Mansfield, Ohio In The
Great Depression, 1929 To 1935

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Chapter I

Pre-Depression Mansfield

Before embarking on a discussion of the early years of the depression, to which this treatise is directed, it is well to look first at the Mansfield of pre-depression days. This is desirable for a number of reasons. First, it provides a backdrop, a logical starting point, for a study of the awesome era 1929-1935. Without this an appreciation of these years would be less than complete. Furthermore, it is helpful to see just what the Great Depression confronted when it struck this, and, somewhat similarly, every other American city, in the autumn of 1929. Finally, it is indispensable, since in a concluding chapter something of a judgement as to the severity of the depression in Mansfield will be offered.

What, then, were the outstanding characteristics of this Midwestern city prior to 1929? What were Mansfield's strengths and weaknesses on the eve of the greatest economic holocaust in American history?

A high degree of industrialization was the most striking characteristic of the 6.1 square mile municipality. Heavy and light industries were numerous. Many of them by a long and steady growth had attained unprecedented prosperity by the mid-twenties. The origins of most of the larger establishments dated far back into previous generations. Most important, as the depression would testify, a great diversification of industry meant that many products, from electric
stoves to bricks, were produced or assembled by numerous firms. The city's work force did not have to rely upon or was not concentrated in any one given enterprise or industry. Rather, workers were widely distributed throughout the industrial complex, as a brief survey of the development of city industry will demonstrate.

The establishment of the area's first and largest plant dated back to 1869. This company, Aultman-Taylor, produced farm implements such as threshers, steam engines, and later gasoline driven tractors. Even at this early date, high production dictated that the firm utilize 30 to 40 acres.\footnote{1}

Humphreys Manufacturing Company began construction of porcelain products in the early 1880's and in 1895, Mansfield had its first industrial and home pump factory. The Ohio Brass Corporation, producer of electrical switches and trolley cables, also commenced operations before the turn of the century. It became so successful an enterprise that after a devastating fire in 1895 it was totally rebuilt.\footnote{2}

Another firm that opened its doors in the nineteenth century and enjoyed steady growth, was the Tappan Stove Company. Started in 1889, this establishment became, in later years, the world's largest independent manufacturer of domestic ranges.\footnote{3}

Mansfield's heavy industries were very numerous and enjoyed continued prosperity. Martin Steel Company began operations in 1895 making storage bins and silos for military and industrial use and later, around 1910, added other
products. While the lack of steel during the World War halted production, thereafter the firm reopened and by developing new products and new markets it weathered the 1921 farm depression. 4

Still another steel producing company that had a long history of economic stability was the Empire Steel Corporation. Originally a small sheet and tin shop, it expanded to become by the 1920's a leader in steel processing. 5

Varied electrical appliances were produced at Westinghouse Electric, which came to the city in 1918. It proved to be the most energetic and expansion minded firm in the municipal area. It grew from making just one product - the electric stove - and 125 employees in 1918, to a three building complex and over 1,000 workers by the mid 1920's. 6

Finally, automobile tires were produced by Mansfield Tire and Rubber Company, which had been a small buggy works in 1912. By 1930 it produced hundreds of tires per day, employed approximately 850 workers, and enjoyed a total valuation of products of over five million dollars. 7

Economic prosperity and permanence also characterized the wholesale and retail business community. Many dry goods firms were well over fifty years of age by 1925. Much of their stability was due to the established names in business - Sowash, Isalys, Scattergood and many more. Trusted and sound, many city retail firms had become well-known institutions by 1929.

Behind city industry and commerce stood granite-like
financial institutions, many of which were older than their counterparts in business. One bank traced its origin to 1848, another to 1898. Since their inception, neither of the two had closed for any reason, an accomplishment and record that continued throughout the twenties. In all, by 1930 there existed four sound banks having total assets of over three million dollars, and four saving and loan institutions with over eleven million dollars in deposits.8

Economically, then, Mansfield, Ohio, in 1929 - by virtue of its varied and time-proven industry and its sound financial structures - enjoyed abundant prosperity and seeming security against the uncertainties inherent in capitalism. Manufacturing establishments were numerous - eighty-eight in all - and could boast of producing products valued at 71 million dollars annually.9 By being situated geographically not far from the center of Ohio, moreover, the city constituted a hub for commercial trade. With three major trunk line railroads in its midst, Mansfield served 200,000 people within a thirty mile radius.10

Industry employed and offered prospective employment to thousands who had various trades and skills. Almost 7,500 men and 1,097 women served in Mansfield's factories which provided a payroll of almost fourteen million dollars annually.11 The per capita income in Mansfield was one of the highest in the state. Industry was guaranteed a work force, for the area enjoyed a steady growth in population from 27,824 in 1920 to a 1930 total of 33,500, an increase of 20%.12
The development and progress of Mansfield industry was attainable not only by an ample work force but also through the absence of costly and disruptive capital-labor disputes. It was not that Mansfield labor did not have grievances, which were many, but labor was almost totally unorganized, hence it could not exert effective pressure on city industry. The only semblance of labor's power was found in the Mansfield Trades Council, formed in 1908. Affiliated with the A.F. of L., the Council represented machinists, musicians, carpenters, bricklayers, pipefitters, and ironmolders. It represented, then, men active in various trades but not the bulk of city labor, the unskilled industrial worker. Consequently, from its inception up to 1929, the Trades Council had pressed their demands on minor industries only, and even then ever so cautiously. Strikes had been few and far between; one of the last industrial quarrels of any consequence occurred in 1881. Employers had historically occupied the seat of power.

If the measure of a good social order is tranquility the Mansfield of the 1920's had all the makings of a superb society. Ninety-five percent of the city's total population was white and primarily of the Protestant faith. Of the white population, 78% was native-born. And because most of Mansfield's foreign-born were from the northern and central countries of Europe little antagonism was shown to them by the native-born majority. This does not mean, however, that social injustice did not permeate city life.
Segregation for the 5% Negro population not only was endorsed by the majority of whites but had reached, long before the depression, such grim proportions that this racial minority had been limited to shettos situated in the northern most section of the city. The area was called the "flats" because of the low geographical setting. From their elevated positions, the white majority peered down upon the "colored folks" and in post-bellum fashion scrutinized their behavior. But in a somewhat hypocritical world some visited as patrons the very dens of inequity in which they had piously depreciated.

