy and “biased” legislation of the FDR administration fueled a rural antipathy towards “liberal elites,” including members of Wisconsin’s Progressive Party.⁶⁸ This debate over the role of government in working-class life would resurface following World War II in the Fox River Valley, and the backlash against the New Deal state that transpired in the late 1940s sparked a political realignment that would suffocate the Fox Valley’s progressive movement. As I argue in this section, workers, both urban and rural, made their electoral decisions based on the realities of their daily lives. They went to the voting booth with ideas in mind about which candidate would best represent their cultural values and economic interests. By doing so, they influenced the creation of a political climate that reflected not only their persistence but also their everyday bigotries and lifestyle preferences. Their self-activity mattered, as it had lasting social consequences not only in Wisconsin but throughout the U.S.

⁶⁸ Ibid.; Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 5-20.

Postwar Populism and Prejudice

On the verge of U.S. entry into World War II, the Fox River Valley political climate was in flux, and the dominance of Wisconsin Progressives was not secure. Although the state had historically voted Republican, polling places had been contested battlegrounds since Wisconsin's inception as a state. Local residents sought electoral campaigns that reflected their cultural practices and employment circumstances; and as much if not more than partisanship, workers supported candidates who represented the realities of their daily lives, whether in a nearby city or the surrounding countryside.⁶⁹ In the early twentieth century, voters demonstrated this practice at the ballot box by backing a party that had its grassroots origins in working-class homes across the region. The broad spectrum of belief systems that Progressive candidates embodied reflected the diversity of the ethnic, religious, and financial perspectives of their constituencies, and successful politicians had to effectively address the proclivities of their electorate. Hence, I argue that the failure of the Philip La Follette administration to include the struggles of dairymen in his welfare state created animosity among a segment of Wisconsin voters, which in turn contributed to the demise of the state's only viable third-party option. Thus, through their daily self-activity, local workers shaped the Fox Valley political atmosphere in ways that resonated with them and reflected their cultural values and everyday preferences.

This led to a breakdown of the New Deal coalition that in turn demonstrated how anti-communism, racism, and patriarchy had influenced the platform of the farmer-labor movement. For example, believing that people who lived in urban centers benefitted more from the "socialist" programs of FDR, rural workers pushed for a reduction in federal bureaucracy and a

⁶⁹ On Wisconsin as a dedicated Republican state, see Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 120-85.

government apparatus that did not align itself with the “special interests” of “foreigners.”⁷⁰ Then, by the late 1930s, as fascism gained power in Europe, the underlying ethnic and gendered prejudices that policymakers embedded in the Progressive agenda resurfaced and hardened alongside U.S. military involvement overseas. The technological revolution in agricultural production along with the expansion of the defense industry transformed the national economy and powered the rise of a multicultural, though predominantly white, middle class by the end of World War II. As a result, the everyday concerns of industrial workers drifted from an emphasis on shop-floor conditions to an ability to purchase a sense of belonging through identification as modern American consumers.⁷¹ This change in values meant that area residents placed less emphasis on their “Old World” traditions and cultural differences. Yet it also reinvigorated a popular belief in white male supremacy, which in turn heightened fears that residents had about people who displayed “undesirable” racial characteristics in the region. As long as residents

⁷⁰ As this anti-communist discourse gained popularity during the late 1930s, the leadership of labor unions and dairy associations like the Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool made significant efforts to silence the more radical voices of the farmer-labor movement that had sparked the wave of strikes that occurred in both industry and agriculture in 1933. Those who participated in the protests had experienced greater financial hardship than those who opposed such activism. Although farmers of all ethnicities participated in the milk dumps, they included a significant number of southern and eastern Europeans as well as American Indians. Thus, after Governor Albert G. Schmedemen called on the state militia to disrupt the demonstrations, more conservative members of the cooperative claimed that “outsiders” were the primary people protesting and that “foreigners” had devised the demonstration and encouraged the farmers’ tactics. The State Board of Directors of the Milk Pool was referring to the socialist groups that worked alongside the National Farm Holiday Association, especially The United Farmers League, which was a communist-led organization. See “Statement by President Walter M. Singler,” Wisconsin Milk Pool Co-operative Records, Box 1, Folder 1; “Violence Mounts in the Milk Strike,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1933; “The Milk Strike,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, February 23, 1933; and “Minutes of the Special Board of Directors’ Meeting, June 25, 1937.”

⁷¹ Here I draw on Lizabeth Cohen, who maintains “that in the aftermath of World War II a fundamental shift in America’s economy, politics, and culture took place, with major consequences for how Americans made a living, where they dwelled, how they interacted with others, what and how they consumed,” and expectations that they had of their elected officials. According to Cohen, the significance of this Consumers’ Republic “was its powerful symbolism as the prosperous American alternative to the material deprivations of communism.” Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic*, 8.

could pass as white and were Christian, however, they increasingly experienced social inclusion, even those who had previously felt like outsiders due to their ethnic backgrounds.⁷² American Indians and women in general continued to experience daily oppression and discrimination, not only at the workplace, but also out in their local communities. Yet, despite these challenges, working-class people, across racial and gendered lines, continued to decide whom to vote for in ways that reflected their daily preferences and religious beliefs. For local Natives, although the polling place was an important avenue for expanding their cultural and economic freedoms, like their white counterparts, American Indians chose which aspects of corporate capitalism to incorporate into their social worlds and resisted what they thought would not support their tribal necessities. Through this self-activity, area indigenous peoples influenced the shape of the region's political landscape not only on reservations, but also throughout Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, disagreements over who constituted the typical American worker and the successful dairy farmer subsided momentarily during the war. Despite the generally cohesive effect that the military conflict had on Americans, bigotries quickly reemerged when it ended, with at least three profound political consequences.⁷³ First, those who continued to believe in a

⁷² This marked an important change, especially for German, Irish, Dutch, and Polish Americans who had experienced a level of exclusion due to their ethnicity, even after their participation in World War I. The booming post-World War II American economy permitted white ethnic communities in the Fox Valley to refashion themselves as modern American neighborhoods, with households that boasted automobiles and refrigerators. Before the end of the war in 1945, working-class American men assessed themselves and each other along the lines of occupation and industrial skill level. The Consumers' Republic created an opening for a more inclusive citizenship that extended to all those who could buy a suburban image. This was on the surface, however, since women in general as well as racial and ethnic minorities continued to encounter discrimination in their ability to access employment and housing. See Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-16; Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Women Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (New York: Beacon Press, 2005), 9-19, 33-37, and 319-20; and Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 163-66.

federally controlled work relief program and a national social welfare system during the 1940s left the Wisconsin Progressive Party, which assured its downfall. Second, some who participated in this exodus joined with racial minorities and women, as well as others who did not agree with the pro-business agenda of the La Follette machine to energize the modern Democratic Party in the Midwest.⁷⁴ Third, the resentment that white workers felt against those who reaped the benefits of the New Deal state not only influenced their choices in “fiscally responsible” government representatives, who were generally Republicans, but also sparked the rise of a virulent strand of anti-communism in the U.S. This caused significant political divisions and fostered conservative community standards based on white, heteronormative family life. Indeed, the origins of both Progressivism and McCarthyism were intimately linked to the economic, cultural, and social outlooks of rural Americans and their neighbors in industrial towns and cities throughout the Fox River Valley.

For instance, in the early twentieth century, white male workers had struggled for their economic livelihood, and local businessmen blamed Senator Robert M. “Fighting Bob” La Follette Sr. and the Menominee sawmill for the depressed economy in east-central Wisconsin. According to L. T. Crabtree, a stalwart Republican and stockholder in the Crandon State Bank, “Fighting Bob” claimed to be the “voice” of “God’s patient poor.” Yet the “progressive” policies of the La Follette administration hurt small lumber manufacturers and large wood-products factories in Wisconsin.⁷⁵ For example, Senator La Follette had supported the

⁷³ I am not suggesting that racism and sexism did not exist during World War II, but rather that the war forced employers to look to white women and men and women of color to fill jobs and thus fuel American industrial capitalism, see Stevens, ed., *Women Remember the War, 1941-1945*, 88-135; *The Wisconsin Book, 1942* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Co., 1942), 152-58; and *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1944* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Co., 1944), 75-79, 80-88, 110-13, and 438-47.

⁷⁴ On the modern Democratic Party in Wisconsin, see Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 166-85.

establishment of the Menominee sawmill, which opened on October 1, 1907. As a result, Crabtree claimed, local “shops” were losing clients to the Indian-run business. Menominees were using their trees for processing at their tribal operation, which meant that white lumbermen were having trouble acquiring timber. Crabtree complained that the new arrangement between state politicians and tribal officials disrupted earlier industry on the Menominee reservation. He argued: “when Indians did the logging and sold their logs to the regular sawmill men, practically all of the labor was done by Indian labor.” This was not the case after the Menominee controlled sawmill began operation. Instead, they were hiring “foreign” workers who were undermining wage levels in the region.⁷⁶

He alleged that small sawmill operators were also struggling in communities like his hometown of Crandon, which relied on the industry to support the local economy. He argued that a “wealth of timber [was] being cut and worse than wasted,” indicating that Menominee people did not know how to manage their product. Crabtree alleged that the Menominee-run factory depressed the profits of lumber barons in cities like Oshkosh, claiming that white working-class men suffered due to the loss of jobs at large lumber factories.⁷⁷ Perspectives like these fueled a rising distrust of government representatives and resentment towards La Follette and his fellow “liberal elites.” Meanwhile, such perspectives also demonstrate the origins of local racism. His grievances reveal not only frustration with La Follette, but also a popular belief

⁷⁵ L.T. Crabtree, *The Wayback Club: A Text Book on Progressivism in Wisconsin with An Analysis of Initiative, Referendum, Recall* (Crandon, WI: Crandon Publishing Co., 1913), 180.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 177. On La Follette Sr. and his relationship with Wisconsin Indians, see Jorn Brondal, “The Ethnic and Racial Side of Robert M. La Follette Sr.,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era* 10, No. 3 (July 2011): 340-53.

that federal officials gave special treatment to American Indians. Thus, anti-Native prejudice had deep roots in Progressive-era Wisconsin.

For example, Oneida tribal member Stadler King discussed his experiences with Fox Valley prejudice and how it made daily life more difficult for Native peoples in a 1930 interview with the Works Progress Administration (WPA). King said that during the early twentieth century, Outagamie County wood-products unions excluded Native Americans from their ranks. At the same time, factory owners hired local Indians as replacements during work stoppages, which in turn fueled regional racism. For example, in 1916, King worked at Interlake Paper Mills in Appleton. The industrial laborer explained that he made “three dollars a day” as a replacement worker and that “when [he] got inside the mill [he] could not come out.”⁷⁸ On two occasions when he did “escape,” he went to visit his wife, “who hardly knew [him] he was so white almost like a real white man [*sic*],” from being inside all day and night. He also remembered that “there were about forty Oneidas working there and about fifty Italians.” And there were the “union men,” who “would come to the gates or entrance sometime but there were always police on guard.” Even though there were “two police men on each side of the grounds” who patrolled the mills and protected factory property, King and his Oneida co-worker Elijah John “sneaked away,” along with two Italian men “who knew the city better.” Apparently seeing “outsiders” on urban streets made white residents “uneasy,” however. When the four men

⁷⁸ I gained access to this WPA oral interview from Herbert S. Lewis, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Lewis graciously emailed me this narrative, which came from the collection of notebooks that he helped edit and later published in Lewis and L. Gordon McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives: Long Lost Voices of the Wisconsin Oneidas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005). The above information he titled “Work in the Appleton Paper Mill.” The “Stadler King notebook no. 8” was part of the “Works Progress Administration, Oneida Ethnological Study,” which occurred during the 1930s and early 1940s. See “The Oneida Speak,” accessed on January 10, 2020 at https://www.visionmakermedia.org/sites/default/files/resources/edu_eg_onei.pdf.

entered a neighborhood bar, the owner Mr. Brown, “who was not with the union but . . . was the paper company’s friend,” offered the men protection against “union thugs.”⁷⁹ Aware that the lives of the “foreign” laborers were in jeopardy, the tavern proprietor called mill management, and “not more than ten minutes later [a] young tall man came in the saloon with a billy club [*sic*] in his hand.” According to King, when the company representative saw them, he said “come on boys,” and the Italian and Oneida workers followed the factory security guard “back safely to the mills,” where their “meals and lodging were all free.” Before their return, however, they encountered union men waiting outside the tavern, who not only shouted racial slurs at them, but also threatened them with violence. King recalled that soon after this altercation, he “was told that the union made up with the mills,” and he needed to pack his belongings and head back to the Oneida Reservation. Based on his experiences, he defended the company, saying that he could never understand why anyone would go on strike when the workers had such “good jobs there.”⁸⁰ King’s memory of his time at Interlake shows that employers used racial segregation as a method to control labor and reveals the ways in which workers also policed and divided themselves. But it also demonstrates how the use of Indian replacement laborers fueled Fox Valley prejudice against local Oneida Indians among white workers. According to King’s account, prejudiced laborers invested in racism in order to protect their jobs and livelihoods. They wanted to live in a social world that reflected their cultural values and everyday beliefs.

