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“THE GOOD PEOPLE OF NEWBURGH”:
YANKEE IDENTITY AND INDUSTRIALIZATION
IN A CLEVELAND NEIGHBORHOOD, 1850-1882

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ABSTRACT

In 1850 the village and township of Newburgh, six miles southeast of Cleveland was a farming community sparsely populated by families who were predominantly of New England descent. Within two decades several iron and steel mills had been erected just north of the village, while a large state hospital for the mentally ill had been built just south of the village. The population of the area increased dramatically as English, Welsh, Irish, and finally Polish immigrants arrived to work in the mills. In 1873 the village of Newburgh and much of the surrounding township was annexed by the city of Cleveland, becoming the Eighteenth Ward, nicknamed “The Iron Ward.” This thesis examines the lives of the Yankee farmers and their families as they adjusted to the striking physical and demographic changes wrought by industrialization, urbanization and immigration, covering the transitional period between 1850 and 1882.

The work is divided into seven chapters, including the introduction and the conclusion. Chapter 2 describes the geographic advantages that made Newburgh a healthy alternative to the swampy land in Cleveland, the topographical features that encouraged agricultural pursuits and eventually attracted industrial pursuits, and the man-made structures erected for business and community functions. Chapter 3 examines the growth of businesses; the early businesses that supported the farming community, the

coming of the iron mills and the asylum, and the emergence of a small central business district that offered goods and services to the growing population. Chapter four examines the influence of faith and religion, chronicling the growth of the three predominant Protestant churches and the intersection of religion and middle-class values. Chapter 5 looks at social and community life, including both formal voluntary associations and informal community ties. Finally Chapter 6 examines the ways in which the Yankee residents of Newburgh continued to be influenced by, and identify with, their New England roots, and how they accepted, or rejected, residents of other backgrounds.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*“Long may the Good People of Newburgh live and prosper
and grow rich with their liberality.”*

Diary of George Dunbar, 6 May, 1862

On the southeast side of Cleveland, the neighborhoods of Slavic Village and Union-Miles struggle to survive in the de-industrializing, rust-belt city. Development corporations and philanthropic organizations attempt to combat the problems caused by a combination of old-stock housing, abandoned buildings, poverty and crime. The mills that defined the area for over a hundred years, creating immigrant neighborhoods and providing employment have been gone for many years, leaving behind only the small homes on tiny crowded lots that were built to house the mill workers. Even less evidence remains of the original New England style village that existed in the first five decades of the nineteenth-century; just a tiny rectangle of grass surrounded by cracked sidewalks in an area known by the grand name of Miles Park.

This area of Cleveland was originally the village of Newburgh and has gone through several incarnations in its two hundred year plus history. As the village began to take shape in the early 1800s, the only sign of its industrial future was the small but

important, grist mill built near and powered by the waterfall on Mill Creek. The first white residents of Newburgh were New Englanders lured by the availability of rich agricultural land for sale by the Connecticut Land Company. The opening of the Ohio Canal and the subsequent rise of nearby Cleveland as a major port city and commercial center overshadowed the growth and development of Newburgh. The coming of the railroads, whose tracks would crisscross Newburgh, cut through family farms and signaled the demise of agricultural Newburgh.

Like many other agricultural areas that surround growing cities, Newburgh's land became more valuable for manufacturing than farming. Family farms were sold and subdivided into narrow lots for the small houses needed for a walking neighborhood. Workers lured from Europe by the often misleading promise of high wages resulted in a population boom. Eventually a growing population and the need for municipal services meant that a choice needed to be made. The village could incorporate or could become part of Cleveland by annexation. Freeholders in Newburgh voted overwhelmingly in favor of annexation and in 1873 the village of Newburgh, and the surrounding area became the Eighteenth Ward of Cleveland, nicknamed the "Iron Ward" for its prominent steel industry.

The village of Newburgh ceased to exist as a political entity in 1873, yet fifty years later many residents still referred to their home as Newburgh. Many of those who clung to the old identity were residents of Anglo-American stock, especially the descendants of the New England immigrants who had arrived in the early 1800's. This New England background played a significant role in the ways in which the residents of Newburgh accepted and responded to the changes wrought by the coming of industry.

This thesis focuses on the years between 1850 and 1882 for two main reasons. First, those years included the coming of the railroads and major industry to Newburgh precipitating the dramatic change from an agrarian area to an industrial one; secondly, there is a dearth of written historical analysis covering those years. In 1882 a large strike by skilled iron and steel workers was the impetus for the mill owners to entice Eastern European, particularly Polish, immigrants to the area. These new residents soon overshadowed the original Yankee residents, creating a new identity for Newburgh as a neighborhood. I have included some material on the lives of specific individuals after 1882 in order to demonstrate the social mobility of Yankee Newburgh, but the physical growth and demographic changes after 1882 are not included.

Prior to 1850 Newburgh had developed along the same lines as other surrounding villages, more akin to Bedford than Cleveland. Without the steel mills its character would probably have remained similar to other New England-influenced Western Reserve towns. While the distance to Cleveland was only six miles, a river, a canal, and many steep sided ravines lay between the two places. The coming of the railroad changed the trajectory of development, effectively closing some of the distance, and allowing industry to develop. As the ravines were filled in and roads improved those six miles became less significant and it was only a matter of time before the city absorbed the now bustling industrial area. While towns like Hudson, Medina, and Chagrin Falls still retain many of their nineteenth century houses and public buildings, the old Eighteenth Ward is a poster child for blighted city neighborhoods, with few signs of the original New England town.

The 1850 Federal Census for Newburgh shows a population of 260 families, with the majority of adult males listed as farmers or farm laborers. Other occupations included blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers and wagon makers, support for an agrarian community. By 1860 the effect of the mills can be seen. Many adult males are listed as employees the in the rolling mills and chair and soap factories. By 1882 most farms in the area now known as the Iron Ward had been subdivided and held rows of modest working class homes. Railroad tracks crossed the area, and the smoke and noise of several major steel mills and foundries filled the air. A major strike at the rolling mills resulted in the decision of the mill owners to actively recruit Eastern European immigrants to work in the mills. The resultant influx of new immigrants forever changed the demographics of Newburgh and affected the patterns of growth as well, shifting the business center to the north where workers houses began to rise around the mills.

The history and development of the Eighteenth ward of Cleveland fall into a bit of an historical no man's land. Local popular history books exist for the towns of Chagrin Falls, Hudson and Brecksville, for example. These books tend toward celebratory history and focus on a few families deemed influential, or whose descendents are still active in local historical societies, but they are useful for tracking the development of these areas over the past two hundred years. Due to the annexation of Newburgh in 1873, there are no histories of the former town, and Cleveland histories that cover the years between 1820 and 1873 do not usually include the area that was then Newburgh.

The pioneer years of Newburgh are briefly covered in narrative histories of Cleveland, among them are; *A History of the City of Cleveland* by James Kennedy's published in 1896, and the earlier, *History of the City of Cleveland: It's Settlement, Rise*

and Progress, edited by W. Scott Robison of the *Sunday World*. Many early residents abandoned the unhealthy swampy land of Cleveland and moved to the higher ground of Newburgh. For that reason some of those early residents show up in pioneer era accounts in these books. The accounts, however, are barely more than names and dates, not much historical detail is included. The only other mention of Newburgh in these early histories is in relation to the Cleveland Rolling Mills and the labor problems at the mills. These events are mentioned as part of the industrial narrative of the city and its prominent business men, but the authors do not delve into the effect of industrialization on Newburgh and its residents.

The changes wrought by the mills and other industry on the neighborhoods and residents were of little interest to nineteenth-century local historians. Early histories written by journalists and amateur historians, whose purpose was to laud and promote their growing city, lack any sort of analysis. Much of the material in these early books comes from the anecdotes and memoirs of the members of the Early Settler's Association of Cuyahoga County. Accounts include Newburgh and its residents in the years before the opening of the Ohio and Erie Canal, but the focus shifts to Cleveland in the years following the opening of the canal.

In the 1930s a series of articles appeared in the *Cleveland Press* relating the stories of the "founders" of Newburgh. These articles repeated the same pioneer stories that had been circulating since the mid-nineteenth century. They extolled the virtues of the intrepid New England settlers of early Cleveland and celebrated the founding myth of the Western Reserve. In other words they repeated the same early history of the area that

had been told and retold, and ignored the changes wrought by industrialization on the descendents of those pioneers.

Nostalgic articles in newspapers and the pioneer accounts in celebratory histories extol the supposed virtues of a vanished way of life, but do not address the ways in which life changed for the children and grandchildren of those Yankee pioneers. Newer immigrants did not displace the old stock New Englanders and there are questions to ask regarding the ways in which these older residents adjusted to the changes wrought by industrialization. What was daily life like in Newburgh before the opening of the mills? How did that change for the residents who had lived there for two or three generations? What occupations replaced that of farming? How and when did the demographics of the area change? What social and cultural networks were in place by 1850? How did those social and cultural networks change by 1880? What did the industrialization of the area and the annexation of Newburgh mean to the native residents? How did these residents come to identify themselves? Were they working class families or middle-class?

With few exceptions Yankee Newburgh embraced industrialization and the progress it represented to them. Their religious faith, with its Calvinistic roots, predisposed them to equate human material success with divine favor. As a group these residents prized and pursued upward social mobility, although many farmers' sons went to work at the mills or factories, they did not tend to remain in those jobs for a lifetime, and their offspring usually became white-collar workers. The New England background of these Newburgh residents predisposed them towards the values and life-style that were the earmarks of the emerging nineteenth-century middle class.

In the 1970s Cleveland State University produced a series of monographs about the ethnic groups of Cleveland. This series includes one titled *Early Settlers of Cleveland*. It includes some details regarding the early days of Newburgh as well as Cleveland. For a variety of reasons this work is disappointing. Author William Donohue Ellis used the older histories of Cleveland and the *Annals of the Early Settlers* as sources, and his book does not yield any new insights into early Newburgh. Ellis focuses, as do the earlier histories of the area, on what was done, and how it was done during the formation of Cleveland. He does not explore the whys or delve very deeply into the worldview of these settlers.

Because Ellis was specifically looking at this group as “settlers,” he chose to end his work in 1831, citing the opening of the Ohio and Erie Canal, the creation of a new, deeper mouth of the Cuyahoga and the resultant flux of goods and people as the signaling the end of the frontier and early settler period.¹ Thus he defines these early immigrants not by their ethnicity, but by their life circumstances. “Settlers,” however, are not an ethnic group, but people in the midst of a temporary life condition. The decision to include these settlers in a series of ethnic studies, but not to examine them as a group with a specific ethnic identity is questionable

This inclusion of New England immigrants in a series about ethnic communities seems contrived, which may explain Ellis’s decisions about what to include in his work, and how he approached his topic. Popular imagination does not normally conceive of any Anglo-American as part of an ethnic group. Their ubiquitous presence in the traditional, narrative history of the United States tends to posit them as the norm against

¹ William Donohue Ellis, *Early Settlers of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Cleveland State University, 1976), 121-22.

which other groups are compared. This thesis is part of a larger work that examines how dominant groups conceived themselves and created the idea of the norm.

The New England Yankees who populated Newburgh in 1850, for purposes of this paper can be studied in the same way that the Irish or Polish communities in the area have been studied: by looking at their social networks, their social mobility as industrialization proceeded, their attitudes towards family, religion and education, and their contacts, or lack thereof, with those in the greater community who were of other ethnic, nationalities, or religious backgrounds.

The Polish settlement of the area after 1870 is covered in this same series in, *Polish Americans and their Communities of Cleveland*, written by John J. Grabowski, Judith Zielinski-Zak, Alice Boberg, and Ralph Wroblewski. Other Eastern and Central European groups are covered in *Identity, Conflict, & Cooperation: Central Europeans in Cleveland, 1850-1930*, edited by David C. Hammack, Diane L. Grabowski, and John J. Grabowski. These accounts cover the society, religion and culture of the immigrants and the coping mechanisms used to create their communities. While the New Englanders had a different set of circumstances to deal with their culture, religion and societal structure dictated the coping mechanisms they used in adjusting to their changing neighborhood, and to the broader changes in American society.

There are two problems in attempting to use ethnicity as a category when studying the many Anglo-Americans who migrated westward in early nineteenth century America. First, unlike later immigrants, years of colonization had separated Anglo-Americans from their ancestral homeland. The original settlers of Newburgh who had emigrated from New England could trace their families back to England, but after two

hundred years of living in North America, they did not consider themselves English. Many had fought in either the Revolutionary War or the War of 1812, or at least had memories of those conflicts which had been fought to detach America from England. So, while most of their folkways, mores, and customs had their origins in England, the English themselves were in many ways as foreign to Newburgh residents as were the Germans and Irish in their midst.

The other problem when trying to pin down Anglo-American ethnicity is regional influence. Virginia residents who moved into Southern Ohio and New Englanders who moved to the Western Reserve were both Anglo-Americans, descendents of English colonists. But their world view, values and folkways were often very different. While nationality was as important as identity, the label “American” or “native” was most often used by those born in the United States to distinguish themselves from those they considered foreign. These terms, however, pertained to a plethora of identities in a nation that was so divided by regional differences. Which brings us back to the New England roots of Newburgh residents; those roots contain the basis for the group identity of those residents. It is impossible to understand the worldview of this group without considering the worldview of the region that produced them.

In her 1956 book, *Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition*, Barbara Miller Solomon looked at New England culture, worldview and traditions that eventually led many of Boston’s elite to promote and/or support immigration restriction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Solomon’s work has a particular focus, but her summation of the New England mindset has broader applications and is still useful over fifty years later in attempting to understand the influence this region had as

New Englanders migrated westward. They held on to their Puritan heritage as an elect, chosen people and “none doubted that New England was morally superior to the rest of the country.”² Furthermore, that New England thought “bred in a small group whose Puritan ancestors settled in Massachusetts” became a part of the American culture at large as “the New England heart pumped its peculiar ideas through the intellectual veins of the nation.”³ At their best these New Englanders used their intellectual rigor to found public schools, promote reform and create a robust economy. At their worst they used it to codify racist thought, promote xenophobia and found exclusive organizations.

Catherine E. Kelly approached the subject of New England cultural and intellectual history from a different perspective in her 1999 book, *In the New England Fashion: Reshaping Women’s Lives in the Nineteenth Century*. Kelly looks at the letters and other writing of women in the mid-nineteenth century to examine the role that gender played in the transformation of rural New England from the traditional household economy and the formation of a provincial middle class. Kelly notes the “traditional virtues of the New England village . . . cleanliness, order, stability and security,” echoed in the letters of her subjects.⁴ These values became the foundation of the emerging middle class, particularly as New England immigrants moved west where they “reproduced both their tidy little villages and their social and cultural institutions.”⁵

Solomon and Kelly had two very different focuses in their respective works, but both provide insights that help to locate the formation of Yankee Newburgh within a

² Barbara Miller Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 2.

³ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁴ Catherine E. Kelly, *In the New England Fashion: Reshaping Women’s Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

larger context. This New England culture laid the ground work from which middle-class Newburgh emerged.

Social historians of the 1960s and 70s began to look at groups that had been neglected by historians of the past, among them women, minorities and working-class Americans. By the late 1970s several scholars began inquiries into the ubiquitous, but hard to define, middle-class American culture. Stuart Blumin examined middle-class formation in nineteenth-century Philadelphia and New York in his book, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1790-1900*. Blumin begins with a chapter entitled “The Elusive Middle Class.” This title is indicative of the problem scholars have faced for decades as they struggle to define, locate and document the American middle class.

Blumin uses the large cities of Philadelphia and New York as the focal point of his work, noting the rise of white collar occupations as central to the formation of the middle class. He argues that urbanization and the emergence of the middle-class in the ante-bellum era are entwined. While his focus is on large cities, he includes an epilogue on smaller towns and communities. Blumin makes an important observation that “communities differed . . . not only according to size and location but also according to what might be called their stage of development.” All three of these differences, he argues “were crucial to the shape of their local social relations.” Urbanization and middle-class formation went hand-in-hand.

Mary P. Ryan looks at a very specific location for her book *The Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County New York, 1790-1865*. Ryan argues that Oneida County, with its importance in the Second Great Awakening, its publishers of

didactic, domestic literature and its abolitionist movements was “one medium through which a variety of changes in the family and society made their way into broader channels of American history.”⁶ Ryan examines the effects on the family as industrialization, urban growth and shifting patterns of domesticity shaped the emerging middle-class in antebellum Oneida County. While eschewing a simplistic view of the change from agrarian to urban society, Ryan argues that “the swift passage from relatively simple agrarian economy to the beginning of urban industrial capitalism . . . ordained that many family members scurr[ied] about in different directions in search of income and career advancement.”⁷

A more recent work, *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class*, offers a collection of essays on middle-class development and culture. The central theme to this work is an attempt to understand the people who identify themselves as middle class and how this identity has developed. Contributing scholars examine nineteenth century cultural trends in literature and other media as they helped to create conformity amongst the emerging middle class. Burton J. Bledstein argues that “new technologies for the production and distribution of cheap print . . . created a shared or common opinion . . . quickly and effectively.”⁸

In his concluding essay for this book editor and contributor, Robert D. Johnston, offers a critique of existing scholarship on the middle classes, and decries the past tendency of scholars to dismiss this group as uninteresting or to “castigate the middle

⁶ Mary P. Ryan *The Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 17.

⁷ Ibid., 236.

⁸ Burton J. Bledstein, “Introduction: Storytellers to the Middle Class,” in *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class*, ed. Burton J. Bledstein and Robert D. Johnston, (New York: Routledge, 2001)10.

class almost without cost or controversy.”⁹ While admitting that there are “a multitude of unattractive parts of the middle-class tradition,” Johnston argues that “the Middle Class need not be the Enemy,” and is deserving of respectful scholarship.

Regional New England and middle class histories have waxed and waned in favor over the past few decades, but urban history has been, and remains, a viable, robust field of study. The amount of scholarship available is seemingly endless. For my purposes I found the work of Stanley K. Schultz in *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920*, and David Schuyler in *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*, helpful in discerning the attitudes and values that helped to shape nineteenth-century cities.

Stanley K. Schultz focuses on American perceptions of the problems and possibilities of cities. He looks at both the utopian visions of literature and the middle-class reform efforts that led planners and officials to address issues of sanitation and safety. At the heart of these improvements, he argues, was a shift to an American worldview that the problems of urban life could be solved by human ingenuity. “Nineteenth-century Americans committed themselves to searching for ever better technologies to improve their moral and material conditions.”¹⁰ This view was not universally embraced, however, and Schultz also examines the tension between those who put their faith in technology and those who “beginning to dread the machine,

⁹Robert D. Johnston, “Conclusion: Historians and the Middle Class,” in *The Middling Sorts* (see note 8), 300.

¹⁰ Stanley K. Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 7.

technology, industrial development, and the city itself as a threat to social unity and order.”¹¹

One of the trends that arose from that tension was an attempt to create rural oases within or on the fringes of cities. David Schuyler examines the rural cemeteries, parks, suburbs and residential subdivisions that were created as part of this trend. The philosophy behind these developments in city planning was the belief that “physical spaces humans occupy influence their patterns of behavior.”¹² Schuyler argues that the work of Downing and Olmsted, among other landscape architects and reformers, has perhaps too quickly been dismissed by historians as mere attempts to foist middle-class values on the masses. He suggests that such a stance “ignores the more positive aspects of their . . . motivations.”¹³ Overcrowded conditions, dirt and disease were endemic to the old gridiron city centers. And, while attempts to bring nature back into the city ignored many of the economic conditions that created the problems of industrializing cities, these attempts were at least an acknowledgement of those problems and offered at least partial solutions.

The transition from a rural to an urban society was a long and often contested process. Many early Americans agreed with Jefferson’s suspicious view of cities as places of dirt, disease, poverty and decadence. They embraced a romantic, idealized view of a rural America, peopled by honest, industrious husbandmen. In *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, William Cronon’s long, sweeping look at the formation of Chicago and its hinterlands, he argues against this false dichotomy of rural

¹¹ Ibid., 8.

¹² David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 6.

¹³ Ibid.

and urban landscapes. Cronon traces the complicated web of relationships that exist between cities and the lands surrounding them, pointing out the irrefutable fact that farmlands are created by human endeavor and are in no way more “natural” than urban landscapes. The black and orange smoke of Chicago’s smokestacks may have a more obvious dramatic visual impact on the landscape, but the neat rows of corn and wheat growing on former prairie land were altering the ecological environment in ways that while more subtle, were just as profound.

The mythology of the American frontier, with its emphasis on rugged individualism and the romance of the honest farmer, however, kept the dichotomy of rural vs. urban America alive in many nineteenth-century Americans, caught in a paradox of extolling the virtues of rural life while profiting, directly or indirectly from industrialization and urban commerce.

Cronon’s analysis of Chicago has implications for Cleveland and by extension, Newburgh as the latter community was made part of the former. The emphasis on the rural nature of Newburgh township that appears in contemporary accounts during the antebellum period seems to easily morph into the later accounts of the industrial ward. The changes wrought by industry occurred in a relatively short time period of less than twenty years, yet printed laments for a lost way of life do not seem to have ever been written. Residents accepted the new role for the town as the “Iron Ward,” and proudly embraced the progress represented by that title. It appears that they may have understood all too well that industry was just another step in the long extant efforts made by humans to “improve” the land.

The focus of my work was an enquiry into the effects of urbanization and industrialization on an area inhabited by families of New England descent, families who embraced the emerging middle class values of the mid-nineteenth century. Therefore this thesis draws on the three strands of scholarship mentioned above; New England regional studies, middle class history and urban history. My work is an attempt to synthesize these three areas of scholarship as they pertain to my research.

Any attempt to create a portrait of a community in transition is inherently doomed to incompleteness. Although a wealth of written records are extant for the time and place under consideration, these records reveal only a fraction of the story. Census data, city directories, deeds, tax records, birth, death and marriage records provide names and dates, but cannot provide motives for human decisions, or emotional responses to events. Newspaper articles, diaries, letters and recorded reminiscences do offer a glimpse of emotions and opinions but the very act of writing something meant for other eyes to read suggests the possibility of conscious or unconscious self-editing. So the portrait I uncovered is hazy at times and frustratingly inconclusive at other times.

While many distinct facts and events were clearly recorded more often these sources offered impressions rather than exactitude. The Anglo-Americans who became New Englanders, then pioneers on the western frontier, then Midwestern, middle-class Americans owe their existence to a series of metamorphoses that are as difficult to pin down as gelatin. This group of people is as ambiguous as it is ubiquitous.

Primary sources used in this study include Federal Census data, agricultural and industrial as well as population schedules. Starting in 1850 all household members were enumerated along with their ages and occupations (including students). This enabled me

to follow the mobility of particular families over time. The rise of boarding houses that accompanied the rise of the rolling mills can be traced in the census.

As part of the centennial celebration of Cleveland local newspaper reporter and amateur historian, Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham, gathered a cohort of women in Cleveland and the surrounding communities with the object of collecting family information to produce sketches of early families of the area. The project resulted in a two volume work entitled *The Pioneer Families of Cleveland*. As with many of the mug books and local histories of the day, the sources used to create this work were not cited, the compilers relied heavily on family stories and the memories of elderly family members, and extolled the pristine qualities of their subjects. That said, the organization of the book, showing the arrival of specific family groups year by year from the late 1700's to the 1840's can be used along with deeds and census data to show the length of time certain families lived in the area.

The female authors of this work desired to create a record of women and family groups, not just men, so the compilers did their best to document the marriages and children of these families. This work, therefore, provides an excellent map of the interconnected family relationships that existed among the Yankee community in Newburgh and the surrounding towns. This complicated web obviously affected land transactions and business arrangements that occurred within the community, but without a record of the intermarriages between families those relationships become obscured, especially when maiden names get lost.

The residents of Newburgh do not appear in Cleveland city directories until 1874, after the annexation of Newburgh by Cleveland. The village itself did not have official

directories, with one exception; an 1858 map/directory depicting the village center and listing the few merchants and mechanics found in the area. After 1874, however, the Cleveland city directories provide a way to track occupations and addresses of families between the decennial census information available. Newburgh businesses not found in the Cleveland directory often took out ads in the local newspaper, *All Around the Clock* (later the *South Cleveland Advocate*).

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, in partnership with Newsbank.com placed a searchable database of their archives online at a fortuitous moment for my research. This every word searchable database, with digitized images, enabled me to find a variety of news accounts from celebrations at the Cataract House to performances at Reeves Opera House, from accidents at the rolling mills to advertisements for new subdivisions near the rolling mills. These accounts have added color and substance to my understanding of the community, with one important caveat. *The Plain Dealer* was an open supporter of the Democratic Party and Newburgh was predominantly Republican in politics. Incidents covered by the *Plain Dealer* were colored by the politics of its publisher, particularly in regards to local Republican officials, abolitionists, and labor relations.

The churches of Newburgh were of central importance to the community. Church records provided information on many families in Newburgh, and also provided a method of tracking the refinement of middle class values as the early, stark evangelical churches added “genteel” accoutrements to their buildings and recreational activities alongside their worship activities. Most of the prominent merchants of Newburgh were also prominent in their churches. Evidence of reform movements and activities, particularly abolition and temperance issues, is found in church records.

School records are not abundant, the few that are housed at the Western Reserve Historical Society are scanty, and after annexation any records would be housed with Cleveland City Schools. Other than published reports, those records are allegedly stored in the attic of the Cleveland Board of Education building, un-catalogued and uncared for. A thorough examination and proper archiving of those records would be a tremendous asset to future historians of the city.

Perhaps the most unexpected source I encountered was the detailed reports of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum which was erected just south of the village center in 1852 and had a significant presence in Newburgh. Yearly reports to the governor exist for almost the entire time period under consideration. These reports show the names of local farmers who sold produce to the asylum, craftsmen who helped to erect and maintain the buildings, local ministers who acted as chaplains and residents who provided home grown entertainment to the inmates. A fire on the grounds in 1872 is described in great detail and demonstrates the concerted efforts of the community to combat fires before the existence of an official fire department.

The impact of the Civil War on Newburgh is found in newspapers accounts of community significance and in the more personal accounts found in the pension records of local veterans. These pension records provide not only a means of detecting and substantiating personal relationship webs, but also offer glimpses of daily life in the period following the war.

Maps and photographs of early Newburgh are few, but those that are available allowed me to trace the physical development of the area. The plat maps of Cuyahoga County and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show subdivisions and the development of new

streets, while newspaper articles and city council proceedings also provide descriptions of those streets, along with the many name changes they went through.

Finally, wills deeds, and probate records show not only financial status but sometimes offer a window into the values of the deceased. Decedents sometimes required that heirs conform to stipulated moral behavior as a condition of inheritance. Family dynamics are often revealed in disagreements regarding the settling of an estate. At the very least probate estate files confirm family and other relationships within the community.

This work is divided into seven chapters, including this introduction and the conclusion in Chapter 7. Chapter 2 describes the geographic advantages that made Newburgh a healthy alternative to the swampy land in Cleveland, the topographical features that encouraged agricultural pursuits and eventually attracted industrial pursuits, and the man-made structures erected for business and community functions. Chapter 3 examines the growth of businesses; the early businesses that supported the farming community, the coming of the iron mills and the asylum, and the emergence of a small central business district that offered goods and services to the growing population. Chapter four examines the influence of faith and religion, chronicling the growth of the three predominant Protestant churches and the intersection of religion and middle-class values. Chapter 5 looks at social and community life, the rise of fraternal organizations, the Temperance Movement, amateur theatrical and musical groups, as well as the importance of informal community ties. Finally Chapter 6 examines the ways in which the Yankee residents of Newburgh continued to be influenced by, and identify with, their New England roots, and how they accepted, or rejected, residents of other backgrounds.

My aim in writing this thesis was to examine the transitional period between 1850 and 1882, the change from agricultural village to industrial neighborhood, and the ways in which residents dealt with those changes. While my focus is narrow, covering a very small part of Cleveland, a specific time period, and a specific ethnic group, I argue that Newburgh's story is similar to many other urban neighborhoods in American cities that experienced the same changes. These stories are an important part of the fabric of urban history.

CHAPTER II

FROM ROLLING FIELDS TO ROLLING MILLS

“There is a first rate investment open to capitalists, to build a number of small dwelling houses in the Eighteenth ward. At the present time there is not a home for rent vacant in the ward and business is on the increase.”

Harry Nelson, editor, *South Cleveland Advocate*, Feb. 26 1881

The geography of Newburgh, both natural and man-made, shaped, defined and dictated its development. The high ground provided a retreat from the malaria infested swamp lands where the sluggish Cuyahoga emptied into Lake Erie. The falling waters of Mill Creek created the ideal spot for the gristmill that was so important to a fledgling frontier society. But, as the swampy land of Cleveland was cleared and the harbor of Lake Erie dredged Newburgh lost its advantage and the city of Cleveland began to take on in reality the planned shape that the Connecticut Land Company had envisioned. The canal skirted the western edge of Newburgh, leaving the center with its farmlands intact. The open fields of those farms provided land for the railroads to cross, heading east to Pennsylvania. And, within the geometric patterns created by those railroads, industrialists built the steel mills and ironworks that would give the Iron Ward its nickname.