Organizations harboring intolerance for religious and ethnic groups were also active prior to 1929. They ensured that the white majority would remain supreme in manipulating civic affairs and in the structuring of Mansfield society. The city had a very formidable Ku Klux Klan which would on a given moment or on any provocation don white robes, parade in parks and streets, and thus strike fear in the hearts of "other" Americans. Negroes, however, were not the only minority to take note of their activities; Jewish shopowners, like Sol Holstein, a leading haberdasher, were forced to close in midday on more than one occasion. The city's Catholic minority likewise felt the wrath of Klan propaganda with the circulation of the outrageous falsehood that the Catholic Church had plans for insurrection and the domination of all Protestants.

But, despite the fact that members of the Klan persisted
with these tactics they did not, on the evidence available, practice physical violence nor did the minorities that they tormented take overt actions against their oppressors.

Thus, for the majority of Mansfield's 35,000 citizens the 1920's brought a worthwhile life. Unemployment was virtually unknown. Property taxes were low. The greater number of citizens were homeowners. More people in the area by 1929 owned automobiles, radios, and other luxury goods than they had at any other time in the city's history. And, if the prosperity of the twenties guaranteed Mansfielders a full and rewarding temporal life, the spiritual aspect did not go unattended; Mansfield was also the "city of churches".

Furthermore, even though religious and ethnic prejudices flourished, as was not uncommon at that time in the Midwest, the city's minority groups did acquire membership in many of the fifty-six secret and fraternal organizations. No doubt such affiliation did much to make social inequities bearable.

A nebulous feature of Mansfield life in the 1920's was the general attitude of the public in their thinking about themselves and their city. To read, even glancingly, the newspapers and public utterances of that day is to see an entire city floating, indulging in its achievements, believing in its immeasurability to disaster. Citizens did not hesitate, in early 1930, to crown Mansfield, "America's most Typical City".14

Perhaps Mansfielders had justifiable reasons to indulge in self-praise. Had they not, after all, surmounted the
Panic of 1893 and the 1921 depression? And, most certainly, the massive industry which spotted the landscape was not merely an aspiration but very much a reality, made possible, over the years, by the sweat of its workers and the ingenuity of its entrepreneurs.

Yet, it was this type of attitude or outlook, which was held not only by the citizens of Mansfield but by other Americans as well that created conditions conducive for a depression, and made such a crisis more bitter and less easily tempered when it appeared in force in 1929.

This was Mansfield on the eve of national chaos: highly industrialized, prosperous, proud, and self-reliant, with few if no labor problems and a tranquil social structure.

Six exacting years challenged and destroyed much of 1920 Mansfield. The transformation probably began unnoticed when, in December, 1929, the U.S. Bureau of Labor reported that "...conditions in the city were little different than elsewhere...", a surplus of labor existed and many industries were unsteady.
Notes - Chapter I

1. Mansfield News Journal, July 13, 1958. Hereafter, this newspaper will be designated as, MNJ.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Mansfield News, July 26, 1932. Hereafter, this newspaper will be designated as, MN.

13. Ibid.


15. MN, Dec. 18, 1929.
"Frenzied speculation has had its fling", the Mansfield News asserted in late October, 1929, "The great financial institutions of the country are all right and will remain so".\(^1\) Never in the history of Twentieth Century journalism was one newspaper so totally mistaken. The economy of the United States in that month began a disastrous decline from which it did not definitely recover until approximately ten years later. And, as the nation swirled into fiscal disorder so did the highly industrialized Midwestern city of Mansfield, Ohio.

Of all the depression years, the 1929 to 1932 epoch represented the most challenging to Mansfield's financial and business institutions, its social structure, and the health and prosperity of its 35,000 citizens.

Public reaction to the initial months of depression displayed some interesting patterns. Some sectors of city life refused to accept cold reality, believing that the nation in 1929 instead of plummeting into disaster "...was on the threshold of an upward swing in business prosperity."\(^2\) This early stage of forced optimism was evident in other public and private utterances. Mayor Charles S. Moore told his constituency in early 1930: "We [have] no troubles here, besides Mansfield labor is much better off than workers in other cities."\(^3\) Still others held that a temporary setback
was not without some advantages. Wrote the Mansfield News: "Unemployment is good for the mind and much reading will show to advantage when (men) start to work again." Another editorial looking for reassurances to calm uneasy minds, proclaimed, "Since many people own their own homes, this temporary slump can be ridden out without too much difficulty." And then other circles were apparently oblivious to the catastrophe which had taken place. City churches chose as their topic for the 1930 Inter-Church Debates, "The World Is Getting Better". On the very day of this academic exercise, in which the affirmative won, seventeen families in the municipality had their water turned off due to unpaid bills.

When it became apparent, however, that 1929 meant extended and untold hardships, the public mood shifted from that of manufactured optimism and naivete to one of withdrawal, discouragement, and general apathy. Many Mansfielders began seriously to wonder in 1931 when the depression would lift; others were not at all positive a conclusion was in sight. Optimists and cheery exponents of the economic heritage and tenacity of the American economy fell into general contempt. Mansfielders realized at this time that a recovery from hard times would necessitate more than faith and mere words. Blasted a local newspaper: "The customary manner of rushing at vital problems with star spangled banners waving (produces) nothing but frustration and confusion."

Without any large scale assistance to ease their plight, citizens attempted to disengage themselves from their own and
the city's problems. Motion pictures afforded them the best opportunity. Movie-going suited the public's quest for mental diversion so well in fact that a new $70,000.00 theatre was constructed in 1931 and prospered thereafter. Of the two incorporated businesses that enjoyed net profits during these years the city's movie houses were the leaders, although other amusements also fared well.

Worry-laden citizens also discovered that reading could offer relief from their mental anguish. Newspapers in the city sensed this public interest and poured out great numbers of lengthy serials, often covering two full pages. Most were fiction and told detailed accounts of care-free Caribbean cruises, gay Parisian parties, and fun-packed adventures of young lovers in Rome. All of the soap operas were adequately complicated to take the readers mind off of his immense worries or to inform him that others had problems also.

For a few Mansfielders of means, mental escapism was not enough. In search of tranquility, several citizens moved from the city to live on the islands in the romantic South Seas and a few graduating students went to what they felt was the promised land, the Soviet Union. Each departure generally aroused envious remarks and eulogies about "...those brave enough to do it."7

It was from 1929 to 1932, too, particularly after the shock of 1929 gave way to more rational thinking, that citizens set out to determine the persons or circles guilty of bringing on the hard times. Mansfielders, like others
throughout the country, naturally looked to Wall Street and ultimately concluded that the nation's business and financial leaders were directly responsible for their sad plight. It was the Insulls, Wrigsleys, and Mitchells, declared one source of public opinion, "who had brought that structure of economy down in ruins about (them)." Another widely accepted thesis contended that 1929 was the result of an upper-class conspiracy directed by, "...an aristocracy of wealth camouflaged as a democracy." The status of bankers fell to a new low. Once revered and respected, financiers by 1932 were held to be little more than "...money lenders, "who had become"...virtual dictators of broad municipal and national policies."