Likewise, King’s discussion of his effort to claim relief during the Depression suggests that Fox Valley bureaucrats had embedded anti-Indian prejudice into the New Deal state. For example, he explained that “when he [was] hurt on the railroad job that he [had been] working on

⁷⁹ Ibid; and Lewis and McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives*, 9-10, 128-36, and 362-67.

⁸⁰ “Stadler King notebook no. 8.”

and [was] laid up,” he asked for relief. Initially, he received a minimal amount of welfare assistance. When that ran out, he worked on a farm, though the pay was very low. His second claim for support met rejection; and King thought that there were “supervisors who [were] against giving relief to Oneidas.” As he recalled, “it seemed easier for white people to get relief than Oneidas.”⁸¹ Thus, discrimination against American Indians continued throughout the Progressive era, as white residents tried to exclude them from accessing government financial support. Thus, the challenges of the Depression Era were greater for Fox Valley Natives, who dealt with the realities of racial and economic exclusion. Even though he encountered prejudice, King enjoyed his job at the local factory, since it provided him economic security. He decided which aspects of industrial capitalism to incorporate into his daily life, and by doing so, he changed the social landscape of the Fox River Valley through his everyday persistence.

Meanwhile, Melissa Cornelius, member of an elite Oneida Indian family, corroborated King’s account in her interview with the WPA. She explained that members of her nation, who initially traveled to the Midwest from New York, “were very much against the Roman Catholic Church” and were more inclined towards Methodism. The Oneida reservation sat just outside of Green Bay, which had a large population of white ethnic Roman Catholics. Although “Catholics had tried several times to [go onto] the reservation to convert the Oneidas . . . they were rejected each time.” Thus, “Catholics [were] really not friendly to the Oneidas.” Yet, the non-Indian population in the area was predominantly Catholic, “and most of the town offices [were run] by Catholics.” According to Cornelius, this was one reason Oneidas had a hard time getting help during the Depression. They did not get “as much [relief] as the people of other localities

⁸¹ Ibid., 133-34.

[received].”⁸² Thus, as her testimony suggests, local discrimination contributed to the financial difficulties that Fox Valley Indians experienced in the interwar era, and white workers did not view Natives as worthy of federal support. Although she wanted economic relief, like most of her Oneida counterparts, Cornelius was not willing to change her religion. Instead, she kept her faith; and by doing so, she influenced the cultural atmosphere of the Fox River Valley.

Additionally, there were efforts by government officials to understand the plight of Native Americans during the Progressive era, though they had unintended consequences. For example, in 1928, the Institute for Government Research (IGR, or the Brookings Institution) appointed Lewis Meriam to direct a team of experts tasked to gather information on the economic conditions and social status of indigenous peoples in the U.S. The subsequent report, *The Problem of Indian Assimilation* (the Meriam Report), helped encourage the Roosevelt Administration to reform American Indian policy, especially healthcare, land use, and education. Not only did the 847-page document expose the negative effects that the 1887 Dawes Act and U.S. boarding schools had on Native people, but also the findings convinced government officials to reconsider their treatment of American Indians. Thus, in reaction to the report, in 1934, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), which sought to “conserve and develop Indian lands and resources” and permitted Natives the “right to form businesses” and their own organizations. Also, it called for the establishment of “a credit system for Indians; to grant certain rights of home rule to Indians,” and to “provide for vocation education for Indians; and for other purposes.”⁸³ Despite the initial goals behind these new government policies, life remained trying for Fox River Valley Indians throughout the 1930s.

⁸² Lewis and McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives*, 288-89.

Due to their movement to cities for jobs and to the countryside to labor in agriculture, some Indian migrants could not claim federal relief under the New Deal state, since they were not physically on a reservation. Although, the IRA recognized the sovereignty of American Indians as separate nations, the legislation made accessing government funding more difficult.⁸⁴ For example, historian Doug Kiel explains that the law created “a clear definition of tribal membership [which] was essential to ensure the proper distribution of federal resources to Indigenous wards.”⁸⁵ In order to collect relief, Fox Valley Natives had to demonstrate that they lived on a reservation and were an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian nation. Those who could not demonstrate that they had both a biological tribal affiliation and lived on a reservation, however, had difficulty accessing government support.⁸⁶

Even for those American Indians who did live on reservations and had evidence that they were official members of a Native nation, life remained trying during the Progressive Era. For example, as Melissa Cornelius stated in her interview with the WPA, there were an abundance of

⁸³ For the exact language of the federal law, also called the Wheeler-Howard Act, see “The Indian Reorganization Act,” accessed on April 12, 2020 at <http://aghca.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/indianreorganizationact.pdf>.

⁸⁴ *Indian Reorganization Act*.

⁸⁵ Doug Kiel, “Bleeding Out: Histories and Legacies of ‘Indian Blood’,” in Kathleen Ratteree and Norbert Hill, eds., *The Great Vanishing Act: Blood Quantum and the Future of Native Nations* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2017), 80–97, quoted material on page 89.

⁸⁶ Kiel explains, “the federal government drew on such precedents in colonial law to position Indian blood as marking one’s relationship to the US state in order to determine civil and criminal jurisdiction, in addition to eligibility for treaty payments and other material entitlements.” This “operates differently from the ‘one-drop rule’ of African American hypodescent, according to which individuals of mixed ancestry only inherit the status of their black kin, which African blood polluting all other types of blood.” Kiel, “Bleeding Out,” 88. For more on blood quantum theory and American Indians, see Samuel W. Rose and Richard A. Rose, “Outside the Rules Invisible American Indians in New York State,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 30, no 2 (Fall 2015): 56-76; and Ryan W. Schmidt, “American Indian Identity in the 21st Century: A Critical Review,” *Journal of Anthropology* (2011), Article ID 549521, 9 pages, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2011/549521>. [I don’t see this article in your bibliography.]

Oneidas who were suffering economically following the passage of the IRA.⁸⁷ Having studied at the infamous Carlisle Indian Industrial School, a U.S. boarding institution, and gone to college at Lawrence, Cornelius helped her mother run their family dairy farm during the Great Depression. She claimed that their financial situation had been better in the 1910s, when her brother helped her family cultivate their land. After World War I, however, she said that “he drank excessively” and went to a veterans’ home in Milwaukee for his alcoholism.⁸⁸ Following his departure, they had difficulty managing the “vegetables, grain, and hay for the cows,” as well as their orchard. After Congress passed the IRA, Cornelius explained that federal officials divided her land among her extended family members. Although “she and her 89-year-old mother had maintained the best piece of property,” they struggled to stay afloat financially, and Cornelius had trouble managing her workload. As a member of the New Deal Finance Committee that emerged under the reorganization of tribal lands, Cornelius said that she could not keep up with the amount of assigned paperwork. She was grateful that her Native people had voted to have her serve them in this capacity, but she complained about the lack of guidance from state and federal officials on how to manage her caseload and she complained about government bureaucracy in general.⁸⁹ Although she had contributed greatly as an agricultural producer during World War I, she did not benefit from postwar prosperity. As Cornelius’s story indicates, American Indians continued to struggle to survive under the New Deal state. Without an expression of support for racial

⁸⁷ Lewis and McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives*, 92-96.

⁸⁸ On American Indian financial struggles during World War I and their access to American citizenship, see William J. Bauer Jr., *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California’s Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 156-75. For the IRA, see *Indian Reorganization Act*, 73rd Congress, Sess. II, ch. 576, 48 Stat. 988, § 19.

⁸⁹ Lewis and McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives*, 92-96.

minorities and women in general, government officials were forgetting about the needs and desires of their constituents.

Meanwhile, Fox Valley Milk Pool members demonstrated their investment in white manhood when they failed to recognize the strike efforts of Oneida dairy farmers. Despite their participation in the milk dumps of the 1930s, American Indians did not receive recognition from their local cooperative.⁹⁰ The Milk Pool listed the local Oneida Farm as a member, but meeting minutes indicate that relations between the organization and farmers at the Native-run dairy were tenuous. Indeed, in 1937, Milk Pool President H. H. Jack and Secretary Dries expressed “concern” about the quality and “freshness” of “Indian” products and dissatisfaction with their interactions with workers at the Oneida processing plant. Dries claimed that the Milk Pool had much more success with white family operations than employee-run businesses like the “mismanaged” Oneida establishment. Eventually, leaders decided to expel the Oneida dairy from the pool’s membership rolls in order to avoid any further disagreements.⁹¹ By 1940, the consecutive Milk Pool President, J. N. Robbins claimed that the most important trait for a local farmer was “loyalty to [themselves], loyalty to [their] farm program, loyalty to the Milk Pool and above everything loyalty to America.” According to the cooperative, Oneidas did not possess the work ethic or occupational allegiance necessary for their inclusion as dairy producers.⁹² Fox Valley dairy farmers had invested in white American patriarchy.

⁹⁰ On the failure to recognize Oneida strike efforts, see “Call for More Deputies at Shawano: State Army of 600 Fears New Threat of 10,000 Invaders,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 16, 1933; “State Moves to Bring Strike to Crisis; Fears Reds Seeking Control of Farmers,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, May 17, 1933; Lewis and McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives*, 132-36; and White, *Plowed Under*, 71-80.

⁹¹ H. S. Dries, “Report on Field Trip, June 21, 1937,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 8.

Indeed, the value that the cooperative members placed on male breadwinners contributed to the downfall of the farmer-labor movement in Wisconsin. For example, although the Milk Pool had a “ladies’ auxiliary,” rural women could not join the actual organization. Instead, they held their meetings separately, which left men attending to “official” business and women to event management. Mothers and daughters, sisters and aunts, and wives of local producers planned social gatherings, which contributed to the success of the organization’s activities and campaigns. Despite their contributions to the movement, women did not experience full inclusion in the cooperative, and they had difficulty benefitting from their dedication to maintaining the cultural values and economic livelihood of Fox Valley dairy farmers.⁹³

For instance, the treatment of a Mrs. Reinhardt illustrates the ways in which patriarchy directed the actions of area dairymen. Upon her husband’s death, Reinhardt petitioned the cooperative for \$1,800 to purchase the 80 acres that she lived on. According to H. F. Dries, the Milk Pool secretary, “she planned to have a berry patch, grow a few pickles, and expected to earn a living.” However, being “a woman past 60 years [who didn’t] know much about farming,” he felt as though her situation was hopeless.⁹⁴ Rather than lend her money, Dries

⁹² “Annual Convention Report of the Wisconsin Co-Operative Milk Pool, June 10-11, 1940, Beaumont Hotel, Green Bay, Wisconsin, Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 7.

⁹³ Rural women were politically active throughout the labor struggles of the early 1930s; however, Milk Pool evidence suggests that they still identified strongly with the economic goals and voting patterns of their husbands. For example, in report from *Wisconsin Dairymen’s News*, Mrs. Arthur Nohr, the secretary of the “women’s auxiliary,” urged her sister farm wives “let us do our part to help those who have our interest at heart, our husbands, brothers, fathers, and friends, let them know that we are interested in their fight for a just return for their labor. Their gain is our gain also.” According to Nohr, “capitalism” had deprived them of the “many things that [were] justly [theirs].” She knew that “the women of the capitalist world [were] enjoying luxuries galore as a result of the labor” of agricultural producers. Nohr believed that women needed to help the Milk Pool defeat the “enemies of farmers.” See “The Spirit of the Farm Wife.”

⁹⁴ “Field Report of H. F. Dries, February 2, 1940,” Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool Records, Box 1, Folder 8.

“recommended that she clean up her entire obligations [*sic*] and live with one of her children.” Apparently, “she rather wanted to be independent and did not seem to favor the idea.” Thus, although Reinhardt likely shared the cultural beliefs that male dairy farmers had regarding individuality and hard work, her gender excluded her from the support of an organization to which her family had paid dues since its formation.⁹⁵ She had legal documentation that confirmed her “joint tenancy of ownership,” and she had dutifully “been paying the insurance, taxes and necessary repairs” on her “husband’s” land and equipment. Still, she could not convince Dries that she was qualified for the loan. To him, not only did she not possess the “skills and training” required for farm production, but she also did not demonstrate the mental stamina necessary to operate a dairy. As Dries reported, “Mrs. Reinhardt seemed to be pretty much in a distressed state of mind,” and he “doubted if her reasoning was very dependable.”⁹⁶ His message was clear; agricultural labor and administration were for men.

Thus, I argue that during the Progressive era, Wisconsin farmers and industrial workers had invested in white male patriarchy, which they carried with them into World War II. The social distance that separated women from men and white laborers from people of color continued in the Fox River Valley, even after the Great Depression had begun to subside. For example, two days before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, on December 5, 1941, the famous contralto Marian Anderson performed at Lawrence University Chapel in Appleton. Although she received an overwhelming ovation for her impressive performance, Conway Hotel staff would not permit her to eat in the dining room with white patrons. A black woman could not move freely in the culturally conservative and racially exclusive city. Her performance was

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Dries, “Report on Field Trip, June 21, 1937.”

acceptable, however, given her popularity as one of the most celebrated American singers of the twentieth century.⁹⁷ On stage she was a musical icon who represented the glamorous possibilities that market capitalism afforded consumers. Anderson's encounter with area businessmen, however, revealed that everyday life in the U.S. North did not offer African Americans complete freedom. Rather than the de jure segregation that existed in the Jim Crow South, she experienced the de facto racial realities of the sundown United States.⁹⁸ Thus, as politicians debated military intervention in World War II, Fox River Valley residents expressed their continued investment in whiteness. The decision to exclude even a famous black patron from the Conway Hotel dining room was just one example of the systemic injustices embedded in everyday life in the region.⁹⁹

As several historians note, World War II had a homogenizing effect on white European Americans, including those who previously had difficulty accessing cultural citizenship.¹⁰⁰ This

⁹⁷ "Lawrence University Pays Tribute to Black Performer," *Appleton Post-Crescent*, October 20, 2014, accessed on November 20, 2019 at <https://www.postcrescent.com/story/life/2014/10/19/lawrence-revisit-concert-marian-anderson/17445927/>. Appleton was not the only place the famous performer experienced racism. See "Miss Anderson and DAR Agree on Singing Date," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 11, 1942; and Seth Feman, "Marian Anderson's Presence," *American Art* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 104-17.