The emergence of the railroad was one of the most significant developments of the nineteenth century. Its presence created new towns, built cities and built fortunes. In Newburgh the changes wrought by the coming of the railroad were just as dramatic. All of the stories were played out here on a small stage; man versus technology, opportunity for some versus inconvenience, and sometimes, tragedy, for others. Without the railroad it is certain that Newburgh would have remained a farming community for a longer period, and perhaps have become a suburb similar to Shaker Heights or Lyndhurst. There would have been no mills built if the railroads were not conveniently nearby. The asylum would have opened its doors in another part of Northern Ohio. The changes wrought from the 1850's onwards were only made possible by the presence of the railroads in Newburgh.

The story of pre-industrial Newburgh began with the formation of Ohio's Western Reserve territory. In a curious, complicated and, at times, bloody, series of land transactions the state of Connecticut laid claim to a strip of land running one hundred and twenty miles from the Pennsylvania border, bounded on the north by Lake Erie and on the south by the 41st parallel of north latitude.¹⁴ The state had sold this reserved land, unsurveyed, to a private group of speculators, retaining the interest of the proceeds of the sale to fund Connecticut public schools in perpetuity. The purchasers paid a total of \$1,200,000 for 30,000 acres of land, and organized themselves into a loose syndicate called *The Connecticut Land Company*.

In 1796 the Connecticut Land appointed Moses Cleaveland, who had paid \$32,000 for his shares of land, to head the first surveying teams into the Western Reserve.

¹⁴ Cuyahoga County Records Office "The Early History of the Western Reserve"
<http://recorder.cuyahogacounty.us/historywestern.aspx>

They measured out townships of five square miles. Newburgh township was survey township number seven, range twelve. Its western border was the Cuyahoga River, to the south it was bordered by Independence Township, to the east lay Warrensville Township, and, at the northern end of Newburgh was East Cleveland. The township had a curious shape; the south and east borders were straight, the west followed the curves of the river, and the north had a small panhandle in the far northwestern corner. The township was further divided into one hundred acre lots. While never incorporated officially as a village, the most populated area of Newburgh centered at the junction of lots 455,456, 463 and 464, around the streets that became Broadway, Harvard, and Miles Ave. These lots were among the lots annexed in 1873, forming the 18th ward of Cleveland.

The surveyors in Moses Cleaveland's party laid out plans for the future city of Cleveland at the mouth of the Cuyahoga, where it entered Lake Erie intending for Cleveland to be the central city in the Western Reserve settlement. Water transportation was vital to the growing settlements of the Northwest Territory; roads were primitive and rudimentary at best, and impassable and nonexistent at worst. The logical place for any important city was along a river or along a lake harbor; Cleveland had both. But the Cuyahoga River was slow and sluggish where it emptied into the lake, and its extreme twists and turns created sand bars and swampland. This land was ideal for breeding malaria-bearing mosquitoes, so many would be residents sought healthier land on the heights to the south east of the proposed city, in Newburgh township.

The absence of mosquito laden swamps was not the only attraction in Newburgh. A creek in the southern part of the township fell over a forty-foot drop into one of the many ravines in the area. The resultant waterfall provided power for the first and, for a

time, only, grist mill in the area, which in turn provided the name given to the creek, Mill Creek. By 1840 a sawmill, a carding mill, a stone quarry, two taverns, two churches and the town hall/schoolhouse clustered near this waterfall.

The stories of Cleveland residents fleeing for higher ground suggests that from its very beginning Newburgh was an extension of Cleveland, rather than a unique location unto itself. Although there were many new residents who had purchased land in the township and came directly from New England and New York to their new land, the image of an accidental population persisted. Ads for land available for sale in Newburgh frequently emphasized the proximity to Cleveland, promoting farm land or building lots “4 miles from the city.”¹⁵ Conversely local businesses assured residents that they did not have to travel to Cleveland to find quality or good prices. Mrs. J. Wenham of the “Millinery Emporium” suggested that customers could “save a tedious trip to Cleveland” by purchasing velvet and silk hats at her store on Broadway for only fifty cents. F.H. Morse guaranteed his boots and shoes to be “as cheap as you can buy in Cleveland.” The proximity of Cleveland meant constant competition for local businesses, a situation that the above ads tried to combat.¹⁶ Interestingly, the above ads appeared in a November, 1873 edition of a local paper, months after the annexation of the area had been approved and only weeks before the annexation became official.¹⁷ These ads illustrate a certain amount of anxiety among residents in regards to their future political and economic independence.

The earliest roads in Newburgh were the long highways that continued through the village to other villages and townships in the Western Reserve. The stage road

¹⁵ *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* 8 June 1852

¹⁶ *All Around the Clock* 14 Nov 1873

¹⁷ *The Leader* 9 Dec 1873

between Cleveland and Pittsburgh crossed through Newburgh from the northwestern corner of the township to the southeast. Taking its early name from its eastern destination this road appears on deeds and early plat maps as Pittsburgh Street, its current name, Broadway, appears as early as 1858, but the old designation continued to show up throughout the late nineteenth century. Broadway, with its diagonal orientation, became the commercial thoroughfare of Newburgh. The intersection of Broadway and Harvard occurred near the cataract on Mill Creek and was the heart of Yankee Newburgh.

At mid-century Newburgh's roads were either dirt or plank roads. Dusty in summer, muddy during rainy seasons, and steeply sloped in places travel to and from Cleveland, while only six miles in distance, was a lengthy undertaking in the years before the railroad. Storms or heavy rains not only churned up mud but washed out the small bridges that crossed the creeks and ravines.¹⁸

The names of the main roads in early Newburgh indicated their destination as they headed away from Cleveland while the secondary roads took their names from the local landowners whose land abutted against the roads. There does not seem to be any particular pattern, however, that explains the choice of one resident over another in the process of naming local roads. The current East 93rd street, for instance, had become Woodland Hills Avenue by the time of the 1906 street name changes to numbered streets, but it was known as Gaylord Street in antebellum Newburgh since it passed the farm of Allen Gaylord between Harvard and Miles Avenue. It could just as easily have been called Carter Street for the Carter lands which lay between Union and Harvard. Perhaps the proximity of the Gaylord farm to the village center was a deciding factor. Gaylord and Carter were both among the earliest landowners, and both were prominent in village

¹⁸ *The Daily True Democrat* 11 July 1850

affairs, but having a street named after one's family name was not a tribute to one's importance or wealth, but simply a matter of geographical clarification. The surveyor's that laid out the map of Cleveland created a grid of deliberately chosen street names, but Newburgh's streets and their names seem to have been originally created by common usage and custom. This custom changed dramatically after the iron and steel mills were erected. Farm land was sold and subdivided and developers began offering lots and houses for the convenience of mill workers.

After the annexation in 1873 numerous petitions fill the minutes of city council meetings regarding improvements for Newburgh's roads. One such petition in 1881 engendered a resolution to "cover the road bed of Woodland Hills Avenue with soft cinders, from Miles Avenue to Union Street." Councilman DeCelle who authored the resolution stated that "cinders can be procured at very small expense close by" to fix the road that was "now in very bad condition."¹⁹ Bad roads were bad for business and businesses brought in revenue for the city. DeCelle and other Newburgh residents did not have to work very hard to persuade the council to spend funds on road improvements, at least for the main thoroughfares.

Improved roads made travel easier, but the coming of the railroads had made the town more accessible years before annexation. The Cleveland and Pittsburgh (C. & P.) Railroad was chartered in 1836 to "build a railroad from Cleveland on the most direct and least expensive route to some point in the direction of Pittsburgh."²⁰ In 1847 the exact route was still being debated. After deliberating over several alternate routes the railroad

¹⁹ *Cleveland City Council Proceedings 1881-1882*, 661.

²⁰ Ed Vernon, ed. *American Railroad Manual for the United States and the Dominion, also an epitome or brief history of the charter under which each road was originally constructed, Volume I*. New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1873, 418-19.

company chose a route through Newburgh on its way south and east from Cleveland, in part to avoid the steep embankments leading down to the river.²¹ The railroad entered the northwestern corner of Newburgh township at the Cleveland city limits, on a diagonal heading southeast. After crossing Woodland Hills Avenue the tracks ran on a straight southerly path until the intersection of Harvard and Broadway. At this intersection tracks ran down the center of Broadway until just south of Miles, a situation that was not rectified until 1906, despite periodic complaints. Below Miles the tracks ran just north of Broadway for a few hundred yards and then crossed to the south of Broadway just before leaving the southeast corner of the township.

The Cleveland and Mahoning (later the Atlantic and Great Western, and in 1880, the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio) did not begin laying tracks until 1853, although the original charter was dated 1848. Originally authorized to build a road from Cleveland to Warren, and on to the state line, the company obtained permission from the Pennsylvania legislature to continue into Pennsylvania and to “any point on the line of what was then the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad.”²²

The Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad entered Newburgh in the far western edge of the township, crossing the Cuyahoga River and the Ohio Canal, then making a slightly curved diagonal heading southeast and exiting Newburgh at almost the same place as the Aurora road (Miles Ave.) This railroad did not have the same presence in Newburgh as the C. & P., but the place where the two roads came together in township lot number 456 created a triangular shaped plot of land where the owners of the fledgling iron and steel industries built their first mills.

²¹ *Plain Dealer* 29 May 1847

²² Vernon, *American Railroad Manual*, 418.

The location of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad was also a major factor in the decision to erect the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum in Newburgh. The report to the State Legislature states that, “The site of Newburgh, the Trustees consider well adapted for this purpose; it is at the junction of the Cleveland and Chagrin Falls Plank Road with the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad, and affords two easy modes of access to and from the city of Cleveland, during the whole year where most of the supplies can conveniently be obtained.”²³

The railroads had an almost immediate impact on daily life in Newburgh. An anonymous “observer,” writing in *The Daily True Democrat* in 1850 noted that the presence of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad in Newburgh had “given some life to the place.”²⁴ By early 1852 the mail was delivered “twice daily, except Sunday” to Newburgh and other towns between Cleveland and Pittsburgh.²⁵ The trains had been running for barely one year when W.W. Leland, an enterprising real estate agent, advertised twelve building lots for sale, “cheap,” in the “thriving village of Newburgh” near the new railroad station. He assured potential buyers that two trains per day would take passengers to and from the city in fifteen minutes, and that “families living in this pleasant village would save enough in rents and taxes to pay for the lot in one year.”²⁶

In addition to the regular trains that made travel between Cleveland and Newburgh easier and quicker than it had been in pre-railroad days, extra trains were added for civic and social events in Newburgh. In 1862 a special train brought Cleveland Catholics to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone of the first Catholic church building in

²³ Public Document No.9 Report of a Majority and Minority of the Trustees for the Location and Erection of Two Additional Lunatic Asylums. In House, December 21, 1852. Executive Office Columbus. P88.

²⁴ *The Daily True Democrat*, 11 July 1850

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 Apr 1852.

²⁶ *Plain Dealer*, 21 July 1851.

the village.²⁷ Twenty years later, three trains from Cleveland and one from Ravenna brought almost two thousand people to attend the laying of the cornerstone for the larger Holy Name church being erected on Broadway.²⁸ An extra car was available for Cleveland residents returning home after a concert at the town hall by the Presbyterian Sunday School choir in October of 1869.²⁹

Convenient travel and faster mail were not the only benefits to residents. The sale of land and purchase of stock in railroad companies provided the opportunity for direct financial benefits. Presumably at least some Newburgh residents purchased stock in the new railroads. The C. & P. Railroad notified its stockholders and landholders that they could obtain their passes on April 2, 1851 at Burke's store in Newburgh. Residents of Newburgh who sold land to the railroads recognized immediate financial gains. Alonzo and Julia Carter sold land in lots 447, 448 and 456, giving the Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad rights to the land twenty-five feet on either side of the tracks for one mile. The Carters received two thousand dollars for this sale, a hefty sum when most landowners total real estate values averaged around three thousand dollars.³⁰

The benefits of the railroad were tempered by the very real problems caused by this new technology. There was the seemingly minor issue of smoke and coal dust in the air as well as the danger to pedestrians, horses and carriages. The presence of the tracks running directly down the center of Broadway in the heart of the business district caused periodic public objections. In 1874 the *Plain Dealer* noted that, "the old project of

²⁷ *The Leader*, 26 May 1862.

²⁸ *The Plain Dealer*, 9 May 1881.

²⁹ *The Daily Leader*, 25 October, 1869.

³⁰ Cuyahoga County Deed "Alonzo Carter to Cleveland and Mahoning Rail Road Company, Recorded 16 June 1865; 1860 Federal Census, Ohio, Cuyahoga County, Newburgh Township

removing the railroad tracks on Broadway is again being agitated by property owners.”³¹ This obviously dangerous situation was not changed until 1906, and then at the behest of the railroad.

The papers were soon full of reports of accidents, many of them fatal. One of Newburgh’s oldest residents, Allan Gaylord, a prominent figure at pioneer celebrations, having been a resident since 1799, had almost reached ninety years of age when he was run over and “frightfully mangled” by an uncoupled car in 1867.³² Seventy-one year old Mary Frank of Bedford was a victim in December of 1875. The engineer saw her on the bridge behind the Cataract House, but assumed she was seeking safety on an abutment and made no adjustment to his driving, striking the woman and throwing her into the creek where her head was crushed. *The Leader* assured its readers that “no blame can possible be attached to the engineer of the train.”³³

The railroad claimed animal victims as well as human. But the death of a horse also impacted its owner, depriving him of income. When a horse belonging to a man named Hayes was killed in 1874 the *Plain Dealer* reported that “the owner is a poor man...dependent upon the use of the horse to support his family.”³⁴

Three examples do not tell a whole story, but the deaths of elderly residents and the loss of property to a poor man can be seen as representative, even if symbolically, of the uneven balance of power as industrialization took hold in nineteenth century Newburgh. Few, if any, residents, however, spoke out against new technologies. The benefits seemed to outweigh the disadvantages. So, while the papers acknowledged the

³¹ *Plain Dealer*, 11 Dec 1874.

³² *Morning Leader* 23 Sep 1867

³³ *Ibid.*, 28 Dec 1875

³⁴ *Plain Dealer*, 16 Oct 1874

hardship of the loss of a horse, or the sadness of family and friends whose loved ones were killed by trains, they also were quick to absolve the railroad of culpability. Criminal charges were not brought against the railroads, or its employees, nor did families sue for wrongful death or negligence.

Some residents of Newburgh and Bedford attempted to fight the railroad in July 1850. Unhappy over monies owed to them by a contractor who had left the area without settling his accounts they held an “indignation meeting” and passed a resolution stating that “unless paid their just and honest dues for labor and materials...they would resist further progress of the railroad to the last extremity.”³⁵ Horace Brooks, a forty-year-old local farmer had boarded railroad workers at his house during the construction of the C. & P. followed through with this threat. He complained to several acquaintances that the contractor had not paid him the sixty dollars owed for this service. Vowing revenge, Brooks sabotaged the tracks resulting in the collapse of a derrick and the death of one man. Brooks was found guilty of murder and spent the rest of his life in the Ohio State Penitentiary where he achieved the dubious honor of serving the second longest time in that place as of 1884.³⁶

Even before the coming of the railroads, Newburgh lacked the traditional New England look of other Western Reserve towns. Perhaps the existence of Mill Creek Falls and the grist mill and sawmill that opened nearby was the reason that Newburgh did not grow up around a New England style town square. Instead public and mercantile buildings clustered around the waterfall and mills. The stage road between Pittsburgh and Cleveland intersected the plank road to Aurora just south of the falls, and another

³⁵ Ibid., 27 Oct 1851

³⁶ *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* 24 Oct; Julian Matthews, *Historical Reminiscences of the Ohio State Penitentiary* (Columbus: C.M. Cott and Co., 1884) 54.

important township road that became Harvard Avenue just north of the falls. In the early days of the village there was no typical public space with the ubiquitous white meeting house like those that existed in other Western Reserve towns, such as Hudson or Bedford. The area now known as Miles Park, a long, narrow strip of land deeded to the town by an early resident, Daniel Miles eventually became a small public square, but not until a town hall was erected on that spot in 1860.

The first public building that acted as combination school house, town hall and church meeting space was built in 1828. This building was a simple two-story Greek revival brick structure. Built on the Aurora Road (later Miles Ave.) the building was perpendicular to the road. The doors on this end were used as an entrance to the two schoolrooms on the first floor while an outside staircase led to the town hall on the top floor.³⁷ This building served the town until 1860 when a more imposing structure was built on the land donated by Miles, finally creating a public square in the village. This new building was French Empire in style, a smaller version of the Case building which served as the Cleveland City Hall at that time. The front of the building faced the long grassy area of the square, while the back of the building was on Woodland Hills Avenue, now E. 93rd street. When the new town hall was erected the original town hall building on Miles Ave. was sold as a private home to William Duff, an Irish Catholic resident. The building stayed in the Duff family, who became funeral home directors, until a fire destroyed the structure in 1977.

The town hall was the official public building, but the Cataract House, built by William Bergin in 1840, was the site of social gatherings for most of the century. This

³⁷ Arthur C. Ludlow, *Miles Park Presbyterian Church, December 31st 1832-December 31st 1907, Anniversary Sermon delivered January 12th 1908*, D. D. Souvenir Copy, p3, Records of Miles Park Presbyterian Church, Western Reserve Historical Society

structure went through several owners as well as a fire and major renovation. Besides providing space for dances, formal balls, dinners, fraternal organizations and other social events, the Cataract House provided rooms for overnight guests and long term residence to individuals and families with diverse socio-economic standings.

The Cataract House was renovated in 1855 after a fire, “with the encouragement and material aid of the citizens of [Newburgh]. Although the interior was frequently updated and refreshed the building the 1855 structure remained much the same until its demise in 1931. A three and one half story front section, fifty six feet long by fifty feet wide fronted on Broadway. A two and one half story wing in the rear contained two halls for dining and gatherings.³⁸ The building was white washed brick, with three rows of narrow windows across the façade, and a small iron balcony above the front entrance. Owen Quigley, the proprietor in 1876 assured potential visitors that his establishment was “the coolest, most secluded and romantic place in the city, “ offering “a lovely retreat to view . . . the splendor of the cataract . . . from an elevation of 100 feet.”³⁹

Quigley was not the only proprietor to extol the delights of this resort hotel in such extravagant terms. And there can be no doubt of the popularity of the place, but the Cataract House was certainly far from secluded. The one extant photograph of the building shows the building tucked up against the smaller brick wine hall on its south side, seemingly adjacent to the busy Broadway with the tracks of the C. & P. Railroad running down its center. Maps and city directories show the many businesses and buildings surrounding the Cataract House. No photograph exists of the back of the

³⁸ *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* 12 Dec 1855

³⁹ *The South Cleveland Advocate* 23 September 1875.

property, which presumably provided green space for its guests, but the resort atmosphere optimistically offered by its promoters was seemingly overrated.

Another tavern sat diagonally across from the Cataract House on the east side of Broadway. Known in the 1840's as the Eagle House, it was offered for sale as the Merchant's Hotel in 1853, proclaiming space for sixty diners and a spring floor ballroom. Joseph Turney purchased this tavern, but never operated it as a hotel. Instead Turney, who became one of the wealthiest and most influential men in Newburgh, turned the old tavern into a family home. It is not clear at what point Turney moved into his residence on Broadway, but on the 1860 Federal Census, although no street addresses are given he is listed on the same page as the Cataract House, so it is logical to assume that his house was across the street from that building.

While not as elaborate as the mansions of other wealthier Cleveland individuals, the Turney home was one of the most impressive in Newburgh. Because there are no images available of the original tavern it is difficult to ascertain how much renovating Turney had done to the structure. The original was probably a two story Federal, brick building with two windows flanking the front door on each side, five windows across the upper floor. The raised hip roof, with a dormer on each side was probably an addition that gave the building a second empire look. Covered porches are visible on the front and both sides of the house and an iron picket fence surrounds the modest yard. The Jones brothers, David I. and John, original proprietors of the rolling mills both had similar homes, although theirs were purpose built, not renovated. The majority of Newburgh residents had much smaller homes, until a building boom in the 1880's saw several grand Victorian houses erected on Miles Avenue.

The authors of *A Field Guide to American Houses* note that as New Englanders migrated west they “tended to build less pretentious folk houses in the same forms as the more fashionable houses then being built further east.”⁴⁰ In Newburgh pre railroad era houses reflected the New England heritage of the area. After a brief log-cabin period the first frame houses were of the massed plan that had originated in eighteenth century New England, although touches of Early Classical Revival showed up in post Canal era houses. The railroad and balloon framing brought an expansion of gable-front houses, and the gable-front and wing houses to most of the northeast, Newburgh included. The narrow single gable-front houses “were particularly suited for narrow urban lots.”⁴¹ This style of house, therefore, proliferated in Newburgh as more land was subdivided and sold as homes for the mill workers pouring into the area.

Photographer Harry Reeves capitalized on pride of home ownership by offering to create “beautiful, photographic landscapes of your home with your family grouped in front.”⁴² Reeves’ advertisement suggests the existence of picturesque residential areas of Newburgh. If anyone responded to this invitation the resultant photographs are not amongst those found in local collections. Most extant photographs of Newburgh houses are not flattering home portraits. Houses look crowded and cramped together; the whole town has a cluttered look, with buildings of different types jumbled together and no sense of planning. There is, however, a danger in forming a physical image of an area based on a few undated photographs. The photos that exist in local collections were taken in the

⁴⁰ Lee McAlester and Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 78.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 90,92.

⁴² *All Around the Clock* 14 Nov 1873

late nineteenth-century after decades of smoke and fallout from the railroad and the mills had left their mark.

Outbuildings included barns, corn houses, storage sheds, animal pens and other utilitarian structures, adding to the cluttered effect mentioned above. Farming and gardening remained important aspects of Newburgh even after it became the “Iron Ward.” Most advertisements for farms or lots mentioned the existence of fruit trees. Rev. Arthur Ludlow, writing in 1908, claimed that the apple trees in the yard of the Harvard school at E. 71st street had been planted by pioneer David Brooks in 1816, using seeds he had brought with him from New York.⁴³ These trees were evidently not blighted by mill pollution, but the trees that had decorated the “expansive lawn and . . . orchard” of John Jones were not as fortunate. Jones home, at the corner of Jones Rd. and Broadway, was within a block of the rolling mills. Jones’ great nephew, who was interviewed in 1944, stated that those “trees long since were destroyed by the palls of smoke from the mills.”⁴⁴

The mills themselves were a collection of several types of iron and steel industries that often were lumped together generically when being referenced by residents, particularly in later reminiscences. The Cleveland Rolling mills in the center of lot 456 were built by Welsh immigrants, David I. Jones and his brother John. This complex was east of Broadway and west of Sawyer (E. (91st), north of Jones Ave. and South of Marble St. Another complex lay a half mile north and west, on between Fleet and Aetna. These mills sat directly north of the cemetery, a situation that was to cause a controversy in 1881. Just north of Union, in the part of Newburgh that had been annexed earlier and comprised the Fourteenth ward the Union Iron Mills lay within a half mile of the mills on

⁴³ Ludlow, *Miles Park Presbyterian Church Seventy Fifth Anniversary*, 6.

⁴⁴ *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* 27 May, 1944.

Aetna.⁴⁵ The area occupied by these mills was only a little over fifty acres per complex, but their impact on the area was tremendous.

The mills physically dominated the area to the north of the village, but the most imposing single building in Newburgh lay to the south. This was the state owned and operated asylum first known as the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum, built in 1854. This institution went through a long series of name changes until it closed in 1977, as the Cleveland Development Center. I have chosen to use the term asylum when referencing this institution since that is the term most commonly used in contemporary sources.

Perhaps no other physical structure in Newburgh exemplified the immense faith that nineteenth century Americans had in progress and the ability to alter and control not only physical space but the human mind itself.⁴⁶ The New York Times offered the opinion that this “institution will meet a want that has been experienced for some years...”⁴⁷ The asylum, sometimes called the Newburgh Lunatic Asylum, was a source of pride to the small town. The asylum provided economic opportunities for local farmers, carpenters, merchants and others. Jobs inside the asylum included cooks and seamstresses as well as attendants, both male and female. And, inevitably, it became a place of residence for some Newburgh residents committed to care at the institution.

The original building stood until the state closed down the hospital and demolished the buildings in 1977. The long life of the institution created a wealth of records, photographs and illustrations. It is easy to recreate the structure and grounds of the asylum because so many photographs, lithographs, and written descriptions of the

⁴⁵ Robison, Savage and Company “Map of the City of Cleveland” 1876.

⁴⁶ For more on the development and philosophy of nineteenth-century treatment of mental illnesses see Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Institutions in America: Social Policy to 1875* (New York: Free Press, 1972)

⁴⁷ “Charitable Institutions” *The New York Times*, 20 Sep 1852.

place are still extant. Annual reports had to be submitted by the trustees and superintendent to the Governor of Ohio. The report for 1873 featured a lithographic print of the asylum, created after a major rebuilding of the institution following the fire of 1872. This illustration shows an imposing building built in a Romanesque style. Lush, rolling lawns surround the building, and trees dot the landscape. The state appointed trustees who selected the site gave their reasons as follows.

The site of Newburgh, the Trustees consider well adapted for this purpose; it is at the junction of the Cleveland and Chagrin Falls Plank Road with the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad, and affords two easy modes of access to and from the city of Cleveland, during the whole year where most of the supplies can conveniently be obtained. The whole region of country is pleasant and healthy; a durable stream of spring water passes through the premises.⁴⁸

An article in the *New York Times* on September 20th 1852 announced the selection of the site and provided a description of the proposed building. The building was to “have a front of 228 feet, with two wings; the entire structure to be of stone.”⁴⁹ Some of the stone came from the nearby quarry of Thomas Garfield, who donated part of his land to the state of Ohio for the erection of the asylum. The land on which the asylum was built ran along Mill Creek, south of Miles Ave. and just west of Broadway. A long curved driveway sloped up a gentle hill from Broadway to the imposing front portico of the building; a fountain splashes on the circular lawn surrounded by the drive. The whole building resembles a fancy resort, or the country estate of an English nobleman, complete with fairy-tale turrets.

This grandly designed institution for patients suffering from mental maladies was typical of the age. This Gothic inspired architecture was primarily the work of a doctor

⁴⁸ Public Document No.9 Report of a Majority and Minority of the Trustees for the Location and Erection of Two Additional Lunatic Asylums. In House, December 21, 1852, Executive Office Columbus, 88.

⁴⁹ “Charitable Institutions” *The New York Times*, 20 Sep 1852.

from Pennsylvania, Thomas Kirkbride. In her book, *The Art of Asylum Keeping: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the Origins of American Psychiatry*, Nancy Tomes argues that while the work of Foucault and others “forced a healthy reexamination of historical preconceptions,” the resulting dichotomy of treatment vs. incarceration has become stultifying in its own way.⁵⁰ Tomes’ aim was to move beyond this dichotomy and to examine the changing attitudes about mental illness and the “moral treatment” methods of cure proposed by Kirkbride and other prominent physicians of the day, avoiding ahistorical judgments. She relates the story of physician and asylum superintendent, Thomas Kirkbride and his theory of moral treatment in the care of the insane. Kirkbride’s influence on the care and treatment of the mentally ill extended far beyond the Pennsylvania Hospital where he was in charge. His methods were imitated nationwide. The Northern Ohio Insane Asylum was designed and operated on the principles and methods proscribed by Kirkbride. The state trustees who oversaw the site selection and construction of the asylum traveled to Philadelphia to meet with Kirkbride in person in order to obtain his advice regarding architectural plans for the building.⁵¹

The annual reports for the asylum provide descriptions of interior rooms as well, a rare find for the time period. Part of the “treatment” of mental patients was the attempt to create a “homey” atmosphere. Therefore the furnishings, décor and recreational items mentioned in these reports are the types of items that would be found, or at least desired, by residents in their own homes. They allow a glimpse into the process of refinement, and the increased demand for consumer goods occurring in most middle-class households.

⁵⁰ Nancy Tomes, *The Art of Asylum Keeping: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the Origins of American Psychiatry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994)12.

⁵¹ Public Document No. 17 Report of the Trustees to Locate Two Additional Lunatic Asylums. In Answer to a Resolution of the Senate. In Senate—January 17. 1853, Executive Office Columbus, 199.