The depression also witnessed Mansfield's blind faith in the nation's capitalistic system give ground to serious questioning of it. Many people feared that free enterprise had outlived its usefulness by the end of the 20's, but more cautious and hopeful observers in the city, concluded that "the evils which had crept into that system through the greed and self interest of some of those to whom it had been entrusted", had to be corrected. Laborers, in the main, thought survival of capitalism was possible only if "...a fairer distribution of the fruits of labor" were to hereafter be introduced.

Yet, a minority of citizens, especially aggrieved laborers and a few intellectuals, agreed in 1932 that some brand of socialism was "...destined to play a dominant part
in national politics"¹³ and were willing to work for its implementation. Even as late as 1933 one respectable mirror of public opinion was fearful that if F.D.R. failed to correct the nation's course then America "...would surely face fascism or communism."¹⁴

More people became interested in economic theory and practice in these years than ever before. Newspapers ran article after article on British socialism and Russian communism, always quick to point out the pros and cons of each system with a comparison with that prevailing in the United States.

Even so, the dominant mood of Mansfield in the first three years of depression was anything but radical. While many were concerned with economics and politics, very few took an active interest in bringing about change or participating in political affairs. Nowhere was this more evident than in the 1930 municipal elections. Issues were inconsequential and few in number and voters went to the polls only in about "half strength" in comparison with previous elections.

Even in the 1932 city, state, and national elections there was no public mandate for sweeping alterations in the direction of local and national politics. Despite the efforts of the Communist Party's vice presidential candidate to whip up interest in the city, and the noisy campaign zeal of the Mansfield Labor Party, Mansfielders dealt socialism a sound set back in 1932. Jack Beery seeking the Mayoralty
on the Labor Party ticket received just over 200 votes, and his running mates received even less. Nor did the city favor national socialism. In the same election, Norman Thomas, seeking the Presidency of the United States, received but 291 votes, Verne L. Reynolds, running for Governor of Ohio, just 37, and William Z. Foster, Communist candidate for President, only 96. Mansfield’s abhorrence of socialism remained constant throughout the Great Depression.

Further, even though the city, in 1932, favored Franklin Roosevelt for President it was more of a reaction to Hoover than a new-found faith in the Governor of New York and his vague ideals. Mansfielders, as a whole, actually felt that F.D.R. could not do anything more than did Hoover to wipe away the hardships common at the time, so entrenched was despondency in the minds of citizens.

This aura of hopelessness was founded on the cruel realities of 1929-1932. Regardless of status or social rank, nearly every citizen, in some degree, experienced privation or loss. Officials and stock holders of major and minor industries were particularly hard pressed. The problems of the Empire Steel Corporation were typical of those facing most enterprises in the Mansfield area. Production at Empire, throughout this period, was always at an "...extremely low level". In some months net losses reached nearly $20,000.00 and from May, 1931 to November 1932, alone, the company suffered a loss approaching $400,000.00. Closure always seemed likely in view of the fact that sister plants
in Cleveland and Ashtabula were already completely shut down. Other industrial mainstays such as Westinghouse and Ohio Brass also experienced financial difficulties and not inappreciable losses. Smaller factories like the New Method Stove Company found the depression too taxing and went to the public auction block. As a whole, the production of Mansfield industries suffered more in these three years than ever before. The total valuation of products in 1931 for eleven major plants was barely over ten million dollars which represented a new low for a five-year period.19

Building and contracting corporations experienced tremendous problems in the first three years of crisis. The total valuation of building in 1930 dropped almost $300,000.00 from the previous year and dipped even lower in successive years.20 Those dependent on home and industrial construction for their livelihoods, such as, architects, masons, electricians, and carpenters, frequently did not work at all at their trades for over four years. Lack of building also had adverse effects on firms producing brick, tile, lumber, and other materials used in home construction.

By the time 1933 arrived many retail stores in downtown Mansfield had closed or were under new management. Jewelry and other shops dealing in luxury goods had a high rate of failure. Other proprietors, who survived the threat of closure, sold neckties for a nickel, and otherwise cut prices drastically, reduced inventories, and released employees in an effort to economize. The public nearly stopped
buying entirely, even during holiday months. Business traffic grew so light in 1932 that many establishments were open only a few days per week or would close and reopen solely for special sales.

The very financial and business foundation of Mansfield was imperiled during these years. In November, 1931 "rumors and madness" resulted in a run on all four city banks forcing the closure of one and the hasty reorganization of three others. At one period in that month, one firm limited withdrawals to 10 per cent of deposits with a monetary limit of $50.00. Another bank allotted excited depositors just $25.00 of their savings. Only after a leading firm wisely brought a half-million dollars from Cleveland, Ohio, were the banks able to calm the public's fears and thus halt Mansfield's gravest banking crisis.

A series of natural disasters in these times compounded Mansfield's economic woes bringing further unemployment and financial loss to the city. As if an omen, on the eve of the stock market crash, the Memorial Building was reduced to charred rubble by fire. In June of 1931, the Taylor-Dise Manufacturing, an employer of several hundred, was the victim of a $75,000.00 blaze. And, just five months later, a gas explosion did $100,000.00 damage to Martin Steel Corporation putting 300 men out of work. Accidents of this nature were just one source of the workers' problems.

Layoffs, dismissals, and plant closures mounted steadily from 1929 on, so by 1931 labor in Mansfield found itself in
an unprecedented state of affairs. More people (4347) were unemployed in 1931, than were officially working at the area's eleven primary industries (4,028). Underemployment was more common than unemployment. Citizens in all fields of endeavors suffered wage and salary reductions. City teachers, for example, went for several months without pay in early 1932. Steel workers at Empire Steel worked but two or three days per month. Many fathers in late 1932 found they "...could not depend on industry as an adequate source of income." The opportunities for work were "scarcer than a hen's tooth." Each morning long lines of men stood before employment agencies and factory gates. Competition among men for jobs was ferocious. At Westinghouse some unemployed fathers of many children "...fell to their knees begging for a job." Others applying for jobs there would sit all day on the Wayne Street curb hoping to be called in for a few hours work.