⁹⁸ On Appleton as a sundown town and the phenomenon in general, see James Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: Touchstone, 2006), 65-68 and 77.

⁹⁹ On Soviet criticism of U.S. racism, see Meredith Roman, *Opposing Jim Crow: African Americans and the Soviet Indictment of U.S. Racism, 1927-1937* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 25-90, and "Soviet 'Renegades,' Black Panthers, and Angela Davis: The Politics of Dissent on the Press, 1968-1973," *Cold War History* 18:4 (2018): 503-19; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2-22; and Cindy I-Fen Cheng, "Out of Chinatown and Into the Suburbs: Chinese Americans and the Politics of Cultural Citizenship in Early Cold War America," *American Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 1067-90.

¹⁰⁰ Historian Cindy I-Fen Cheng argues that early Cold War culture had two important components, "the first highlights how the image of racial equality in the United States became critical to showcasing the superiority of American democracy over communism. The second involves the

certainly occurred in the Fox Valley, where participation in the war altered the economic realities and social attitudes of residents, which in turn fostered shifting notions of white supremacy in the region. To get at these changes, I examine letters that local soldiers sent home to their families during their time overseas. Their correspondence suggests that troops witnessed devastation, but also experienced camaraderie with a diverse range of fellow soldiers. As I demonstrate, their experiences shaped their firm commitment to the U.S. and their local communities in ways that were sometimes liberalizing, but more often exclusionary. For example, soldiers from Kaukauna had the opportunity to build relationships with men from towns and villages near where they had lived before their deployment. If they came from the city or countryside or whether they worked in a wood-products factory or on a dairy farm, or if they spoke Polish at home and attended a Roman Catholic parish, or spoke English and attended a Lutheran church, chance encounters made what had seemed like significant differences at home appear trivial during life-threatening combat overseas.¹⁰¹ This shared military experience in certain ways made veterans more open-minded and more bigoted in others, which would influence their perspectives on daily life and shape the cultural and political landscape of the region that they called home.

promotion of the domestic ideal.” In theory, abiding by these community standards offered postwar Americans access to cultural citizenship. See Cheng, “Out of Chinatown and Into the Suburbs,” 1069.

¹⁰¹ Scholars have argued that World War II had an “Americanizing” effect on white ethnics through their shared investment in patriotism and white male citizenship. See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 87-91; Steve Estes, *I Am A Man: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 11-23; Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 189-208; and Emily Skidmore, “Constructing the Good Transsexual: Christine Jorgensen, Whiteness and Heteronormativity in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Press,” *Feminist Studies* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 270-300. Matthew Frye Jacobson explains that by the late 1940s, the mass migration of African Americans northward “produced an entirely new racial alchemy” in which “racial differences within the white community lost their salience.” See Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 93-94.

For instance, Chief Petty Officer Willard J. Van Handel, who was stationed with the 60th Naval Construction Battalion, reported to the *Kaukauna Times* about how he “had the privilege in [his] travels better than half way around the globe, to meet several Kaukauna lads.” He wrote jovially about these meetings with “neighbors.” Likewise, he encountered others from the Fox Valley, “including Dan Van Thiel and Ralph Vanden Huevel of Little Chute,” and also “Clarence Schmidt, son of Henry of Dundas.” Additionally, he served with “two Appleton lads,” one who was “formerly of Oshkosh,” and found himself “in the same outfit [as] Ike Houle, husband of Gen Powers.” Apparently, he also “saw pictures of Phil Zwik” of Kaukauna, who Van Handel “gathered [had been] a very popular fighter” on the Western Front during the Great War. According to Van Handel’s recollections, military participation provided opportunities for soldiers to meet people with whom they may not otherwise have forged relationships with in their everyday lives. Even images of local athletic entertainers influenced Fox River Valley men to build solidarity and take pride in their hometowns.¹⁰² This shared experience reinforced their racist and sexist perspectives on daily life, both while at war and when they returned home to the Fox River Valley after their service.

For example, Oshkosh native William D. Radford described similar experiences when he recounted his time with the U.S. Coast Guard. In an oral interview with local historian Brad Larson, Radford said of his comrades, “we were real young” during the war, but added “we were all in it together so there was a bond. And it was nice. That I liked.” Although his wife gave birth to their first daughter while he was abroad, and he lamented that he “didn’t get back to see her until she was until almost a year old.” Radford contended that he endured this because of the connections he established with his shipmates. The time he spent on the water gave him “the

¹⁰² “Letter from Willard J. Van Handel,” *Kaukauna Times*, August 23, 1944.

nerves,” he told Larson, since on “the Rolly-O,” they would “practically go from the vertical to over the horizontal, you know. But it would always come back.”¹⁰³ A Canadian immigrant and the son of an upwardly mobile lumber magnate, Radford noted that the Great Depression had been a “bad deal” for his family financially. Then came “Pearl Harbor Day in 1941 [when] everyone [became] very incensed and President Roosevelt really got [them] all worked up.” As a result of Hitler’s treatment of Jews, Radford hated fascism, and “that’s why [he] enlisted in January of ’42.” During his time in the Pacific, along with “a lot of his friends from Neenah-Menasha,” Radford was as a member of a diverse crew of Fox Valley residents who represented an array of ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds. Given the opportunity to advance in rank, he remembered that he “had a tough time for a while,” because “he had become an officer.” After being “an enlisted man for two and a half years it was kind hard” for him “to accept . . . more pleasantries.” Yet, “there was always a good friendship and ah, camaraderie.” Upon going home, Radford returned back to work for the family lumber company, which had become even more lucrative as a result of World War II. His income comfortably supported his wife and eleven children.¹⁰⁴ Family was important to him, and this cultural value shaped his perspective not only on daily life but also on the political landscape of his hometown region.

Likewise, another Oshkosh resident, Clarence “Inky” Jungwirth, described the importance of establishing relationships with other Wisconsin soldiers overseas. From the gritty blue-collar neighborhood that locals referred to as “the bloody sixth ward,” the not-yet-twenty-one year old man convinced his parents to sign the form that permitted him to join the National

¹⁰³ Brad Larson Interview with William Radford, World War II Oral History Project, accessed on November 11, 2019 at <http://www.oshkoshmuseum.org/Virtual/exhibit6/e60032a.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Guard. He was ready to leave “the poor life”—the Depression had continued in the Fox Valley well into 1940—and “he was desperate for money.” The “future looked so bleak,” and the U.S. military provided an opportunity that he did not want to squander. Soon the ambitious Fox River Valley native learned that he would join several of his high school classmates in the Red Arrow Division of the U.S. Army on a journey to defeat Japanese forces in the Pacific Theatre. Bored after briefly working as a company clerk in Australia, Jungwirth, a Bohemian American who was the son of a wood-products worker at Paine Lumber Company, decided that he wanted to experience the “glamour” of war.¹⁰⁵ He “joined a mortar, an 81 mm,” as he explained to Fox Valley historian Gordon Doule, and immediately “regretted it” after he got to New Guinea. During the Battle of Buna in 1942-43, a group of 1,500 ill-trained American and Australian men attempted to defeat “the best [of] the Japanese.” After the campaign, Jungwirth grieved, “there were only about 500 of us left.” As the company clerk, Jungwirth gained the reputation of being the “‘father confessor’ to many, many, many” GIs in his company. Thus, he had deep knowledge of the “horrible” sights that soldiers witnessed “up at the front lines,” where he worked. He did not think that military officials knew what the “G.I. really hadda go through.” But the working-class “boys” who joined the 32nd Infantry Division were well aware of the risks of General Douglas MacArthur’s hasty combat strategy. Their fellow combatants were those who suffered the deadly burden of his military ambition.¹⁰⁶ This reality influenced Jungwirth’s investment in his manhood and commitment to the United States.

Having endured jungle warfare, Jungwirth returned home to the largely German Catholic Sixth Ward, taking a stable job at Oshkosh Truck Corporation as a design supervisor. Although

¹⁰⁵ Gordon Doule Interview with Clarence Jungwirth, World War II Oral History Project, accessed on November 2, 2019 at <http://www.oshkoshmuseum.org/Virtual/exhibit6/e60102a.htm>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

he lived in the neighborhood where he had grown up, Jungwirth explained that the homogenous and close-knit community was altered, because “World War II helped change the image of the Hi-Holders [German Catholics] in the eyes of the [city’s] citizens.”¹⁰⁷ Before, he claimed that “the Yankees” who lived north of the Fox River viewed his neighbors “as uneducated mill workers or simple farmers,” who were “inferior” and “second class.” Ethnicity and religion had played an important role in the political choices and cultural outlooks of Sixth Ward residents. During wartime, however, women “went to work in local factories,” and “social interaction” between people of different wards became more common.¹⁰⁸ These encounters led not only to improved economic circumstances for local workers, but also to decreased animosity towards white ethnic Americans. No longer were immigrants “stubborn Germans,” “drunken Irishmen, or “dumb Pollacks.” Instead, those who served were all veterans of a foreign war.¹⁰⁹ Jungwirth thought that the “onus” of being Catholic “was diminished by the many interfaith marriages that took place after the war.” Because many “made the extreme sacrifice” of risking their lives to defeat “the Nazis,” “the Japanese,” and especially Hitler, “the community discovered that, just like themselves, Hi-Holders were regular people.” This increased tolerance allowed ward residents to escape “the ghetto-type atmosphere” of the “terrible sixth” and “take a more active part in the city’s social and political life.”¹¹⁰ Thus, after the war, if a person was Christian, pro-capitalist, and was regarded as white, they could claim access to life beyond the neighborhood.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. For more on the prejudice that Oshkosh Bohemian Americans experienced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Ron La Point, ed., *Oshkosh: The Way We Were: Remembering People and Places* (Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing, LLC, 2010), 57.

¹⁰⁸ La Point, ed., *Oshkosh*, 57-58.

¹⁰⁹ Clarence Jungwirth, *A History of the Bloody Sixth Ward in the City of Oshkosh from 1880-1940: A Personal View* (Oshkosh, WI: Clarence Jungwirth, 1991), 4.

¹¹⁰ La Point, ed., *Oshkosh*, 57-58.

It helped if one established a nuclear family, though that was not the case for Jungwirth initially, as he remained “a bachelor” until much later in life. Only after he married Virginia Schubert did he move with her and their children to another district in Oshkosh.¹¹¹ He had invested in white settled family life; and I argue that his choice reinforced the social landscape of his hometown.

Meanwhile, World War II offered economic opportunities not only for those who left urban centers to serve in combat overseas but also for those who migrated from the countryside to military training camps throughout the U.S. and around the globe. For instance,, my grandpa Gordon H. Jacklin signed up for the Army Air Force (AAF) reserves, believing that he would deploy to Europe. Not long before basic training, however, he received a letter from the commanding general of the AAF, which stated that due to “the rapid conquest of Germany,” all “future training would be mainly for the ground crew.” According to the officer, this change in strategy “precluded entirely [Jacklin’s] opportunity to train as a member of the air combat crew.” Although this may have been a “disappointment,” given that he ambitiously volunteered, it also may have saved Jacklin’s life.¹¹² Still devoted to the cause and in need of income, he decided to seek reassignment within the AAF. So, after traveling to Biloxi, Mississippi, for boot camp, the Wisconsin resident headed to Scott Field near St. Louis in Belleville, Illinois, to join his former neighbor and high school sweetheart Doris Jean Gibbons, and he remained there until after the Paris Peace Treaties were signed on February 10, 1947.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Gordon Doule Interview with Clarence Jungwirth.

¹¹² Letter from H. H. Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Force, to Gordon H. Jacklin, Reservist, dated May 1, 1945, Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin, in Jillian Marie Jacklin’s possession, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Jacklin enlisted on July 11, 1944, when he was 17 years old, “for the duration of the [World War II], plus six months to begin following high school graduation in 1945.” See Identification Card—Enlisted Reserve Corps, Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin.