Sitting rooms and family parlors at the asylum were “fitted up” for “the comfort, if not the pleasure, of the inmates.” Comfort, in this case, meant the use of wall-paper, paint and carpeting, to make rooms “as pleasant as our means allow.”⁵² The state was not expected to provide mentally ill patients with luxury, but “comfortable” surroundings were essential to their recovery. One superintendent ruefully admitted that pleasant surroundings “have more to do with their recovery than the prescriptions of the most skilled physician.”⁵³

This belief in the power of pleasant surroundings was not limited to the mentally ill. The words “pleasant” and “comfortable” or variations thereof, frequently appeared in advertisements for resorts and other public buildings. An announcement for a party that appeared in the December 6 edition of the *Plain Dealer* assured the public that “the gentlemanly proprietors of the Cataract House understand getting up pleasant parties.”⁵⁴ Newburgh real estate offered in 1851 promised prospective buyers cheap lots where families could live “in this pleasant village” where two daily trains provided transport to the city.⁵⁵

The village of 1851 would not be quite as pleasant after the arrival of the steel mills, and even the convenience of rail travel had unpleasant aspects. The emerging middle-class of Newburgh lived with the dirt and noise of the burgeoning steel industry, dealt daily with the dirt or mud of unpaved roads, and endured the smells of manure and burning coal and wood from home and factory furnaces. They constantly sought means

⁵² *Fourth Annual Report of the trustees and officers of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of Ohio for the year, 1858* Columbus: Richard Nevins, State Printer, 1859, 26.

⁵³ *Third Annual Report of the trustees and officers of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of Ohio for the year, 1857* Columbus: Richard Nevins, State Printer, 1858, 13.

⁵⁴ *The Plain Dealer*, 6 Dec 1865

⁵⁵ *The Plain Dealer*, 22 Jul 1851

of mitigating these unpleasant sensory realities by creating public or private spaces where noise, dirt and odors were lessened, if not banished. One of the ironies of the industrial age was the fact that mass produced paints, carpets, furniture and other household items used to embellish these places were only available to a greater number of consumers because of an increased number of factories and the attendant noise, dirt, pollution created by these manufacturing centers. Eventually streetcars and automobiles made it possible for many middle-class and even working class families to live at a remove from industrial areas but that would not happen in Newburgh for many decades. In the late nineteenth-century working and middle-class families sought to minimize the drawbacks of industrialization while benefiting from the conveniences.

The industrialization of Newburgh was a major factor in the decision for the city of Cleveland to annex this part of the township. A thriving industrial economy was attractive to the leaders of Cleveland. Conversely, the sudden growth of Newburgh due to the influx of mill workers created a need for a more sophisticated infrastructure. Newburgh had “outgrown its limits as a village” and had “no police, not steam fire department, few or no pavements and a wholly inadequate school system.” The village needed to either incorporate as a city of its own, or annex themselves to the already established city “of which they are already in all economic respects, a part.”⁵⁶ In August of 1873 Newburgh landowners voted 362 to 69 in favor of annexation. This annexation allowed the newly created Eighteenth Ward to have access to municipal funds for schools, road improvements, and perhaps of primary importance, established fire and police services.

⁵⁶ *Cleveland Leader*, 6 Aug 1873

Despite the existence of a stone quarry south of Mill Creek Falls and a small brick making industry extant in the 1840's and 1850's, the vast majority of buildings were wooden structures. Fire was a threat even to the brick and stone buildings and there were several famous fires in Newburgh, particularly prior to the existence of a formal fire department. The Cataract House, Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum and the Cleveland Rolling Mills all suffered major fires.

A location on Sawyer St. (East 91st) was chosen for the new fire station. This location put the new fire department next door to the Walnut School, across the street from the Methodist Church, and within a mile radius of most of the stores and businesses of Newburgh, including the rolling mills and the asylum. The new engine house was designated as Engine House No. Eleven for the number of the engine assigned to the ward. A new fire company was assigned to this building on February 9, 1875.⁵⁷

The design of the building was a standard design found in most urban fire departments in the late nineteenth century. The engine house was a two story brick building with one set of double doors in the front of the building. The lower floor was divided into two rooms, the front for the engine and other equipment, with horse stables in the back room. A "broad flight of stairs" led up to the fireman's quarters, and the whole building was well ventilated and lighted. Archways were built into the walls to allow for additions to accommodate a hook and ladder, an addition that was added within two years of the original building being completed.^{58, 59}

The municipal fire department was responsible for the construction and staffing of the new fire house but the citizens of the Eighteenth Ward held a large and successful ball

⁵⁷ *History of the Cleveland Fire Department* (Cleveland: Fireman's Relief Association, 1897), 38.

⁵⁸ *The Cleveland Leader* 8 Feb 1875

⁵⁹ Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Fire Commissioners December 1875

to raise funds for furnishing the engine house with “needed articles” leaving a “handsome balance to be placed in a fund [to be used for] purchasing a library for the use of the company.”⁶⁰ It is somewhat ironic that the location chosen for the hall was the Newburgh town hall, now rendered obsolete by the annexation.

The new Eighteenth Ward was designated as the eighth precinct in the Cleveland Police Department. The earliest police station was at first housed in leased space in a section of the old chair factory, a less than ideal place, being “dry as a tinder-box” and backing up to a vacant warehouse.⁶¹ There is no evidence that the town hall was ever considered for housing the police station, a solution that seems appropriate, perhaps its layout precluded such a purpose. Plans for a building a new purpose built structure were soon being debated.

Politics briefly held up the erection of a new building. In June of 1875 the *Plain Dealer* complained that “some occult reason” put the job of renovating existing police stations and purchasing the lot for a new station in the Eighteenth ward in the hands of the council, as opposed to the more capable police committee. This situation would result in unknown delays to the progress, according to the paper.⁶²

The delay was not too long; the new building was finished and dedicated on January 14, 1876.⁶³ It stood on Wales Street, a block south of the rolling mills, and well within walking distance of the business district. The station was a one story building, divided into three rooms. There was an office for the sergeant, a room for the seven patrolmen assigned to the ward, furnished with wardrobes and a washstand. The prisoner

⁶⁰ *The Cleveland Leader* 15 Mar 1875

⁶¹ *The Plain Dealer*, 18 Sep, 1875

⁶² *Ibid.*, 17 Jun 1875

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 14 Jan 1876

holding area featured open iron cage cells in the center of the room.⁶⁴ Several dignitaries, including the mayor, were on hand at the dedication of the new station. They pronounced the new police station, perhaps with some hyperbole, “the best in the city.”⁶⁵

The Eighteenth ward now had police and fire protection, streets and schools began to be maintained by the city, and the area reflected a typical urban neighborhood. The rolling hills and pastures had dwindled to almost nothing. The residents that lived in Newburgh from 1850 to 1882 had one constant in their lives, an ever evolving neighborhood. Those who had grown up or lived their adult lives in the years from the earliest days of European settlement had seen a slow, steady progression from the log cabins to frame houses and the erection of a few buildings for commerce and public gatherings. Those who lived on into the 1880’s, along with their offspring, witnessed the building boom that accompanied the growth of the steel industry. These changes occurred well within an average lifetime. Some residents helped to effect the growth of the area, some had no control over the changes, and more than a few may have resisted change, but all were affected by it.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 18 Sep 1875

⁶⁵ Ibid., 14 Jan 1876

CHAPTER III

AN HONEST DAY'S WORK

"The land in this township is rolling, which is something of a relief to one after traveling the lake shore towns in this county . . . the wheat and oat crops are very good. Corn generally looks well."

An Observer, *Daily True Democrat* 11 July 1850

"Newburgh never was much to look at . . . houses were grimy with smoke from iron and steel mills."

George Davis, *Cleveland Press*, 25 October 1938

In March of 1869 the sleepy residents of Newburgh were startled out of their beds by the prolonged cackling and honking of a flock of disoriented geese attracted to the glare and heat of the blast furnace at the rolling mill. The geese paused in their northward migration to spend the night circling the furnace in circles that sometimes stayed close to the site, and then widened out over a mile. At daybreak they "found the points of the compass again and sailed away . . . for their Arctic home."⁶⁶

The geese were not the only creatures to be both attracted to and bewildered by industrial activity. Industry and technology attracted and confused humans as well. The overarching theme of nineteenth-century America is one of eager acceptance of the

⁶⁶ *Morning Leader* 16 Mar 1864

positive aspects and advantages of industrial society, but such acceptance was never wholesale. Tension arose as people tried to cope with the unavoidable, if unintended, results of industrial activity, especially the visible or discernable, noise, smoke and dirt. Even the most zealous promoters of industry could not deny the “nuisance,” to use a common contemporary term, of its byproducts.

While it would be many decades before the true environmental costs of industrialization became obvious, the smoke, dirt and fumes produced by the mills were apparent from the start. A Grand Jury in Cleveland was ridiculed in *The New York Times* for finding an unnamed mill guilty of “making a smoke.” *The Times* suggested that the mill owners should invest in cologne to “drown the dainty-nosed inhabitants.” Smoke, the writer inferred, was a small price to pay to make Cleveland “one of the chief manufacturing cities of the West.”⁶⁷ And it was a price most inhabitants of Cleveland and Newburgh were more than willing to pay.

The transformation of agrarian Newburgh had been accomplished long before reporter George Davis penned the above words in a series of articles detailing the history of the area. The steel mills that had affected that transformation were being dismantled and closed down when Davis set out to record the stories of the “mighty men” of Newburgh that worked in those mills.⁶⁸ Two interesting details stand out in his accounts. First, while over fifty years had passed since the area had become a ward of Cleveland, residents still referred to themselves with pride as “Newburgers”⁶⁹ Second, the image of industrial Newburgh, with its ubiquitous smoke and dirt, had long erased the image of the

⁶⁷ *The New York Times* 27 Jul 1860

⁶⁸ “Home of Mighty Men,” George Davis, *Cleveland Press*, 26 Oct 1938.

⁶⁹ “Clings to Name After 50 Years,” George Davis *Cleveland Press* 25 Oct 1938. Newburg and Newburgh were used interchangeably and while I have chosen to use the more common Newburgh I have not changed the spelling in direct quotes.

rolling hills and abundant crops that had impressed the anonymous “observer” in 1850. The once prominent pastoral image of Newburgh had been gone for so long even the elderly men Davis interviewed had no memory of the rural past. No one challenged Davis’ description of a place that was “never much to look at.”⁷⁰ His words convey the impression that Newburgh was an industrial town that bloomed around the mills, as if the human inhabitants had only arrived on the scene with the advent of the steel industry.

Newburgh was not, however, a boom town that arose in a formerly unpopulated area. While the mills certainly had an enormous impact on the character of the town after the 1850’s, its rural beginnings, and the Yankee background of the Newburgh residents at mid-century played an important part in the development of the smaller businesses and neighborhoods in Newburgh. And, while change was about to occur at a rapid pace, Newburgh in 1850 was still a pastoral landscape, without the smoke and dirt that defined its later appearance.

The population schedules of the Federal Census for Newburgh township in 1850 report a population of 1,542 individuals, divided amongst 259 families living in 246 dwellings.⁷¹ This population was scattered amongst the entire township, almost twice the area that would later comprise the eighteenth ward. A large majority of the heads of households owned their own land. Many owned entire hundred-acre lots, a fact that helps to explain the lack of population density. Few lots were subdivided into units smaller than half or occasionally quarter lots, with the exception of the far northern tip of the township, near the city of Cleveland, and within the small business district that comprised

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Seventh Census of the United States, Year: 1850; Census Place: Newburg, Cuyahoga, Ohio; Roll: M432_672; Page: 339A

the village center.⁷² On the other hand, no one individual owned large amounts of land. Those who owned more than one single hundred-acre lot rarely owned contiguous lots, but instead held partial lots in scattered areas.

An overwhelming majority of residents were farmers, according to the occupation listed on the census. Other records demonstrate that at least some of those listed as farmers often brought in revenue from other methods. Thomas Garfield owned hundred-acre lot 472, immediately south of the village center, land which he both farmed and quarried for stone. Garfield was financially secure enough to loan tuition money to his nephew, James, the future President of the United States. In 1854 he donated fifty acres of land and stone from his quarry to build the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum, a gift valued at \$8,000.⁷³ There was a limit to his philanthropy, however. While the land and the stone were gifts when Garfield offered to do the grading on the construction site his bid for the job was \$500. Garfield explained that his knowledge of that “kind of work” came from sixteen-years experience performing it on “railroads, pikes, canals, and otherwise.”⁷⁴ Like his more famous nephew, Garfield was also active in politics, serving as trustee for the village at various times during the 1850s and 1860s.⁷⁵ While the 1850 census described Garfield as a farmer, it is clear that this label only conveys part of his

⁷² *Cuyahoga County Land Ownership Map and Index* (Cleveland: Cuyahoga County Genealogical Society, 1975)

⁷³ Public Document no. 9 “Report of a majority and minority of the trustees for the location and erection of two additional lunatic asylums. In House, Dec. 21, 1852, 88.

⁷⁴ *Appendix to the Journal of the Senate of the State of Ohio, containing reports of investigative committees, etc, for the second session of the fifty-second General Assembly and the Fifth Session under the New Constitution, commencing Monday, January 5th, 1857* Columbus: Richard Nevin, State Printer, 1857, 267.

⁷⁵ Crisfield Johnson, comp., *History of Cuyahoga County, Part Third: The Townships*, (Philadelphia: D.W. Ensign & Co., 1879), 482.

work identity; by 1880 he abandoned his earlier designation of farmer and identified himself to the census taker as a stone dealer.⁷⁶

Farming in the nineteenth century involved a large number of skills, so other types of work done by men like Garfield is not surprising, but it does demonstrate the fluidity of occupational terms. Individuals in Newburgh were not locked in to any one occupation or occupational category.

Because the 1850 through 1870 agricultural schedules for the county are not available it is difficult to ascertain the income generated by Newburgh farms in this period. There was, however, a fairly rapid decline in farming as an occupation within the next couple of decades. This trend away from farming was in response to industrialization and the creation of white collar jobs but it also suggests the possibility that farming in Newburgh was not a particularly lucrative undertaking. The terrain was hilly and full of ravines and farms were fairly small in acreage, since few individuals owned more than one hundred-acre lot. Small orchards seem to have been popular as several advertisements that offered farms for sale often emphasized “abundant fruit trees” on the land.⁷⁷ Most ads, however, did not mention other crops that were being produced by current owners. One advertisement offered a suggestion that the farm could be divided into “numerous small parcels for gardening for which its soil is exceedingly well adapted.”⁷⁸ This suggests subsistence-first or personal farming rather than commercial agriculture.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ 1880 Federal Census, Ohio, Cuyahoga, Cleveland, Enumerator District 52, written page 47, printed page 277, line

⁷⁷ *Plain Dealer*, 8 Sep 1856.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ For more on the transformation of farming practices from subsistence-first to commercial orientation see John Larson “The Market Revolution” in *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction*, ed. Lacy K. Ford (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2005)

The farmers of pre- industrial Newburgh belonged to the nascent middle-class in their values and outlook, regardless of economic status or the actual labor they performed. Most were property owners, working on the land they owned. Both men and women were literate, and both sons and daughters were sent to primary and, often, secondary schools. While some of the sons of these farmers who went to work in the rolling mills later in the decade performed manual, wage-based labor, their lifestyles, values and worldview were more typically middle class. Mill work was not always a life time occupation for these men, rather a temporary phase in their working years. Also, mill work did not become generational with the native-born Newburgh residents; the sons of mill workers did not usually follow their fathers into the mill. A typical pattern was as follows: the first generation worked as landowning farmers, the second generation included mill workers, farmers and clerks, and the third generation clerks, small business owners or professionals. Variations, of course, occurred, but this pattern was prevalent enough to be considered representative.

The family of pioneer David Brooks provides one illustration of the occupational mobility pattern followed by many Newburgh families. David Brooks, a Vermont native, immigrated first to St. Lawrence County, New York and then came to Newburgh in 1818. This migratory pattern was one that many of his neighbors had also followed. Brooks purchased lot 310 from John Hubbard of Madison, Ohio, paying off the thousand dollar purchase price in yearly installments until paid in full in 1834.⁸⁰ David Brooks died in 1849 and his land was split between his sons, some of whom continued to farm this land until the late nineteenth century, long after most other farms had ceased to exist.

⁸⁰ Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham, *The Pioneer Families of Cleveland 1796-1840*, Cleveland: Evangelical Press, 1914,235.

By 1880, Caroline Brooks, widow of eldest son Samuel had the largest share of the land. She reported twenty-one tilled acres of land, on which she raised corn, oats, and potatoes. Her income from the farm that year was one thousand dollars, in keeping with other farmers in the area, but she spent \$100 on fertilizer, \$500 on building repairs and \$150 was paid out to hired labor. The estimated value of her farm was \$10,000.⁸¹ Caroline died in 1908 and left a sizable estate to her children, including two houses and lots and several thousand dollars in bequests.⁸²

David's son Midas was a farmer in 1850 and 1860 but worked as a carpenter during a sojourn in Chicago in the 1870's. In 1860 another son, John, was one of the employees working in the Ohio Chair Factory, but is listed as a farmer again in 1870. It is possible that the work John did at the chair factory was part time to supplement his farm income. And in 1880, while he was still farming, his output may have been very small, as he was not included in the 1880 agricultural schedules.

A wider range of employment shows up in the third generation of the Brooks family. This generation, born in the 1850's, made their living as carpenters, salesmen, lawyers and doctors as illustrated in the census data on these men in the 1880 census and beyond. The Brooks family is not unique; it is in fact typical and representative of the descendents of pioneer families in Newburgh, and therefore serves as an excellent example of the employment patterns of those families.

The few non-farming occupations that existed amongst the 1850 population were typically artisans and merchants who supported the farming community. Among this

⁸¹ *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Schedule 2, Products of Agriculture in Cleveland in the County of Cuyahoga, State of Ohio*, Page 1, supervisor's district 6, enumeration district 54, line 5.

⁸² Last Will and Testament of Caroline Brooks, probate file no 45292, Cuyahoga County Probate Court, Cuyahoga County Archives

small group were a few blacksmiths, wagon-makers, carpenters, shoemakers and dry-goods merchants. Also listed were two physicians, two clergymen and one lawyer. Three men ran the saloons and taverns that existed in Newburgh, including the Cataract House that provided rooms to let, but there were no listings for the type of boarding house that emerged by 1870 to house immigrant mill workers in the steel and iron industry.⁸³ There were only three industries reported on the 1850 census. A brick making facility employed seventeen men, and two sawmills employed four and two men respectively.⁸⁴

Those heads of households whose given occupation was simply described as “laborer” were predominately Irish or, less frequently, German born. Several Germans were also among the landowning farmers and artisans. This “non-Yankee” population of Newburgh was scattered throughout the township and not concentrated into specific areas. Newburgh was, at that point in time, still rural in character, with houses scattered along the roads that traveled through the township rather than concentrated along the later residential streets formed by subdivisions. This physical arrangement did not allow for the type of ethnic enclaves that later arose amongst the closely set dwellings built to house the influx of mill workers in the decades following the Civil War.

Henry and Lemuel Pratt, brothers from Massachusetts settled in Newburgh in the mid-1850’s and opened the Ohio Chair Factory, a wholesale manufacturer of cane and wood seat chairs. While the factory was in Newburgh, the company office was on Water Street in Cleveland’s warehouse district.⁸⁵ Henry did not stay in the area, moving to New York in the 1860’s, but Lemuel remained in Newburgh until 1879, at which time he sold

⁸³Seventh Census of the United States, Year: 1850; Census Place: *Newburg, Cuyahoga, Ohio*; Roll: *M432_672*

⁸⁴ 1850 Non-Population Schedule, Products of Industry Ohio, Cuyahoga County, Newburgh Township

⁸⁵ Wiggins & Weaver’s Cleveland Directory, 1870-1871

the land on which the factory stood to himself for one dollar, and moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan where he opened another factory. Although the brothers were fairly prosperous in ventures after leaving Ohio they did not turn the Ohio Chair Factory into a large presence in the community, nor did it leave a lasting impression as did the steel mills on the residents. Tax records for 1859 value the factory building at \$6,000 dollars, considerably higher than any other structure in the village. Yet this value seemed to diminish very quickly. This was the building that the *Plain Dealer* dismissed as an “old chair factory, vacant for years” when it rented to the police department as temporary quarters in 1875.⁸⁶ The number of years it had been vacant was not as long as the newspaper article made it sound since the factory was still listed as an active business in the 1871 city directory.⁸⁷

The relative rapidity with which the community seemed to dismiss this enterprise is rather puzzling. Though the Ohio Chair Factory was not a long-lasting or a large operation it did provide some of the first wage employment in the village. Most of the men employed by the Pratts came with the brothers from Massachusetts, others were English immigrants, but a few were sons of the earlier New England residents. Since the 1860 manufacturing schedules for Cuyahoga County are not extant, it is not possible to obtain an exact count of Ohio Chair employees, but a scan of the population schedules show only about ten men listed as having jobs at the chair factory, including the Pratts.⁸⁸

The Ohio Chair Factory was one of the few businesses that are depicted on the earliest extant map of the Village of Newburgh. This map, an insert in the G.M. Hopkins Cuyahoga Map of 1858, depicts only the small section of Newburgh that surrounds the

⁸⁶ *The Plain Dealer*, 18 Sep, 1875.

⁸⁷ Wiggins & Weaver's Cleveland Directory, 1870-1871.

⁸⁸ 1860 Federal Population Census Newburgh, Cuyahoga, Ohio; Roll: M653_955

waterfall, the intersection of Broadway and Harvard, and the Miles Park area. This document also serves as the only early directory of Newburgh. The map/directory shows the subdivisions of original township lots in the village center, and provides a rudimentary listing of the businesses located in this small area.⁸⁹

Businesses listed include Wm. Varney, shingle maker, E. Miles, dry goods and grocery store, M. Fish, boot and shoe store, Wm. Bergin, owner of the Cataract House , Jacob Drum, owner of the Merchant's Hotel, G.R. Bowman, wagon maker and, P. S Ruggles, physician. The Hopkins map also contains a listing, but does not depict the location of the "Stone, Chisholm, Jones & Co. Rolling Mill," which was "North of the Village."⁹⁰ This modest listing was in reference to the future Cleveland Rolling Mills, which would, within the next twenty years continue to grow and become the most significant industry in Newburgh.

Mill work was not only dirty it was dangerous; many men were maimed or killed in frequent accidents at the mills. The fast growing iron and steel industry, however, did attract many workers to the area, bringing great wealth to some, and the hope, at least, of steady income to others, and provided the basis for the rapid, steady increase in population and the attendant boost to the local economy.

Newburgh's iron and steel industry began in a fairly modest manner. David I. Jones and his brother John Jones immigrated from Glamorganshire, Wales in 1845. Skilled iron workers themselves, they built the first rolling mill in Newburgh just east of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh tracks in 1856. This initial operation was not a steel mill, but an iron foundry, that produced tie bars for the railroad.

⁸⁹ G. M. Hopkins, *Map of Cuyahoga County Ohio from actual surveys and county records* (Philadelphia: S. H. Matthews, 1858).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The Jones brothers, unlike the partners who joined them in the rolling mill venture remained in Newburgh and put down roots in the community. David helped to found the Welsh Congregational Church, while John became a prominent member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Their descendants continued to live and work in Newburgh for several generations. They built substantial, but not elaborate, houses on Broadway just north of Jones Rd., one on the west side of the street and one on the east. This put the brothers within walking distance of the mills they owned.⁹¹

The Jones brothers were not sole owners of the mills. An early partner, also named Jones, but not related to them, was involved for only a brief time. The panic of 1857 dealt the fledgling industry a blow, but the brothers found outside investors who not only saved the mills from financial ruin, but changed the focus of the operation from iron to steel.

Among the investors were Henry Payne, Jephtha Wade, Amasa Stone and Henry Chisholm, men who shaped the industrial growth of Cleveland and became leaders in its elite, wealthy society. By 1858 the firm was known as Stone, Chisholm and Jones, and shortly thereafter was incorporated as the Cleveland Rolling Mills.⁹² Payne, Wade and Stone were not hands-on investors, but Henry Chisholm not only invested money in the mills but directed its operations until his death in 1881.

Chisholm, a Scottish carpenter, had immigrated first to Montreal and then to Cleveland where he obtained contract work to build breakwaters. Many glowing biographical accounts of Chisholm can be found in old histories of Cleveland and the steel industry in general. Elroy Avery asserts that Chisholm's success as a contractor

⁹¹ "Founders of Newburgh" *Plain Dealer*, 23 Apr 1944

⁹² *Ibid.*

had allowed him to amass a “modest fortune for those days of about twenty-five thousand dollars.” This fortune, Avery notes, allowed Chisholm to invest in the iron mills that would become the basis of his successful steel industry and earn him his true fortune.⁹³ James F. Rhodes credits him with being not only, “among the early ones to see that steel rails would entirely take the place of iron,” but for having the vision to see the larger future of steel. In 1868 the Cleveland Rolling Mills became the first company in Ohio to use the Bessemer process, using blasts of hot air to mass produce steel. Chisholm recognized that “Bessemer steel must be adapted to other uses than the making of rails . . . he was the first to branch out into the manufacture of wire, screws, agricultural and merchant shapes, from steel.”⁹⁴

None of his biographers explained how a trained carpenter amassed the knowledge needed to operate an iron or steel mill. Nineteenth-century historians seemed to take for granted the diverse interests and skills of the leading capitalists of the day. The proof of their skills seemed evident by the money they were making. There is no doubt, however, that under Chisholm’s direction the Cleveland Rolling Mills became a leader in the American steel industry. In 1879 Chisholm, in “one of the most important business transactions which ever took place” in Cleveland, bought a controlling interest in the company for over \$1,400,000. At that time the works consisted of two rolling mills, the Bessemer works and several wire mills.⁹⁵

Unlike the Jones brothers, Henry Chisholm never lived in Newburgh. He was, however, reputed to have been admired by his workers to whom he was “benevolent and

⁹³ Elroy McKendree Avery, *Cleveland and Its Environs: The Heart of New Connecticut, Volume II: Biography* (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 504.

⁹⁴ James F. Rhodes, “The Coal and Iron Industry of Cleveland,” *Magazine of Western History* Vol. II May-Oct, 1885, 304.

⁹⁵ “A Huge Business Transaction” *The New York Times*, 24 Oct 1879.

paternalistic,” and who were better paid than most at \$7.00 a day for rollers and \$1.65 for laborers.⁹⁶ When Chisholm died at the age of fifty-nine in 1881 the men “laid down their tools and went home to mourn.”⁹⁷

The original founders of the rolling mills never made it into the ranks of the Cleveland elite. The Jones brothers did not merit lengthy obituaries or sketches in “mug books” of leading citizens like their wealthier counterparts. It is difficult to find contemporary references to these men. In an era that applauded hard work the most when it resulted in great wealth, the Jones’ did not fit that image. In an 1874 campaign speech to the workers in the Eighteenth Ward, Henry Payne applauded the Jones as “pioneers of the growth and greatness of the eighteenth ward,” but he prefaced his words with the suggestion that they could not have foreseen the results of their “small undertaking.”⁹⁸ Payne points out that the hard, hands-on work of the brothers Jones needed the vision and capital provided by others, including himself, to create a successful steel industry out of a modest iron rolling mill.

The Jones brothers may not have gained the fame and fortune that Chisholm and other industrialists did, but they led comfortable, if not luxurious lives. John Jones died while on a visit to Wales in 1870. Although he had not amassed a large fortune he left his family financially secure. David lived until 1893, also dying while visiting Wales. Along with substantial monetary bequests David left his remaining twenty-eight shares in

⁹⁶ William E. Van Vugt, *British Buckeyes: The English, Scots, & Welsh in Ohio 1700-1900*, (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2006) 172.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁹⁸ *Plain Dealer*, 12 Oct 1874

the Cleveland Rolling Mills and his thirty-seven and one-half shares in the American Plate and Sheet Company to his children.⁹⁹

A large number of Welsh iron workers joined the Jones brothers to work in the mill they founded and became steel workers as the industry evolved. These Welsh immigrants soon became a vital part of the community, building two churches, organizing a choir and holding Welsh music and poetry festivals, known as Eistefodds. Many of the descendents of David and John Jones and the other Welsh residents of Newburgh became successful small businessmen and community leaders in Cleveland.

English and Irish immigrants also arrived to work in the growing steel and iron industries, which included the Aetna Iron and Nail Company, opened in 1868 north of the rolling mills. When this company met with financial difficulties Chisholm and Stone purchased its operation. The Union Rolling Mills, began by Charles Otis to roll railroad ties, also became part of the Chisholm holdings and was combined with the Aetna mills. These operations occupied land a few blocks north and west of the original rolling mills. All told these mills provided employment for hundreds of workers, a number that would grow into the thousands as the century ended.

The railroad boom and the demands of war created a tremendous need for the products of the steel industry. When President-elect Abraham Lincoln made a brief visit to Cleveland on the way his 1861 inauguration the “workmen at the Newburgh Rolling Mill presented Mr. Lincoln with a T rail of their manufacture, which was courteously received.”¹⁰⁰ This early notice of the mill workers in Newburgh was the beginning of a journalistic tendency in local newspapers to define Newburgh, and later the Eighteenth

⁹⁹ Probate records of David I. Jones, journal entry dated July 11, 1893, Cuyahoga County Archives

¹⁰⁰ *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 16 February 1861

Ward, by its mill workers, whose activities, mishaps, financial condition, labor disputes and politics provided fodder for numerous newspaper accounts.