Possibilities for employment for city men were further limited by the influx into Mansfield of the unemployed from other states. Thinking the city had work for all, hundreds came from Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana, and Tennessee to compete, sometimes successfully, with Mansfielders for the few jobs available. The problem became so great the Mansfield Trades Council conducted a campaign urging industry to hire Mansfield men first.

Migration to the city coupled with the continuing rise
of unemployment resulted in a marked increase in crime and lawlessness between the years from 1929 to 1932. At times it seemed as if Mansfield's social structure was hanging by a thread. More than a few idle, hungry men turned to thievery to support themselves and their families. Organized bands of chicken rustlers roamed the countryside often exchanging gunfire with farmers and the sheriff's deputies. In sub-zero winter months mothers were known to snatch coal from neighbors.

More back alley sluggings and daylight robberies transpired in these years than in the so called "roaring twenties". The same was true of unexplained shootings and country lane murders. Swindlers and bogus salesmen became so commonplace that city hall with the aid of a local newspaper instituted a "don't-buy-anything-from-a-stranger" campaign. Beggars became a problem, too. Some forced their way into homes and after being fed by the startled owners frequently burglarized the homes.

Crime and disorder reached its zenith in 1932, earning for the city in that year the dubious title, "Little Chicago". In just one week in March, sixteen burglaries occurred and a prominent citizen was slug ged in midday for his pocket money. Crime also took on an organized character and grew in complexity and seriousness. Extortionists became very active and plagued the area's more affluent citizens. Unable to extort thousands of dollars from an industrialist, one ring set fire to his estate causing damage estimated at
Later, the same industrialist was victimized for an undisclosed sum of money, believed to be over $10,000.00. Another underworld society attempted for a time to "shake down" a certain minority group, threatening them with bodily harm. Shoplifters also became organized, and the number of their offenses skyrocketed during these years.

City fathers, while in effect powerless to correct the situation, attempted to wage a "war against crime". However, the entire episode proved to be an exercise in self-incrimination, for once underway many startling facts were brought to light which embarrassed city hall and many prominent citizens. A newspaper disclosed, among other things, that many prominent citizens close to city politics were involved in bootlegging operations and other illegal ventures. It was also revealed that a house of ill-fame stood squarely behind the Mansfield Humane Society.

The most pressing problem for the municipal government was not crime, however, but the tremendous demands for relief. How to care for great numbers of families made prostrate by the depression "...was predominant in the minds of city fathers", particularly in the 1931-32 winter.

Some embittered citizens thought city hall flouted its responsibility to do everything it could to assist its constituency. Evidence suggests, however, that the reverse was true. Mayor Lantz and city council were faced, during these demanding years, with the unhappy paradox of dwindling revenues at a time when much more was needed for relief purposes.
Over a four-year period (1929 to 1933) general fund receipts from direct taxes decreased more than $86,000.00. Delinquency in tax payments was over $221,000.00 in 1932 alone. Thus, forced to operate on less revenue, in some years as much as $76,000.00, city hall could not begin to handle all of the demands for welfare placed before it.

Nevertheless, throughout hard times and under adverse circumstances, the city fathers made every attempt to ensure adequate relief. They cut their salaries and those of city employees ten per cent, continuously transferred funds from other departments to that of welfare, released several non-essential employees and diverted the savings in salaries to relief coffers, transferred in 1932 $35,000.00 from gas tax shares, borrowed on the city's share of utility taxes, and even contemplated shutting off city lights - all in an attempt to secure more funds for the relief of Mansfield citizens. Furthermore, city hall was quick to react to need even if unable to cope with the problem. Just a few months after the economic crisis had set in, city council instituted a "Find-A-Job" movement in the hope of finding work for worthy men in the industrial community. City fathers also devised a limited program of outdoor work relief but, like their previous endeavor, scant funds permitted very few unemployed men to participate.

By the close of 1932 Mansfield's municipal government was faced with the impossible task of supplying food, fuel, and funds for doctor and hospital care to over 2,500 relief
cases. Food costs, alone, for indigent families cost the city government over $1,000.00 per week. In some winter months total welfare expenses ran over $10,000.00. In addition, the city fathers, for over three years, housed and fed 5,000 drifters in city jails.

While financially able to aid only a small percentage of those in need, when the city relief office did offer supplies such help was adequate in quality and quantity. A family on public assistance received goods and services ranging in value from $2.50 to $5.00 per week depending on the number of siblings. In addition, relief recipients were eligible for flour and other basic food stuffs made available by Federal surplus.

The inability of Mansfield to care for every hungry family was not due to lack of sincerity or zeal on the part of municipal officials. Drastic loss of revenue and the phenomenal need in the area simply made help for all an impossible task for city hall. No doubt more would have been assisted if the state of Ohio had provided the city funds and services. Many scholars of this era in Ohio history contended that the State was grossly negligent in meeting the demands of Ohioans, pointing to the fact that the Governor and legislature were slow to formulate a bill to aid political sub-divisions. There is much truth in this thesis; between 1929 to 1932 the city of Mansfield, Ohio received just $104.97 from the state.
Notes - Chapter II

1. MN, Oct. 21, 1929.
2. MN, Nov. 21, 1929.
5. MN, Nov. 6, 1930.
6. MN, Feb. 18, 1932.
7. MN, June 12, 1932.
12. Ibid.
14. MN, July 8, 1932.
15. MN, Jan. 8, 1931.
16. MNJ, Jan. 15, 1933.
17. MN, Nov. 23, 1932.
18. MNJ, July 10, 1933.
19. Ibid.
21. MN, Nov. 5, 1931.
22. MN, July 10, 1933.
26. MNJ, June 10, 1933.
27. MN, Aug. 10, 1932.
28. MNJ, Nov. 28, 1932.
29. MN, March 27, 1932.
30. MN, May 29, 1932.
31. MN, June 11, 1932.
33. MN, Nov. 2, 1932.
34. MNJ, Jan. 3, 1933.
35. MNJ, Dec. 28, 1932.
36. MN, Nov. 30, 1932.
37. MN, Nov. 21, 1930.
39. MNJ, May 1, 1933.
40. MN, Dec. 31, 1930.
Chapter III
The Organizational Response

Organized charity during the years from 1929 to 1933 was, like its counterparts in municipal relief offices, able to alleviate only a small fraction of the total human want which was brought to the fore by economic conditions. For all philanthropic bodies in Mansfield these years were the most disconcerting of their existence. Never in such a brief period were they so needed and hard-pressed for their services and, at the same time, able to give so little.