Meanwhile, pregnant and needing the support of her family, Doris Jean traveled back to Wisconsin, settling with her parents on December 9, 1946. Missing his wife during the time that he worked for the AAF, Gordon sent Western Union telegraphs to Doris Jean, and hitchhiked home on the weekends to Appleton to visit her.¹¹⁴ Then, almost exactly one year after their wedding, on February 5, 1947, she gave birth to their first child, Michael Gordon, while Jacklin remained on base, and she worked at Zwicker Knitting Mills in Appleton.¹¹⁵ Ready to be near his family after his honorable discharge, the “farm boy” reunited with his growing family in Wisconsin, where they rented a flat. During this postwar period, Gordon had a bakery route on the south side of the city, while Doris Jean stayed at home to raise their children. Although Dorothy Gibbons initially disagreed with her daughter Doris Jean’s marriage to a “damn Lutheran,” after Gordon converted to Catholicism and the couple had five more children

¹¹³ Gordon Jacklin to Doris Jean Jacklin, February 9, 1947, Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin. Out of three options, Jacklin chose “training for assignment in the AAF,” which his mother, Mrs. Adrian B. Jacklin, signed on May 9, 1945, see Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin. According to her scrapbook and interviews with her children, Doris Jean Jacklin worked cleaning the home of the colonel of the U.S. Army Air Corps, Frederick F. Christine, at Scott Field. Suggesting that she would leave her position if the officer did not transfer her husband to the base, the officer summoned Gordon to work as a supply sergeant in Illinois. This ensured the Wisconsin native’s safety from combat and his ability to marry Doris Jean. She remained a military housekeeper until she and Gordon married on February 9, 1946. During this time serving her country in the best way she could, she also promoted the Allied cause by organizing “Victory parties.” See “Invitation: Fight with the Home Army, Work, Save, Defend,” September 18, 1942, Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin. Admission to this event was a donation of “any scrap rubber or metals” to the war effort.

¹¹⁴ Western Union Telegraphs from Gordon H. Jacklin to Doris Jean Jacklin, January 1, 1947, January, 5, 1947, January 25, 1947, Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin.

¹¹⁵ Gordon converted to Catholicism while stationed at Scott Field. Before giving birth, Doris Jean worked at Zwicker Knitting Mills to earn money during the war. Interview with Barbara Bolduan, Appleton, WI, September 28, 2019.

(Thomas, Daniel, Patrick, Barbara, and Kathleen), the “fiery” and “opinionated” Irish American woman decided that Gordon Jacklin had become an acceptable son-in-law.¹¹⁶

In an effort to provide for his family, not long after his move from rural Wisconsin to the bustling urban center of Appleton, Gordon secured a job in the plant at Miller Electric through Doris Jean’s father Lloyd Gibbons, who had grown up on a dairy farm in nearby Waupaca County. During his time working there, Gordon Jacklin climbed from laborer to mailroom clerk to Assistant Vice President of Operations of the company. Meanwhile, his wife took care of their six children and taught calisthenics at their parochial school, St. Pius, just down the block from the single-family home that they owned. Not until the 1960s would Doris Jean return to wage work. Instead, she devoted her life to the reproductive labor of supporting her husband and raising their children. She worked endlessly, as did Gordon. However, when he spent too much of his free time relaxing while she worked around the house, Doris Jean compelled her husband to “get off of the couch and help!”¹¹⁷ Gordon Jacklin’s evolution from making ice cream at his parent’s store in Amherst during the Great Depression to an urban-dwelling, lower-middle-class family man during the 1950s reflected new opportunities for social mobility, especially for married white men. This shaped his investment a version of manhood that rested on his Catholic religiosity and belief in settled family life.

Gordon Jacklin’s uncle’s position as a Wisconsin State Senator demonstrates even more dramatically this opening in professional possibilities. Harley Jacklin served in the state Senate during the mid-1940s. How he got there is a complicated family tale, involving the different fortunes of Gordon Jacklin’s father and uncle. Taking courses at the University of Wisconsin-

¹¹⁶ Interview with Thomas Jacklin, Appleton, WI, September 25, 2019.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Kathleen Jacklin, Appleton, WI, September 28, 2019.

Madison's Agricultural School during the interwar years, Gordon's father Adrian Jacklin continued the family legacy of working in the dairy industry, as did his brother Harley. Eventually Adrian and Harley made different career choices, however, which led to divergent lifestyles. Harley secured a job as the foreman at the University of Wisconsin Marshfield Experiment Station in central Wisconsin, while he also managed a business raising purebred Guernsey cattle on his farm. Meanwhile, his younger brother Adrian decided to end his work with the university researchers and operated a family-run dairy store in Amherst. Then, after World War II and the subsequent failure of his commercial venture, Adrian moved to Appleton and took a job with Miller Electric, where his son Gordon worked.¹¹⁸ Yet, the war created an alternative for Harley, who ran for political office in 1942. Winning as a Democrat, Harley M. Jacklin's campaign centered on the plight of American farmers who were patriotically producing food. He also advocated a streamlined relationship between banks and corporate dairy interests, as well as increased government intervention in milk-products regulation.¹¹⁹ U.S. involvement

¹¹⁸ Throughout the 1940s and 50s, family-run dairy stores closed due to volatility in the market and the rising in popularity of supermarkets. Before settling in Appleton, however, Adrian Jacklin briefly moved with his wife Ina and youngest daughter Krystal to Spokane, Washington, to work for Jacklin Seed Company, which his cousin owned and operated. Misfortune struck in 1952, however, when his son Gordon and pregnant daughter-in-law Doris Jean were in a life-threatening car accident on their way to a Miller Electric Christmas party. This brought Adrian Jacklin back to Wisconsin to take care of his three grandsons while their parents recovered from their severe injuries. After this tragedy, Ina and Adrian Jacklin decided that they wanted to stay "home" permanently and remained in Appleton to be near family. Interview with Bolduan Interview.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.; *Wisconsin Blue Book, 1946* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Co., 1946), 32; "Former State Senator Dies," *Stevens Point Daily Journal*, December 7, 1970; and "Harley Jacklin, Plover, Dies," *Capital Times*, December 8, 1970. Milk quality testing and government involvement in the dairy industry became highly disputed in the 1930s and 1940s. Local producers argued that corporate farmers benefitted from these regulations. The "red tape" that state officials managed to create with the aid of "crooked" processors and dealers led to an increased socioeconomic divide between smaller and larger operations. This "modernization" created divisions among farmers in the Fox Valley, especially during World War II and its aftermath. Those with the financial and material resources necessary to maintain their equipment had an advantage over farmers who did not, and the connections that producers had with their consumers and local milk haulers was key to their survival. See "Memories of America's Dairyland;" and Eric M.

in World War II created greater economic opportunities for white rural men who had suffered during the Great Depression. Thus, by joining the cause and investing in American patriotism, Fox Valley workers improved their financial situation. This was especially the case for white male soldiers, who returned home to claim their place in the booming postwar economy.

Similar to white industrial workers and dairy farmers, Wisconsin Indians contributed to the World War II effort. For example, Oneida tribal member Alice Torres recounted how happy she was when her brother Herman returned after serving overseas. Also, in this same interview with her granddaughter, Kristina Ackley, Torres explained that the war opened employment opportunities for women. Thus, at only 16 years old, soon after she married a Mexican migrant worker in 1942, Torres left the reservation and traveled with her newborn baby Alicia and her mother to nearby Sturgeon Bay. She claimed that there were also members of the Menominee Nation who migrated there for jobs, and “there were other people there from Oneida” as well. Everyone had corporate-supplied living quarters, and she, her mother, “and Alicia stayed in one cabin, [while she] went to work in the [cherry] factory.” Meanwhile, her husband remained in Green Bay, toiling as an agricultural laborer. Torres claimed that the war “changed a lot [for her family] because it created jobs for a lot of people. She discussed how “factories opened up and people were able to get jobs and a better living,” and “there were quite a few jobs opening up, even for women too, because there [were] so many men missing in there that they took women too.” Following the armistice, Torres lost her job in Sturgeon Bay and briefly took a position at a cannery in Green Bay, before she took a job as a cashier at the local Prange’s department store in 1946. Thus, Fox Valley Indians traveled for jobs, whether to urban centers for work in factories or to rural Wisconsin for agricultural labor during the 1940s, and their labor contributed

Erba and Andrew M. Novakovic, “The Evolution of Milk Pricing and Government Intervention in Milk Markets,” accessed on June 20, 2019, at <https://dairymarkets.org/pubPod/pubs/EB9505.pdf>; *Wisconsin Blue Book, 1946*, 267-69 485-94, and 521.

greatly to the World War II effort both at home and abroad.¹²⁰ Despite the inequities that she faced following her commitment to the military effort, Torres influenced the cultural landscape of the region through her everyday persistence and need to economically provide for her family.

In contrast to Torres's testimony, Bernice Miller Pigeon, a Stockbridge-Munsee Indian, shared memories on the economic challenges that Fox Valley Indians faced during the global conflict. Pigeon explained that she grew up during the interwar era in the "small settlement" at Big Lake, in northern Wisconsin. She moved as an adult, however, and lived with her husband in "a shanty" on the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. Although she was married and had children, her family had to live "like migrants" during the war era. She explained that she was "very patriotic" and worked hard to support the U.S. effort overseas, even though her people could not harvest timber or farm on the land that they acquired under the IRA, since Farm Security occupied the area. Pigeon remembered, "we had like 13,000 acres of land that was the Indian Reorganization Act, but only 2,200 or a little more was declared reservation." She continued, "the war came and negotiations weren't done I suppose and the land hadn't been turned over so the Farm Security took over, and called it FSA land."¹²¹ Even though Stockbridge-Munsees had a Bureau of Indian Affairs forester who protested the timber harvesting methods of the FSA, Pigeon claimed that government workers "cut down all of the trees" by "clear cutting and most [tribal members did not] agreeing with that" practice. Her account demonstrates that during World War II, federal officials claimed

¹²⁰ Kristina Ackley interview with Alice Torres, Wisconsin Women During World War II Oral History Project, June 22, 1992, Oneida, Wisconsin. Also, see Lewis and McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives*, 77-95.

¹²¹ Kristina Ackley interview with Bernice Miller Pigeon, Wisconsin Women During World War II Oral History Project, June 22, 1992, Oneida, Wisconsin.

Native land, using it to cultivate food to feed soldiers overseas. New Deal policies had promised to help Wisconsin Indians; however, they failed to protect the natural resources and meet the everyday economic needs of Stockbridge Munsees.¹²²

Due to the local job shortage, which the federal use of Indian land had exacerbated, Pigeon and her family traveled east to Sturgeon Bay to pick cherries. She claimed that she and her husband carted their young children from Sturgeon Bay back to the reservation on weekends for tribal council meetings. Her husband, who was tribal chairman, made her duties as his wife clear; her job was to “make coffee and keep the kids quiet.” In order to receive recognition from federal officials, the newly formed Stockbridge-Munsee tribal government mirrored aspects of American political culture, which placed men in positions of power and women in the kitchen. Yet Pigeon was not “just a wife”; she also volunteered to teach Native children English in nearby Wittenberg and labored hard during the week picking cherries. In both places, she experienced racism: “every tavern, sometimes even in restaurants, it would say ‘No Indians allowed.’ I wish I could find one of those signs now,” she said to her interviewer. On one occasion, she recalled, “I went down to find my old man, there he was having a great time, and they wouldn’t serve me a drink because I was Indian.”¹²³ She had to leave the bar, yet her husband was able to stay because although he was Native American, he was also a man. In a cultural atmosphere where the appearance of a indigenous woman in a bar signaled sex work to men, Pigeon could not participate in the local leisure scene. According to people she encountered while off of the

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid. Pigeon’s sister confirmed that there was racism in area communities. See Kristina Ackley interview with Dorothy Davids, Wisconsin Women During World War II Oral History Project, June 22, 1992, Oneida, Wisconsin. On articulations of race and gender under settler colonialism, see Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of U.S. Race and Gender Formation,” *Sociology of Race and Gender Formation* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 52-72.

reservation, she was an Indian and possibly a prostitute.¹²⁴ Despite the concerted military efforts of Fox Valley Native women, and their investment in the war effort, they found themselves relegated to the bottom of the local socioeconomic ladder. Still, her testimony demonstrates that they would continue to influence the political and economic landscape of the region through their everyday labor, cultural determination, and physical persistence.

Throughout World War II, local indigenous workers demonstrated their commitment to the U.S. military effort overseas. Like their white rural counterparts, they expressed patriotism by laboring endlessly in the Fox Valley countryside to support the war effort. Some also went abroad to work in the Pacific Theatre, such as Gwendolyn Washinawatok (Menominee) of Keshena, Wisconsin, who intercepted Japanese messages in International Code for the U.S. Navy. Yet area Native people still encountered local prejudice. For example, when asked if she had dealt with racism during the war, Washinawatok explained that during basic training in Antigo, Wisconsin, her platoon leader, who was a white woman, found out that she was Menominee, “and never spoke to her again.” Washinawatok claimed that white residents “would not have anything to do with Indian people” in east-central Wisconsin. Thus, despite their war contributions, Native Americans continued to struggle against daily bigotry.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, after the armistice, many local indigenous people sought to practice settled family life. However, due to economic struggles and discrimination in housing, buying a home was not a possibility for

¹²⁴ On stereotypes of American Indian women as sex workers, see John M. Coward, “The Princess and the Squaw: The Construction of Native American Women in the Pictorial Press,” *American Journalism* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 71-99; and Denise K. Lajimodiere, “American Indian Females and Stereotypes: Warriors, Leaders, Healers, and Feminists; Not Drudges, Princesses, and Prostitutes,” *Multicultural Perspectives* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 104-09.