This tendency on the part of journalists was understandable. Following the Civil War mill workers were probably the most numerous and visible segment of Newburgh. The 1870 census schedule covers one hundred fifty seven pages. Nearly every one of these pages has at least one, and usually more, males whose occupations are listed as rolling mill worker or wire mill workers, including several boys between the ages of twelve and seventeen.”¹⁰¹ Occasionally a man was listed as a puddler, one of the jobs considered skilled labor, but more often than not mill workers were designated in generic terms, leaving it difficult to ascertain the ratio of skilled and unskilled jobs. In 1880, however the Cleveland Rolling Mills reported that the average days worked by “skilled mechanics” was two-hundred thirteen, while “ordinary labor” worked an average of one-hundred thirty days and the “greatest number of hands” working at any time during the year was fifteen-hundred. These numbers included one hundred twenty-five males under fifteen and two hundred fifty children, although no age was given for them.¹⁰²

Statistics do not provide us with a clear look at the human side of mill work. It is very difficult to delve into the day-to-day life of a mill employee. Contemporary diaries or letters are not easily found and reminiscent accounts are colored by nostalgia. News accounts were usually written with a particular slant, the sympathies of the major Cleveland newspapers, regardless of their political leanings, lay with owners and industrial capitalists. While accounts regarding accidents or layoffs acknowledged the pain and distress workers suffered the tone of the papers was often patronizing.

¹⁰¹ Ninth Decennial Census, 1870 population schedules, Newburgh Township, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

¹⁰² 1880 Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, Products of Industry, Ohio, Cuyahoga, Cleveland

Politicians on both sides courted the working man's vote and claimed to support them but disapproved of labor disputes, particularly when violence erupted during strikes.

Newspaper accounts illustrate the fact that mill work was dangerous and demanding and not always a steady, reliable source of income. The mills often shut down temporarily or dismissed part of its work force due to natural disasters or fires and in times of financial depressions leaving wage workers without an income. A "terrific wind-storm," probably a tornado, demolished the west end of a building at the Cleveland Rolling Mills in March of 1880 and carried off the roof. This disaster not only killed several men buried in the rubble and wounded others but left many more men without work, or wages, until the damage was repaired.¹⁰³

A fire in 1870 destroyed the Iron and Nail Company at a cost of one hundred-thousand dollars. Fortunately no one was killed in this incident, but three hundred men were "thrown out of employment by the disaster." The article listed in detail the dozen or so insurance companies that covered the loss and the amount each one would pay, a total of \$102,500, more than covering the loss. The article did not note how the workmen would recover their lost wages.¹⁰⁴

Less spectacular accidents occurred on a regular basis as safety regulations were nonexistent. Collapsing scaffolding sent men falling to the ground, while falling coke from the top of a blast furnace sent flames out of the furnace causing the men who were cleaning the furnace to be "badly burned." Some accidents were caused by carelessness, mill spokesmen were quick to point out. When an assistant engineer died from an electric shock, the paper noted that he had "been repeatedly warned not to touch the

¹⁰³ *New York Times*, 6 Mar. 1880

¹⁰⁴ *New York Times*, 10 Dec. 1870

machinery.”¹⁰⁵ The man was found dead in front of the brushes of the battery and “the supposition is that he touched both brushes and completed the circuit . . .”¹⁰⁶ Why the worker would do this was not explained, but the article implies that the mill was not responsible.

Uncertain work meant uncertain wages, which affected the community at large. A satirical poem signed simply “Fair Play,” appeared in the local newspaper during the panic of 1873. This rather lengthy poem portrays the Newburgh merchants who have decided to stop extending credit to working men and demand payment in cash. A condensed version of the poem is presented here:

*Tom, Dick or Harry for aught that we care,
May have on his visage the look of despair . . .
His wife may be sitting both lonely and sad,
No fire in the stove and the child very bad. . .
The Mill may be stopped and no wages a going,
Till the furnace is lit, or the blast set a blowing.
Did you think for a minute we’d stand at our doors
And welcome you all to get “tick” at our stores . . .*

*Then workmen be strong, be united at length,
Remember that saying, in union is strength,
Rise up for yourselves a great store of your own,
And many will join you as ‘tis known,
That you are awake from the sleep of the past
And true to your own native interests at last.¹⁰⁷*

What the reaction of the merchants was to the appearance of this poem is not recorded. While the poet chastised these “men of money” for their greediness, none of the merchants in Newburgh were outlandishly wealthy, and the Panic had affected their incomes as well. But his verses did point to the divisions in the community that existed

¹⁰⁵ *New York Times* 12 Mar 1882

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *All Around the Clock*, 14 November 1873

between wage workers and small business owners. And his call for the mill workers to unionize was clear.

The often precarious financial state of wage workers was commonly acknowledged. In 1881 some workers organized a society “based on ‘fraternity, aid, and protection.’”¹⁰⁸ An earlier society had been organized in 1878, calling themselves the Sons of St. George, perhaps in tribute to their English heritage.¹⁰⁹ A resolution was made in city council that a delegation approach the mill and factory owners in the Eighteenth Ward to request that these owners begin paying wages bi-weekly, as opposed to the current monthly schedule. The reason for this move was not necessarily meant as a boon to the workers, but was suggested to help ensure the success of the new Eighteenth Ward market. The city had invested eight thousand dollars in the establishment of this market for the “poor and laboring class of people in particular . . .”¹¹⁰ *The Plain Dealer* added a dig at Republican Party council members who were reluctant to approach business owners and “dictate to capital [showing] how that party bows down to money.”¹¹¹

Uncertain wages, tensions between skilled and unskilled labor and between management and labor came to a head in May of 1882. There had been minor strikes by mill workers in the 1870’s, but the first significant strike was the one that occurred in 1882. *The New York Times* asserted that the employees of the Cleveland Rolling Mills were “as a general thing, of the best class of iron working men, and relations between the company and the workers had been “of the most friendly character [with] fewer strikes

¹⁰⁸ *South Cleveland Advocate* 26 Feb 1881

¹⁰⁹ *Plain Dealer* 15 Nov 1878

¹¹⁰ *Plain Dealer* 28 Oct 1879

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

among them than in any other iron-making center.”¹¹² But twenty-five years had seen a lot of changes in the industry. Skilled iron workers were being marginalized as technological advances mechanized work and allowed the mills to use more unskilled labor. This situation was exacerbated when the mills began to produce more steel utilizing the Bessemer and open hearth furnaces.¹¹³

In an article written in 1979, historian Henry B. Leonard wrote a detailed account of the 1882 Cleveland Rolling mill strike. Leonard focused on the unskilled Polish and Bohemian workers and their relations with the skilled English, Welsh and Scots workers. Curiously, Leonard does not mention the activities of either native-born or Irish workers during the strike. Contemporary accounts and records are incomplete and sketchy but census data indicates that the Irish typically held less-skilled or unskilled jobs while the native-born were more likely to hold skilled positions. The unskilled Irish workers, who had been working at the mills since the 1860’s did not appear to threaten the other workers as much as the newer immigrants. Leonard lays some of the animosity on religious differences, citing the foreignness of Polish Catholics, but the Irish were also Catholics. In fact the Irish were also hostile to the Eastern Europeans; economic competition and ethnic differences trumped a shared Roman Catholic faith. Clashes between these two groups would punctuate another rolling mill strike in 1885.¹¹⁴

Leonard points out that Henry Chisholm’s immigrant status and paternalistic attitude had softened owner/worker relations before his death in 1881 helping to hold at bay worker’s discontent. His son William, however, had a different approach and “would

¹¹² *The New York Times*, 17 May 1882

¹¹³ Henry B. Leonard, “Ethnic Cleavage and Industrial Conflict in late Nineteenth-century America: The Cleveland Rolling Mill Strikes of 1882 and 1885” *Labor History* no.20 (1979), 526.

¹¹⁴ *New York Times* 7 July 1885

tolerate no nonsense from his edgy skilled employees.”¹¹⁵ In 1882 most of the skilled workers had joined the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers in hopes of lessening the threat of unskilled Eastern European workers. According to one *Plain Dealer* account nearly 4000 men went out on strike “in an orderly manner,” but were not “communicative . . . as to their plans . . . there seems to be no means of discovering what the exact demands of the mill men are . . .”¹¹⁶

The writer must have had some means of discovering those demands as he proceeded to detail the demands as he understood them to be; the mill must agree to a scale of prices in use by all Amalgamated mills, all skilled labor must belong to the Amalgamated Association, and the hiring and firing of any employee must “go before the Association for its approval.”¹¹⁷ Chisholm had no intention of agreeing to the demands of the union and the strike dragged on until late July.

There was little violence done during the strike, although a few skirmishes sometimes occurred. Extra city policemen were assigned to the Eighteenth Ward in anticipation of trouble, and the union created its own patrol units who had orders to “arrest and hand over to the police any one of their numbers who shall violate the laws of the state or the city ordinances.”¹¹⁸ Nevertheless the situation was volatile. When rumors that Chisholm planned to start the mills running again “by the aid of imported help,”¹¹⁹ turned out to be true, the “imported” Polish and Bohemian workers were the victims in several incidents of scattered violence.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 527.

¹¹⁶ *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* 11 May 1882

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ *The Plain Dealer* 8 Jun 1882

¹¹⁹ *New York Times* 17 May 1882

¹²⁰ *The Plain Dealer* 17 Jun 1882

For many reasons the strike was doomed to failure. By July 10th the *Plain Dealer* stated that “it has all along been patent to impartial observers . . . that the strikers have been fighting a losing battle.”¹²¹ The union had hoped that Chisholm’s use of inexperienced, unskilled labor would result in such monetary losses to the mill that he would be forced to concede to their demands. *The Plain Dealer* noted that while the mills were no doubt running at a loss the company would withstand even more losses “to crush the Union.”¹²² The truth was the mill owners had the money and power to withstand a strike, while most of the striking men were running low on funds to feed their families. The local merchants were not extending credit to the workers, and a strike in Pittsburgh meant less available strike pay from the main branch of the Amalgamated.¹²³ With more of a whimper than a bang the strike faded as even the most impassioned union men eventually came back to work, or moved on to other jobs.

An apocryphal story arose from the strike of 1882 that William Chisholm “imported an entire shipload of Poles directly from Europe.”¹²⁴ While this story is unlikely to be true, Chisholm did send an agent to Castle Garden to recruit Poles to come to Cleveland, “promising them steady work at daily wages ranging from \$1.50 to \$2.00.”¹²⁵ By 1885, when these new workers and their counterparts had become disenchanted with the mill and staged a much larger strike than the one that had brought them to work in Cleveland, this Polish community had become a large and influential part of the Eighteenth Ward. Their neighborhood on the northern end of Broadway had acquired its own nickname of “Warszawa” or “Little Warsaw”

¹²¹ *The Plain Dealer* 10 Jul 1882

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Leonard, 532.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

As the village grew, factory workers, farmers and everyone else in Newburgh could spend their income on an ever expanding array of goods and services available in the compact business center of the village. Their neighbors who provided these goods and services were part of a growing group of small merchants, businessmen and clerks who were becoming part of the “developing worlds of white-collar [workers]” that had census superintendent Francis Amasa Walker struggling to create better defined occupational categories in the 1870 census.¹²⁶

By 1873 several other dry goods establishments had joined that of Eben Miles, the sole grocer listed in the 1858 directory. Cady and Woodbridge offered “fine family groceries” and informed the public that they were “agents for the U. S. Tea Co.” while R. Leonard & Son highlighted their canned fruit selection and “oysters in their season.” These stores, along with that of Milan Wiggins and the Healy Brothers, were dotted along Broadway, near the Harvard intersection, while the Wells and McAfee meat and vegetable market stood two blocks away at the corner of Hamilton (Harvard), and Walnut (E. 91st)¹²⁷

Other practical goods offered for sale included hardware, tin and stoves, including the “new National Parlor Heating Stove,” sold at two hardware stores in town, shoes and boots at several locations and “all kinds of hard and soft coal.”¹²⁸ One dealer in coal, sand and ice also offered his services as a building mover.¹²⁹ Those who wanted to decorate their homes, rather than move them, could purchase paints in “all colors—ready

¹²⁶ Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American city, 1760-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 266,260.

¹²⁷ *All Around the Clock*, 14 November 1873

¹²⁸ *All Around the Clock*, 14 November 1873

¹²⁹ Invoice dated 25 Jul 1888, E. Ames, Dr. Dealer in Hard and Soft Coal, Ice, Sand, Etc. Building Mover, private collection Walton Hills Christian Church

for use” at the South Cleveland Paint Co., whose small factory and sales office was located near the corner of Broadway and Harvard.¹³⁰ Several men offered their services as painters and wall paper hangers. J.M. Marsh was “prepared to receive orders for paper hanging, kalsomining, and painting . . . at the lowest possible prices.” He directed his customers to view the “largest assortment and designs of wall paper at less than city prices” available at the Rolling Mill Store.¹³¹

The proliferation of less practical goods, more esoteric or even frivolous items signaled a shift from the pragmatic pioneer atmosphere of ante-bellum Newburgh. Respectable, hard-working pioneer or farm families were admired for frugality and simplicity. Respectable middle-class families were admired for accumulation of refined goods and attention to properly adorned homes.

Luxurious offerings included gold and silver watches and jewelry, wine and fine liquors, and “foreign and domestic cigars and tobaccos.” Less obviously luxurious, but still indicative of at least a modicum of discretionary income are items described as fancy, as in Bartlett & King’s “ . . . finest assortment in Fancy Toilet Articles ever offered in Newburgh.”¹³²

The existence of luxury items for sale does not prove their use by Newburgh residents, but the continued growth of these types of businesses, and the addition of new merchants offering items associated with the growth of refined consumer tastes suggests a parallel demand for such items.¹³³ Newburgh merchants were more likely than not to

¹³⁰ *South Cleveland Advocate* 19 Nov 1881

¹³¹ undated public notice, J. M. Marsh, Newburgh Ohio, family papers, private collection of Jane Herrington

¹³² *South Cleveland Advocate* 19 Nov 1881

¹³³ For a detailed study of the proliferation of luxury items in nineteenth-century America see Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991)

cater to a local clientele, as residents were more apt to travel to Cleveland for specialty goods than out of town customers were to come to Newburgh to shop.

A constant theme in the advertisements of Newburgh merchants was the convenience of shopping locally. Newburgh retained a small town atmosphere even after it was officially part of Cleveland, but its small town residents were as eager to adopt the latest fashions for themselves and their homes as were their counterparts in larger cities, especially if such fashionable items could be had at affordable prices.

In 1881 the owner of O'Brien and Company grocery store assured its customers that their thriving business and quick turn over allowed them to purchase goods at advantageous prices. This practice allowed them to sell their wares at "bottom city prices," and meant that a potential customer could "save . . . long journeys to the city."¹³⁴

Publisher, printer and stationary merchant, Harry Nelson was able to take advantage of the advertising needs of local businesses, by offering them a local newspaper in which to advertise. He began publishing a small paper, *All Around the Clock*, in 1873. Nelson's choice of a title may have been a reference to the twenty-four hour operations at the mills. The paper was offered at no charge to readers but advertisers paid fifty cents per square. He solicited "correspondence . . . on anything pertaining to the improvement of Newburgh and of interest to its inhabitants," promising to "publish the opinions and suggestions of all parties."¹³⁵

All Around the Clock became the *South Cleveland Advocate* by 1876 and was no longer offered gratis, but at a subscription price of one dollar per year, paid in advance. Republican in politics, Nelson's paper contained "matter of a moral and instructive tone

¹³⁴ *South Cleveland Advocate* 26 Feb 1881

¹³⁵ *All Around the Clock*, 14 Nov 1873

[and] embraces the news of the week in a concise and intelligible form.” Nelson warned that only “honorable advertisements [are] admitted into our columns.”¹³⁶ Advertising rates became more complex, the original fifty cents per square giving way to a broad array of space from one inch to one column, offered in time increments ranging from one week to one year.¹³⁷ Cleveland and national ads joined the local businesses as patrons. Along with out of town merchants Nelson added more national and international news to his small paper, but it maintained its local focus throughout its long existence, lasting until 1914.

In addition to publishing his newspaper, Nelson, like most small, independent publishers of the era also sold stationery and offered his services as a printer. He produced personal and business items ranging from visiting cards and invitations, to check and order books, posters, circulars and hand bills.¹³⁸ Nelson’s heart many have been in the newspaper that he took such pride in, but it is probable that he earned a large percentage of his income with his printing and stationary business.

Amongst the ads found in Nelson’s paper was one of Newburgh’s working women, Julia Wenham. Wenham operated the grandly named Broadway Emperium [sic] of Fashion, and advised customers to “save a tedious trip to the city and buy your velvet or satin hats for fifty cents each . . .” For those women who preferred to trim their own hats and clothing Wenham sold lace and ostrich plumes, and “ribbons of all qualities.” She also offered to clean and press hats “in the latest styles.” Mrs. Wenham’s

¹³⁶ *Pettengill’s Newspaper Directory and Advertiser’s Handbook for 1877* New York: Pettengill & Co. 1877, 114.

¹³⁷ *South Cleveland Advocate* 26 Feb 1881

¹³⁸ *All Around the Clock*, 14 Nov 1873

establishment included another working woman, Miss P.F. Forbes as superintendent of the trimming department.¹³⁹

The numbers of female wage earners grew at a fairly steady pace between the 1850 and 1880 census, although the most common occupation listed for adult women remained that of “keeping house.” The 1850 census did not even provide that distinction, either by instruction or personal decision the census taker for that year left the space for occupation blank for adult females. Presumably the wives of the two men who ran taverns cooked and served food and drink to customers and took care of any overnight accommodations occupied by guests. By 1860 at least some of those duties were performed by hired help at the Cataract House where three females were employed as a cook, waitress and “wash girl.”

Several adolescent girls are listed as domestic servants in 1860, a few working in Newburgh homes, but most living with their own families and working for other households. A few families took in boarders in 1860, this number increased over the next two decades. In households that included boarders the adult women in the family were not listed as having an occupation other than keeping house, but keeping house for several non-family members meant extra domestic work and income, qualifying these women as wage earners.

Even those women who began to appear in outside occupations held traditionally female jobs. Women were not employed at the factories in Newburgh. Working women performed domestic, homely arts whether in the confines of private space or within the broader public sphere. They cooked, cleaned, sewed and nurtured. There was, however, some class division. Wives and daughters of working class men tended to work as

¹³⁹ *All Around the Clock*, 14 Nov 1873

domestics and sometimes seamstresses. Middle-class wives did not typically work outside the home, although they might take in one or two boarders. But these boarders were often apprentices or other men employed by the homeowner. Daughters of middle-class workers might find outside work in positions considered somewhat “genteel,” at millinery or dress shops or as teachers. These women usually left their jobs when they married.

A unique opportunity for employment for both men and women existed in Newburgh at the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum. The asylum relied on a large number of attendants, both male and female, to look after the inmates. These attendants were responsible for the personal needs of the patients, taking care of their bedrooms and assisting with personal grooming. One superintendent declared that “good attendants . . . are little less than heavenly gifts . . . the service they render is great, the compensation they receive is small their trials are many, their privileges, few.”¹⁴⁰

Attendants were held to strict standards. They lived at the asylum, and “devote their whole time to the Asylum.” Not only were they responsible for assisting patients to dress, or dressing those unable to do so themselves, they made sure that the patients remained “neat and tidy” throughout the day, adjusting disordered clothing, and changing soiled clothes when needed. The attendants themselves were to “avoid all filth” and “observe perfect cleanliness in their entire apparel.” The same standards were applied to the patients’ bedrooms; “beds well and neatly made . . . floors, windows and doors

¹⁴⁰*Twenty-second Annual Report of the Trustees and Officers of the Northern Ohio Hospital for the Insane to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1876*, (Columbus: Nevins & Myers State Printers, 1877),23.

washed . . . pay close attention to spittoons, water closets, sinks and urinals [keeping them] clean, free from any unpleasant odor.”¹⁴¹

Patients also had to be watched at all times, knives and forks counted before and after each meal and all clothing or any other item that could be used in a suicide or escape attempt removed from the bedrooms at night. The attendants carved and served the food at meals, feeding patients who could not feed themselves. If a patient escaped the attendant deemed negligent was responsible for the “expense incurred in bringing him back.”¹⁴²

In the course of their duties attendants were required to “address [patients] in a gentle tone . . . never upbraid them or use harsh or abusive language . . . keep cool under every provocation . . . never scold threaten or dictate . . . and under no circumstances whatever. . . use violent hands or strike a single blow, except in the clearest case of self-defence.” Besides the avoidance of physical abuse attendants were to protect their charges from being “jeered, laughed at, or ridiculed on account of their peculiarities.”¹⁴³

This job was an intense, hands-on, high energy job, so it is not surprising that the majority of attendants were in their twenties. Also the requirement to live on the premises meant that attendants were unmarried. When the asylum opened male attendants were paid \$20 per month, females \$12, along with room and board.¹⁴⁴ These

¹⁴¹ *First Annual Report of the Trustees of the New Lunatic Asylums and of the Officers of the Northern Ohio Asylum at Newburgh to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1855* (Columbus: Statesmen Steam Press, 1856), 31-32.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 45.

rates did not increase much over the next two decades; males were making \$25 a month in 1875, while their female counterparts made \$14.¹⁴⁵

The Asylum also offered women jobs as cooks, dining room servers, and laundry women. The baker, who also acted as head of the kitchen, was male. Men also worked as carpenters, engineers, gardeners, gas makers, and night watchmen. Most of these employees did not live on the asylum grounds, but commuted to work. Economic opportunities existed in the local community as well. The Asylum steward purchased local produce from farmers and merchants in Newburgh. The medical superintendent and his family lived on site, with the superintendent's wife often acting as Matron. The position of superintendent was filled from a large pool of physicians outside of Newburgh. He and his family became part of the community by virtue of his position but they were not likely to have been residents prior to or after his tenure. The asylum, however, was a major source of employment and revenue for many Newburgh families.

Two very visible establishments in Newburgh flourished in the last half of the century. The first was the Cataract House, a fixture in the community since the 1840's. The second, a recent newcomer, was Reeves Opera house, opened in 1874. Both of these places served as private businesses devoted to public use. They were acceptable places for respectable citizens to gather for entertainment and social activities.

The Cataract House took its name from its location above the falls on Mill Creek. Even after industry had begun to coat the neighborhood in grime and soot, the Cataract House was still billed as a "lovely retreat to view the beautiful works of nature."¹⁴⁶ The

¹⁴⁵ *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Trustees and Officers of the Northern Ohio Hospital for the Insane to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1875* (Columbus: Nevins & Myers State Printers, 1876), 48.

¹⁴⁶ *South Cleveland Advocate* 23 Sep 1876

back of the hotel offered these picturesque views; the front of the building was on the west side of Broadway where the C. & P. Railroad tracks crossed the street.

Its location was convenient not only for local patrons, but for out of town visitors who arrived by train and carriage to attend celebrations like the one held in 1865 to commemorate Perry's victory at "one of the best regulated hotels within the range of a Sunday drive from the city."¹⁴⁷ Newburgh residents held Fourth of July celebrations lodge meetings, and political rallies at the Cataract House. "Old employees" of the Newburgh Asylum held a reunion and ball on October 14, 1875; one day after members of the Ohio 9th Battery held their own reunion at the same place.¹⁴⁸

In addition to hosting large gatherings the hotel offered public rooms for short and long term stays. The clientele was fairly diverse; in 1860 several rolling mill laborers were living at the Cataract house, along with a medical student.¹⁴⁹ In 1870 the occupants included the milliner Julia Wenham, mentioned above, and her husband who had "no occupation," a bookkeeper and a saloon keeper, Owen Quigley, who later become one of the owners of the hotel, an iron puddler and an iron molder, a school teacher and a dentist and his wife and child.¹⁵⁰ The 1880 list of full time boarders is much shorter and somewhat less diverse. It includes three teachers, two police officers and a mill superintendent.

Tragedy sometimes struck at the Cataract House, providing fodder for the press. A woman who almost died from a morphine overdose taken for a headache caused the newspaper to ponder the possibility of a suicide attempt, and "created quite an excitement

¹⁴⁷ *Plain Dealer*, 15 Sep 1865

¹⁴⁸ *Plain Dealer* 14 Oct 1875

¹⁴⁹ 1860 Federal Census, Ohio, Cuyahoga, Newburgh, page 122, lines 1-21

¹⁵⁰ 1870 Federal Census, Ohio, Cuyahoga, Newburgh, page 120, 14-40

in Newburgh.”¹⁵¹ A man who had been in residence only two weeks while working at a nearby stone quarry was described as “reserved in his manner, rarely engaging in conversation.” He was found one morning in his room with a bullet in his forehead.¹⁵² In a bizarre incident an odd-job man at the hotel attempted to rape a young chambermaid, claiming he “wanted to go to the penitentiary and had been there before for the same crime.” The man sometimes dressed as Napoleon and was considered to be a “loon.” His lawyer planned on using insanity as a defense¹⁵³

Sensational reports of crime helped to sell newspapers and caught the public’s attention. But the Cataract House survived any and all unsavory associations, maintaining its respectability over the years. A brief cholera outbreak claimed the life of a hotel guest and sickened another in 1866. *The Plain Dealer* noted that the disease first struck at a saloon known to be “exceedingly dirty” and that the man who died at the Cataract House contracted the disease by helping to lay out the deceased man at the saloon. The Cataract House was not, the *Plain Dealer* implied, in the same category as dirty saloons.¹⁵⁴

The popularity of the Cataract House was constant through a dizzying array of owners. Whenever a new owner was announced in the paper he was variously described as “gentlemanly”, “not only a good man but can keep a hotel,” “in every way qualified to make a success.” Many of these owners temporarily changed the name of the hotel to reflect their ownership, but in common parlance it remained the Cataract House. When a fire destroyed the building in 1855 owner William Bergin had the “encouragement and

¹⁵¹ *The Plain Dealer* 22 Mar 1869

¹⁵² *The Plain Dealer* 20 May 1881

¹⁵³ *The Plain Dealer* 4 Oct 1882

¹⁵⁴ *The Plain Dealer* 14 Oct 1866

material aid” of local citizens to help him rebuild. The building remained a beloved landmark and meeting spot until the end of the century. It functioned as a town square, communal parlor, lodge hall, party center and temporary abode. The Cataract House was one of the places in Newburgh that sat at the confluence of public and private space, a concept that will be addressed more fully in Chapter Four.

Photographer Harry Reeves branched out in his artistic endeavors in 1874, paying sixty-six hundred dollars for a lot on Broadway a few yards north of the Cataract House.¹⁵⁵ He erected a three story stone building on this lot and gave it the grand title of Reeves Opera House. The ground floor of the building functioned as a photographer’s studio for not only Reeves but other photographers. In 1881 the studio offered “the new novelty—the beautiful Photo Crystal,” and provided copying and enlarging of old photos and finishing in “India Ink, Crayon and Pastele.”¹⁵⁶

The stage and auditorium on the third floor seated about five hundred patrons, and featured the typical gilded décor of the age, albeit on a smaller scale than its big city counterparts. The shows were on a more modest scale as well. Some national touring troupes appeared on stage at Reeves Opera House. The “favorite actress” Kitty Rhoades accompanied by her “brilliant coterie of artists” played there for a week in 1881 featuring a different play every evening.¹⁵⁷ In 1937 when the building was about to be demolished the Plain Dealer interviewed a local resident who remembered seeing Buffalo Bill Cody at the Opera House.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Woodbridge, Edwards, et al. to Henry Reeves, Cuyahoga County Records Office, Deed Book Vol. 243, page 567.

¹⁵⁶ *South Cleveland Advocate* 19 Nov 1881

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ *The Plain Dealer* 15 Jul 1937

In addition to the professional acts that appeared at the Opera House the stage was the site of many local, amateur productions. Henry Reeves wrote and produced his own dramatization of a sentimental magazine tale, *Marion Gray*¹⁵⁹. The Broadway Social Club staged productions of *Rob Roy*¹⁶⁰ and other melodramatic plays of the era. Andrew J. Spencer, longtime owner of the Cataract House and Secretary of the Cleveland Fire Department, was a frequent performer in these productions. He shaved off his beard to play a character in *Nick of the Woods*,¹⁶¹ and more than once he appeared in blackface in the perennial favorite *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.¹⁶²

As with Harry Nelson and his newspaper, Reeves Opera House was a labor of love for Reeves, not a bread and butter occupation. His occupation is listed as photographer on all census schedules until 1910 by which time he had retired and was living on his “own income” while his nephew living with him ran the photography studio¹⁶³. No records remain to provide financial data on the Opera House, but like the Cataract House locals looked upon the establishment fondly and with pride. In 1876 “prominent citizens of the Eighteenth Ward” held a “complementary” to benefit the Opera House. The Cleveland Gray’s orchestra, the Cleveland Arion Quartette and a local singer, Estelle Barney “tendered their valuable service” for the benefit.

Entrepreneurs like Henry Reeves and others mentioned earlier were important to the growth and development of the community and it is likely that many other individuals aspired to own businesses or shops. But the reality was that for every successful

¹⁵⁹ *The Plain Dealer* 3 Jan 1880

¹⁶⁰ *The Plain Dealer* 23 Mar 1877

¹⁶¹ *The Plain Dealer* 20 May 1876

¹⁶² Reeves Opera House Broadside, printed by Robison, Savage and Company, Cleveland 1876 accessed at <http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=6804>

¹⁶³ 1910 Federal Census, Ohio, Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, 25th Ward, sheet 14 B, line 55

businessman or merchant there were many other residents who had to settle for wage earning jobs with less prestige, income, and autonomy.