Philanthropy's inability to satisfy hunger and want in the early 1930's was not founded on the lack of agencies or indifference. The city of Mansfield enjoyed an abundance of charitable bodies, many of long standing and past achievements. There existed the Friendly House, the Boy Scouts, the Visiting Nurses, the Y.M. and Y.W.C.A., the Community Memorial, the Milk Fund, the Salvation Army, the Humane Society, the Red Cross, and the Volunteers of America. All of these participating agencies were centralized under the Community Fund, which served as a clearing house for all philanthropic activities in Mansfield.¹

The majority of these philanthropic bodies entered the 1930 era with many past achievements. In previous years of distress they had proven themselves worthy of high public praise and could with all justification claim that Mansfield
"...could care for its own"₂, no matter what the nature of catastrophe or the degree of assistance required. Having performed admirably during the 1921 recession and on other occasions of crisis it seemed there was nothing they could not accomplish and even in the early days of crisis they felt "...complacent in (their) responsibility in the national effort to mobilize local relief."³

Back of philanthropy's previous success were the people of Mansfield who consistently, year after year, contributed unselfishly to its coffers. The citizenry had tremendous faith and confidence in charity's good offices and in past years had never failed to rally financially and otherwise to its pleas.

Mansfield charity thus had an enviable record and an admirable heritage when the gloom of 1929 was cast upon the city. It was during the years 1929 to 1935, however, that city charity suffered a crushing blow to its prestige and effectiveness. These years proved unhappily that Mansfield could not care for its own, that something more was needed in the form of Federal assistance and its immense expenditures of time and resources.

Organized philanthropy operated as best it could under the limitations of its offices and the severity of the times. Being entirely dependent on public donations they were forced to cut back on expenditures and at times offer no services at all, since, as the depression wore on, most citizens found it impossible to give it any sizeable amount. Only
one charitable body, the Humane Society, was guaranteed yearly funds. One-half of its moneys came from tax dollars supplied by city hall but even then it was subject to taxpayers' economic conditions which, as hard times marched on, grew more precarious.

Philanthropy's loss of revenue was not immediate, however, due primarily to the great faith Mansfielders had in it. In 1929, citizens provided the Community Fund with over $81,000. and in 1930 bested that mark with nearly $84,000. which represented 97.8% of the Fund's original goal. By 1932, however, economic conditions permitted the public-spirited to offer only $46,673., and thereafter donations dipped even further. In more tranquil times this sum would have no doubt been sufficient to care financially for the area's needy, but not in the 1930's.

Relief demands in late 1931 on organized charity were up nine-fold over that of 1929. Coupled with loss of revenue, charity could not begin to appease even a minute proportion of human distress.

Added to its monetary woes, philanthropy in the depression's early years was not set up to handle the type of demands which arose during these years. There was only one qualified social worker for all agencies, and furthermore, this sociologist also served the city welfare department and the probate court. A limited staff, however, was just part of the problem. Charity, by design, was simply not equipped to serve hundreds of people for extended periods of time.
Their purpose was to aid temporarily those humbled by natural disasters, such as fire, flood and pestilence. Work relief and similar ambitious undertakings were foreign to charity's format. Before the depression the Community Fund, for example, paid only funeral expenses, utility bills, and hospital care for those temporarily financially despondent but never for a single case over a great length of time. Thus, charity functioned not as a remedy of widespread suffering but as "...a palliative" for a few selected cases.

In addition to the monetary and organizational dilemma, another problem confronted charity during these trying years. The depression produced not only widespread suffering but also a new type of citizen, one who by being hard put psychologically was bitter, impatient, and seemingly irrational. This being so, most Mansfielders who had fallen on hard times turned to charity with a misconception of its real role in city life and the adverse circumstances under which it labored. Thus, charity's purpose and format were in direct contradiction with the mood of the public and as a result a once amiable relationship between philanthropy and those whom they had served for years became strained to the breaking point.

Foremost of those who misread charity's position was the Unemployed Council. Members of this organization conceived that the whole of mankind rested squarely on their shoulders and thus, often disregarding the law, took up the improvement of welfare like a holy mission. While their
illustrious activities to this end, which reached a crescendo in 1934, deserves more space than is presently possible, let it suffice to say that the Unemployed Council was by far the most controversial of any ad hoc organization ever in the history of the city; in some, it aroused sheer indignation, to others of that day it appeared to be made up of folk heroes straight from King Arthur's Court.

While its members were extremely active in relief affairs, political ideology provided the bulk of their motivation. Most members were stout, determined, not intemperate individuals who by being essentially unskilled laborers were jobless for extended periods of time. In the course of their depression hardships most had become imbued with various aspects of Marxist philosophy. Standing in their ranks were liberal democrats, reform-minded socialists and still further to the left, militant communists who looked to Russia for guidance and inspiration.

Some of the Council's views and demands on organized welfare were not unpopular among Mansfield's citizenry. A city newspaper shared the popular apprehension about the possibility of politics in relief and ran many editorials in hopes of deterring its development. Several Parent-Teacher Associations shook conservative tendencies to insist upon large scale federal participation in the operation of the city and county schools. Even a respected city attorney came to agree with the Council that court evictions were "...inhumane and unnecessary." Still others were convinced,
as was the Council, that charity and the city should establish soup kitchens while dispensing with other activities, and they petitioned local officials for such implementation.\textsuperscript{10}

Yet, while the Unemployed Council influenced public thinking about relief, because it favored a mixture of welfare with politics and at times advocated harsh measures to secure their local objectives, it enlisted the active support of only a few citizens.

Mansfielders, in the main, did not condone violence, nor did they want in their midst organizations harboring "faulty doctrines"\textsuperscript{11} and whose "...flag was red medicated flannel."\textsuperscript{12}

Violence, however, emanating from inadequate relief, ever present in other depression-laden, industrial communities, never erupted in Mansfield. Even though conditions were highly conducive to food riots or destructive mass protests, like those in Lorain, Ohio, none occurred. As a vehicle to gain their objectives, the Unemployed Council did, however, on occasion, use the threat of force but never to the extent to warrant police or military deterrence.