¹²⁵ Kristina Ackley interview with Gwendolyn Washinawatok, Wisconsin Women During World War II Oral History Project, July 17, 1992, Keshena, Wisconsin.

most Native people.¹²⁶ Although the defense industry had bolstered the U.S. economy during the war, after its end, politicians reinforced the idea that women should become housewives and have children.¹²⁷ This was possible for certain women in the Fox River Valley, who were primarily white and middle class. For most Native women, the ideal was unattainable.¹²⁸ Yet, as Washinawatok's memory suggests, local Indians would continue their struggle to access to economic security and social inclusion in the region. By doing so, I argue that they navigated their social landscape in ways that would reflect their preferences and beliefs.

As co-author of the Indian Reorganization Act, Felix Cohen noted in the *Yale Law Journal*, “the Indian plays much the same role in our American society as the Jews played in Germany. Like the miner’s canary, the Indian marks the shift from fresh air to poison gas in our political atmosphere; and our treatment of Indians, even more than our treatment of other minorities marks the rise and fall of our democratic faith.”¹²⁹ Following World War II, as the

¹²⁶ *Hearings Before the United States Before the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations, 81st Congress* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1949), 1743; Kristina Ackley interview with Bernice Miller Pigeon; and Grace Mary Gouveia, “We Also Serve: American Indian Women’s Role in World War II,” *Michigan Historical Review* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 153-82. A commitment to private property and national resistance to transience were central to these postwar policies. On the role that access to G.I. benefits had on a person’s ability to access citizenship and the ways in which federal officials contributed to the making of a heteronormative American nation-state, see Canaday, *The Straight State*, 137-83. On the World War II generation and what sparked their patriotism and deep commitment to the U.S., see Harvey Kaye, *The Fight for the Four Freedoms: What Made FDR and the Greatest Generation Truly Great* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014).

¹²⁷ Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, *James and Ester Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2015), 99-100; May, *Homeward Bound*, 58-65; Cheng, “Out of Chinatown and Into the Suburbs,” 1069; and Canaday, *The Straight State*, 138-45.

¹²⁸ *Indian Reorganization Act, 73rd Congress, Sess. II, ch. 576, 48 Stat. 988, § 19.*

¹²⁹ Felix S. Cohen, “The Erosion of Indian Rights,” *Yale Law Journal* 62, no. 1 (1953): 348-90. Also see Stephen Haycox “Felix S. Cohen and the Legacy of the New Deal,” *Yale University Library Gazette* 68 (April 1994): 135-56; and Kathleen A. Brown-Pérez, “By Whatever Means Necessary: The U.S. Government’s Ongoing Attempts to Remove Indigenous Peoples During an Era of Self-(De)termination,” *New Diversities* 19, no. 2 (2017): 7-23.

U.S. united with Great Britain against its former ally the Soviet Union in an effort to stop the spread of communism, Wisconsin residents simultaneously expressed a renewed and heightened investment in white male patriarchy. On August 13, 1946, President Harry S. Truman signed the Indian Claims Commission Act (ICC), purportedly in recognition of Native participation in World War II. This created a system through which tribes could present claims for compensation for property lost to both private U.S. citizens and the federal government, with an important condition. If they filed, they forfeited their ability to present a grievance in the future.¹³⁰ As historian Brendon George argues, this represented one last expression on the part of U.S. officials to encourage American Indians to rely more fully on capitalism and wage labor.¹³¹ Meanwhile, lawmakers also enacted this legislation in an effort to appear superior to their Communist adversaries, amidst Soviet scrutiny of American racism. In reality, they had developed yet another method to dispossess Native peoples of their land, languages, and cultures.

Meanwhile, Fox Valley residents were mobilizing behind a local “farm boy,” Joseph Raymond, “Joe” McCarthy, who would play an important role in American Indian policy during the 1950s. The son of poor Irish Catholic dairy producers from Grand Chute, Wisconsin, he represented the racism and patriarchy that characterized the postwar era. McCarthy embodied the image of American citizenship that upheld settled family life and white male superiority, and his political approach rested on fears of communism, foreigners, and government infiltrators.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ward Churchill, “Charades, Anyone? The Indian Claims Commission in Context,” *American Indian Culture & Research Journal* 43 (2000): 43-68; and Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas, 1983), 5-6, 142-43.

¹³¹ Brendon G. George, “Mile High Metropole: Denver and the U.S. Empire” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2019), 5-8.

¹³² Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, “Enemies Within,” Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950, Urban P. Van Susteran Papers, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Wisconsin.

Scholars have debated what specifically carried McCarthy into the public spotlight and cemented his electoral success, though his personality and military service (which he exaggerated) were certainly crucial. Following World War II, Fox Valley residents, both urban and rural, questioned whether the La Follette establishment was capable of alleviating their daily financial struggles, and they decided to abandon the progressive movement. Working-class residents wanted someone who would protect their economic livelihood and embrace their cultural beliefs. Therefore, when they encounter found Joe McCarthy, they backed his campaign.¹³³

Growing up just outside of Appleton on a nearby farm, McCarthy embodied the struggles of Fox Valley rural residents. His mother Bridget Tierney was an Irish immigrant, and his father Timothy McCarthy was a second-generation American and struggling dairy farmer.¹³⁴ The McCarthys were devout Roman Catholics, and despite their poverty, local residents viewed the rural family as hardworking and generous. As the fifth of seven children, Joe dropped out of school at age 14 to help his parents with their farm. Wanting to improve his economic situation, however, McCarthy returned to school at age 20, attending Little Wolf High School, and graduating in one year. Despite his outward disapproval of formal education, he remained obsessed with success. Thus, he enrolled with fellow Fox Valley Catholics at Marquette University in Milwaukee before leaving in 1935 with a law degree. Upon graduation, McCarthy passed the Wisconsin state bar exam and returned to the Fox Valley to work for a law firm in Shawano, while gambling and boxing for entertainment and to support himself financially. Wanting to represent the values of his community members, Joe decided to run for local district

¹³³ Ibid. See Interview with Barbara Bolduan, Appleton, Wisconsin, June 9, 2018.

¹³⁴ Bolduan Interview. On his early life, see Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), 1-3; and David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The Life and Times of Joseph McCarthy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2-8.

attorney as a Democrat in 1936. After winning the election, he gained a reputation for how quickly he expedited divorce cases, and area residents applauded his concerns for the needs of children. They demonstrated their support for his efforts by electing him to serve as Circuit Judge of the Tenth Judicial District of Wisconsin in 1939.¹³⁵

Before enlisting in the Marines in 1942, McCarthy had developed strong relationships with influential local Catholics like Urban P. Van Susteran, a Dutch American circuit judge in Outagamie County. The two spent their leisure time in local taverns, drinking, gambling, and carousing with women. Both men had bombastic personalities and a large network of acquaintances. They supported each other in their legal work, and McCarthy stood as Van Susteran's best man at his wedding. Their friendship rested not only on their shared occupation and religious affiliation, but also on their investment in local understandings of white manhood. For example, McCarthy's college degree qualified him for a direct commission as an officer in the Army Reserves, which could have kept him out of combat during World War II; however, Van Susteran dared McCarthy, asking, "you got shit in your blood?"¹³⁶ Having been bullied as a youth for his rural and "ignorant" upbringing, McCarthy refused to give in when he met a challenge, especially one posed by his best friend and urban counterpart (Van Susteran was from Appleton). Van Susteran had joined the U.S. Army Air Forces in early 1942, and McCarthy soon followed his friend into military service. After the World War II's end, Van Susteran

¹³⁵ Griffith, *The Politics of Fear*, 1-3. David Oshinsky explains that McCarthy "chose Marquette for religious and financial purposes" over University of Wisconsin-Madison. Like Irish-American working-class families throughout Wisconsin, McCarthy claimed, "there was a strong feeling in my home that the state university was a godless place, filled with atheists and Communists." Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense*, 11.

¹³⁶ Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Random House, 2003), 338.

showed support for his fellow Catholic by serving as campaign manager during McCarthy's run for U.S. Senator.¹³⁷

Then, on November 5, 1946, Wisconsin residents elected Joseph Raymond McCarthy to represent their economic interests and social values in Washington D.C. During the postwar era, growing animosity toward the Democratic Party combined with a rural distrust of "liberals" helped secure victory for the young Republican from Grand Chute. Changing political affiliations worked well for McCarthy, given the regional loss of faith in the Progressive Party and concerns over suspected conspiracy within the leadership of the movement.¹³⁸ This created a challenging political match for Robert M. La Follette Jr., known as Young Bob, who had lost touch with his working-class constituency. Participation in World War II had boosted the social status of Catholics but also of people with Irish ancestry, and the opportunity to vote for a co-ethnic appealed to Fox Valley rural residents. Although the stories he told about it were mostly fabricated, McCarthy's stint overseas gained him status among World War II veterans. He had been an intelligence officer during the war, but upon his return, the Fox Valley lawyer claimed that he had experienced more than thirty engagements with the enemy in Japan. His boasting set him apart from the Progressive incumbent, who had supported isolationism, not involvement in "foreign" wars. Rather than reach out to working-class voters, La Follette decided not to spend time in Wisconsin and remained on Capitol Hill during his campaign.¹³⁹ Meanwhile, McCarthy reached out to local voters and gave memorable speeches in Wisconsin, where he indicted the

¹³⁷ Ibid; and Bolduan Interview.

¹³⁸ Bolduan Interview. Democrats also lost support in rural towns and villages among German Americans, where McCarthy had an advantage due to his farming background. See Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 162-63.

¹³⁹ Bolduan Interview.

elitism not only of the La Follette family but also of the entire “liberal establishment” in state government and nationally. McCarthy fueled hatred of university “experts” and urban “elites,” and his views spoke to local dairy farmers, who felt ignored by the policies of the Progressive Party and the New Deal state. Although he did not witness significant active combat, he declared himself “Tail-Gunner Joe,” exaggerating his time in the Marines.¹⁴⁰ Thus, McCarthy had important qualities that set him apart from La Follette. Regardless, the Fox River Valley native barely beat Young Bob, winning by a margin of just over 5,000 votes in the Republican primary.¹⁴¹ Joseph R. McCarthy then went on to defeat his Democratic challenger, U.S. House Representative, Howard J. McMurray, in the general election.

There are several reasons why McCarthy won in 1946. Democrats struggled to build a strong enough coalition to overcome the strength of Republicans, and where they did have a solid influence, various factors affected the loyalty of their voting base. For example, although Irish Americans had historically voted for the Democratic Party, they split over whether or not to elect McCarthy. They wanted government officials who would protect their cultural values, as well as their economic livelihood. Memories of the Bennett Law of 1889, when state officials tried to make English mandatory in local schools, still simmered, and a 1946 state referendum reignited old working-class animosities. The infamous Bus Bill Referendum represented a local

¹⁴⁰ During McCarthy’s 1952 campaign for re-election, his opponent in the Republican primary was Leonard Schmitt, local politician from Merrill, Wisconsin whose campaign produced this pamphlet, which alleged that “Tail-gunner Joe” had exaggerated his combat experiences in World War II, see “What has McCarthy done for Wisconsin?” (Merrill, WI: Leonard F. Schmitt for U.S. Senator Campaign Committee, 1952), accessed on October 15, 2019, at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=1121>.

¹⁴¹ See Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 162-68; and Thomas C. Reeves, “Tail Gunner Joe: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Marine Corps,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 62, no. 4 (Summer 1979): 300-13; Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense*, 30-33; and Griffith, *The Politics of Fear*, 6-9.

effort to challenge the separation of church and state, though voters defeated it. Had it passed, the legislation would have altered the Wisconsin Transportation to Schools Amendment, which outlawed the use of state funds to bus children to private educational institutions. Roman Catholics, who sent their children to parochial schools, were the primary supporters of the proposed change.¹⁴² According to Steven K. Green, “the Knights of Columbus succeeded in having the measure referred for a vote,” since Catholic workers did not see why they should have to pay taxes for something that did not benefit them.¹⁴³ World War II had not translated into financial security for all Fox Valley residents. For those working-class Catholics who had large families, transporting their children was costly and time consuming. Thus, in the same election that they voted for government funding for busing to their private schools, local Catholics cast their ballots in favor of a politician that they thought would represent their interests. Although they had historically identified as Democrats, this started to change during the postwar era, as McCarthy took half of the Catholic vote. Moreover, displeased with the Progressive Party and the New Deal state in general, for those who lived in rural areas, their choice was the socially conservative Republican candidate from the Fox River Valley.¹⁴⁴

The 1946 campaign and McCarthy’s victory marked an important transition in which the Democratic Party became the political home of liberals and Republicans reclaimed their stalwart roots in the Midwest. This drift meant that social conservatives would look to McCarthy and the Republicans, while a restructured left-wing alliance would establish its home in the Democratic

¹⁴² Bolduan Interview.

¹⁴³ Steven K. Green, *The Third Disestablishment: Church, State, and American Culture, 1940-1975* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 95.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid; and Arthur Herman, *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamining the Life and Legacy of America’s Most Hated Senator* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 175-80.