The steel and iron mills dominated Newburgh by the time of the 1873 annex, creating a large wage earning working class in the area. Economic changes and population growth wrought also created opportunities for small business owners and merchants. Influenced by their New England heritage many Yankee descendants born at mid-century may have preferred to work in the nascent white-collar jobs. The worldview and values of these Yankees aligned them with the middle-class, regardless of the manner in which they earned a living. But opportunities for clerks or bookkeepers, for example, were not as plentiful as opportunities for mill work. Many sons of Yankee families ended up in working class jobs by chance, if not by choice.

The transformation of agrarian Newburgh to the industrial Eighteenth Ward took place well within an average person's lifetime. Sons and daughters born to farming parents in 1850 were more likely to be found as adults in the 1870's working in a mill or factory or behind a shop counter than to follow in their parents' footsteps. They left behind the economic insecurity of agricultural work, but often found the vagaries of the workplace equally insecure. This shift provided great opportunities for some but meant a lifetime of uncertain wage work for others.

CHAPTER IV

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

“It is good to be home with one’s family on the Sabbath.”

George Dunbar, Newburgh, Ohio, January 5, 1862¹⁶⁴

Twenty-nine year old Newburgh resident George Dunbar enlisted in the 2nd Ohio Cavalry in October 1861. George began keeping a diary on January 2, 1862 while at Camp Dennison, Ohio and continued his entries until he was medically discharged in October. Dunbar’s personal, heartfelt entries detail daily life in camp, his homesickness, and his faith. His tone displays a casual, unselfconscious and sincere attitude towards faith and religion. And, while his belief in God and his Christian faith were important to him, Dunbar does not come across as overly pious or priggish. He notes with delight the many women of the village who came to greet his furlough with “a little kissing, which was not amiss.”¹⁶⁵ Also, Dunbar did not always mention God or the church in every entry, but he did always mention his wife. For George Dunbar, his faith and his family and his character were tied up together, and his writing showed the confluence of these things.

¹⁶⁴Diary of George Dunbar, MS4601, folder 1, Western Reserve Historical Society.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

He started the entries with a New Year's resolution hoping "with God's help, to be a better man."¹⁶⁶ Home on furlough before leaving for Ft. Leavenworth Dunbar attended church with his wife and declared it was "good to be home with one's family on the Sabbath."¹⁶⁷ Parting from his wife on Monday he reflected that "who knows, but He who knows all things, when we may meet again."¹⁶⁸

Acting as quartermaster sergeant meant that Dunbar was often busy with his duties, even on Sundays, while out west. He made a wry comment on February 16th that it was "hard to have a day of rest in the army."¹⁶⁹ When he was able to attend a local church or chapel services Dunbar took advantage of the chance, although he desired to "attend church in Newburgh once more with my dear family."¹⁷⁰

Dunbar's wife Eliza, along with his father-in-law Isaac Reid, are listed on the early membership rolls of the Presbyterian Church, Reid was in fact a founding member of the church. Dunbar however was not listed on the official membership rolls until late in his life. But, regardless of his formal status during his sojourn in the army, Dunbar's diary shows the profound, pervasive, influence of religion that was prevalent in his life and in his community.

The typical Newburgh resident, like most nineteenth-century Americans, was actively involved in religious practices ranging from traditional Sunday worship services, to Sunday schools, quasi-religious fraternal societies, temperance and anti-slavery movements, and mission work. The traditions of a Puritan New England heritage, coupled with the influence of the Second Great Awakening, had laid the foundation for

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

the robust church congregations that remained active throughout the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century.

The personal piety of individuals was matched by religious language found in the formal statements and documents of ostensibly secular institutions. The trustees of the Newburgh asylum attributed the health of the inmates in 1860 as the “blessing of God,”¹⁷¹ while in 1859 the superintendent gave credit to his employees, the Board of Trustees and “Divine Providence”¹⁷² for the success of the institution that year. In 1880, Dr. Jamin Strong was more specific in his words. In his superintendent’s report that year he expressed his belief that with the proper “desire to promote the highest good of those in greatest need,” the asylum would be for years to come a “noble monument to the benevolence of a Christian Commonwealth.”¹⁷³

The trustees of the Asylum acknowledged that although it was not “the duty of the State to impart religious instruction . . . we believe that suitable religious and moral instructions are necessary and proper.”¹⁷⁴ As part of the moral treatment espoused by the asylum, patients who desired to attend religious services were accommodated by a chaplain, who also provided such instruction to those inmates. Over the years several local ministers filled this position at the asylum. Some years the Ohio Legislature appropriated funds for “moral instruction” but often the chaplain offered his services pro bono.

¹⁷¹ *Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of the State of Ohio for the year 1860*, (Columbus: Richard Nevins, State Printer, 1861), 5.

¹⁷² *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of the State of Ohio for the year 1859*, (Columbus: Richard Nevins, State Printer, 1860), 25.

¹⁷³ *Executive Documents. Annual Reports for 1880 made to the Sixty Fourth General Assembly, Part One*, (Columbus: G.J. Brand & Co., State Printers, 1881), 461.

¹⁷⁴ *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of the State of Ohio for the year 1873*, (Columbus: Nevins and Meyers, State Printers, 1874), 7.

Not surprisingly, given the demographics of the area, the ministers who acted as chaplains were overwhelmingly drawn from the Protestant churches in Newburgh, including the Rev. Dr. Elroy Curtis, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Newburgh. Curtis acted in this capacity throughout most of his tenure at the church, from 1868-1886. Curtis and the other Protestant ministers who filled this role were encouraged to keep denominational differences in mind, but were not expected to act as chaplain for Catholic patients. Father Gallagher of the small Holy Name church in Newburgh was called in to minister to any Catholics at the asylum.

The trustees claimed that to deprive inmates of religious instruction and opportunity for worship would provide a “shock to their notions of propriety and to the whole teachings of their life.”¹⁷⁵ There was a tacit understanding that decent, respectable citizens were also devout. When the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad discontinued Sunday trains in 1873, Newburgh newspaper editor, Harry Nelson, praised this decision as “a move in the right direction [that] should be encouraged by all lovers of civil law and good order.”¹⁷⁶ Nelson further suggested that all employers should give their employees a day of rest on Sunday to “afford them the opportunity of fulfilling the great law of God.”¹⁷⁷ This would benefit the employee as well he declared since they should have “more confidence in men who attend places of divine worship.”¹⁷⁸

Although the tradition of separation of church and state precluded an official government religion, it was assumed, and even expected, that businessmen, government officials and local community leaders were persons of faith, more specifically, Christian

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ “Stoppage of Sunday Trains,” *All Around the Clock*, 14 November 1873.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

persons of faith. Most prominent political leaders, businessmen, and society leaders were also active church members, preferably Protestant, although the denomination varied. Obituaries of these leaders, as well as lesser known individuals stressed their Christian piety. Religious faith and corporate worship were ubiquitous and normative in nineteenth-century Newburgh.

Early nineteenth-century Americans also breathed in a heady atmosphere of burgeoning democracy. They worshiped the concepts of freedom and liberty, particularly on the frontier. “Citizens were entrusted to elect their political representatives, but also to organize as they wish in the religious realm.”¹⁷⁹ This created a perfect environment for the emergence of diverse denominations. Many of these denominations emerged or flourished where freedom of choice and the expectation of church membership intersected. In particular, the preaching of the Charles Finney and other revivalists that was the hallmark of the “Second Great Awakening” embraced “free will and self-determinism.” These concepts held “an unmistakable appeal to a people . . . inebriated with Jacksonian democracy and the frontier spirit of rugged individualism.”¹⁸⁰

The evangelical fervor of the Second Great Awakening had a profound effect on frontier religious practices. In Newburgh this meant that the Congregational church model that had existed in the New England towns of their forefathers was challenged by the rise of theologically diverse sects and denominations. Although the New England descendents of Newburgh came from Congregational roots, they did not establish a true Congregational church in the town, a departure from many Western Reserve towns. The

¹⁷⁹ Nancy Ammerman “American Evangelicals in American Culture: Continuity and Change” in *Evangelicals and Democracy* Vol. 1 of *Religion and Society* eds., Stephen Brint and Jean Reith Schroedel (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009), 53.

¹⁸⁰ Randall Balmer and John R. Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians in Denominations in America*, Number 5 ed. Henry Warner Bowden (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 47.

early organizational format of the Presbyterian Church was a hybrid format of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, called the Plan of Union.¹⁸¹ But there was no true Congregational church in Newburgh until Welsh immigrants founded the Wales Street Congregational Church in 1857.

The two hundred sixty families that inhabited the township per the 1850 Federal census supported four separate Protestant churches; all of whom existed within a few hundred yards of each other. The three main churches that occupied this small radius were the Miles Park Methodist Episcopal, the Miles Park Presbyterian, and the Miles Avenue Church of Christ, or Disciples of Christ. The fourth, Grace Episcopal, was a small chapel that served as an outreach of Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland. In 1857 Welsh immigrants began worshiping within a mile of the other churches, and when the first Catholic Church in Newburgh was erected it was build across from the Presbyterians and almost next door to the Methodists. However the Protestant residents of Newburgh far outnumbered their few Catholic neighbors until the large influx of Eastern European mill workers after 1882.

The emergence of four distinct Protestant churches within a small geographical area, and amongst a small, mostly homogenous, population is intriguing. These descendants of Puritans no longer lived in the theocratic society of their forebears. Church attendance was not mandatory for public officials and no one was fined for not attending Sunday worship services. Yet personal piety and corporate worship were still hallmarks of respectable citizens. The expectations of society certainly played an important role in the decision to become church members. This is not to say that Newburgh residents were constrained to attend church, most did so out of sincere and

¹⁸¹ Ludlow, *Miles Park Presbyterian Church, Seventy-Fifth Anniversary* 5.

deep personal convictions. They also held deep convictions regarding the freedom to choose which church to attend, and the ability to form new congregations.

Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational church leaders in established eastern churches saw the frontier as a fertile field for missionary work. They preached not only to those persons anxious to recreate the churches they had attended in New England, but sought out “backsliders” and nonbelievers. New home-grown religious movements, Mormons, and Disciples of Christ had their beginnings on the American frontier. In many early Anglo-American settlements, including Newburgh, grass-roots efforts of local residents proved the impetus for establishing the primary Protestant congregations in the village.

The Methodist Episcopal Church had its beginnings in Newburgh in 1832 at the home of Lyman Ferris, who had moved from Vermont in 1831. In a practice that was common to all of the young congregations in Newburgh, the Methodists held worship services in private homes or the town hall until they built their own structure. According to an account written in 1932 the first church building was erected in 1841 on the northwest corner of Miles Park on land donated by Theodore Miles.¹⁸² Land records show that the church did not receive this land until 1853, so the 1841 date is suspect.¹⁸³

There are no photographs or descriptions available for the early building but church lore states that the timber for the church was donated by Ferris and that “members of the congregation built the structure.”¹⁸⁴ No other details exist as to its size and form, but by 1870 the church began to plan for a larger, more impressive brick building. The

¹⁸² *The Cleveland Press* 1 April 1931

¹⁸³ Theodore Miles & Wife to M.E. Church Newburgh, Deed recorded 15 April 1853, Cuyahoga County Records Office, Book 61, page 497.

¹⁸⁴ Anniversary Celebration, Miles Park Methodist Church, 1972, loose folder, Records of the Miles Park Methodist Church, Archives of Ohio Methodism, Beeghly Library, Ohio Wesleyan University

congregation donated money via subscription towards the building fund pledging amounts ranging from ten dollars to several one thousand dollar pledges. One of the largest subscribers was the widow of John Jones, co-founder of the rolling mills. In a dramatic act during the laying of the cornerstone Jones, “stepped up to the stone . . . and tapped it five times with a gavel,” declaring that each tap represented one thousand dollars she “intended to give to the building fund.”¹⁸⁵

. Circuit ministers filled the pulpit until 1860 when the membership had grown large enough to warrant a fulltime pastor. Methodist pastors are assigned to a particular church, or “station” by a bishop of the larger governing body, called a Conference. Early rules limited the term that a pastor could serve to two years until 1888 when the term was increased to five years. The assigned pastors of the Methodist church, therefore, changed quite frequently.¹⁸⁶ There were, however, men in the congregation who were ordained as “local ministers.” These men were licensed to preach, preside over communion, and perform marriages, but only on a local basis. Along with the trustees, elders and deacons of the church, these men formed a stable, long term cadre of local church leaders.

An important feature of the Methodist church was its Sunday school program. The Sunday school was intended not only to serve the children of the congregation but was an evangelical and reform tool aimed at neighborhood children to “save the next generation from the blight of infidelity and irreligion.”¹⁸⁷ Popular memory credits a female member of the church, Lily Pond, with establishing the Sunday school by going

¹⁸⁵ *The Cleveland Press* 1 April 1931

¹⁸⁶ Joseph F. Anderson, *Methodist Dictionary: A Brief Work on Methodist Terminology* . . . (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1909), 67.

¹⁸⁷ Jan 1860 Board Minutes, Ledger 1855-1873, Box 2 of 4, Records of the Miles Park Methodist Church, Archives of Ohio Methodism, Beeghly Library, Ohio Wesleyan University

“about the streets asking children to come”, but church records give evidence that more formal arrangements were involved in creating and staffing the Sunday school.¹⁸⁸

Sunday school curricula included not only introduced Bible stories and church doctrine, but magazines and books produced by the church that featured morally uplifting stories and poems. These sentimental stories extolled the virtues of religious devotion, evangelism, patriotism, family fidelity and the ethics of hard work. They warned children of the dire fate that awaited those who swore, told lies and were disobedient. They would be led to “bad company, tippling shops, gambling houses and other bad places and . . . hell would open wide to receive [them].” On the other hand a gentle, obedient child, who “delighted” in Sunday school teachers and books, could look forward to a life filled with “schools, churches, wealth, respectability” and a promise of heaven in the after life.¹⁸⁹

Pupils had to wade through a maze of seemingly contradictory messages; children should obey their elders and never talk back, but the evangelical efforts of children should lead parents or neighbors who were “heathen,” Roman Catholic, or “drunks” to religious conversions. Scriptures taught the importance of taking care of the poor, but people brought poverty upon themselves by impudent behavior.¹⁹⁰ Making fun of others was seen as unkind and un-Christian, yet the stories were full of stereotypical representations of other peoples and cultures. These lessons helped to inform the often self-righteous stance of many Anglo-American Protestants. They influenced reform

¹⁸⁸ undated news clipping, Anniversary folder, box 3 of 4, Records of the Miles Park Methodist Church, Archives of Ohio Methodism, Beeghly Library, Ohio Wesleyan University

¹⁸⁹ Richard Donkersley, *Budget of Facts for Young Readers* (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1867), 28-30.

¹⁹⁰ The tendency to conflate character with financial fortunes was also emerging in secular society, see Scott Sandage, *Born Losers: A history of Failure in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005)

movements and charities whose organizers meant well, but tended to exhibit patronizing attitudes towards those they deemed less fortunate.

Before the establishment of the Methodist Sunday school, an earlier Union-Sunday School had existed at the home of a Mrs. Fuller, sister of Presbyterian minister, Stephen Peet. This arrangement lasted until each church established its own school.¹⁹¹ The significance of these Union Sunday schools lies in the fact that while denominations had significant theological and doctrinal differences, there was considerable consensus on the values and societal mores that were passed on to children. The broad dissemination of these values created a large base of the population for whom such values were normative.

The spirit of democracy, the westward migrations and the Second Great Awakening not only contributed to the flourishing expansion of American denominations but set the stage for the “winds of theological and sectional controversy” that led to divisions and rifts within denominations themselves. The Presbyterian Church began the century as a single entity, but emerged at the end of the century as “at least half a dozen, often contentious, strands . . .”¹⁹²

This situation played out on a local level in Newburgh in 1832 when the Presbyterian Church was organized under the “Plan of Union.” Adopted in 1801, this system allowed the Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Church allowed for the pooling of resources to send visiting preachers to the Western frontier. The church in

¹⁹¹ Ludlow, *Miles Park Presbyterian Church Anniversary Sermon*, 3.

¹⁹² Balmer and Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians*, 45.

Newburgh was first called “The First Congregational Church of Newburgh,” but was “under the care of the Cleveland Presbytery.”¹⁹³

The practical reasons for the “Plan of Union” system were soon overshadowed by theological differences. Conservative Presbyterians were troubled by the influence of New England Congregationalists who had, in their minds, strayed too far from Calvinist orthodoxy. They looked on with alarm as many Presbyterians, particularly in New England, New York and the Western Reserve adopted revivals that encouraged “people to choose Christ . . . by their own power, rather than waiting for divine initiative . . . blended a concern for society with the promotion of revivals [and] favored the use of voluntary associations . . . to promote moral reforms.”¹⁹⁴

Conservative Presbyterians did not believe that “the task of the church . . . was to reform society,” nor were they happy with the rejection of the doctrine of original sin and predestination.¹⁹⁵ In 1838 the conservatives found themselves in the majority at General Assembly in Philadelphia and acted not only to dissolve the Plan of Union, but declared the “New School” Presbyterian synods that had been organized under the plan to be illegal and refused to recognize them at the Assembly. The “New School” members then proceeded to claim legitimacy for themselves, continued call themselves Presbyterians, and held their own General Assembly.¹⁹⁶

The Old School-New School schism lasted until 1870, and “rent the fabric of American Presbyterianism.” Most of the New School members were in upstate New

¹⁹³ Arthur C. and Mrs. Arthur C. Ludlow, *History of Cleveland Presbyterianism*, (Cleveland: W. M Bayne Company, 1896), 88.

¹⁹⁴ D. G. Hart and John R. Muether, “Turning Points in American Presbyterian History Part 6: Old School Presbyterianism, 1838” Reprinted from *New Horizons*, 2005, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH05/06d.html

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Balmer and Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians*, 48.

York, the Western Reserve, and Michigan, where significant New England migrations had taken place. In Newburgh, however, the church became officially Presbyterian at the time of the schism, and due to the Old School loyalties of its minister, Matthew Fox, withdrew from the Cleveland Presbytery and joined in fellowship with the Old School Wooster Presbytery. As soon as Rev. Fox left the church in 1845 Newburgh realigned itself with the New School Cleveland Presbytery, “with which it was more naturally affiliated.”¹⁹⁷ Ludlow made it clear that the church in Newburgh firmly believed in reform movements rejected by the Old School Presbyterians, noting that the historical records of the Cleveland Presbytery resolved to fight the evils of “slavery, infidelity and intemperance.”¹⁹⁸

The Presbyterian Church, like all the other churches covered here, first met in informal spaces. The first meeting place was appropriately symbolic for a Christian church, being a carpenter shop on Miles near E.93rd St. They tried using the Town Hall but found the time allotted to them restrictive and moved to a school house on Harvard and E.71st. They built their first meeting house on land donated by a George Walker of Rome, NY. How Walker acquired land in Newburgh, and why he donated it to the church are unclear, but his interest in the church is apparent from a unique stipulation he made in the deed. The church was to “erect and finish on the outside a Church . . . within Eighteen months from the date hereof otherwise this deed shall be void and the land . . . shall revert to the grantor.” Walker also stipulated the width (at least thirty feet) and length (at least forty feet) and that the building was to have a cupola or steeple.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Ludlow, Anniversary Sermon, 6.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Deed, George Walker to Elijah Ingersol Trustee, 1st Presbyterian Soc. Newburgh, Cuyahoga County Records Office, Book 30, page 289.

The congregation borrowed funds, raised money and donated goods and labor to build the church, which was presumably “finished on the outside” within the time period allotted, but was not dedicated until 1845. It was the first purpose built church in Newburgh and the congregation worshipped in the small, one story meeting house with the appropriate cupola, until 1869. At that time the cornerstone was laid for a new imposing brick edifice on Miles Park facing the Methodist church across the public square. A growing congregation needed more room, but contemporary standards of architectural beauty informed the style of the new building. At the laying of the cornerstone the president of Western Reserve College gave an address in which he “drew a contrast between the comfortable and attractive places of worship of the present day and those of a quarter century ago”²⁰⁰

The new building was an outward sign of the trend towards refinement that all of the churches in Newburgh eventually embraced. The austere simplicity of the earlier meeting houses owed something to the Puritan past, but also reflected the limited resources of the original congregations. By the 1870’s Newburgh was long past its frontier past and was very a part of larger national trends. And the trend towards refined and elegant church buildings had been growing steadily since the 1820s. In 1852 the General Convention of the Congregationalist Church produced a book of architectural plans for new churches that included designs by several renowned architects including Andrew Jackson Downing and Richard Upjohn.²⁰¹ These men had “enlisted in the

²⁰⁰ *The Leader* 27 May 1869

²⁰¹ For more on the influence of Downing on domestic architecture and natural aesthetics, see Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 25-35.

campaign to introduce beauty into every corner of the landscape with no exceptions for churches.”²⁰²

The building of more elaborate churches coincided with a trend towards more social activities within the church. In 1869 the women of the Presbyterian Church held a dinner to raise funds for the building. A notice in the *Leader* exhorted “all the citizens of Newburgh” to “encourage [the] ladies in a noble enterprise . . . as the ladies have placed the dinner tickets at the low price of fifty cents and there should be no empty seats at the table.”²⁰³ To ensure a large attendance “the ladies” had wisely chosen to hold their dinner in the town hall at noon on Election Day. *The Leader* reported later that “no good citizen of either party permitted the excitement of the election to prevent him from going to the dinner.”²⁰⁴

In another fund raising effort the music teacher at the Presbyterian Sunday School wrote an oratorio for his pupils to present to the public. This event was also held at the town hall and special transportation arranged for “friends from the city” who traveled to Newburgh to support this effort. In promoting this event the *Leader* noted that the proceeds of “the *entertainment*” were to be used for the building fund.²⁰⁵

The use of the word entertainment is significant. The churches had moved away from the condemnation of worldly activities and embraced them for their own purposes. Social activities such as dinners and concerts not only raised money for the church, they placed the church in the public eye as a part of the fabric of the community. The church provided not only a place for worship and religious instruction, but a place to engage in

²⁰² Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 339.

²⁰³ *The Leader* 11 Oct 1869

²⁰⁴ *The Leader*, 15 Oct 1869

²⁰⁵ *The Leader* 25 Oct 1869

leisure activities. Under the auspices of the church these activities were wholesome and respectable, amusing and uplifting at the same time.²⁰⁶

In 1860 the chaplain at the Insane Asylum suggested that “the cheerfulness and mirth produced by the use of a magic lantern has so good an effect upon diseased minds as to amply repay the small cost to which the State will be subjected in its purchase.”²⁰⁷ While imparting religious instruction and leading worship were primary to his function the chaplain believed that “cheerfulness and mirth” were also beneficial to human well-being. Church socials, choir concerts and other gatherings fulfilled this function. While there were obvious limits to the typed of secular amusements and social activities church members could engage in with the approval of the church, many restrictions had been loosened.

The Disciple’s Church in Newburgh followed a similar trajectory as the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in terms of its founding and growth. Strictly speaking the Disciples of Christ were not a denomination. One of the church movements to come out of the revival period of the Second Great Awakening, the Disciples had their beginnings when a father and son, both Scots-Irish Presbyterian ministers, Alexander and Thomas Campbell, began to preach what they called Restoration Christianity. Rejecting the idea of creeds as basis for church membership they claimed to speak “where the Scriptures speak, and be silent where the Scriptures are silent.” They did not set out to create a new denomination, “from their point of view the number of denominations was

²⁰⁶ For more on the ambivalent attitude of middle-class Americans towards leisure activities and the need to attach a moral purpose to them, see Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)

²⁰⁷ *Sixth Annual Report of the Trustees and Officers of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1860* (Columbus: Richard Nevins, State Printer, 1861), 23.

already too great.”²⁰⁸ What they envisioned was a restoration of the New Testament church, or what they called the Primitive Church, where “the Church of Christ was at first one.”²⁰⁹

Campbell stirred up great controversy amongst the established denominations. Reformers are not usually popular with the institutions they aim to reform. Campbell stirred up ire in the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches with his rejection of creeds and his insistence that only adult baptism by immersion was scriptural. Despite his belief in this practice his brief association with the Baptist Church soon ended due to theological differences as well. Ministers and theologians in these other denominations published pamphlets and books that refuted “the errors of Campbellism.”²¹⁰ Campbell defended his views in his own publications and in formal, public debates. Despite the attacks on Campbell, or perhaps because of them, many lay people were drawn to his system of belief and began organizing into congregations.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully examine the history of this movement which became several new denominations, contrary to their founders’ intent. But there are some items of importance that need to be noted. As a home-grown, American institution, the Disciple’s Movement began in the West Virginia, Kentucky, Western Pennsylvania area, where its founders resided. But its influence was carried very early into the Western Reserve where Disciple congregations began springing up after revivals at which Alexander Campbell preached in the area.

²⁰⁸ B.B.Tyler, *Concerning the Disciples of Christ* in the *Handbook Series for the Bethany C. E. Reading Courses* (Cleveland: W. M. Bayne Printing Co., 1897), 26.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 27.

²¹⁰ T. McK. Stuart, *The Errors of Campbellism: Being a review of all the fundamental errors of the system of faith and church polity of the denomination founded by Alexander Campbell* (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1890)

Disciple churches easily fit into the Western Reserve communities in which they emerged. Doctrinal differences aside, they had much in common with their fellow churches. Like the Methodist and Presbyterian churches in Newburgh, the Disciples Church was evangelical in outlook, holding revivals and Sunday Schools in attempts to convert unbelievers. They supported missionary work, both local and international. All three churches supported education, both religious and secular. Members were encouraged to read the Bible and other religious literature. Irregardless of its camp meeting origins, and its reluctance to become a new denomination, the Disciples movement founded several colleges early in its existence, including Hiram College, not far from Newburgh. While lay people without any formal education could and did hold leadership positions, official ministers in all three denominations typically were classically educated and held advanced divinity degrees. Yet, while different churches held these traits in common, personal beliefs and worship preferences, still led individuals to band together with like minded Protestants to join or form specific congregations.

Like the other congregations in Newburgh, the Disciples of Christ church began as a small group meeting in the early 1830's in private homes, but was not formally recognized until 1842 when about thirty five members began meeting in a school house on Pittsburgh (Broadway). In 1844, as more members were added, the church began utilizing the town hall for worship services, just as the Presbyterians had done.²¹¹

In 1850 the members pledged money "for the purpose of building a meeting house and purchasing a lot for the same." Subscribers pledged from two dollars to one

²¹¹ *History of the Miles Avenue Church of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio*, private collection of Walnut Hills Christian Church

hundred seventy five, and the money was due as soon as pledges reached the sum of eight hundred dollars.²¹² Members also pledged one dollar each “for the getting of Stoves, Pipes, Lamps & etc. such as the present committee may think proper.”²¹³

By 1851 a lot had been purchased from Eben Miles on Aurora Rd. (Miles Ave.) near Broadway for sixty-five dollars and a building was erected on this spot by 1852. A photograph of the building shows that it was a modest Greek revival structure that would have been at home in any New England town. A substantial bell tower encased the bell purchased for three hundred and seventy-five dollars, “with all the irons compleat [and] guaranteed to give good satisfaction” from G.W. Coffin and Co. in Cincinnati, one of the largest of the many bell foundries that came into existence in the early nineteenth-century.²¹⁴ The architecture and style of a church and the inclusion of steeples and bell towers were dictated not by religious doctrine but by cultural trends and popular fashion. But the lines between what was fashionable and what was proper, Christian behavior were often blurry. A proper church, it seemed, needed a proper bell.

There was no full time minister at the church until 1864, and much of the early preaching was done by lay pastors, including the young James Garfield, whose uncle Abram was a member of the church. Garfield preached several times at the church while he was President of Hiram College. Church historians were always quick to point out with pride the congregation’s ties to the slain President.

Like their counterparts, the Disciple Church outgrew its original building and built a new one in 1888. A decision was made to keep the original building, but have it

²¹² list of subscribers for the Society of Disciples in the Township of Newburgh, dated 26 Oct 1850, private collection of Walton Hills Christian Church

²¹³ “Subscription for Furnishing the Disciple Meeting House in Newburgh”, private collection of Walnut Hills Christian Church

²¹⁴ receipt of payment, G. W. Coffin Co., private collection Walnut Hills Christian Church

moved to the back of the church lot and turn it sideways. A new two addition to the old building then became the main sanctuary, while the original structure served as Sunday school. Unlike the other churches, the new Disciples church was not made of brick. Instead the architect, Andrew D. Kent, who was a member of the church, designed a two-story wooden, Queen Anne style church with the bell tower adjacent to the front entrance. The new church had a seating capacity of five hundred.²¹⁵

The importance of religion in general, and the Protestant faith, in particular, to mid nineteenth-century Newburgh residents cannot be overstated. The three Protestant churches that dominated Newburgh retained a strong and influential presence in the neighborhood until well into the twentieth-century. Churches provided not only spiritual support to the neighborhood, but offered social and recreational outlets as changing attitudes softened some of the strictures against worldly pursuits. Church suppers, fetes, and choir concerts were intended to counteract less wholesome activities, although evidence suggests that many church members participated in both church sponsored social events and secular activities such as dances and theatre performances.