For the most part, the Council's purpose throughout the depression's formative years was to "defend" those citizens who had been denied assistance by private and public relief. Often, in the hope of securing redress, individuals drew to the attention of Council what they believed to be countless injustices perpetrated against them by organized philanthropy. The Council, spearheaded by
activists like Joseph Sublich and Otto Dettrich, generally responded to public pleas by charging that welfare body in question, and once there would put forth a determined image, postition rugged appearing comrades before timid relief officials, and press their case either to the point of exhaustion or to successful conclusion. At other times, when finding a relief body adamant to concessions and their maneuvers ineffectual, members visited on moonless evenings, the homes of welfare administrtors to promise uzy consequences should their demands not be heeded.

While devoid of substance, the Council's threats had an appreciable bearing on the thinking of and the decisions made by organized charity. Most agencies yielded at one time or another to the Council's wishes either through sheer fright or because of the relentless pressures the Council could and, in many instances, did apply. Subsequently, the Council scored innumerable victories for those whose cause they championed. Tens of families garnered philanthropic services who would not have otherwise received them. And, frequently through hair-raising episodes which often involved the shuffling of furniture between sheriff's deputies and the Council, court-sanctioned evictions were frustrated. Despite its small and fluctuating membership, which varied from approximately thirty to fifty participants, the Unemployed Council was, throughout the course of the hard times, an important, extralegal factor in the affairs of Mansfield charity.
While it was the most formidable opponent and the overt nemesis of organized charity, the Unemployed Council was not the only voice of discontent in Mansfield. Other citizens, while not so radical as the Council, also charged philanthropy with a whole host of misdemeanors, most of which were without basis in fact.

Many of the downtrodden in the area maintained that application procedures to receive relief were too harsh and restrictive. Exponents of this allegation pointed to the fact that most assistance was dependent on extensive, time-consuming investigations. Moreover, they were quick to criticize charity's policy of only aiding those who had exhausted their savings and other personal resources beforehand. They held that it made little sense to voluntarily part with their material possessions, especially at a time when they were cherished more than ever, simply for the sake of gaining meager assistance from organized philanthropy. In essence, this popular argument, which was employed by many, was founded on the conviction that welfare should dispense with detail and simply distribute goods and services as rapidly as possible to anyone who asked for them.

Further, those in need of clothing for themselves and their families took issue with the Humane Society's policy of selling used clothing. Believing that essential apparel should be given free of charge, particularly since it was donated in the first place by well-meaning citizens,
many charged the Society with capitalizing on personal disaster and flagrant insensitivity to human want.

Women were especially unhappy about the quality and quantity of goods made available to them by charity as well as the manner in which most of them were actually distributed. A typical response was that of one mother of five children who claimed that most of the foods given by philanthropy was so unsatisfactory it deserved to be "...thrown into a ditch." More, however, were perturbed by the voucher system which was utilized by most agencies. Maintaining that it afforded groceries the opportunity to give to them defective and unsaleable wares, most relief recipients were in agreement that the practice should be scrapped in favor of cash relief.

Many issues relating to relief that were prevalent before the depression became heightened between 1929 and 1933. Minorities, for example, felt that discrimination was rampant in the minds and actions of welfare officials. Negroes believed that they received goods of second quality while whites got the new commodities. They also contended, too, that when one widely needed product was in low supply that they were again unfavorably treated by being denied that commodity. Alleged racism in welfare became such an issue, particularly in local government relief, that the Mayor made repeated appeals to the Negro community to assure them of his sincerity and repudiate charges of deference to white applicants.
Those active in municipal politics also held that one's party affiliation was a determinant in the gaining of aid. Most of those who embraced socialism were of this opinion. Thus, one Austro-Hungarian who had taken up Communism with a passion and who had been out of work for over two years, said he got a pair of shoes only after physically obstructing the entrance to the relief station which had consistently denied him. 16

Those who made these and similar charges failed to take note, however, that charitable bodies were not monolithic structures with an unlimited source of revenue. This fact, alone, explained most of welfare's alleged irregularities. It made necessary that most organizations limit the number of those receiving benefits from them. Their guidelines and requirements were thus not meant to be discriminatory or obnoxious to the applicant but a means of giving priority to the most worthy individuals. Moreover, since funds were few, close investigations were vital so as to prevent or discourage professional relievers, who were ever present, from taking advantage of the spirit of charity.

Financial limitations also accounted for the quality of goods dispersed by philanthropy. If the agencies had purchased foods with reference to quality rather than quantity many persons would not have been served at all. For monetary reasons, the Humane Society was forced to place a minimal fee on used clothing. Without this
income, as meager as it was, it would have not long been in operation in view of the fact that it was allocated considerably fewer funds than most other charities and was expected to be self-supporting.

It was these circumstances - privation and want of unprecedented and unsatisfiable proportions, a public whose anxiety blurred its understanding of charity's financial and organizational limitations, and the continual harassment by one organization bent on rapid social change - under which organized philanthropy struggled during the years from 1929 to 1933.

Yet, in retrospect, charity in Mansfield accomplished a great deal. Many agencies throughout these years displayed considerable vigor and proved effective in providing limited needs.

Boy Scout troops in the municipality took their oath to heart and conducted campaigns to raise clothing and personal supplies for the indigent. In the winter months of 1931 and 1932 (the most severe of the entire depression) they collected over eight tons of used bedding and clothing. Working with the Scouts, the Y.W.C.A. and the Red Cross made most of this wearable and often delivered it to families who were unable to visit their relief offices.

The Red Cross of Mansfield also in most months, with the help of as many as 2,000 volunteers transformed federal yarn into clothing for relief purposes. In November, 1932, alone, this public-spirited organization worked over ten
thousand man hours making articles totalling 8,000 in number.18

The Y.W.C.A. also provided a free employment service to unemployed mothers and also trained them for prospective jobs. Frequently, moreover, it hired many women to sew and mend donated clothing used in annual Christmas programs.19

The Volunteers of America was especially active and effective in the housing of transients and those citizens made homeless by eviction. In winter months in particular the Volunteers housed hundreds of men and fed as many as 400 wanderers per day.20 Milk was also given daily to "...long lines of men, women, and children" through its good offices.21

The Community Fund, too, frequently took time from countless administrative problems to take an active role in combating distress and unhappiness. In the very first depression year it brightened the Christmas of 1700 youngsters by giving them gifts.22 This practice continued for many years. Later, the Fund included canned foods in its Yuletide offerings. And, even on the eve of its collapse when its officials were exhausted indeed, the Fund scraped together an additional $12,500.00 to help the downtrodden through some otherwise joyless days.23

By 1933, the private relief effort, after handling almost all of the city's relief burden for three years, was exhausted. In this year the Community Fund withdrew from direct relief entirely, leaving this function to better
equipped and more financially secure state and federal relief offices. And, other agencies dependent on public donations also disengaged themselves from direct relief.