Party. This reflected the ongoing social debate between rural and urban workers over public welfare and the role that government should play in the lives of U.S. citizens. Dairy farmers argued that government bureaucracy did not protect their interests, despite their service to the U.S. military, and they criticized the New Deal state. The failure of the Bus Bill reminded the Catholic voters that elected officials did not protect their beliefs. Thus, working-class cultural values and everyday struggles for survival were central to the postwar partisan realignment that occurred in the Fox Valley, which ensured the downfall of the Wisconsin's Progressive Party.¹⁴⁵

The subsequent conservative zealotry that evolved during the Cold War revealed values and prejudices that had existed within Fox Valley communities well before World War II. The reactionary movement that arose during the late 1940s reflected paranoia about communism that developed during the early twentieth century in the region; and the racism, homophobia, and patriarchy that characterized McCarthyism as an ideology, had origins in the Upper Midwest. On February 9, 1950, Joe McCarthy gave a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, commemorating the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, in which he appealed to local veterans by condemning war. He claimed: “as we celebrate the birth of this man who with his whole heart and soul hated war, I would like to be able to speak of peace in our time—of war being outlawed—and of world-wide disarmament.” Rural Americans had invested too much labor in global conflict, and working-class soldiers had risked their lives. This sort of rhetoric appealed to many Wisconsin residents. His words reflected the beliefs of his fellow Catholics: “the great difference between our western

¹⁴⁵ Bolduan, Interview; Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 137, 161-63; Nathan B. Scovronick, “The Wisconsin School Bus Campaign of 1946” (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1947); William W. Boyer Jr., “Public Transportation of Parochial School Pupils,” *Wisconsin Law Review* (January 1952): 64-90; William F. Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 6: *Continuity and Change, 1940-1965* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1988), 515-25; and *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1948* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1948), 525-33.

Christian world and the atheistic Communist world is not political, gentlemen, it is moral.”¹⁴⁶ Local dairymen had demonstrated their fear of Stalinism, and when McCarthy called for “government decency,” his message resonated with those who had made a similar call in the early 1930s. McCarthy represented his working-class constituency when he charged, “it has not been the less fortunate . . . but rather young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been most traitorous.” He defended working-class patriotism when he shouted, “if a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within.”¹⁴⁷ Those who supported McCarthy did so because they shared his anxieties. His speeches reflected the everyday values of local residents who believed that government officials were distrustful and had abandoned their working-class constituents.

For these reasons, McCarthy won reelection in 1952. The Fox Valley senator again campaigned extensively, meeting with Wisconsin workers to discuss their concerns. He reached out to local voters and gave speeches all over the region, including one in the basement of St. Pius X Parish in Appleton. His campaign manager, Urban Van Susteran, was a member there, and the community responded well to the visit by the U.S. Senator. They may not have agreed with all of his views or the way that he conducted himself in Washington D.C., but he broadcast the importance of their everyday lives on the national stage.¹⁴⁸ For example, by pushing for laws like the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 (Taft-Hartley Act), which restricted labor

¹⁴⁶ Joseph McCarthy to the League of Women Voters, Wheeling West Virginia, February 9, 1950, *State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 1763.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Bolduan Interview; and “Speech at St. Pius,” Urban P. Van Susteran Papers, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Wisconsin.

union power, McCarthy defended the perspectives of Fox Valley farmers who despised the New Deal state and conservative businessmen who wanted more control over their labor force.¹⁴⁹ After he successfully won his reelection campaign, McCarthy spent his second term in office working to dismantle what his constituency believed was “bloated” government. According to Patrick W. Carey, the senator was popular among Catholics who shared his “antipathy towards ‘liberals,’ whom they considered naïve or soft on communism, but also his fears of the socialist tendencies of the welfare state.”¹⁵⁰ In the Fox River Valley, conservative Catholics had won the political battle, and while not all local workers supported McCarthy, those who did were ardent about their faith in him.

Due to the booming postwar economy, left-wing residents watched as the Fox Valley political landscape drifted quickly to the right. Rural transplants took industrial jobs in nearby cities, and dairy farmers saw their economic situation improve during the 1950s. Less concerned with ethnic and religious differences, the Cold War era heightened a local investment in white manhood that reflected military service and settled family life. This reflected the improved social status of Catholics in the U.S., and the expansion of the middle-class in Wisconsin. Having McCarthy as their senator gave some Fox River Valley residents new pride in their communities, and they applauded when he announced his battle against “communists” that he

¹⁴⁹ Bolduan Interview; and “Speech at St. Pius,” Urban P. Van Susteran Papers, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Wisconsin. On the Taft-Hartley Act and anti-communism in the labor movement in general, see Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism: The Conflict that Shaped American Unions Labor* (Princeton, N.J. Princeton University, 1977), 95-8; Harvey Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade* (New York, Basic Books, 1984), 238; Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 253-73; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2002), 46-48, 11-12, and 64-67.

¹⁵⁰ Patrick W. Carey, *Catholics in America: A History* (London: Praeger, 1993), 109.

alleged had infiltrated the federal government.¹⁵¹ When he began this crusade, trying to root “foreign spies” out of the United States, he revealed the deep prejudices that existed in his hometown.¹⁵² Thus, McCarthy’s labor in Washington D.C. demonstrated to local residents that their agency had shaped the national political landscape to reflect working-class beliefs.

The senator’s actions on the national stage resembled the prejudices that had survived the progressive developments of the New Deal era. U.S. military struggles against fascism abroad had intensified the anti-communism that already brewed nationally in the 1930s, and concerns about communist infiltrators existed, even during the socially democratic presidency of FDR. For example, Congress had established the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1938 in order to investigate alleged “disloyal” Americans.¹⁵³ Thus, the Red Scare that transpired following World War II and culminated in the rise of McCarthyism in the early 1950s reflected a loss of faith in government officials and a working-class investment not only in democracy but also global capitalism. According to historian Elaine Tyler May, “McCarthyism was fueled, in large measure, by suspicion of the new secularism, materialism, bureaucratic collectivism, and consumerism that epitomized the not only the achievement but the potential decadence of New Deal liberalism.”¹⁵⁴ Dairy farmers and rural Fox Valley residents had not benefitted in the ways that they had hoped from the social welfare programs of the Progressive-era state, and their belief in self-reliance and less government oversight increased after World

¹⁵¹ McCarthy to the League of Women Voters, Wheeling West Virginia, February 9, 1950.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 90.

¹⁵⁴ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 10.

War II. Thus, a desire to distance American political culture from the communism practiced by the Soviet Union fueled a backlash against economic relief for those still experiencing poverty in the U.S. during the Cold War. Meanwhile, a dramatic effort to rid the federal government of alleged communists developed in Washington D.C.¹⁵⁵

In 1952, upon his reelection in Wisconsin, Joe McCarthy became chairman of the Government Committee on Operations and head of the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. While serving in this capacity, he and his political entourage led a campaign that targeted anyone who did not conform to the standards of white middle-class nuclear family life as un-American. In each hearing, McCarthy used his oratorical skills to expose a communist conspiracy led by government officials, and thousands lost their jobs throughout this era of political repression.¹⁵⁶ Amid rumors that he engaged in "homosexual activities," McCarthy responded by marrying his legislative assistant, Jean Kerr, in 1953.¹⁵⁷ Meanwhile, he continued his bigoted actions on the U.S. Senate floor until 1954, when he charged that military officials were also communists. During the televised Army-McCarthy hearings that transpired, the American public witnessed McCarthy's brash tactics, and some viewers did not agree with his overbearing interrogation methods. After Senator Ralph Flanders, a Republican from Vermont, introduced a resolution to censure Joseph McCarthy for his "verbal assaults" on government workers and top military officers, the Wisconsin farm boy lost political support across the nation.

¹⁵⁵ On dairy farmer distrust of the New Deal state, see Lorence, *Gerald Boileau and the Progressive-Farmer-Labor Alliance*, 5-20. On the rise of McCarthyism in Washington D.C., see Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense*, 103-15; and Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes*, xi-xiv.

¹⁵⁶ Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes*, xiii.

¹⁵⁷ K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 94. On McCarthy's expressions of homophobia and of the anti-communist movement in general, see David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 20-25, 80-92, 97-104, 170, and 214-17.

On December 2, 1954, the U.S. Senate voted to censure McCarthy, though he did not immediately halt his anti-communist intolerance, and he remained popular in working-class communities around the Fox River Valley.¹⁵⁸

Meanwhile, the social conservatism that characterized the Cold War era did not resonate with all Wisconsin residents, and Menominee Indians continued to shape the political landscape of east-central Wisconsin to reflect their cultural values and economic needs. Indeed, in October 1951, a tribal advisory council met to discuss how Menominees planned to make improvements to the infrastructure on their reservation, which included building more local housing and a recreational facility using the 8.5 million dollars that the U.S. government owed the Native nation for mismanagement of their timber resources. Tribal members budgeted a scholarship fund and wanted to repair their sawmill and power plants; and they discussed how they would distribute the remainder of the settlement as a \$1,000 per capita payment to every enrolled member of their nation. Menominees had historically resisted federal oversight of their daily activities, and they regularly ignored the guidance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). For example, they did not relocate to Minnesota as the U.S. government had ordered, and they did not practice a farm-based economy. Instead, they ignored allotment policy and refused to sell their valuable pinelands. Moreover, they did not abide by the governing guidelines set by the IRA.¹⁵⁹ Rather than complacently followed federal guidance, Menominee Indians urged their U.S. government officials to protect their cultural values and natural resources.

¹⁵⁸ On his censuring, see “The Censure Case of Joseph McCarthy,” accessed on April 15, 2020 at https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/censure_cases/133Joseph_McCarthy.htm. On his continued popularity in the Fox River Valley during and after the Army-McCarthy hearings, see Herman, *Joseph McCarthy*, 304-06.

Thus, I argue that they shaped the local political landscape of the Fox River Valley to support their economic practices and recognize their tribal sovereignty. For example, on May 19, 1953, U.S. Congressman Melvin Laird, a Republican representing Wisconsin's 7th District in the northern portion of the state, introduced a bill in the House, calling for a per capita distribution of \$1,500 to each enrolled member of the Menominee Nation. It passed without an objection or amendment in the House, yet the socially conservative Joe McCarthy had trouble convincing the Senate to approve it. Although Menominees had successfully negotiated with Wisconsin Republicans to defend their interests, the sequence of events that occurred in reaction to the bill demonstrate the deep resentment of the Menominee Nation that existed not only in the Fox River Valley but also in the U.S. federal government. In order to pass, the legislation needed the endorsement of the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Affairs; however, the chairman, Republican Arthur Watkins of Utah, did not agree with the per capita payment that existed in the bill. The Menominee tribal delegation that was in Washington D.C. in support of the legislation could not believe that the senator from Utah denied their request. In reaction, they invited Watkins to their reservation to explain his resistance to members of their nation. Accepting their offer, on June 20, 1953, Senator Watkins attended a Menominee General Council Meeting, where he explained to tribal members that the only way they could receive their individual \$1,500 payments from their sawmill profits was if they forfeited their federal tribal status.

¹⁵⁹ Stephen J. Herzberg, "The Menominee Indians: From Treaty to Termination," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 60, no. 4 (Summer 1977): 266-329, see cited material on 310-12. The desire to terminate the Menominee as a federally recognized tribe has a long history. For example, during the Progressive era, the Meriam Report of 1928 targeted Menominees as one of two Indian nations eligible for assimilation into broader American culture (along with the Klamath of Oregon state, who also managed lucrative timber stands), suggesting that the profitability of their pinelands made them capable of being integrated into U.S. society. Meanwhile, Fox River Valley wood-products industrialists sought to benefit from the privatization of Menominee forests and access to the nation's timber, see page 42-43 of the *Meriam Report: The Problem of Indian Administration* (1928), accessed on April 17, 2020, at https://narf.org/nill/documents/merriam/d_merriam_chapter1_summary_of_findings.pdf.

Watkins could not imagine why the Menominee Nation had sued the U.S., and he maintained that they needed to agree to surrender their sovereignty and reservation if they wanted government money. He told them that he stood for “Indian freedom;” yet, he actually was calling for Menominee Indians to agree to detribalization.¹⁶⁰

Despite their resistance, not long after the senator’s visit to east-central Wisconsin, on June 17, 1954, Congress passed the Menominee Termination Act.¹⁶¹ The law effectively severed the trustee-relationship the Indian nation had with U.S. officials, which ended their status as a federally recognized tribe, and called for immediate assimilation into American culture and society. No longer under federal guardianship and subject to state and county legal systems, the tribal government lost the ability to protect their citizens. Regardless of their “advanced” civilization and economic prosperity, and the patriotism they demonstrated by serving as code talkers for the U.S. during World War II, Menominees continued to live as second-class citizens in the Fox River Valley.¹⁶² This arrangement did indeed work to the advantage of local white businessmen after Menominee termination, as the tribal sawmill operation lost the majority of its workforce to jobs off reservation in urban centers outside the Fox Valley. Due to this forced or “encouraged” movement to midwestern industrial cities, including Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Paul, Minnesota, the young and elderly residents who stayed on the reservation remained in poverty.¹⁶³ At the same time, during the 1950s, Menominee Enterprises Incorporated (MEI), the

¹⁶⁰ Herzberg, “The Menominee Indians,” 310-12.

¹⁶¹ “Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin: Termination of Federal Supervision,” accessed on April 15, 2020, at <https://www.menominee-nsn.gov/CulturePages/Documents/Termination.pdf>.