Because most of the day to day decisions on church governance were enacted within local congregations by laypersons these institutions provided opportunities for members to act in leadership positions. Men who may not have had power to effect policy on a city, state or national stage acted as deacons, trustees, elders and local ministers. In the smaller venue of their local congregation they had authority. Men who had broader political ambitions could use their church leadership roles to an advantage. A man who acted as church deacon or trustee was seen as eminently respectable and trustworthy.

²¹⁵ *History of the Miles Avenue Church of Christ*, private collection, Walnut Hills Christian Church

Women, while subject to traditional roles, nevertheless engaged in leadership roles within the very active and influential women's groups of the church. Hosting fund-raisers, teaching Sunday school, chairing committees and participating in choirs did more than provide women with social outlets. They allowed women to amass organizational, leadership and public speaking skills, while staying within the confines of respectable womanhood. As more opportunities for women opened up in the larger community many women who stepped into these roles called upon these skills.

Church leaders and members enjoyed a central role in the arbitration of acceptable behavior, not only within its doors but in the larger community. For those who subscribed to their ideals this created a sense of stability and security. For those whose mores and values were different, or whose life circumstances precluded certain material refinements, this situation left them vulnerable to scorn, pejorative labels, and discrimination.

While doctrinal and theological differences were important enough to provide the various denominations with sufficient members to support separate houses of worship, an atmosphere of cooperation and camaraderie between the congregations prevailed in the village. The members of Trinity Episcopal in Cleveland provided a used pulpit for the first church building erected by the Presbyterian Church in Newburgh. While the pulpit was found to be too large to fit through the doors of the small building, it could and did provide fuel for winter heat for which the Presbyterians "extended thanks to Trinity Parish."²¹⁶ When the Presbyterians built a new building in 1872 their original structure was sold to the Episcopalians and moved to the corner of Harvard and Sawyer (East 91st).

²¹⁶ Ibid.

A Thanksgiving Day service, held at the Methodist Church in 1879, was designated a union service of the Eighteenth Ward churches, with the sermon preached by Rev. Spiller of the Church of Christ (Disciples).²¹⁷ When the cornerstone was laid for the Presbyterian Church in 1869 a lead time capsule was entombed in the stone. Included in this lead box were “items of interest in regards to the other churches in Newburgh viz: Methodist Episcopal, Disciple, Welsh Presbyterian, Welsh Congregational and Welsh Baptist.”²¹⁸

Conspicuously missing from the above list was the Catholic Church. But the Catholic Church, whose mostly Irish parishioners remained a minority in Newburgh until the advent of the Eastern European immigrants, appeared to have had a very secure place in the village. St. Mary of the Holy Rosary, later Holy Name, was begun as a mission church to the Catholic inhabitants of Newburgh in 1854. A building was erected at the corner of Woodland Hills (East 93rd) and Miles Park in 1862, joining the Protestant churches clustered in the area.²¹⁹ Before the first church was built Mass was held on the second floor of the old town hall on Miles Ave., just as the burgeoning Protestant congregations had done in the past. The influx of mill workers, including more Irish Catholics, as well as Eastern Europeans, meant that a larger church was needed and the “pastor and people... agreed that the most aristocratic spot of Newburgh was none too good for a Catholic edifice and Broadway was selected as the place...”²²⁰

The laying of the cornerstone for the new church building, in 1881, drew a large crowd, with three special trains from Cleveland, and one from Ravenna, bringing about

²¹⁷ *The Plain Dealer*, 26 November, 1879.

²¹⁸ *The Leader* 27 May 1869

²¹⁹ Foster Armstrong, Richard Klein and Cara Armstrong, *A Guide to Cleveland's Sacred Landmarks* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1992), 78.

²²⁰ “Church of the Holy Name,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 9 May 1881.

1300 visitors from other parishes.²²¹ *The Plain Dealer* is mute on whether or not non-Catholic residents of the city were in attendance. They had no official part in the ceremonies, but possibly those residents who lived within walking distance would have at least been amongst the spectators. There were, however, no reports of hostility on the part of the Protestants, although the *Plain Dealer* took the opportunity to point out to their readers the growing number of “believers in the Roman Pontiff,” amongst the citizens of Cleveland.²²² The tension between tolerance and the political fear of a large number of citizens of suspect loyalty would color interactions between Catholic immigrants and “native” Protestants for many decades.

Religious tolerance was not always extended to less prominent denominations. The Mormons, for instance, often aroused disapproval, suspicion, and violence; as was the case when a visiting elder baptized three women of Newburgh in April of 1861. *The Plain Dealer* reports that the women’s husbands were “not particularly pleased, and threaten the Elder with violence.”²²³ Distrust of “Papist” activities ran deep in main stream Protestant minds, but the beliefs and practices of the followers of Joseph Smith aroused even more animosity. The Church of Latter Day Saints never had a significant presence in Newburgh.

The three churches highlighted in this section were chosen because of their importance to the “old stock” Newburgh residents, and because they had a significant presence in the community for so long. Many of the original members and their families continued to be a major presence in the church, even as they became a minority group in

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ “Three Women Baptized by a Mormon Elder into the Mormon Church,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 10 April 1861

the community. They were joined, however, by members pulled from the newer British immigrants, demonstrating the relative ease with which these residents blended with the older ones.

All of these churches were proud of their individual historical narratives. The almost mythical humble beginnings by a few faithful, determined, individuals echoed the mythic Puritan story of their ancestors' quest for a "city on a hill." Each church claimed this story as unique to its heritage, although the details followed the same trajectory; the early days in borrowed space, the first meeting house, often built with their own labor, the eventual move to larger, and more imposing buildings. The evolution of all the church buildings illustrate a trend away from the austere simplicity of the meeting house with its emphasis on self denial, towards more elegant building and sanctuaries that included such amenities as damask covered cushions for comfortable seating.²²⁴ And, as proud as they were of their lowly beginnings, they were equally proud of the newer, more stylish structures.

The evidence shows that most church members had a sincere and deep faith in God and gained personal satisfaction from corporate worship. But the influence of these churches reached out into the everyday life of the community. While members and clergy placed high priority on Bible study, preaching and worship they began to accept and even embrace the emerging consumerism and cultural mores of the age. Hard work and piety led to material wealth, an obvious sign of Divine approval. The darker corollary to this belief was that poverty and lack of refinement suggested a lack of God's favor.

²²⁴ Invoice for cushions covered with olive damask, H. D. Ostermoor & Son, 35 Broadway, New York, private collection Walton Hills Church of Christ

Protestant church members in Newburgh, regardless of their denomination, held a firm belief in the moral correctness of their values and worldview. They were confident, and, sadly, often arrogant in their convictions. Their shared vision of a Christian society superseded their doctrinal differences and influenced the community values that came to be associated with the emerging nineteenth-century middle-class; education, moral reform, respectability and piety.

CHAPTER V

THE TIES THAT BIND

*“A new society has just been organized in the Eighteenth Ward,
based on ‘fraternity, aid and protection.’”*

South Cleveland Advocate, February 26, 1881

*“Mr. Spencer, secretary of the fire board, and the Broadway Social club are
making amateur theatricals lively in the Eighteenth Ward.”*

Plain Dealer February 5, 1877

Churches were among the most prominent and obvious communal organizations in Newburgh, but nineteenth-century Americans were avid joiners, and Newburgh residents were no exception. Like-minded citizens could participate in organizations dedicated to societal reform, or join fraternal societies that offered social bonding with other “good men and true.”²²⁵ Men could become Masons, or join the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, or one of a myriad of other fraternal orders. They also formed new groups that drew their members from veterans of the Civil War. Local regiments held annual reunions and many veterans joined the Grand Army of the Republic. As the century progressed many “good women” could also join sororal societies of their own.

Men and women also belonged to organizations that involved hobbies and artistic interests. They joined choirs and amateur dramatic societies, and attended lectures. Ad hoc groups were formed to organize specific civic or charitable events. Residents also participated in formal and informal social activities and “amusements.” Whether high-minded, or seemingly frivolous, civic organizations provided their members with a sense

²²⁵Albert G. Mackey, *A Lexicon of Freemasonry* (Philadelphia: L. Johnson and Company, 1852).

of camaraderie, acted to introduce or reinforce ideology, and generally set out parameters of accepted and expected behavior. Social activities carried out within these same parameters offered participants a chance to indulge in “cheerful recreation,”²²⁶ or attend “a pleasant party.”²²⁷

The use of the word pleasant to describe a social function is ubiquitous and significant. A pleasant pastime implies enjoyment with a certain amount of restraint. “Suitable amusements and recreations”²²⁸ were considered a vital element in the care and potential cure of the patients at the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum. Conversely, the absence of such outlets, or indulgence in less refined pastimes could create the mental conditions that sent patients to that institution in the first place.

Snippets of information in newspapers and institutional records show the existence of the many societies and organizations that thrived in Newburgh, but these sources are frustratingly brief and lack the rich details that are found in church records. We know, for instance, that the temperance movement was strong in the area, but other than officers mentioned by name in newspaper accounts, the names of members are not extant. I was unable to track down local records of any of the various organizations. If such records are extant they are not housed in any local repository. The informal social life of the average resident is almost impossible to discern, except for the few incidences found in letters or diaries. Nevertheless, the sources that are extant demonstrate the vigorous civic and social life of Newburgh. The strong presence of these organizations points to the involvement of a significant number of residents.

²²⁶ *Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1866* (Columbus: L.D. Myers and Bro., State Printers, 1867), 11.

²²⁷ *The Plain Dealer* 15 Sep 1865

²²⁸ *Twelfth Annual Report . . . of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum*, 11.

Scholars have posited the that the growth of existing voluntary associations, and the emergence of new ones peaked in the latter part of the nineteenth century. These organizations arose in response to the rapidly shifting and sometimes chaotic environment that accompanied industrialization. The quest for order and security helped to fuel the formation of clubs, societies, and organizations. Scholars Gerald Gamm and Robert D. Putnam challenged this finding. According to their research, “associational life was most vibrant and its growth most sustained in the small cities and towns of the hinterland, rather than the great cities of the Northeast or Midwest.”²²⁹ Even after its annexation to the larger city, Newburgh, or the Eighteenth Ward, still retained many of the characteristics of a small town, so the popularity of voluntary associations fits the model suggested by Gamm and Putnam. I would argue, however, with their conclusion. They posit that urbanization and industrialization were not primary factors in this phenomenon. Few areas of the country, even the most rural, were unaffected by industrialization. Even before becoming part of the larger city of Cleveland, Newburgh felt the impact of industrialization. Its growth and changing environment were most certainly factors in the growth of its societies, clubs and fraternal organizations.

As the population expanded, and became more heterogeneous, the need to identify oneself with a particular group became vital. These groups then were able to collectively affirm their social standing, or their relevance to the larger community. Some groups actively sought new members, desiring to create a large presence whose strength was reflected by large numbers. Other groups thrived on exclusivity, creating small, elite communities, based on race, ethnicity, or religion.

²²⁹ Gerald Gamm and Robert D. Putnam, “The Growth of Voluntary Associations” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 29, no.4, Spring, 1999, 514.

The earliest instance of a society of like-minded citizens in Newburgh was the Newburgh Library Society, formally incorporated by the Ohio state legislature in 1827.²³⁰ The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the progress of the Ohio and Erie Canal (completed in 1832) increased the availability of imported goods from the East, including books and other printed literature. Little is known of the structure and activities of this society, but it probably could not have existed without the new availability of literature. By the 1850's, however, there are no references to be found about this society, which may have faded as other types of groups emerged and as individuals had more opportunities to purchase or borrow literature, although no public library existed until the 1890's.

There are few references to other antebellum societies in Newburgh, but it is unclear whether this is due to a lack of involvement, or a lack of extant records. Not surprisingly, given the agricultural nature of the original township, Newburgh residents participated in the Cuyahoga County Agricultural Society, organized in 1846. Their annual fair was the precursor to the Cuyahoga County Fair, and was an important cultural event. An 1857 list of "premium winners" from Newburgh includes prizes for livestock, produce and flowers, but no winners from Newburgh appeared in the prize list for artwork.²³¹ Alva A. Jewett of Newburgh acted as an officer of the organization. In 1850 he and a colleague, disappointed in the few vegetables entered at the fair offered the opinion that "liberal and definite premiums" would entice more gardeners to compete

²³⁰ *Journal of the Senate of the State of Ohio; Being the First Session of the Twenty-sixth General Assembly . . .* (Columbus: R. H. Olmsted, State Printer, 1827), 76.

²³¹ *The Plain Dealer* 3 Oct 1857

with each other, and perhaps fill not just an “end of a table” but a whole “Gardener’s Hall.”²³²

The Cuyahoga County Teachers Institute began meeting in the 1840s to provide continuing education for teachers. A.J. Spencer, a teacher at Newburgh’s Walnut School in the 1850s served as secretary for this organization before the war. The location of the meeting rotated amongst the communities within the country and met several times in Newburgh.

Both of the above organizations were county wide organizations, members were not drawn specifically from Newburgh. But Newburgh residents participated in these organizations and their participation demonstrates the larger network of community involvement that existed amongst the neighboring towns and villages.

Among the most controversial organizations of the antebellum period were the anti-slavery societies. There are no known records or reports of a local anti-slavery society specific to Newburgh, but just as residents participated in the countywide organizations mentioned above, residents could have joined the very large and active Cuyahoga County Anti-Slavery Society which was organized in 1837.

There are small bits of evidence that point to abolitionist sympathies; the Presbyterian Church passed a resolution condemning slavery, Newburgh lawyer, Hiram Griswold traveled to Harper’s Ferry to act as defense council for John Brown, and noted abolitionist, Henry C. Wright, was evidently staying in Newburgh for a time in 1856. Wright sent a letter to Garrison datelined “Newburgh, O.”²³³

²³² *Fifth Annual Report of the Ohio State Board of Agriculture to the Forty-ninth General Assembly . . .* (Columbus: Charles Scott, Printer, 1851), 135.

There is a tantalizing snippet of information in a *Plain Dealer* article that confirms the existence of anti-slavery sentiment in Newburgh, albeit in a derogatory fashion. *The Plain Dealer* was Democrat in its sympathies and the article was written as a sly dig at abolitionist behavior. According to the report, printed in February of 1860, a man from Kentucky attempted to “get an insane negro woman into the Asylum.” Not succeeding in his mission, he “proceeded to the village hotel” [presumably the Cataract House] where, “a large crowd, headed by the most prominent abolitionists of the place congregated,” under the assumption that the woman was a fugitive slave.²³⁴

The reporter claims that the man acted in a dignified way, while the crowd “made themselves disagreeable.” When the man offered two hundred dollars to anyone prepared to take care of the woman, no one took him up on his offer. Proof, the paper asserted “of the philanthropy of the windy lovers of Our African Brother.”²³⁵

The article is obviously slanted and sarcastic, but it raises some questions. Who were the “prominent abolitionists” mentioned in this article? And how many people were actually present at this incident? The “large crowd” may have been an exaggeration on the part of the newspaper, but since the writer obviously meant to be insulting downplaying the size of the crowd would have suited his purposes better than overstating the numbers involved. So it seems safe to assume that there were significant numbers of residents that were at least sympathetic to the cause in the crowd that day. Further research may be able to identify some of those who were most active in abolitionist activities.

²³³ William Lloyd Garrison, *Letters of William Lloyd Garrison*, vol. 4, *From Disunionism to the brink of war, 1850-1860*, ed. Louis Ruchames (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1976), 271.

²³⁴ *The Plain Dealer*, 5 Feb 1860

²³⁵ Ibid.

The temperance movement also emerged alongside the abolitionist movement out of the evangelical spirit of reform. L.C. Pratt, owner of the Ohio Chair Factory, was an active member of the Independent Order of Good Templars in 1862.²³⁶ A county-wide organization at that time, there were several lodges in Cleveland by the mid 1870s, including a Newburgh chapter.²³⁷ The temperance movement was not confined to evangelical Protestant residents. St. Mary's Temperance Society and the Father Mathew Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society drew its members from the Irish Catholic community. Led by the local priest, Father Gallagher, they held weekly meetings, marched in parades, and appeared at civic functions.²³⁸

In popular memory, however, the image of the temperance movement that lingers is that of the crusading Carrie Nation, descending on saloons with hatchet in hand. The women of the temperance movement in Newburgh were not quite as militant or radically destructive as Carrie Nation, but they did join in the Women's Crusade of 1873 and 1874, along with thousands of other women in Ohio. This crusade was a well organized operation, and garnered tremendous support in the fight for prohibition. In Newburgh the crusade started off with a meeting at the Presbyterian Church, where Rev. Curtis preached, read Scripture, and encouraged those present to sign a pledge of abstinence from "all alcoholic drinks, including wine, cider and beer . . . and promise in all practicable ways to discourage the manufacture, sale and use thereof . . ."²³⁹

Men who sold alcohol were considered liable for the grief caused by alcohol. A melodramatic Sunday school story recounted the sad tale of a father tempted by a saloon

²³⁶ *Plain Dealer* 7 Apr 1860

²³⁷ Robison, Savage & Co.'s Annual Cleveland Directory for the year ending June 6, 1876, 798.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, *Plain Dealer* 9 May, 1881

²³⁹ *Plain Dealer*, 8 Mar 1874

keeper and his little boy who begged him not to drink, but faithfully stayed by his father's side even as he passed out on the road. At the end of the story both father and son freeze to death on the roadside and the author asks the rhetorical question, "Had it not been for that licensed rum seller would they have died thus?"²⁴⁰

The fifty or so women in the crowd then pledged to form a league to "remove the evils of intemperance . . . from our midst," by visiting business that sold liquor and using "friendly Christian exhortation" to persuade men to give up drinking and selling alcohol. As any good organization of the time required formal officers the women elected a President, Secretary and Treasurer from their ranks, along with several other unspecified officers.²⁴¹

Social historians have questioned the motives of reformers, accusing them of ethnic and religious intolerance, prejudice, and class bias. Were these men and women acting out of altruism or "status anxiety and a need to reassert control over inferior classes?"²⁴² The answer is probably yes to both motives. There is no doubt that these women wanted to see a society that reflected their own values, but it is also undeniable that alcohol abuse took a tremendous toll on families and communities. Wives and children, in particular, did often suffer abuse at the hands of a drunken husband or father, and many more were in want of basic necessities when household money went to support a parent's alcohol habit. The sensationalist, romantic literature of the day seems quaint to modern eyes, but the problems were very real, and the women of the league were

²⁴⁰ Richard Donkersley, *Budget of Facts for Young People*, 208.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class*, 193.

“entirely convinced of the justice of [their] cause and the urgent demand for immediate action . . .”²⁴³

One month later these eminently respectable women encountered an equally respectable citizen who was equally convinced of the justice of his cause. A. J. Spencer was a forty-five year old veteran of the Civil War who had lived in Newburgh since the 1840’s. He was a former school teacher, was well-spoken and had elegant handwriting. This last skill may have led to his position as secretary of the Cleveland Fire Department, a position he held from 1876 until his death in 1899. At the time of the women’s crusade he also happened to own and operate the Cataract Hotel, a fact which made him a target in the ongoing battle to close down all saloons and bars.

After a couple of encounters with the temperance women Spencer went on the offensive. He sent an invitation to the women to call on him at the Cataract House on April 15th. Sixty women gathered in his ball room where they held exercises consisting of “singing, reading of Scripture and prayers.”²⁴⁴ Then Spencer took the floor for his rebuttal. He also read from the Bible, choosing his text carefully. “Judge not, that ye be not judged [and] why beholdest thou the mote that is in thine brother’s eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye.”²⁴⁵ He suggested that the women should take on other types of intemperance, such as eating and vanity. He suggested that men were driven to drink by the strain of trying to keep their family in “fashionable ruffles and gewgaws,” on an “insufficient income.”²⁴⁶ He claimed he could not stay

²⁴³ *Plain Dealer* 8 Mar 1874

²⁴⁴ *Morning Leader* 20 Apr 1874

²⁴⁵ *Plain Dealer* 18 Apr 1874

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

silent when “besieged by a band of praying women who have enlisted as soldiers to wage a war against my business and to take away my means of support.”²⁴⁷

A letter to the editor of the *Leader* from an unnamed source in Newburgh appeared two days later condemning Spencer’s actions and words as “a downright premeditated insult to . . . ladies, by a man who lays claims to being a gentleman.”²⁴⁸

Spencer had invited the women to visit him and they should have received a “polite or at least civil reception.”²⁴⁹

The Plain Dealer, as a rival to the *Leader*, was happy to champion Spencer in his ongoing battle with his women and the above critic. They printed a long rebuttal he made in May, where he expressed his dismay at the controversy. He denied any insult to the women and expressed his anger and sadness that the *Leader* portrayed him as less than a gentleman, causing old friends to think he had become “the meanest man living.”²⁵⁰

Again Spencer used Scriptural quotes to put forth his arguments. He thanked those women among the group who had spoken up in his defense after the “harsh words” had appeared in the *Leader*, reminding them that “a soft answer turneth away wrath.” Not content with Biblical quotes, Spencer also called upon his knowledge of Shakespeare. He suggested that like Shakespeare’s “Jew” the “saloon keeper hath eyes, hands, reason, dimensions and a reason to dwell somewhere on the face of this globe . . .”²⁵¹

The actors in this drama were all part of a core group of residents who had lived as neighbors for decades. Most of the women remain anonymous in the reports, but the

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ *Leader* 20 Apr 1874

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ *Plain Dealer* 23 May 1874

²⁵¹ Ibid.

secretary of the league, Mrs. J.S. Healy, was personally acquainted with Spencer. Her husband, John Sullivan Healy, had been one of Spencer's pupils, they had joined the same unit in the Civil War, both surviving to return to Newburgh and become businessmen, Healy as a grocer and Spencer as a hotel owner. Mrs. Healy may have been one of the women that Spencer thanked for "defending [his] character . . . old friends who have not all lost their respect for me."²⁵²

The conflict between A.J. Spencer and the women of the temperance movement that played out in the newspapers highlights the tensions and conflicts present even within the seeming solidarity of middle-class respectability. Both parties could lay claim to this respectability. Spencer was an educated businessman who provided a useful and popular service to the community. He used his education and religious upbringing as tools in his defence against the attacks of the crusaders. The women, while stepping outside of their domestic spheres, did so only to protect the sanctity of the home. They were willing to enter into the lion's den to fight against threats to home, family and community. The political rivalry between the Democratic *Plain Dealer* and the Republican *Leader* also played a part in the portrayal of the conflict, as each paper seized upon the incident to continue their long standing feud.

The Women's Crusade involved hundreds of women in several states, most notably New York and Ohio. The temperance movement remained a vital and powerful interest group into the next century, finally achieving their goal of Prohibition in 1919. But in Newburgh the dramatic events of 1874 eventually died a natural death. Rather than marching on saloons, temperance organizations began offering alternative social gatherings that did not include alcohol. While prayers and Bible study remained an

²⁵² *Plain Dealer* 23 May 1874

important element in these gatherings they also included more secular amusements, including comic songs, parlor games, and speeches “which kept the audience in an uproar of laughter.”²⁵³ And at least one enterprising saloon owner assured the ladies of the town that “stimulants” were as healthy for ladies as for gentlemen, and offering them “accommodations in his private parlor for respectable ladies.”²⁵⁴

The aims of the temperance societies were obviously at odds with men like A. J. Spencer, but he, along with many of his fellow citizens, were among the large numbers of men who joined fraternal, or secret, societies. By the mid 1870’s several fraternal societies met in Newburgh, most in the vicinity of Broadway and Harvard, still the business and social center of town. A.J. Spencer was a devoted member of The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, or I.O.O.F. until his death in 1899.²⁵⁵ The Cataract Lodge of this order took its name from its meeting place, gathering on Saturdays at Spencer’s establishment. The Cataract House also served as a banquet hall and meeting place for other fraternal societies.

Two Masonic lodges held “stated convocations” on Tuesdays and Fridays in the Masonic Hall at 2501 Broadway.²⁵⁶ The Newburgh Lodge held a “festival and ball” in December of 1874 to raise funds to furnish for this hall that was described as being “in the bank building.”²⁵⁷ Other fraternal choices included the Knights of Pythias, and the Independent Order of Foresters, whose hundred and thirty-six charter members, “composed of some of the best material of the Iron Ward,” were installed in 1878 in a banquet held at the Cataract House.

²⁵³ *Plain Dealer* 27 Dec 1880

²⁵⁴ *South Cleveland Advocate* 19 Nov 1881

²⁵⁵ *Plain Dealer* 27 Feb 1899

²⁵⁶ *Robison, Savage & Co.’s Annual Cleveland Directory, for the year ending June 6 1876*, 796.

²⁵⁷ *Plain Dealer* 5 Dec 1874

These fraternal societies were also known as “secret societies” although only the meetings and initiation processes held any secrecy. The social activities of these groups were well covered in newspaper articles, they seemed to welcome and encourage publicity. Mug books and obituaries took special care to note membership in such organizations. But the “mysteries,” rituals, and somewhat curious attire that marked these societies appealed to some instinct or need in normally staid, respectable nineteenth-century men. These modern men obtained satisfaction at being part of ancient traditions purported to have been handed down for hundreds of years.

These rites and rituals were an odd mixture that combined unlikely elements. Biblical figures, Egyptian kings, “noble” stone cutters and woodsmen, were all held up as shining examples of brotherhood and moral manhood. The Masonic apron became a mystical symbol that signified not only the stonemason’s craft from which the group took its name, but was also intended to represent the Jewish priesthood and statues of “heathen gods . . . discovered in Greece, Asia and America . . . decorated with superb aprons.”²⁵⁸

The I.O.O.F. claimed descent from a group of eighteenth-century English men who were considered “odd” for banding together to take care of unfortunate individuals. They combined this image of brotherly love with their corps of “Patriarchs Militant,” who were instructed in “drill tactics [and] rules for cantonments, parades, competitive drills . . . and funeral services,” using military terms and procedures borrowed from the Army Infantry.²⁵⁹ The Cataract Lodge I.O.O.F. was one of the “out-of-town” lodges to

²⁵⁸ Mackey, *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, 41.

²⁵⁹ Colonel H.B. Grant, *Drill Tactics for Patriarchs Militant I.O.O.F.* . . . (Cincinnati: The Pettibone Manufacturing Company, 1886), title page, 6.

march in the Cleveland procession that accompanied the body of Abraham Lincoln to bier on Public Square.²⁶⁰

The Protestant church, especially in the evangelical and Reform traditions prominent in Newburgh, had rejected and eliminated most of the liturgical drama of the Roman Church. Protestant men who joined the Masons and other similar associations may have been attracted to these organizations by the human love of dramatic spectacle.

Rituals and drama were only part of these societies. The social aspect of these groups was very important. In addition to the weekly meetings for members, there were many functions that included “the ladies.” Balls, dinners and parties held by local lodges functioned as popular and respectable forms of entertainment. Those whose dining, drinking and dancing took place under the official auspices of morally responsible organizations were certain to maintain propriety and not devolve into rowdiness or immodest behavior.

There was additional benefit to these occasions according to at least one English Mason. He wrote an essay in defense of gatherings that included women, referring to the gratification of those involved in the “innocent festivities of Freemasonry.” Such gatherings, he asserted, would enable the “waiting wife” to endure her husband’s absences while he attends Masonic meetings. Women who were “amusingly curious” and “so easily satisfied,” would soon realize the “great ‘bonhommie’ in all good lodges [and] instead of undervalue[ing] Freemasonry . . . become warm, honest and faithful friends . . .”²⁶¹ Presumably his observations applied to his American counterparts as well.

²⁶⁰ Daniel J. Ryan “Lincoln and Ohio” *Ohio Archeological and Historical Quarterly* Vol. 32, 238. <http://www.ohiohistory.org/portal/publications-p.html>

²⁶¹ “Should Ladies be Banished from our Recreation Banquets?” *The Masonic Monthly*, July to December, 1882, 117.

Fraternal organizations were also mutual benefit societies, pledged to “use wisely the things which have been committed to us in trust for the advancement of the general good.”²⁶² Members paid monthly dues which were for “the exclusive purpose of relieving the sick, burying the dead, educating the orphan and protecting and assisting the widow.”²⁶³ Personal fortunes were often precarious in the nineteenth-century, an illness or accident could deprive even middle-class families of income, and frequent panics and economic downturns could put small businesses out of business. The livelihoods of many Newburgh men depended on the fluctuations of the local and national economy. In the words of a Masonic Grand Master they could be “to-day elated with the smiles of prosperity, tomorrow depressed by the frowns of misfortune.”²⁶⁴

Mutual aid societies were, by design, intended to aid their own members and families. The Masons and Odd Fellows were the most prominent and enduring of these groups, but there were other choices. The Order of the Chosen Friends held a “select social dance,” in 1881 at Dean’s Hall on Broadway.²⁶⁵ This organization, begun in 1879, was a true mutual aid, or insurance society, admitting both men and women. Members were promised not only death and illness benefits, but old age benefits to those who reached the age of seventy-five. This organization eventually found itself unable to meet its obligations “since no attention was paid to mortality tables . . . and assessments had been fixed a figure too low.”²⁶⁶ In June of 1900 the Order of the Chosen Friends was placed in receivership.