The first few years of the depression proved two things: philanthropy like the municipal relief effort was unable to solve the welfare problem which was the most menacing both had ever faced; and, the problem could be tempered only by large scale federal activity.
Notes - Chapter III

1. MNJ, Dec. 1, 1933.
2. MN, Nov. 27, 1932.
3. Ibid.
5. MN, March 27, 1931.
7. MN, Oct. 17, 1933.
8. MNJ, Sept. 19, 1933.
10. MNJ, Feb. 25, 1933.
11. MN, Dec. 8, 1934.
12. MN, Nov. 19, 1930.
17. MN, Oct. 16, 1932.
18. MN, Nov. 4, 1932.
20. MNJ, Dec. 1, 1933.
23. MN, Nov. 27, 1932.
Chapter IV
The Civic Response

In the preceding chapter one may have gained the impression that in the early 1930's Mansfield deserts its impoverished masses, left them to scuttle for themselves, and ignored completely their plight. But, the ineffective philanthropic societies, previously discussed, did not have a monopoly on relief activities. Other organizations, many of which sprang up as a response to depression conditions and others of long standing but not previously concerned with welfare, also attempted to ease the suffering wrought by chronic unemployment. It is the civic attempt to temper hard times that will concern us presently.

In the early years of the economic crisis there was almost no public agreement on the means either to temper the hardships wrought by joblessness nor to prevent further accentuation of the depression. Lack of unanimity particularly among the more affluent and influential Mansfielders was natural since the depression in 1930 had not yet displayed fully its awesome character and, in the main, had defied critical analysis. Numerous citizens knew widespread privation existed but little more; they did not know, for example, that the current depression would be as lasting and ferocious as time was to reveal. For those who had experienced the 1921 recession, the aftermath of 1929 was viewed as but a recent performance. The period of economic
hesitation would surely, in a short time, give way to financial resurgency, just as it always had. Others failed to be moved because they maintained that the doldrums were the price to be paid for free enterprise and that the economic cycle was a natural feature of American life, and must be taken in stride. Since, in fact, the majority of Mansfielders believed recovery was just "around the corner", a sincere and concerted public effort to aid the distressed was slow to emerge.

This faith in the economic heritage of Mansfield and the nation continued well into the second year of hardships even though it was widely known that over four thousand were without means of self-support. Only when it became evident that recovery was not "around the corner" did some sectors of the public respond to the depression situation. However, many pre-New Deal schemes were motivated entirely by self-interest and had little intrinsic value either to the area's needy families or to the cause of economic rehabilitation. The Mansfield business community, in particular, advanced numerous proposals designed to further their immediate needs but was careful to phrase them in humanitarian and theoretical terms in hopes of acceptance by the general populace.

One proposal, popularized by the Mansfield News, claimed it could do great things to erase staggering joblessness. Hundreds of Mansfielders would work again if, the News contended, the city's 35,000 citizens would make
every effort to purchase only locally made products.\(^2\)

There is good reason to believe, however, that the News created the "Buy Here Plan" not out of concern for mankind but out of sheer desperation to salvage its own operations. As in past years the newspaper now faced a whole host of financial difficulties which put in question its very existence. Most menacing was the insufficiency and the continuous decline of paid advertising which they so heavily depended upon, as did other public media of that day. It followed, therefore, that the News needed to usher the general public into a buying mood if advertising was to pick up and if it was to continue to put ink on paper.

Irrespective of their motives, the underlying principle of the plan was partially valid. Economic recovery was, in part, dependent on more money being put into circulation, as President Hoover contended. But, aside from this, considerable ambiguities permeated the scheme from top to bottom.

Chief of the inconsistencies was the unhappy truism that the greater majority of citizens were not hoarding their money as the News implied; they simply did not have any considerable funds to hold back and what money they could put into the business arena would not have been of sufficient amount to speed recovery.

Yet, given the proposition that Mansfield's citizenry was sufficiently affluent at the time and had sizeable amounts of funds stuffed away in their tick mattresses, of
what benefit was it to buy Mansfield made products? Clearly, the plan might have had limited possibilities if the depression had raged in 1830 when products were largely consumed by individuals within a twenty-five mile radius. But in 1936 redemption of Mansfield's economic life depended on an upsurge of spending not only in neighboring states but also throughout the entire world. It is difficult to believe that the Newe was realistic when it assumed that citizens 35,000 strong could absorb the greater proportion of the automobile tires produced by Mansfield Tire, the electrical appliances turned out by Westinghouse, and the hundreds of gas ranges made per day by Tappan Stove. Furthermore, a greater percentage of city laborers were employed at concerns which did not produce consumer goods but rather materials for other industries. Empire Steel which employed, in peak prosperity, approximately 1,500 workers and Ohio Brass with about the same amount were industries of this nature.

For these reasons, the "Buy Here Plan" concocted by the Newe was doomed to failure as was its sponsor. It was a matter of expediency in 1932 for the News to sell to Horvitz Enterprises with the result that the organ became the Mansfield News Journal.³

A few Mansfield retail concerns sought to reverse waning sales by plans promising work and monetary rewards for unemployed men. One furniture merchant thought his idea was a "revolutionary" scheme to speed re-employment. All
one had to do was to bring a friend to his establishment and have him purchase a designated furniture grouping; from the proceeds of the sale the "hustler" would be awarded a handsome commission. These kinds of plans, however, had unwholesome consequences for, to be successful, they frequently necessitated the execution of highly unethical, if not immoral, practices. Many times, unemployed hustlers in order to make a sale would get their prospective clients intoxicated or prey on and cajole gullible juveniles into signing unfair and lengthy commitments which relatives would be bound to honor. Even if the buyer was not coerced or duped into the transaction he was most often assessed exorbitant interest rates since credit was generally the norm. Fortunately, such promotions were not as widespread in Mansfield as they were in other, larger American cities.

Still others in Mansfield believed a rejuvenation of the city's economic front could come about only by the introduction of new industry to the area. The Mansfield Chamber of Commerce fancied this course of action.