¹⁶² On Menominee code talkers, see “Native American Code Talkers,” accessed on April 15, 2020, at <https://www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic-heritage/historical-figures-publications/hall-of-honor/Article/1621560/native-american-code-talkers/>.

entity that managed the nation's business affairs, had to sell profitable timberlands in order to ensure the nation's cultural and economic survival.

Meanwhile, tribal members found that they could not afford the increased property taxes that they had accrued as a result of their termination, which compelled them to sell sacred land to non-Indians.¹⁶⁴ Thus, not only did the nation lose important economic profits generated by their sawmill operation, but they also witnessed the destruction of their timber stands. As a result, the majority of Menominees struggled to maintain financial security on their Native ancestral homelands.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, termination had devastating effects on cohesion for members who remained in the area as well as those who traveled for work. For example, according to code talker and Menominee tribal member Gwendolyn Washinawatok, who had intercepted Japanese messages in International Code during the World War II, "termination was really a destructive policy. Not only did it strip [the Menominee Nation] of their relationship with the U.S. government but it also destroyed the community culture . . . there [was] not that closeness anymore. Even with the family." Termination sought to defeat the Menominee cultural spirit; yet their people refused to accept the parameters of federal dispossession. Instead, they would continue to resist corporate oversight and U.S. governmental regulations over their everyday lives.¹⁶⁶ Thus, they struggled for their restoration as a federally recognized tribe, and they gained

¹⁶³ Nicholas C. Peroff, *Menominee Drums: Tribal Termination and Restoration, 1954-1974* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1982), 31-32; Deborah Shames, *Freedom with Reservation* (Washington DC: National Committee to Save the Menominee People and Forests, 1972), 10; and Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001), 33-37, and 95-96.

¹⁶⁴ Ryan Baumtrog, Steven Cook, and Dennis Dresang, "The Unmet Needs of the Menominee Nation: Challenges and Opportunities," pp. v-50, quoted material on p. 4, accessed on October 3, 2019, at <http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/images/publications/otherpublications/menominee.pdf>.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*; and Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 33-37.

it through their persistence and perseverance in 1968. Through their struggles to survive, they challenged not only the limits of American capitalism but also the reign of the white Eurocentric patriarchal state in the U.S.

The Cold War was not only an era of social conservatism but also a moment that represented the continued strength of everyday Fox River Valley residents who struggled to maintain their economic inclusion and refused to discard their everyday cultural values. Thus, the McCarthyism that transpired in the Fox Valley during the 1950s represented a working-class constituency determined to survive, but also one that embraced a white male patriotic version of the American Dream. Ultimately, Menominee termination had bipartisan support, but for different reasons. Democrats maintained that reservations were racist institutions, but they also wanted to “unite” Americans under a “common” identity. Republicans argued that Indians did not deserve special status and should pay taxes like all other Americans, and in east-central Wisconsin, this legislation was especially popular among paper industrialists, who wanted unregulated access to Menominee timber stands.¹⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the health of the local economy

¹⁶⁶ Kristina Ackley interview with Gwendolyn Washinawatok, Wisconsin Women During World War II Oral History Project, July 17, 1992, Keshena, Wisconsin. In 1968, the U.S. government passed the Menominee Restoration Act, which reinstated federal recognition of Menominee tribal sovereignty, see “Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin: Restoration of Federal Supervision,” accessed on April 14, 2020 at <https://www.menominee-nsn.gov/CulturePages/Documents/RestorationAct.pdf>. Wisconsin Oneidas had to constantly negotiate with the everyday expectations of the local white population as well, though in different ways, see Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 100-20; Lewis and McLester, eds., *Oneida Lives*, 92-96 and 287-95; Doug Kiel, “Competing Visions of Empowerment: Oneida Progressive-Era Politics and Writing Tribal Histories,” *Ethnohistory* 61, no. 3 (2014): 419-44, and “The Oneida Resurgence: Modern Indian Renewal in the Heart of America” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012), pp. 10-30; and Robert E. Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960: A Study of Tradition and Change* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 128-45, and 164-66.

¹⁶⁷ Larry Nesper, “The Trees Will Last Forever: The Integrity of Their Forest Signifies the Health of the Menominee People,” *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* (March 1993), accessed on April 6, 2020, at <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/trees-will-last-forever-integrity-their-forest-signifies>; Beck, *The Struggle for Self-Determination*, 6, 24, 46, 72-73, 98; and Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 28-32. Kenneth W. Townsend, *First Americans: A History of Native Peoples*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019), 521-28; Clayton R. Koppes, “From New Deal to

would drive the political perspectives of workers throughout the postwar era. Working-class constituents had demonstrated their dissatisfaction not only with the Wisconsin Progressive Party but also with the New Deal state. As a result, the local political scene drifted rightward, and the social welfare platform that helped pull the U.S. out of the Great Depression began to unravel. Yet, Fox Valley workers would continue to demand fair treatment throughout the twentieth century. Their everyday self-activity would have profound political meaning not only in the region but also throughout Wisconsin and the nation.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have argued that the racism and sexism that fueled Joseph R. McCarthy's national prominence reflected longstanding local prejudices in the Fox Valley. His political crusade was not an isolated example of hysteria that created Cold War conservatism. Rather, the concerns that he expressed defended the beliefs of his community members. "Tail Gunner Joe" was not just a demagogue; he was a dairyman from the Fox River Valley. His grand, though hostile, oratorical skills revealed the deep power of storytelling that existed in local places of work and play. The personal problems he had with imbibing liquor were embedded in the region where he grew up; and the severity of his alcoholism, which killed him in 1957, reveals how strongly he invested in the local trappings of white manhood. McCarthy's life provides a window into those of everyday people who lived in his home place. The son of rural ethnic Americans, he had struggled to survive financially and intellectually throughout his childhood. Yet, he used his determination and the values that he learned as a Catholic to prosper

in Wisconsin's economic world. On his deathbed at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington D.C. on May 2, 1957, McCarthy awaited news of the daughter he and his wife were adopting. They planned to name her Tierney after the surname of her Irish grandmother, Bridget. But McCarthy had developed cirrhosis of the liver. His wife, Jean Fraser Kerr, had approached her husband's best friend Urban Van Susteran for support, but the senator would not accept help with his addiction. He died waiting for his adopted daughter to arrive.¹⁶⁸ One of the social customs that he had so enjoyed and so strongly protected had finally killed him.

McCarthyism did not exist in a political vacuum; rather it had roots in the struggles and bigotries of earlier generations in the Fox River Valley. By the 1940s, Wisconsin residents had invested in white middle-class patriarchy and in the economic mobility that they had gained as dairy farmers, factory laborers, and soldiers during World War II. By doing so, they shaped the political realities of the region where they lived. As a result, in 1946, many working-class voters turned against Wisconsin's Progressive Party, having lost faith in the liberal establishment that they had propelled into power during the early twentieth century. Instead, white male workers voted for politicians who they felt represented their cultural values and financial livelihood. They believed that by forming nuclear families and settling permanently in the Fox Valley that they would be happy, prosperous, and safe. Meanwhile, despite their military service and support of the war effort, Wisconsin American Indians continued to suffer both culturally and economically. Yet they still resisted their oppression during the Cold War and beyond. Through their everyday self-determination as sovereign Native peoples, local Indians changed the Fox Valley political landscape to support their material livelihood and everyday beliefs. By doing so,

¹⁶⁸ Bolduan Interview; and Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense*, 505. See also Geoffrey R. Stone, "Free Speech in the Age of McCarthy: A Cautionary Tale," *California Law Review* 93, no. 5 (Fall 2006): 1387-412.

they demonstrated their persistence and ensured their physical endurance and cultural survival. They selectively chose which aspects of white colonization and corporate capitalism to discard and which to incorporate into their communities, and their preferences safeguarded their daily existence. Ultimately, their will to persist influenced the social and political geography of the region that they called home.

Conclusion

It sounds so far away and different. I like different places. I
like any places that isn't here [*sic*].

Edna Ferber, *Gigolo*, 1922

In “Paper Dreams” I have argued that from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, Fox River Valley working people shaped the social and political atmosphere of the region through their everyday persistence and enjoyment of daily life. I have explored how they were militant about their demands for fair treatment and cultural inclusion and claimed that their self-activity created a dynamic political climate that reflected both progressive and conservative elements of the local working-class population. Not all residents had the same social outlook. Rather they were diverse in their values, which is what made the Fox Valley such a politically complex region. Unlike large metropolitan cities, the mix of urban and rural that existed in and around the mid-sized communities of the Midwest created multifaceted ideological worlds. Thus, by analyzing the history of a place like the Fox Valley, this study provides an important lens for unraveling the intricacies of American political culture.

As I have explained, over the course of a hundred years, both the physical landscape and social geography of the region changed drastically. A place governed by waterways and pine forests and inhabited primarily by American Indians during the 1850s became a cluster of cities and suburbs surrounded by farm fields and occupied mostly by white people by the 1950s. This change did not occur instantly; it was a long and contested process. Although white settlement had occurred throughout the nineteenth century, during the 1880s, as local Native peoples negotiated the parameters of federal involvement in their affairs, the region saw an influx of newcomers. Migrants began to colonize the area in greater numbers, and by the 1890s, wood-products factories dominated the industrial landscape, while dairy farming reigned in the

surrounding countryside. City and country were intimately linked, and urban and rural workers relied on each other for their livelihoods. Businessmen viewed the modern technologies that they had in their homes and used in local factories as symbols of progress, and they supported politicians who protected the interests of area elites and guaranteed corporate control. Workers, however, did not embrace this style of politics. Rather, as I have argued, farmers, laborers, housewives, and even children protested corruption in government and publicly demonstrated their disagreements with Fox River Valley capitalists. Their efforts led to the rise of Wisconsin's Progressive Party in the 1930s, which promised them economic survival and cultural fulfillment. The prejudices that existed in the left-wing coalition that backed the movement, however, gained strength following World War II, as working-class soldiers returned to the Fox Valley to claim their enhanced status in the region's white male patriarchal hierarchy. Now more able to access economic security, working-class people, both men and women, embraced settled family life, becoming homegrown conservatives and propelling McCarthyism into power in the Midwest.

The political trajectory of the area has changed since the 1950s, but not in significant ideological ways. Rather, the Fox Valley continues to embrace conservatism, including the racism, sexism, and homophobia that characterized some aspects of the Progressive movement and continued into the Cold War era. Yet, workers still shaped the political trajectory of the region through their daily self-activity during the second half of the twentieth century. American Indians protested in defense of their sovereignty, and Latinos and African Americans moved to the area in greater numbers.¹ White women challenged male supremacy; however, they did not always address their racial privilege while participating in feminist movements. Meanwhile, most white men, even if they viewed themselves as "liberal," had invested in their presumed

¹ Ani S. Mukherji, "The Worst Place to be Black in the U.S. is Wisconsin," *Boston Review*, October 29, 2018.

superiority. Wives embraced heteronormativity as well, reproducing an economic model that confined them to a life filled with domestic labor and the demands of conventional feminine beauty.² The promotion of settled family life was not a partisan issue; rather it straddled all political divides. Starting in the 1950s, more white workers had the financial means to choose this lifestyle. Accordingly, labor activism declined, which in turn contributed to the Fox River Valley's social conservatism, and for some, an ardent commitment to McCarthyism.

Not all workers celebrated this rightward turn in the region's political climate. Indeed, during the late 1990s my paternal grandfather Gordon H. Jacklin regularly reminded me that he despised the Cold War-era Republican Party, claiming that he was an independent who chose candidates based on whether or not they reflected his cultural values and economic beliefs. We had several deep political conversations while we lived together. My grandpa shared books with me, and we both read voraciously. Then on November 3, 2000, he died at home in bed, with his daughter Kathleen next to him. "Oh father," she wailed, as my dad entered my bedroom in tears. "I know," I said, and he hugged me. With my room just across the hallway from my grandpa's, I awoke at 4:14 a.m., knowing that he had passed on. Just days earlier, Father Mark Vandersteeg, a priest from St. Pius X Parish in my hometown of Appleton, Wisconsin, had visited our house to perform *Viaticum*, the Catholic last rites Sacrament, for my dying grandfather. I will never forget feeling and watching my Grandpa Jacklin's spirit leave his body as Father Mark completed the ceremony. My grandfather had helped instill in me a deep sense of faith, as he was the person with whom I attended mass on Sundays, and I wanted to make him proud. After

² On Cold War culture and white settled family life, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

his death, my dad became my church companion, and he would reminisce about his time in Catholic schools and as an altar boy at St. Pius X and St. Therese in Appleton. Fittingly, my grandpa's two daughters, Barbara and Kathleen, were my sponsors for my Sacramental of Confirmation ceremony at St. Pius X in April 8, 2002.³

My grandfather's six dedicated Jacklin children took turns watching over him at our home on the northeast side of Appleton, where he lived with my dad, brother, and me. Each of my dad's siblings came to help during my grandpa's almost two months of suffering, from his diagnosis on September 14, 2000, until he passed on in early November. My great-aunt Mae, my grandpa's sister, also came and stayed with us during his battle against purgatory, helping to manage the household, while also bringing love, laughter, food, and tea to our home. After University of Wisconsin-Madison surgeons confirmed that my grandfather had suffered an aortic aneurysm in early September, my aunts, uncles, and cousins were stunned and saddened to learn that he did not want to undergo an operation that possibly could have saved his life. A long-time survivor of physical injuries and a veteran of surgeries, he argued that he wanted to go home and that he was ready to move on to the next stage of his spiritual existence. He had missed my grandmother ever since her death in 1986, and he decided that it was time to join his wife Doris Jean in heaven. Being "good Catholic children," and recognizing the love that their parents had for each other, the Jacklin siblings took turns staying overnight at my dad's house in order to provide my grandfather with the support he needed to cross over during his final days.⁴ An

³ Interview with Kathleen Jacklin, Appleton, WI, September 28, 2019; and Journal entry, December 1, 2000, Jillian Marie Jacklin Journal, in author's possession, Oshkosh, WI.

understanding of loyalty to family, religion, and nation embedded itself within the Jacklin clan prior to turn of the twenty-first century. Indeed, their dedication to their father stemmed from the cultural values rooted in the fabric of the community within which they lived. Working-class people had protected their interests across the Fox River Valley for at least a century, and their preferences and persistence shaped the social landscape that surrounded them.