²⁶² Charles Brooks, *The Official History and Manual of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America* . . . (Philadelphia: Odd Fellows Journal Print, 1902), 222.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ “Notes and Gleanings,” *The American Freemason; A Monthly Masonic Magazine*, Vol.II, 1858, 235.

²⁶⁵ *South Cleveland Advocate* 19 Nov 1881

²⁶⁶ *The Insurance Press* 4 July 1900

Other fraternal organizations fared much better than the Order of Chosen Friends, several still have a significant presence in the present day. The sense of camaraderie and fellowship was a powerful motivation for belonging to one, or more, of these societies. The hierarchy, structure and elaborate rules created by these societies created a world where order reigned supreme, an important quality to respectable middle-class people who prized order in their lives and communities. Theoretically these organizations offered men a place to put aside political and religious differences and enjoy “one common brotherhood of love.”²⁶⁷

A less high minded group calling itself simply the Broadway Social Club appears to have functioned mainly as an amateur theatrical troupe, although they also held dances. This group produced plays at Reeves Opera House in the 1870s and sometimes presented encore productions for the patients at the asylum. The asylum records, in fact, are the only extant source that mentions an earlier thespian troupe, the Amateur Society of Newburgh who performed at the asylum as early as 1859.²⁶⁸

Musical societies also provided outlets for amateur performers. The Mendelssohn Society, organized in 1878, was reported as “fast reaching a high standard among the musical societies of the city.”²⁶⁹ Vocalists could also join the South Cleveland Vocal Society, The Welsh Choral Society²⁷⁰ or the Maenner Chor. The last two groups were composed of Welsh and German immigrants, respectively, but appeared to have been well received in the broader community.

²⁶⁷ Mackey, *Lexicon of freemasonry*, 291.

²⁶⁸ *Fifth Annual Report of the Trustees and Officers of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum . . .* (Columbus: Richard Nevins, State Printer, 1860), 25.

²⁶⁹ *Plain Dealer* 23 Aug 1878

²⁷⁰ *Cleveland Directory for the Year Ending 1880*, (Cleveland: Cleveland Directory Company, 1879), xxi.

Performances of all types, theatrical or musical, amateur or professional were well attended. At the asylum such amusements were considered part of a “full system of moral training.”²⁷¹ The chaplains at the asylum concurred. There are several accounts of chaplains requesting funds or donations for items to be used for “the amusement of those whose minds are dwelling upon . . . delusions.” Among the items listed for use at the asylum were magic lanterns, pianos, billiard tables, and chess sets, along with an eclectic array of reading material. As one of the goals at the asylum was to create a homelike atmosphere, it is logical to assume the existence of many of these items in the private homes of Newburgh residents, with the possible exception of billiards tables. The latter could be found saloons like the grandly named Continental Hall on Harvard which invited gentlemen to “spend an hour quietly, socially and in first-class company.”²⁷² For those who preferred the genteel, outdoor sport of croquet, sets could be purchased at Baxter and Brown’s bookstore.²⁷³

The support and encouragement by physicians and clergy suggests that not only were these activities tolerated or approved by respectable society, they were considered as vital to the mental health of its members. People were permitted, even expected, to enjoy themselves and they found many ways in which to do so, while staying within acceptable community sanctions. Formal concerts, theatrical events and balls, were augmented by holiday celebrations, such as Fourth of July picnics and firework displays, and Decoration Day parades.

Many of the organized parties, benefits and celebrations that occurred in Newburgh drew in participants from other local communities, and vice versa. When the

²⁷¹ *Fifth Annual Report*, 19.

²⁷² *South Cleveland Advocate* 26 Feb 1881

²⁷³ *South Cleveland Advocate* 23 Sep 1876

Plain Dealer described the plans for a Newburgh Independence Day celebration held on July 3rd in 1858 they added the hope that their “Newburgh friends,” would join in the Cleveland celebration on the following evening.²⁷⁴

As mentioned earlier special train cars and omnibus service were put into use for various functions to bring out of town attendees to functions. This practice was good for the local economies, and the railway profits, plus it reinforced the larger regional community that existed throughout the Western Reserve. Communities ran the gamut from neighborhood blocks to the county level and beyond. Several residents even made the trip to Philadelphia in 1876 to attend the Centennial Exposition. With the exception of the early years of the fairly short lived frontier era, Newburgh residents were never isolated or insular.

Within any community there exist various types of sub-communities. I have described some of the voluntary associations and clubs that drew people together out of shared interests or values, but there are some communities that are less tangible and obvious. Shared experiences, particularly challenging or traumatic experiences, create bonds that may or may not result in formal alliances, but do result in the creation of informal communities. The Civil War and the challenges faced by soldiers and civilians during that struggle produced both of these types of communities.

For better or worse the war stood as a defining moment in the lives of the majority of nineteenth-century Americans. Newburgh was predominantly Republican, and enthusiastically took up the Union cause. Newburgh men were quick to enlist in one the several units organized in Cuyahoga County. Many of these men had existing relationships before the war; they were neighbors, friends or relatives. Shared camp and

²⁷⁴ *Plain Dealer*, 2 July 1858

battle experiences added a layer to these extant relationships. There were also men who were not able, or chose not to enlist. If drafted some of these men paid commutations, or provided substitutes to take their place.²⁷⁵ Depending on the circumstances and their standing in the community these men many have faced the scorn of their neighbors. Joseph Turney, one of Newburgh's most prominent citizens, was active in local and state politics. His lack of military service provided fuel for his political foes who accused Turney of staying at home "enjoying the comforts of life," while his opponent fought "the battles of his country."²⁷⁶

Family members that stayed behind waiting and worrying also forged bonds based in shared experience. Residents rallied to show support of their hometown soldiers. When George Dunbar came home on leave before shipping out west friends and neighbors gathered at his house, or made a point of greeting him in the village.²⁷⁷ Relief Committees were organized to look after soldier's families, and care packages were sent to the men in the field. While Union troops were probably never in any real danger of starvation these packages were a welcome diversion from camp life, and provided a connection to home. Even in the early days of the war Newburgh soldiers "yelled and danced," with joy to receive items that were "needed and useful," and praised their home town, and "the girls they left behind."²⁷⁸

The Civil War continued to loom large in the lives of those who lived through it for many decades. Veterans met at reunions like the one held by the 42nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry at the Cataract House in 1874 and included many Newburgh veterans, including

²⁷⁵ *Plain Dealer* 23 May 1864

²⁷⁶ *Plain Dealer* 14 Sep 1867

²⁷⁷ Diary of George Dunbar, Western Reserve Historical Society

²⁷⁸ *Plain Dealer* 18 May 1861

“adopted son” James Garfield, the first Colonel of the unit. Newburgh residents claimed a kinship with Garfield because of the prominence of his uncle, Thomas, in village affairs.

Less than a decade after the end of the war these occasions were unabashedly celebratory. Men made speeches and passed resolutions that recognized the “honorable military career of the 42nd,” and the “equally honorable career of its members in civilian life.” Members were requested to provide data to create “a lasting record [of the] honorable deeds of the regiment.”²⁷⁹ The work of commemoration had begun. In typical fashion the horrors of war were being downplayed and the heroic valor of the participants took on mythic proportions.²⁸⁰

Veterans’ pension records tell a different story. In these records the glory of war is overshadowed not only by the tragedy of war but by the earthy reality of bodies weakened by debilitating and often humiliating disease. Chronic diarrhea, piles, and rheumatism wreaked havoc on men who survived the war. One of the surprising aspects of pension records is the intimate knowledge of very private bodily functions expressed by friends and neighbors. If these people did not have certain knowledge of the types of health issues veterans claimed on pension applications, they were at least willing to swear under oath that they did.

The Civil War Pension system was originally based on need, not merit, although it evolved as the veterans grew older. Pension relief began as “a restricted program to compensate disabled veterans and the dependents of those killed or injured in military service [but changed] into an open-ended system of disability, old-age, and survivors’

²⁷⁹ *Plain Dealer*, 27 Aug 1874

²⁸⁰ For more on Garfield and the 42nd OVI see Allan Peskin, *Garfield: A Biography* (Kent: Kent University Press, 1978)

benefits for anyone who could claim minimal service time on the northern side of the Civil War.”²⁸¹

From 1862 until 1873 pensions were only paid to soldiers who had become disabled during the war, or to the wives and orphans of those soldiers who had died during the war. The Consolidation Act of 1873 made several changes to pension rules; including a provision that allowed compensation “for conditions and diseases contracted during military service that subsequently resulted in disability.”²⁸² Then in 1879 another change allowed a lump sum to be paid in arrears to date of death or discharge. Not surprisingly these two changes led to a large spike in pension applications, and most of the Newburgh records I examined were filed after 1879.

Also not surprisingly, allegations of fraud and abuse were bandied about by the press, and were highly likely to have occurred. But one of the themes that permeate the various pensions under consideration is the seeming reluctance of the applicant to ask for assistance. Military service was honorable and worthy of gratitude, but a man who depended on “hand-outs” or charity was somewhat less than manly. Witnesses stressed the applicant’s willingness to work if only they could, and were only applying for a pension as a last resort.

In 1888 H. Harvey Pratt finally “put aside his pride, listened to the advice of friends and filed his claim for a pension.”²⁸³ His neighbor, Abigail Collins stated that he should have done so years earlier but his “pride and desire to be independent has

²⁸¹ Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 102.

²⁸² Peter David Blanck and Michael Millender, “Before Civil Disabilities Rights: Civil War Pensions and the Politics of Disabilities in America,” *Alabama Law Review* Vol. 52, Number 1, 8.
<http://www.law.ua.edu/pubs/lawreview/articles/Volume%2052/Issue%201/Blanck.pdf>

²⁸³ Affidavit of P.W. Garfield, Pension file, H. Harvey Pratt, Certificate 651479, Civil War Pension Records, National Archives, Washington D.C.

(foolishly, I think) stood in the way.”²⁸⁴ His former captain Henry W. Johnson concurred. Johnson thought that “false pride . . . has kept [Pratt] from asking help from the Government he so faithfully, efficiently and so intelligently served . . . I think he should have a pension dated back to the time of his discharge.”²⁸⁵

The reluctance of veterans to ask for help was one of the many themes found almost universally across assorted pension files. Others included the long-standing and silent physical suffering of the veterans, their changed appearances after the war, their sober, industrious habits, and their valiant attempts to remain self sufficient.

I do not intend to downplay the suffering of these men. They did suffer from the effects of exposure, lack of nutrition and contaminated water, even if they managed to survive the war with no injuries. All of the above were exacerbated by the limited medical treatments of the day. But the vivid and adamant accounts found in the affidavits of friends and fellow soldiers make it clear that it was important to prove that these veterans had earned these pensions, eliminating the stigma of charity.

Veterans and their allies were blunt and detailed in their descriptions of ailments. Abigail Collins seemingly had no qualms about describing Pratt’s “hemorrhoids . . . resulting from chronic diarrhea,” intimate details that seem odd for a neighbor of the opposite sex to be privy to. A. J. Spencer, in his affidavit in support of George Bowman, was more discreet. Although the doctor’s affidavit for Bowman shows that he suffered from the same complaint as Pratt, Spencer simply notes “his gradual decline in health . . . from exposure and disease contracted in the army.”²⁸⁶ Pratt and Bowman were not alone

²⁸⁴ Affidavit of Abigail Collins, Pension file, H. Harvey Pratt

²⁸⁵ Affidavit of Henry W. Johnson, Pension file, H. Harvey Pratt

²⁸⁶ Affidavits of J. Beeman and A. J. Spencer, Pension file of George Bowman Certificate 615361, Civil War Pension Files, National Archives, Washington D. C.

in their suffering; chronic diarrhea came in second only to gunshot and shell wounds in the list of ailments reported between 1862 and 1888.²⁸⁷

Pension records help to reveal the informal networks of community that existed in Newburgh. Other aspects of pension records and what they reveal about the community will be addressed in chapter five. For the purposes of this chapter though, the web of relationships between veterans and their neighbors and friends highlights a different kind of community than found in voluntary associations. These records shed some light on the informal, yet significant, day to day relationships that created communities based on proximity or kinship, rather than ideals or hobbies. Pension records are among the few records that document relationships to neighbors and extended families. The persons who were asked to provide affidavits regarding the character, habits, and health of pension applicants also provided details on their relationship to the applicant and his or her family.

Newburgh residents who lived through the war were shaped by the experience for good or ill, but there is no doubt that the war years created a sense of camaraderie and reliance upon one's community. Many residents who moved to Newburgh after the war would have had similar experiences regardless of the location they inhabited during the war. This may have shortened the time needed to forge bonds between old and new residents, making them comrades as opposed to strangers.

Despite the trauma and horror of war, or perhaps because of it, community bonds were forged and strengthened by shared wartime experiences. The records and sources from this era provide prime examples of the importance of community in the lives of

²⁸⁷ Peter Blanck, "Civil War Pensions and Disability," *Ohio State Law Journal* Vol. 62, 120.

Newburgh residents. They call into question the myth of the rugged, individualists beloved in American mythology.

Nineteenth-century Americans may have embraced this mythology in literature and mug books, but the evidence shows that communal support was also recognized and applauded. Fund raisers and benefits were held to raise money a wide variety of causes. Prominent citizens held a charity ball to raise funds for those “needy of Newburgh,” who “by some unforeseen circumstance are obliged to ask for assistance.”²⁸⁸ The names of those involved were listed in the newspaper account, and while several were known members of church groups and other societies this effort seemed to be outside the purview of any one organization.

Numerous accounts show charitable efforts not only by formal organizations but by individual efforts and ad hoc committees. The author of an anonymous letter sent to the *Leader* in 1861 praised the “inhabitants of Newburgh village [who] have donated about \$200.00 for the relief of the young man . . . who met with the loss of his hand in the chair factory . . . another proof of the generosity of the Newburgh people.”²⁸⁹ And in the 1850’s Newburgh resident J.S. Brown formed a committee of one and sent gifts of fruit to the prisoners in the county jail for several years, an act that the *Plain Dealer* declared was “true charity [without] ostentation.”²⁹⁰

Charitable urges, social activities, neighborly support, and reform impulses were all contributing factors to the rich and varied communal life of Newburgh’s residents. But there were drawbacks to these activities. While charitable aid was needed, charity recipients often had to contend with the patronizing attitudes of the donors and usually

²⁸⁸ *Plain Dealer* 11 Jan 1878

²⁸⁹ *Leader* 20 Mar 1861

²⁹⁰ *Plain Dealer* 27 Aug 1860

had to prove themselves deserving of aid. Another downside was the often exclusive nature of many organizations and the attempt to control societal morals according to the dictates of a specific group. Those who did not share the same religious, ethnic, or racial background were not always offered the same considerations or benefits that the dominant community found in group membership. Even members of the same background could quickly be placed beyond the pale by actions or attitudes deemed incorrect or aberrant. Stepping outside accepted societal bounds brought disapproval and censure. The positive aspects of community organizations, however, provided structure and security for many, if not most, residents, contributing to the stability of the community as it grew into an industrial ward of the city.

CHAPTER VI

YANKEE NEWBURGH

“Whether the descendant of the Puritan emigrated to the shores of the Connecticut River, or to Ohio, he emigrated in the same way, with the same ideals steadfastly set before his eyes.”²⁹¹

Lois Kimball Mathews, Vassar College, 1909

“Edmund Rathburn, another pioneer, a resident of this county since February, 1817, died on Saturday evening at the home of his daughter . . .”

Plain Dealer, October 31, 1881

The earliest Anglo-Americans to inhabit Newburgh came from New England, or were of New England descent. As industry changed Newburgh they became part of the emergent middle class of the nineteenth century. I argue that these two facts are related. The past four chapters have detailed the physical and social changes wrought by industrialization. This chapter focuses in more depth on the elusive New England characteristics and middle-class values that shaped the reactions to these changes by old-stock residents, and conversely, how these changes often shaped the values and characteristics of this emergent middle class. Several in depth stories of persons or incidents are included, as micro-histories that help to define the broader community.

²⁹¹Lois Kimball Mathews, *The Expansion of New England: The Spread of New England Settlement and Institutions to the Mississippi River 1620-1865* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1909), 175.

Newburgh residents who lived through the changes chronicled in the past few chapters may have watched with dismay as their quiet village became a busy, crowded and dirty city ward, or they may have embraced the excitement and opportunities as new businesses flourished, employment options increased and elegant buildings rose on improved streets. Sources seem to favor the latter attitude on the part of most residents, and I argue that these residents shared a heritage that may have predisposed them to embrace change. Descendents of Puritan New Englanders who sailed to the Americas with a Bible in one hand and an accounts ledger in the other were well positioned to create a middle class based on morality and economic growth. Scholars who have located the emergence of the middle class in Western New York were examining the lives of transplanted New Englanders. The Anglo-Americans who occupied ante-bellum Newburgh came from the same stock, so it is not surprising that they followed a similar trajectory as their New York cousins.²⁹²

While the common, popular image of New England Yankees is that of hide-bound traditionalists, the immigrants who headed west in the early nineteenth century were willing to leave homes and family in search of material improvements in life. They carried with them many of the attitudes and values of their ancestors, but those ideas were tempered with the willingness to adapt in order to achieve their material goals. They came to a wilderness, but immediately set about to tame that wilderness. The changes wrought by industrialization were continuations of the changes wrought by the axes, plows and mills of the pioneer. Such changes proved to these Yankees their human ingenuity, their industriousness, and their God's favor.

²⁹² Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class* (chapter 1, n. 6)

The earliest Anglo-American residents of Newburgh had arrived from New England with an ingrained belief in the exceptional character of their ancestors, a firm self-confidence that could, and often did, cross over into xenophobic arrogance, and the remnants of a Puritan outlook that equated the accumulation of wealth with the grace of God. The influence of the Enlightenment had imbued these nineteenth century New Englanders with a belief in human achievement and technology and the certainty of progress. New technologies such as the railroad and telegraphic communications, steel mills and the beginnings of mass production represented both human achievement and providential benevolence. On the other hand, the Evangelical movement had imbued these Yankees with a spirit of moral reform, which, if it did not open their eyes to the abuses of capitalism, it encouraged them to address some of the suffering that resulted from urban industrialization.

These beliefs and attitudes allowed a robust middle class to emerge from the pioneer Yankees of Newburgh and the “invisible” British immigrants who blended into the community. They may not have had the means to live the lifestyle of Euclid Avenue residents, but they could aspire to gain that lifestyle for their children, if not for themselves. While the term upwardly mobile was not in their lexicon they understood the concept of “bettering oneself.” Wealth and prominence were signs of hard work and God’s grace. Therefore those who had not yet reached these goals showed a certain amount of deference to those who had, allowing those individuals to take on the roles of community leaders. Yet all through this period native Newburghers retained a respect for manual labor and the “simple lifestyles” of pioneer life. While upward mobility was the

goal, there was also a propensity to hold on to the identity of a simple working man who just wanted to support himself and his family in a modest manner.

Lysander Thompson, grandson of pioneer Allen Gaylord, struggled with the tension created by this dichotomy during an unhappy fourteen year marriage that ended in a bitter divorce. Lysander's wife Matilda accused her husband, among other wrongdoings, of supporting her in a "stingy and niggardly [*sic*] manner" even though he was earning good money at the Cleveland Rolling Mill. Lysander countered that his wife knew she had not married "a man of wealth," that he was "a laboring man, earning support for himself and wife solely by the seat of his brow." His wife, he charged "desire[d] to be a bigger queen bee in society than [his] earnings afford."²⁹³

The Thompsons were married in 1877. Lysander had worked at the mill since 1870 and by 1884 they were able to purchase a lot on which they had built a house. But this house and land were mortgaged, according to Lysander, in an attempt to "provide his wife and home with such comforts and requirements as she demands."²⁹⁴ In her plea for alimony Matilda averred that Lysander made at least one hundred dollars per month at the mills. In his affidavit he claimed his pay averaged only sixty or seventy dollars per month. Either sum was a substantial wage for mill work; Lysander probably fell into the category of skilled worker. The significant detail is that he identified himself as a laboring man and did not identify with the "society world" his wife allegedly aspired to.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Matilda Thompson vs. Lysander Thompson, divorce records, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, File number 41040

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ see Sandage, *Born Losers* (chapter 4 n. 191) for more on the changing ideas of manhood, success and family in industrializing America.

Lysander was by birthright a descendent of the old-stock Yankees, and his grandfather's exploits were recounted as part of pioneer lore. His uncle, Noah Graves, was considered to be the founder of Chagrin Falls, and was a successful businessman. Lysander's father had partnered with his brother-in-law, Graves, in business but had died when Lysander was a boy, without leaving his family any wealth. Lysander went to work at the mill at the age of seventeen. He eventually left the mill and became a house painter. He remarried, was a deacon and treasurer in the Disciple's Church, and died in 1927 in the house he had built in 1884, with the mortgage paid in full. His three children from his second marriage, one son and two daughters, all graduated from college.

Any attempt to classify Lysander Thompson, and many other Newburgh residents who followed this pattern is difficult. The average Newburgh resident of Yankee descent did not quite fit into the refined bourgeoisie whose greater wealth and position allowed its members to distance themselves from manual labor. Newburgh middle-class residents occupied a more liminal space that allowed them to combine a respect for hard work, even manual labor, with pride in their New England background. Firm believers in American democracy they also subscribed to a belief in social hierarchy and showed deference to those whose wealth backed the growing capitalistic system.

In this period the head of the household might work as a puddler at one of the new steel mills but he came home to a house that included a parlor papered and painted in the latest fashion. He might earn his living with his hands, but he participated in literary and artistic pursuits and belonged to the Masons or the Odd-Fellows. His wife did her own housework, and made her own clothes, but she probably read *Godey's Lady's Magazine* and patronized the local milliner to keep up with changing fashions. She was active in

local charity pursuits and may have added her efforts to the very active local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union or sang in a glee club.

Their children attended grammar school, and probably high school. Many went on to higher education becoming teachers, lawyers and doctors, or at the least they worked in one of the emerging white-collar jobs. These children did not often follow their fathers into the mills, except in managerial capacities. This community did not disdain manual labor but the ultimate goal for the family was higher education, the accumulation of wealth, and upward mobility.

Middle-class aspirations and upward mobility, however, did not however completely define the members of the Yankee community. Stories of the pioneer past emphasized not only self-reliance but also generosity to one's neighbors. Harriet Brooks Ferris looked back with nostalgia on the "log cabin hospitality [where] wayfarers asking for lodging or food were never turned away."²⁹⁶ While memory adds a rosy glow to reality, Ferris' words imply that a genuine feeling of kinship and mutual responsibility existed amongst this group. Although the literature of the age promoted the self-made man, the evidence shows that in reality residents were supportive and generous to their neighbors in times of need. This support system may have evolved as the needs of the community shifted, but the system itself did not disappear with the log cabins.

The ties to the pioneer past and the sense of a New England community are most obvious in the ante-bellum, pre-industrial Newburgh. While most households were scattered amongst farms, rather than clustered on streets the distance between family farms was not great, each hundred-acre lot was only a half mile long and three eighths of

²⁹⁶ Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham, *Pioneer Families of Cleveland, 1796-1840* Vol.1 (Cleveland: Evangelical Publishing House, 1914), 235.

a mile wide, so one did not have to travel extensively to visit with neighbors. The suicide of W.W. Williams, son of the first miller in Newburgh produced a detailed coroner's report that demonstrates the network of neighborhood community and the informal, familiar relationships amongst neighboring farmhouses.

Williams was a sixty-two year old widower, living with his sons on half of lot 440 and half of 441. On the morning of December 20, 1852, Francis, Williams' sixteen-year-old son, went into his father's bedroom to make up the fire, and found the bed empty. Francis went outside to look for him and found his father hanging in the corn house "not far from the dwelling." The sixteen-year-old Francis ran back to the house to tell his older brother Joseph what had happened and then ran to Lorenzo Carter's house on the neighboring lot. He testified that "Carter, Hamilton and others came immediately and took the body of my father down."²⁹⁷

How long "immediately" was is up to interpretation, but the neighbors summoned by Francis all lived on lots on either side or below the Williams land and presumably were not confined by roads, but could walk in the most expedient manner to the Williams corn house to take down the body. From the proximity of the farms it can be assumed the walk to the Williams house would have taken no more than twenty minutes.

Other neighbors were called to testify at the coroner's inquest, which by law was held at the site of the incident. The list of witnesses included Alonzo Carter, father of the above mentioned Lorenzo. Like the victim, Alonzo had been a child of an original pioneer. Williams had grown up in Newburgh; his father had operated the first grist mill at Mill Creek. Carter's father, the first Lorenzo, was considered to be the first settler in

²⁹⁷ Deposition of Francis Williams, Case number 117, Wm. W. Williams, Cuyahoga County Coroner's Report Files, Cuyahoga County Archives, Cleveland, Ohio.

Cleveland. Although he was raised in Cleveland, Alonzo Carter had settled in Newburgh as an adult and would have known Williams all of his life.

Ariel Harris, a friend of the Williams family, was called to testify to the mental state of the deceased. Williams' sons made no statements regarding their father's mental state, nor did the men who helped to take down the body, but Harris provided the testimony that suggested a reason for William's suicide. She stated that she had known Williams for over thirty years and had "always found him to be a man of sober and correct habits [and had] never known him otherwise."²⁹⁸ She noted, however, that since the death of his wife three years earlier he had been subject to "spells of mental derangement" and "drooping spirits," and although he had "never intimated that he would lay violent hands on his body," Harris was certain that he had "committed the fatal act by hanging himself."²⁹⁹

The case of Williams' suicide not only demonstrates community ties it demonstrates what happens when a respectable member of the community, a man of "correct and sober habits," behaves in an aberrant manner, stepping outside the bounds of acceptable behavior. In Williams' case, and in many other instances, the community stepped in to confirm and validate the normally respectable status of the member who has behaved in an unexpected manner. Friends and neighbors make statements in newspapers and official records to protect and uphold individual, and by extension, community reputations.

The sense of community that existed in the sparsely populated Newburgh of 1850 may have existed in part because of that lack of density. It is easier to know your

²⁹⁸ Deposition of Ariel Harris, Case number 117, Wm. W. Williams, Cuyahoga County Coroner's Report Files, Cuyahoga County Archives

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

neighbors, even half a mile away, when there are only a few of them. But another factor, the homogenous ethnic background of the inhabitants, contributed to that early community cohesiveness, and perhaps allowed the formation of a more insular community when the demographics began to include other ethnic groups and nationalities.

Williams and his neighbors were bound by more than proximity of their land. Most of the families who lived in Newburgh at the time of the 1850 census were children or grandchildren of the original Anglo-European inhabitants of the township. Some residents had been adult pioneers themselves, many of whom lived well into their eighties and nineties. These families demonstrated pride in both the New England background and the pioneer experience. The descendants of these families held on to that New England background for generations, its cultural influence helped to mold the emerging middle class of Newburgh.

In 1855 a group of Western Reserve residents created the New England Society of Cleveland and the Western Reserve. Their purpose was to “promote a kindly feeling among the sons of New England [and] for the taking of ourselves back to the standards of our Fathers.”³⁰⁰ This was only one of the several formal organizations that gathered to celebrate their heritage, both in New England and in the early years of the Western Reserve. Both the Western Reserve Historical Society and the Early Settlers Association of Cuyahoga County were formed in the nineteenth century and are still active today.

The Western Reserve Historical Society, in its initial incarnation, was ostensibly a scholarly undertaking to preserve the history of the area, and in particular the New England settlement. In the late 1850s members John Barr and Charles Whittlesey

³⁰⁰ Records of the New England Society of Cleveland and the Western Reserve, container 1, folder 3, WRHS

gathered together a collection of personal memories of several pioneers much as later historians would conduct oral history interviews. But the Society also functioned as a social organization in the early years. They held a large gathering in Newburgh in 1858, when several of the original pioneers were still alive. Speeches were made, one man declared that “all the blessings of civilization in the mighty West, owed their origin to the New England schools, the peoples’ colleges and Sabbath schools, the object of which was to better mankind.”³⁰¹

In a more light-hearted manner several women “dressed old-fashioned” and carded and spun wool while they “chatted and cackled and laughed . . . which carried us back to old New England days of yore,” according to an observer. Several participants brought out “antiquated relics” like the desk carved with an axe in 1816 by Allen Gaylord, or the even older army commission of Gaylord’s grandfather Timothy dated 1753. Yet amidst all the celebration of the past pioneer, Oliver Culver, visiting from Rochester where he now lived “was very happy to see the present happy and prosperous generation and to note the changes wrought.”³⁰²

Residents all over the Western Reserve clung with pride to this New England heritage. They shared a Protestant faith, although the homogeneity of the New England Congregational churches was challenged on the frontier by the rise of more evangelical denominations. They also shared a more secular faith in education, human reform and commerce. These values were not unique to New England or those of New England background, but many mid nineteenth-century residents in Newburgh who shared in this

³⁰¹ “Pioneer Meeting” *Plain Dealer* 21 Oct 1858

³⁰² Ibid.

background may have seen them as such. They held firm to a belief in New England exceptionalism.

One of the difficulties for scholars attempting to pin down the culture and worldview of the emergent middle class, or more accurately, classes, in the nineteenth-century stems from the mitigating factor of regionalism. Middle-class values, worldviews and attitudes varied radically depending on the region of the country under consideration. The cultural landscape created by New England pioneers in the Western Reserve was very different from areas of Ohio where immigrants from southern and mid-Atlantic states settled.

In his book, *Albion's Seed*, David Hackett Fischer explores the origins of regional differences in the English colonies that became the United States. He argues that these differences were directly related to the different regions of England that supplied the colonies with their first white inhabitants. He concludes that such differences extended from England to the colonies and continue to shape regional attitudes in the present. Fischer tends to ignore factors that shaped the lives of Anglo-Americans after immigration, holding on to his theory with certain doggedness that does not stand up to closer examination in many cases. But his conclusions do hold some validity. Immigrants of any culture tend to bring the worldview and folkways of their place of origin and many of those views carry down in some version or other in the new environment

The challenge is to tease out those values and mores from the existing sources, and to note how they influenced the attitudes and reactions of residents as they experienced the changes wrought by the industrialization of Newburgh. There are certain

keywords that appear in newspaper accounts and official records, like the coroner's reports mentioned earlier. These words include, "respectable," "sober," and "industrious," among others. These were the admirable characteristics of the ideal citizen. But what did these words mean? What constituted respectability or industry? In earlier chapters I looked at the ways that Newburgh residents worked, worshipped and amused themselves. In all of those activities residents were expected to act within the boundaries that constituted respectability. But sometimes it is easier to define a concept or work by what it is not.

Good, respectable people could and did sometimes act in ways that were deemed irrational, or abnormal or even evil. Churches, schools, and community organizations all imposed rules and sanctions that attempted to produce a well ordered society. But even Newburgh residents who led quiet, uneventful lives would have been very much aware that many other people in the community were afflicted by everything from minor domestic disputes to shocking crimes. The daily newspapers were full of the details of lives gone wrong, and while not recorded, personal knowledge and local gossip would have spread any news of wrongdoing as fast, or faster, than the official news.

Respectable people did not commit suicide, but if they were suffering from depression caused by the death of a wife, as Williams had been, then he could commit this irrational act and still remain respectable. Respectable men are not "whiners,"³⁰³ they are "worthy, very industrious [men who] earn an honest living" without "any assistance from the government."³⁰⁴ But if those men were afflicted with wounds and illness while serving their country in time of war, they could honorably accept the aid of

³⁰³ Affidavit of Seymour Ruggles, Civil War Pension file, Oscar B. Ruggles Certificate 965041

³⁰⁴ Affidavit of Henry Johnson, Civil War Pension file, H. Harvey Pratt, Certificate 651479,

that government. And sober, upright ministers did not display “an ungovernable temper” towards their families, or treat them in a “cruel and inhumane” manner.³⁰⁵ Unless, of course, that individual was driven insane by a bullet left in the body after serving as a Chaplain in the Union Army. When respectable people acted in ways that were outside the norm, friends and loved ones did not always condemn or shun them, they looked for answers. The Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum provided some of those answers.

The grand, imposing asylum that stood on a hill south of the village of Newburgh could be viewed by most of its inhabitants. It stood as a daily reminder that even respectable people could lose their reason and behave in abnormal fashion. One of the first medical superintendents at the asylum noted with approval the many locals who came to visit the asylum. He called it “the people’s house” and suggested that “none know how soon they might want its protection for themselves or their family.”³⁰⁶

The asylum was not only to protect its unfortunate patients, but to attempt to “restore reason to its wanted resting place.”³⁰⁷ Among the causes cited for the loss of that reason are jealousy, seduction, Spiritualism, Free-love, disappointed affection, intemperance and masturbation, but the most common cause was simply listed as “unknown.”³⁰⁸ While mental illness caused more concern than censure, at least ideally, the causes were still shrouded in mystery, and what passes for possible causes were often simply behaviors and beliefs that were considered outside the bounds of acceptable societal behavior.

³⁰⁵ An Act Granting a Pension to Elizabeth H. Bowen, pension file, Elizabeth Bowen, divorced wife of Benjamin F. Bowen, Certificate 477380

³⁰⁶ *The Third Annual Report of the Trustees and Superintendent of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1857* (Columbus: Richard Nevins, State Printer, 1858), 14.

³⁰⁷ *The First Annual Report of the New Lunatic Asylums and of the Officers of the Northern Ohio Asylum at Newburgh to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1855* (Columbus: Statesman Steam Press, 1856), 10.

³⁰⁸ *Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum to the Governor of Ohio for the year 1858* (Columbus: Richard Nevins, 1859), 9.

It is easier to find details of aberrant behavior in the sources, given the newsworthy nature of those behaviors. Respectable behavior is ascribed to people in more broad terms, lacking specificity. But the terms sober and industrious often appear in descriptions of respected individuals. Dr. Jamin Strong insisted that those working on his staff at the asylum display a “clear recognition of, and a prompt obedience to authority.”³⁰⁹ Strong was speaking to a particular case, but the sentiment applies generally to the broader community. Order and discipline were hallmarks of respectability.³¹⁰

How did these attitudes and values affect relations with those outside the Yankee community? What type of behavior was expected of them or, more accurately, ascribed to them? There was, of course, always an “Other,” even in the years before the great influx of mill workers. In the mythic narratives of the pioneers that role belonged to the Native Americans. The canal era brought new immigrants or “others” to the area. Immigrants arrived from the Germanic states, Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland. Most of the new British immigrants blended easily and seamlessly into the neighborhood, sharing a language, religion and appearance with the original residents. The Welsh were a minor exception, retaining the use of the Welsh language at least for church services and Eistedfodds held in the neighborhood. But, although the language was different the Welsh congregations shared the same basic Protestant beliefs with their English-speaking neighbors, and Newburgh was quick to embrace and support the musical efforts of the

³⁰⁹ *Twenty Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Cleveland Asylum for the Insane to the Governor of the State of Ohio for the year 1880*, compiled in, *Annual Reports for 1880 made to the General Assembly of the State of Ohio* (Columbus: G. J. Brand & Co. State Printers, 1881), 456.

³¹⁰ See Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (New York: Routledge, 2005) for his classic work regarding societal constructs of mental illness and the treatment of the mentally ill.

Welsh choirs and other performers that participated in the traditional festival of song and poetry known as an Eistedfodd. Also the prominence of mill owners, David and John Jones gave the Welsh a privileged standing in the community.

Yet, during this period, the old Yankee community dominated the local leadership. Other than the designation of honor given to “original settlers” or “pioneers,” newspaper articles about this group did not identify them by ethnicity or nationality as was the case with the Irish, Welsh, Bohemians, Germans and Polish residents. It would not have occurred to newspaper editors or those responsible for official records, court proceedings, or coroner’s reports, for instance, to identify white, Anglo-Americans. They were considered the norm.

The residents who had emigrated from New England were proud of their ancestry, but it is doubtful that they felt any need to define or claim a particular ethnic identity. The idea would no doubt be somewhat foreign to them. As the dominant culture they were simply American, they had no doubt that this was their birthright, a God given, natural state of affairs. New England blood meant descent from old English blood, but their parents and grandparents had fought a revolution to break the bonds with England. By 1850 few residents of the Western Reserve would deny or denigrate their English ties, and American culture was inexorably entwined with English culture in many ways. But the residents of Newburgh and the rest of the Western Reserve did not cling to English identity in the same way that their Irish and Germanic neighbors did, or that the later immigrants from Eastern European countries would do

Retained pride in Yankee and Anglo-Saxon antecedents sustained them during demographic change and allowed the rather smug assurance that they lived “correct”

lives—the measuring stick against which others were compared. It is doubtful if anyone in Newburgh was aware of the Teutonist theory of historian Herbert Baxter Adams, but they would have agreed with his views. Adams envisioned a chain of unbroken heritage of the Anglo-Saxon way of life from ancient Saxon villages to New England villages. Democracy had its roots in this tradition, according to Adams, and had reached its perfection in New England villages in “communal landholding, town meetings, [and] the appointment of selectmen.”³¹¹ That Yankee perfection was not only carried from New England to the Western Reserve, but had been improved upon. As a speaker noted at a meeting of the Early Settlers’ Association, “the kingdom [of England] was sifted that the best seed might be found...that seed was planted in New England...further sifted...and brought out here to plant on the Reserve.”³¹²

While New Englanders were the predominant group in ante-bellum Newburgh, their numbers were never very large. After the war they quickly became a minority in terms of sheer numbers, but they were a minority whose culture was still considered the norm.

So what did the influx of newcomers mean to the older residents? One immediate result was a growing community where it became less common for everyone to “know everyone.” In 1850 most residents not only knew their neighbors and fellow citizens, but many were related by blood or marriage. Family history and lore was part of the community history and lore. By the time of the 1873 annexation there was no longer one Newburgh community, but many. The steel mill workers themselves constituted a

³¹¹ John Higham, “Herbert Baxter Adams and the Study of Local History,” *The American Historical Review*, 85, no. 5 (1985): 1229. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1867041>

³¹² Remarks of Dr. Bates, typed manuscript, Records of the Early Settlers Association of Cuyahoga County 1890-91, container 1, folder 1, Western Reserve Historical Society.

community and within this larger group there existed several sub-communities based on such distinctions as occupation type, age, or nationality.

The new arrivals from England and Wales did not, of course, share the pride in New England heritage that had been a mainstay of Newburgh since its beginnings. But they shared many cultural and social values with the older residents, which made it relatively easy for English and Welsh immigrants to become assimilated into the existing community. While the Welsh were very proud of their Welsh culture and language, they were staunch Protestants. This religious identity made them less “foreign” and therefore threatening, to the native-born Protestants. The Irish and later the Polish immigrants, however, who came to work in the mills were predominately Roman Catholic, marking them as not only foreign, but ideologically suspect.

The influx of new immigrants put an end to the homogenous Yankee community. By the 1880 census, the first to provide street names and addresses, many streets had become predominately Irish or Welsh, and there were a few Eastern European families occupying the new subdivisions north of Harvard.³¹³ Original land owners or their descendants began to sell off their land to developers who created the new subdivisions, within walking distance of the mills.

Whether they stayed on the land they originally owned, or bought other land for new homes, older residents tended to congregate around the original village center. They lived along Broadway south of Union, and on Harvard, Gaylord (E. 93rd) and Brecksville (E. 71st) and around Miles Park. The new subdivisions south of Miles Avenue were also predominantly old stock Yankee families. Newer arrivals from England and Scotland

³¹³ 1880 Federal Census, random samples, Ward 18, Cleveland , Cuyahoga, Ohio

could also be found on these streets as these British immigrants were readily accepted into the existing community.

This physical segregation was not official nor was it necessarily planned, but it allowed the continuation of a Yankee oriented community within the now culturally diverse population. The older residents still controlled the major businesses and cultural institutions and did not feel particularly threatened by the newer immigrants during the first decades after the war. This may have kept ethnic tensions and hostilities to a minimum, as prior to the 1880s there did not seem to be many altercations between the newer and older communities.

While there did not appear to be tremendous enmity amongst the different nationalities whenever there was trouble at the mill or in the neighborhood, either work related or otherwise, newspaper accounts tended to highlight the Irish names of those involved. When John Brennan was accused of trying to choke his wife who ran a boarding house in the Eighteenth Ward the *Plain Dealer* printed a humorous account of the lives of the Brennan family. The writer noted her six children “most by a former husband,” the fact that John Brennan is only at home “once in a while to collect board money and take a hand in punishing the ‘childers.’” Mrs. Brennan, the paper dryly noted “does not like such proceedings.”³¹⁴

The newspapers did not take lightly the sad case of Patrick and Eliza Kanen (also spelled Keenan, Kaneen, and Kanan) who were charged with neglect in the death of their son Patsey. The story was ripe for sensationalism. An anonymous tip sent police out to Gaylord St., in a section of the Eighteenth Ward known as “Irishtown.”³¹⁵ The lurid

³¹⁴ *Plain Dealer* 27 Oct 1875

³¹⁵ *Plain Dealer* 23 Sep 1875

details of the state of his emaciated body, found in the Kanen barn, and the findings of the autopsy were duly reported. And the replies of his parents to questions regarding their son were reported in a way guaranteed to portray them as indifferent, callous and unnatural parents.

When asked why their son was kept in the barn, the parents explained that he was “an idiot” from birth, didn’t like to be in the house and would scream and tear his clothes. They thought he was about thirteen or fourteen years old, but did not know for sure, they tried to feed him but he refused to eat.³¹⁶ Each detail was certain to horrify the reading audience, but more than that the story was certain to reinforce stereotypes. The lawyer for the defence was afraid his client would incriminate himself “for he was an ignorant Irishman.”³¹⁷ What the Irish policemen, Keegan and O’Day, who found the boy and made the arrest thought of that statement is not recorded. But the *Plain Dealer* did point out that “the inhabitants [of Irishtown] were usually quiet, hard working people and were as completely horrified at this discovery as the officers.”³¹⁸

The fate of the Kanen boy is indicative of more than just prejudice. He allegedly lived in the Kanen barn for over eighteen months, and yet few people were aware of his existence. The increase in population had created an urban environment where many neighbors had no personal interaction with each other. Even amongst the Irish who lived in proximity of their fellow countrymen the struggles of a family and a handicapped child went unnoticed.

The newspapers did print stories that involved native-born Newburgh residents, but in most cases the details were not always so lurid. When pioneer descendant,

³¹⁶ *Plain Dealer* 23 Sep 1875

³¹⁷ *Leader* 23 Sep 1875

³¹⁸ *Plain Dealer* 23 Sep 1875

Seymour Ruggles and his wife were involved in a custody hearing the resultant report simply stated the fact that the judge had ruled that “the mother was not a proper person to have charge of children and gave them to the defendant, the father.”³¹⁹ The readers were not informed why the mother was deemed deficient, there were no clever quips about the lifestyle of the Ruggles or stereotyped depictions of their heritage. Granted, the brief notice, and the removal of her children would have shamed and embarrassed Mary Ruggles, but the story was handled in a much quieter manner than those involving “foreigners.” Mary’s story might have been discussed amongst Newburgh’s Yankee families in parlors all over town, but her sad fate was kept within the community.

Given the significance attached to New England bloodlines and pioneer ancestors it is somewhat ironic that those individuals who rose to prominent positions in Newburgh after the Civil War in business, commerce and the burgeoning steel industry did not, for the most part share in that background. The Jones brothers, who founded the mills that became the Cleveland Rolling Mills, came from Wales as experienced steel and iron workers. Henry Chisholm, whose capital investments enabled the growth of those mills was born in Scotland, and, unlike David and John Jones, never resided in Newburgh. Less well known, but locally important, were Harry Nelson, printer and publisher of the *South Cleveland Advocate*, and an English immigrant, and Henry J. Reeves, photographer and impresario of the Reeves Opera House, another Englishman. But one of the most intriguing stories of post Civil War Newburgh is the life of Irish immigrant Joseph Turney.

The life of Joseph Turney pulls together the many paradoxes found in middle-class, Yankee Newburgh. Turney, an Irish immigrant, was no Yankee, but he married

³¹⁹ *Plain Dealer* 12 Jul 1877

into a New England pioneer family. He started his adult life as a working man, and ended up owning railroads and banks. A Republican who held town, city, county and state political positions, he was reviled by the Democratic *Plain Dealer*, until his death when they printed a fulsome obituary. Called a coward for not enlisting in the Civil War, he risked his life during the 1872 fire at the asylum. He left behind a legacy that took on mythic proportions for several decades, but his family faded into obscurity and his once elegant home on Broadway fell into disrepair by the 1930's. Modern day Cleveland residents who live on the street that bears his name know nothing of the man who was once called "the King of Newburgh."³²⁰ Turney himself might have been surprised at that epitaph; contemporary accounts refer to him as the more homely, "Uncle Joe." But those accounts make it clear that he wielded influence both in Newburgh and in the county from a fairly young age.

Joseph Turney was born in Dublin in 1825. His parents, whose names are not recorded, sailed for America when he was one year old. Contemporary accounts of his early years and family background follow a typical Horatio Alger style (and perhaps stood in place of the pioneer antecedent mythology he lacked). After the Turney family arrived in Baltimore his father "went off to sea," presumably abandoning his family, while Turney's mother died six months later leaving her son to be raised by relatives in Ohio.³²¹

The consistent emphasis on his Irish heritage is curious, since he left Ireland as a baby and grew up in Bedford and Newburgh. *The Pioneer Families of Cleveland* includes families that arrived as late as the 1840, and but with few exceptions only those

³²⁰ *Plain Dealer* 11 Feb 1935

³²¹ "Uncle Joe is Dead" *Plain Dealer*, 22 July 1892

that came from New England and New York. Had he not been successful, Turney's Irish blood may have been cited as a reason for lack of success, in fact he would not have merited mention at all, but, because he was successful, his origins of birth provided a slight "exotic" spice to his story.

Turney's rise to political prominence was not harmed by his Irish immigrant status or his father's abandonment of his family. The respectability of the son was in fact was magnified against the example of his ne'er do well father. The personal effect of this abandonment may account for the strict conditions Turney set for his grown children in his will. Any child not "conducting himself or herself in a pure, sober, upright and honorable manner," loses his or her share of the estate.³²² Said behavior was at the discretion of the trustees of their mother Asenath Turney, and William Gurley, husband of Turney's eldest daughter, Mary Eva.

Furthermore any child who elected to live at the Turney residence with his or her mother would have ten dollars per month deducted from their share of the estate, and "shall assist their mother in the performance of her household duties."³²³ The Turney household included at least one or two servants, so household duties may not have been onerous, but the father's insistence on this aid is still indicative of his values. It appeared that Turney kept reign on his offspring in true patriarchal fashion, but he also left specific bequests to his children, leaving several valuable, yet personal items to each of them, "as slight testimonials of the love and affection I bear to them."³²⁴

Perhaps Turney was wise to doubt his offspring. His sons never worked, but lived off their inheritance until they both died at a fairly young age. Joseph and his wife,

³²² Last will and testament of Joseph Turney

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

Asenath appeared to have a long, happy marriage; they celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in 1870 with a large party at their home where they renewed their wedding vows.³²⁵ But at least two of the Turney children suffered marital problems that ended in divorce.

The oldest son was accused by his wife of “gross neglect of duty,” when she divorced him in 1905.³²⁶ Turney’s daughter Katherine divorced her husband in 1894 after he “lived a fast life [and] squandered her fortune.”³²⁷ The oldest daughter was married to a prominent Chicago lawyer, but both of her daughters divorced their spouses without having any children of their own. The lives of the younger Turneys fit the stereotypical image of discontented children of wealth and privilege as if they had been written into a Hollywood melodrama.

Turney’s public life is inexorably tied up with the development of Newburgh in the years of its transition from rural village to industrial ward. We find him in the 1850 census at age twenty-four, living with his twenty-two year old wife, Asenath, and their 2 year old daughter, plus the 22 year old Archibald McIntyre, a Scottish born blacksmith. Turney’s occupation is also listed as “blacksmith,” but his obituary tells of his apprenticeship to a carriage maker and his subsequent opening of his own carriage shop in Newburgh after his 1845 marriage.³²⁸ While the two occupations share similar skill sets and tasks, a carriage or wagon maker would offer more specialized work.

Newburgh at the time had two liverys and a farming community who must have needed frequent wagon repairs. Two of Turney’s close neighbors, Radway and Ames

³²⁵ *Plain Dealer* 28 Oct 1870

³²⁶ *Plain Dealer* 18 Mar 1905

³²⁷ *Plain Dealer*, 27 May 1894

³²⁸ Population schedule, 1850 Federal Census, Ohio, Cuyahoga, Newburgh; “Uncle Joe is Dead” *Plain Dealer* 30 Jul 1892

were listed as wagon makers. But, of these three men, Turney owned the most valuable real estate, worth one thousand dollars at the time of the 1850 census.³²⁹

All of the above information raises several questions. According to Turney's brief biography, as recorded in his obituary, Turney was raised by his uncle, Martin Quigley. The Quigley family lived briefly in Newburgh in 1835, and then moved to a farm in Bedford, where Turney served an apprenticeship to a carriage maker named Hurlbart. Turney built his own shop in Bedford and married his childhood sweetheart, Asenath Marble in 1845, when he was twenty and she was eighteen.³³⁰ Five years later he owned his own shop in Newburgh, with one possible employee (McIntyre) and owned one thousand dollars worth of real estate.

Starting up a small business required at least a small amount of capital, as did the purchase of real estate, where did the young Joseph Turney acquire the funds needed for such investments? Perhaps his uncle or his wife's family loaned them the money, or he had received an inheritance. The contemporary accounts of his life do not provide these details; perhaps because they do not fit the romantic image of the American myth of the self made man.

Somewhere in addition to his blacksmith and carriage making skills, or more probably, as an extension of those skills, Turney had acquired knowledge of engineering. In his own words he describes himself in 1856 as "a machinist and an engineer," having been hired by the state in 1854 to "run the engine at the Newburgh asylum." He began this employment in January of 1855 when the asylum opened, and worked there until November or December of that year. He was called as a witness in the state senate

³²⁹ 1850 Census

³³⁰ "Uncle Joe is Dead"

investigations into alleged fraud and shoddy workmanship by the contractor who installed the heating apparatus at the Newburgh asylum.

The language used by Turney in his affidavit demonstrates not only his knowledge of the heating apparatus and its workings, but his ability to read and decipher the plans specified in the contract for said apparatus. In addition, his language is obviously that of an educated individual, regardless of the fact that Turney, apprenticed at age fourteen and married at twenty, could not have had any formal schooling beyond grammar school.

According to Turney's admirers he never forgot his humble beginnings. Turney was affectionately known as Uncle Joe by many Newburgh residents, a quaint term for a former county and state Treasurer, and a one time gubernatorial candidate. Speaking at Turney's funeral, Rev. Arthur Ludlow claimed that although he "rose from the masses...he was never removed from contact with them."³³¹

While serving as State Treasurer Turney purportedly was asked by a niece to present her with a horseshoe he made himself. His agreeing to this task created a publicity opportunity worthy of any modern campaign manager, although Turney's motives are open to interpretation. While Turney was home from Columbus recuperating from an illness, he took up the challenge of his niece and "sauntered down to W. P. Braund's blacksmith shop, accompanied by a few friends."³³² Turney proceeded to borrow the smith's tools and "went to work in earnest," turning out not one, but two shoes and declared himself to be "just as surprised at his own skill" as the witnesses.³³³

³³¹ "Honesty, Purity, and Thoroughness in Everything He Did" *Plain Dealer*, 2 Aug 1892.

³³² "Our State Treasurer, A Village Blacksmith Once More" *South Cleveland Advocate* 26 Feb 1881

³³³ Ibid.

The writer who reported this incident in the *South Cleveland Advocate* remarked with pride that thirty years had not erased Turney's skills and that if necessary he could still use those skills to earn a living.³³⁴ As State Treasurer, Director of the Cleveland and Newburgh Railroad, and president of two local banks, it is doubtful if Turney would ever have the need to support himself in such a manner. The image thus portrayed, however, of an ordinary working man living what would come to be known as the "American Dream" had great political cache.

Turney began his political life in as one of the town trustees of Newburgh, the highest office in the township. He held this position as a young man, presumably while still working as a blacksmith, in 1858 and 1859, and again for the years 1871 and 1872. He was part of the committee that worked for the annexation of Newburgh in 1873, and then he served as councilman for the newly created ward eighteen on the Cleveland City Council. Turney served as County Treasurer from 1866 to 1870 and State Treasurer from 1880 to 1884.³³⁵

While the details of Turney's rise to wealth and political power are recorded in many contemporary sources, it is almost impossible to find data that explains where his wealth came from, and why a fairly obscure young blacksmith became Newburgh's favorite son. While the Democratic *Plain Dealer* frequently spoke out against him as a member of the Republican Party, the only real criticism they seemed to use was the fact that he did not serve in the Union Army. The newspapers did not accuse Turney of personal scandal, or abuse of power, and even the *Plain Dealer* was quick to praise his

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ "Uncle Joe is Dead" *Plain Dealer* 30 Jul 1892

efforts at local fundraisers. He was reported to have a personal charm and warmth that endeared him to a wide variety of people.

Joseph Turney was a perfect mixture of representative Newburgh residents. He was an immigrant with Yankee in-laws; his wife was a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church, although Turney himself only joined the church on his death bed. He grew up on a Western Reserve farm during the canal era, as did his Yankee neighbors. He was one of the wealthiest men in town but expected his children to uphold respectable, middle-class values and habits, and to help out with household chores. In an era that extolled the myth of the self-made man Turney embodied that myth in Newburgh.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In 1881 Cleveland City Council declared that the Eighteenth ward cemetery, also known as Axtell St. Cemetery, was “no longer suitable for the purpose of burial by reason of its location and its surroundings of dirt and smoke . . .”³³⁶ This cemetery had served residents as early as 1813 and despite the council’s resolution stating the “unanimous . . . desire to abandon said old cemetery and procure new and suitable ground,” many families were not happy with the decision.³³⁷ Eighty of these people signed a petition that was sent to the council protesting the move, claiming to be owners “in fee simple of burying ground lots . . . occupied by bodies of deceased relatives and friends.” They vowed to oppose the sale “in all legal form.”³³⁸

The petition was in vain, as might be expected. The council approved the move of the cemetery whose green grass had “withered from the fumes of the blast furnace.”³³⁹ The city purchased farm land on Harvard owned by Isaac Reid, who was later buried in the new cemetery. The bodies and tombstones in the old Axtell Street Cemetery were removed to the new Harvard Cemetery, although many were missed. A 1907 excavation by the Union Rolling Mills, whose smoke and fumes had created the need for the move in the first place, turned up several tombstones and some human bones.³⁴⁰ In all the

³³⁶ page 66, 1 July 1881, Cleveland City Council Proceedings, 1881-1882, Cleveland City Archives, Cleveland, Ohio

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ page 97, 1 Aug 1881, Cleveland City Council Proceedings, 1881-1882

³³⁹ “Mill Men Remove Oldest Cemetery” *Plain Dealer* 13 Feb 1907

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

controversy over the moving of the cemetery no one voiced the observation that perhaps land adjoining a cemetery was not suitable for the erection of a steel mill.

Industrialization created the aspect of Newburgh that is reflected in the “Iron Ward” nickname; the influx of immigrants, the proliferation of small houses on lots set close together, boarding houses, saloons that catered to thirsty working men and the inevitable noise and dirt of the mills. Meanwhile the emergence of the American middle-class was reflected in the activities, businesses and organizations of Newburgh. The type of middle-class lifestyle that the residents of Newburgh Village enjoyed was, however, the lifestyle that would come to exemplify small town values. Those values were informed, consciously, or subconsciously, by the New England heritage shared by early residents.

Some of the original residents prospered by selling land to the emerging industries and the railroads that were built across the town. Others were forced to sell off their land little by little as farming became unprofitable and never accumulated great wealth. Several enterprising men took advantage of the influx of people and became successful small businessmen, others went to work as clerks for these men, or worked in the mills. Few descendants of the New England pioneer families became wealthy but few, if any, fell into poverty. They were truly in the middle of the classes that existed in late nineteenth century Cleveland.

The old-stock New England immigrants passed away and their descendents soon constituted only a small proportion of the population. Yankees in Newburgh became a minority in numbers, but never suffered the discrimination or exclusion that later immigrant groups had to endure. In the greater Cleveland region Yankee descendants still

dominated business, religion and politics. Even in Newburgh it took several decades for the Welsh, Irish and Polish immigrants to become established in business and politics. Usually these groups had to assimilate into the broader culture to achieve any measure of success, and that broader culture had been heavily influenced by those earlier Yankee immigrants.

Today few physical features that defined Yankee Newburgh still exist. The churches are there, but the congregations are long gone, the last members abandoning the neighborhood in the white flight exodus of the 1960s. The original town hall was for years the family home of the first Irish councilman from the ward, William Thompson. It was later used as a funeral home by Thompson's son-in-law. The building burned down in 1977. The 1867 town hall was demolished in 1906 and a Carnegie library built on the spot. The Cataract House and Turney's elegant home on Broadway were labeled "eyesores" and were both torn down in the 1930s. Reeves Opera House met the same fate. The old fire station stands empty, the sidewalk in front of it cracked and broken.

The steel mills themselves were torn down in the 1930's, victims of the Great Depression. The neighborhood is blighted, a victim of white flight, redlining, poverty and neglect. In true Yankee spirit the descendents of those pioneers who came seeking wealth and security moved on for the same reasons. Some proudly recount the myth of their pioneer ancestral past, most don't know much about that past. Few look back at the changes wrought by industry and fewer still count the costs.

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