As I demonstrate throughout “Paper Dreams,” from the 1880s through the 1950s, corporate employers had attempted to reproduce a model of settled family life that more mobile workers had often rejected. Indeed, transience had been a way of life in the Fox River Valley from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century, though World War II had diminished such mobility. The influx of wealth into the region created greater opportunities for people to buy homes and purchase a sense of belonging in the region. Yet working-class people still chose which cultural activities to adopt or reject. Ethnic identity became less important, as long as a person could pass as white or was Euro-American, while discrimination along the lines of gender and race continued. Christianity remained important for social acceptance during the 1950s, as Catholic Americans gained greater cultural currency in the region. Thus, through their everyday struggles to maintain their ability to practice their religions and protect their social institutions, workers had created a local landscape that reflected their desires and daily needs. This led to opportunities for people like my grandparents, who courageously moved from the countryside to the city following World War II.

Gordon and Doris Jean were Amherst High School sweethearts and neighborhood friends, while growing up in east-central Wisconsin. As a young boy, my grandpa had told his

⁴ Kathleen Jacklin Interview; and Journal entries, September 14, 2000, September 15, 2000, September 16, 2000, September 17, 2000, and September 19, 2000, Jillian Marie Jacklin Journal, in author’s possession, Oshkosh, WI.

mother Ina Mae (Hobson) Jacklin that he wanted to marry the girl who would become his partner of forty years. Both children of dairy-farming families, Gordon Jacklin and Doris Jean Gibbons recognized their similarities, despite their religious differences (she was Catholic, and he was Methodist). They were both popular, involved young people, known for their commitment to the livelihood of their local community. During their senior year of high school in 1945, Doris Jean was the class president, and Gordon accompanied her to their prom before he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force.⁵ They were members of the cohort of young Wisconsinites who moved from rural communities to nearby urban centers in the Fox River Valley to create a better life for themselves and their nuclear families. Following World War II, after moving several times throughout the valley, the Jacklins survived the polio epidemic while living in Kaukauna. Finally, in June 1960, Gordon and Doris Jean settled into their house on Glendale Avenue in northeast Appleton with all six of their children. Just down the road from their Catholic church, St. Pius X Parish, they enjoyed their neighborhood and religious community. The Jacklins participated in settled family life because it suited them, and they cherished their cultural values and spiritual home.⁶ Like their working-class predecessors, Gordon and Doris Jean chose which aspects of their surrounding social worlds to participate in depending upon their entertainment preferences and ability to express their beliefs. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, like other working-class people, their everyday self-activity influenced the political culture not only of their community but also of Wisconsin and the nation.

⁵ Bolduan Interview; Letter from H. H. Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Force, to Gordon H. Jacklin, Reservist, dated May 1, 1945, Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin, in Jillian Marie Jacklin's possession, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Jacklin enlisted on July 11, 1944, when he was 17 years old "for the duration of the [World War II], plus six months to begin following high school graduation in 1945." See Identification Card—Enlisted Reserve Corps, Scrapbook of Doris Jean Jacklin.

⁶ Interview with Thomas Jacklin, Grand Chute, Wisconsin, April 19, 2020; and Interview with Barbara Bolduan, Appleton, Wisconsin, April 19, 2020.

For example, during the 1960s, some working-class residents would shift their political outlook and again commit themselves to candidates who were invested in the expansion of the welfare state, for their own benefit and that of their neighbors. This became clear on November 22, 1963, when many Fox Valley residents mourned the assassination of their beloved Irish American President, John F. “Jack” Kennedy. Although he grew up surrounded by wealth and privilege in a prominent New England family, Kennedy’s constituency included workers from across the nation. Roman Catholics, who had historically voted for Democrats, celebrated the political success of the young politician and admired his “perfect” family. Indeed, the Kennedys had gained popularity in the Fox River Valley before Jack’s ascendance to the Oval Office. Even Senator Joseph R. McCarthy had benefitted from the family’s support during his campaign. Like McCarthy, Kennedy visited Appleton to encourage area voters to elect him. Also like the senator, JFK cared about the cultural beliefs and economic struggles of his potential constituents. He wanted to understand what everyday Americans needed and how they enjoyed their lives. Speaking in the basement of Appleton’s St. Pius X Catholic parish in 1960, he told his audience that he realized that their economic circumstances drove their political decisions. He promised that if they elected him, he would help ensure their livelihoods and protect their religious beliefs. Additionally, he claimed that he recognized the hard labor that Fox Valley workers endured and said he wanted to help them.⁷

Jack Kennedy understood that local residents wanted not only to toil but also to enjoy their lives. He noted that “as the center of America’s paper industry,” Wisconsin offered both financial prospects and spaces for relaxation. For instance, he asserted that the state was “a land

⁷ John F. Kennedy, “Resources for Recreation,” Speech, St. Pius Parish, Appleton, WI, accessed on March 30, 2020, at <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/appleton-wi-19600311>; Interview with Barbara Bolduan, Appleton, Wisconsin, June 16, 2019.

of unparalleled opportunity for recreation.”⁸ Like McCarthy, Kennedy expressed the cultural values of Fox Valley workers, but he was also different. Unlike his fellow Roman Catholic, Kennedy was not fiscally conservative, and he defended the need for a renewed welfare state.⁹ This appealed to my paternal grandparents, Gordon and Doris Jean Jacklin, who lived just down the road from St. Pius X in Appleton. They both had a commitment to social democracy, and their greatest priorities were the health of the local economy and their Roman Catholic faith. With six children, they knew that life was challenging, and they wanted a leader who would support them. Thus, Gordon organized with his parish men’s society to bring the presidential candidate to the Fox Valley. A “political independent,” Gordon believed that Kennedy would relate to how his family and friends “enjoyed their annual church picnic.” Having grown up working on a local dairy farm, he argued that Kennedy was the solution to “rural and urban matters.”¹⁰ Gordon Jacklin was a proud industrial salesman of welding supplies and equipment, and he enjoyed fraternizing with his fellow Catholics, especially men like my maternal grandfather, metal-products worker Ronald Koski. They both believed that the actions of political leaders should reflect the everyday cultural values of workers and protect their communities.¹¹ Like working-class voters who had come before them, Jacklin and Koski chose their political leaders based on the candidates whom they believed would best protect their cultural values and ensure their economic livelihood. Thus, they too changed the political

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Interview with Barbara Bolduan, Appleton, Wisconsin, June 9, 2018; and Interview with Thomas Wayne Jacklin, Grand Chute, Wisconsin, June 10, 2019.

¹¹ Interview with Thomas Jacklin, Grand Chute, Wisconsin, September 25, 2019; Bolduan Interview; and Interview with Kathleen Jacklin, Appleton, WI, September 28, 2019.

climate of the region through their everyday self-activity. Although McCarthy had appealed to socially conservative voters, many of whom had been working class, others believed that the former farm boy had failed to represent the interests of his constituents.

To these voters, Jack Kennedy represented the care that Fox Valley residents had for their communities as well as a strong Catholic faith. He recognized their daily struggles and seemed to share their commitment to settled nuclear family life. His political promises and overall image provided his constituents with hope, including my grandparents, though not everyone benefitted equally. For example, unlike Gordon Jacklin, my maternal grandfather, Ronald Koski's ability to live this lifestyle did not last. Having grown up in poverty in the economically depressed Keweenaw Peninsula of Upper Michigan, in 1950 Koski enlisted in the U.S. Army during the military conflict in Korea. A Finnish American, Koski was a decorated soldier, and he received the Bronze Star for his service. When socializing with Jacklin, the stoic Koski would discuss his experiences as a corporal, recalling his time in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, after he was shot in the leg during combat. He recalled that he once encountered Douglas MacArthur, and that the Five Star General impressed him with his corn cob pipes, tenacity, and unwavering spirit.¹² But privately, the destruction of war haunted Koski. He drank excessively, and his children feared his erratic behaviors as he battled trauma. His wife, Margaret Pepin, finally decided that she could no longer take his daily abuse. Thus, on January 2, 1965, she abandoned her family, never to return. Ronald and their five daughters carried on as best they could without her.¹³

¹² Interview with Marion Wolf, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, April 18, 2020; Interview with Brenda Jacklin (Koski), Appleton, Wisconsin, April 19, 2020; and Interview with Daniel Jacklin, Appleton, Wisconsin, April 19, 2020.

¹³ Interview with Marion Wolf, Appleton, Wisconsin, June 10, 2019; Interview with Amy Sanders (Jacklin), Appleton, Wisconsin, June 6, 2019; Interview with Amanda Fink, Kaukauna, Wisconsin, July 7, 2019; Interview with Margaret Schaeuble (Koski), Appleton, Wisconsin, June 6, 2019;

Ultimately, not all Fox Valley workers could survive in a society that embraced its white male patriarchs, especially men with angry and domineering ways. Instead, my grandmother first returned to the Keweenaw Peninsula to be with family members before moving to Detroit, Michigan, where she remarried and had one more child, my uncle Donnie. Apparently settled family life did suit her, but not in the form she had experienced during her brief time living with Ronald and their five daughters in a mobile home in Appleton. Instead, she chose surroundings that better reflected her commitment to sobriety and her Christian faith. She also changed the cultural landscape of the Fox River Valley through her decision to divorce my grandfather and leave the region. She paved the way for women like her, those who wanted a stable home life. This reality did not last long, however, as she passed on in 1978 at the age of 46.

Meanwhile, just over a decade later on April 20, 1986, my grandmother Doris Jean Jacklin died unexpectedly from a brain aneurysm. This shocked and devastated my family, though I was only two years old and do not have first-hand memories of her passing. I do know that my mom was pregnant with my younger brother Benjamin at the time, and that my grandma took joy in my jovial toddler spirit up until her last days.¹⁴ Although I do not remember her physically, my grandmother changed my life. A committed genealogist and a “matter of fact” storyteller, she inspired my love of history. My grandmother gave us not only her love, but also the gift of a deep appreciation of our working-class past. Her labor created a genealogical archive that celebrates the struggles and triumphs of both Gordon’s family and her own. This is her legacy, and it reminds us how ordinary people are constantly changing their everyday social

Interview with Brenda Jacklin (Koski), Appleton, Wisconsin, July 7, 2019; Interview Diane Koski, Appleton, Wisconsin, July 9, 2019; and Interview with Benjamin Jacklin, Grand Chute, Wisconsin, June 5, 2019.

¹⁴ Interview with Marion Wolf (Koski), Appleton, Wisconsin, April 19, 2020.

worlds.¹⁵ In an era where the dominant American cultural ideal placed women at home, cooking, cleaning, and raising kids, my grandmother decided to return to work during the early 1960s, this time as a sales clerk at Sears. She was a member of a cohort of white women who took jobs in corporate offices, diners, and department stores to escape from the domestic sphere and contribute to their household income. Though her choices exhausted her, as she managed her job as well as her duties to her husband and children while my grandfather traveled for work, she remained firm in her commitment to a version of settled family life, where she had an economic voice and some cultural freedom. Thus, through their persistence, workers like my grandmother challenged prescriptive gender roles and transformed local understandings of acceptable living. These everyday acts of resistance changed the political trajectory of the region.

Throughout this dissertation, I have maintained that from the late nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, Fox Valley workers struggled against the limitations that capitalists and government bureaucrats placed on daily life in the region. They engaged in activism and cultural dissent, all in an effort to protect the values that they cherished in their daily lives. By doing so, they altered the social and political climate of the area to reflect their desires and beliefs. By the end of World War II, workers had gained a greater public voice and significant electoral influence. Meanwhile, the Cold War era brought financial prosperity to some and monetary struggle to others. Regardless, rural and urban residents continued to practice their faith and demonstrated an investment in the health their local communities. Racism and sexism still affected the lives of Fox Valley residents, though workers continued to challenge these systems through their everyday persistence and outright resistance. As they had for decades, working-

¹⁵ Journal entries, September 14, 2000, September 15, 2000, September 16, 2000, September 17, 2000, and September 19, 2000, Jillian Marie Jacklin Journal, in author's possession, Oshkosh, WI.

class people shaped the cultural and political landscape of the Fox River Valley through their everyday self-activity and perseverance. They knew that their lives mattered, and they struggled on in pursuit of their dreams.

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