This plan, however, was based on faulty thinking. The Chamber of Commerce apparently but incorrectly believed that something was inherently wrong with local industry and that the depression had by-passed all other American cities and their industries and had come to plague only Mansfield's industrial complex. Perhaps it was a case of nostalgia which promoted the Chamber to embrace this viewpoint since in pre-depression days they had been moderately successful
in luring outside firms to the area. Whatever their reasons, after considerable expense and extensive exploration, the Chamber managed to entice one out-of-state concern to locate in Mansfield, but it was hardly a lasting asset to the area nor one to provide additional employment. It was not, as a local newspaper insisted, a prelude to good times. Not only did one industrial enterprise depart from the city on the very day the Chamber's prize moved in but the latter suffered economic difficulties and closed up in a few short months. The Chamber of Commerce had simply led a sick horse to the city and then watched it die.

Grocers and butchers in the city attempted to reverse slumping profits by the creation of the Square Deal Association. Under this scheme, the unemployed father was to imagine that he could feed himself and his family without paying to grocers cash on the barrel head. However, the trust afforded to citizens was only for one week in duration; the tab had to be settled every payday, a luxury many did not have in 1931.

These plans, while highly representative, were but a few of the many which were designed and promoted by various sectors of the Mansfield business community. Often phrased in righteous and humane terminology, they reflected each sponsor's view of the depression and the effect it had, not only on the general populace, but also on themselves. Yet, because of economic stagnation in the area and the many inconsistencies in the efforts undertaken, these contrivances
failed to gain the public's confidence. And, it is evident that they certainly did little to further the cause of personal and municipal recovery.

There was, however, during the depression's most harrowing years, more than one individual or organization in the area that laid aside selfish interests and attempted to do something constructive about the hardships common at that time. City schools were particularly active. Many high school principals like Jesse Beer throughout the depression years clothed and fed hundreds of needy youngsters, often out of their own pockets. In the first seven days of September, 1932, alone, public schools outfitted 325 deprived children with shoes, jackets, trousers, and other apparel. Local teachers, themselves long without pay and at reduced salaries, in the previous year voluntarily supplied lunches for over 1,500 pupils.

Even the school truant officer reversed his standing with wayward students by supplying 291 of them with necessary school supplies. His humane efforts did much to keep youngsters in school since many were tempted to quit entirely because of feelings of inferiority. In all, over a five year period, from 1929 to 1934, the Mansfield City School System spent nearly $130,000.00 maintaining the physical and mental health of school-age children.

Of all Mansfield institutions none was more zealous in meeting the public's needs than was the Mansfield News Journal. In conjunction with the American Legion, the
Journal devised an "Adopt A Family" program whereby needy families received yearly Christmas dinners and gifts. Food for the campaign was secured by solicitation and with the assistance of Mansfield movie houses which, during the month of December, accepted canned foods as the price of admission to specified showings. Theaters also held "kiddie shows" and Christmas parties for city youngsters who would, in turn, contribute pennies and nickels to the Christmas fund. Boy Scout troops each year collected used clothing and toys and with the help of city police and firemen made them ready for delivery on Christmas eve. Actual distribution of food and toys was carried out by the American Legion. It was common in the early depression years for over 100 Legionnaires using forty trucks, donated by the city, to deliver Christmas dinners to over 1,500 families.

In 1932 alone, a year marked by extensive need, Legionnaires distributed over forty tons of food to approximately two thousand homes. The American Legion was so zealous in its endeavor that neither muddy roads nor incorrect addresses kept them from visiting every family apparently suffering from gross privation. "A lot of work for a great many people", the Journal—Legion holiday programs, with the spirited co-operation of Mansfield's citizenry consistently raised more provisions than did larger, Ohio cities such as Toledo, Ohio.

Christmas was not the only time when citizens showed concern for their fellowman. During summer months the
Journal and the Legion also originated relief gardens whereby families raised their own basic foodstuffs. With this financial and organizational assistance, from 1929 to 1935 approximately six thousand citizens planted garden plots for "life itself."16

The Mansfield chapter of the American Red Cross likewise contributed to the well being of city families. Even though faced with a "...heavier relief schedule than ever before...", the chapter with federal surplus and the help of hundreds of volunteers distributed in five months of 1932 almost 14,000 pounds of flour and 9,000 garments to eighteen township relief offices.17

In some instances even business concerns abandoned self-interest and joined the crusade against hunger and want. Barbers in the area cut children's hair free of charge and adults for half price. A few retail proprietors also contributed to the Christmas program and donated unsaleable wares to organized charity. For several years a leading dairy company gave, without cost, thousands of gallons of milk to the Salvation Army which, in turn, provided it to undernourished children.

These efforts and programs, however, were seasonal endeavors or instantaneous responses to a particular need. Their sponsors did not propose that their implementation would hasten economic recovery. Even when civic philanthropy was at high tide relief offices in late 1932 remained "...crowded with applicants for food and fuel", and the
welfare problem grew "...week by week." Nevertheless, the city's citizens brightened the Mansfield scene in the dull-est of months and brought brief happiness during important holidays.

Central to the thinking of many more citizens was a conviction that gifts and "...doles could not be trusted", and that something else, if recovery was to be not only lasting but also virtuous, should, "...take its place." To give substance to this ideal, numerous, spirited and influential citizens sought ways to take unemployed men from the dole and put them to work for honest pay. With few exceptions the attempts to implement outdoor work relief were, on the whole, the most ambitious, and frustrating, of any public effort in the pre-New Deal period.

One of the first moves to this objective was taken by an ad hoc, independent organization appropriately called the Poverty Board, formed by the powerful but humane industrialist Paul R. Tappan. At first, Tappan and his organization displayed sound reasoning. Before work projects could move from the drawing board, they held that adequate funds be first acquired. To this end, the Board conducted a city wide campaign to raise $30,000.00 to finance, for a period of thirty days, employment for approximately 1,000 jobless fathers.

Unfortunately, several pitfalls in the Board's execution of the program proved to be the ruin of an otherwise admirable attempt. Firstly, the Tappan group neglected to
take steps to ascertain unemployment statistics; since they imagined that only 1,000 were jobless in the immediate vicinity their program was geared to accommodate that sum. But, in fact, nearly 4,100 were of this classification. Thus, it would have been imperative that the Board improvise a criteria and gather an adequate staff to handle great numbers of people, if for no other reason than to maintain orderly procedure. The Board neglected to equip itself with either of these two necessary components and thus on the very first day of operations confusion reigned, tempers flared and many uncouth words were spoken by the twenty-five hundred jobless who engulfed Poverty Board headquarters.

Furthermore, the goal of thirty thousand dollars, which was the key to the program's success, failed to be reached even halfway. In the 1920's a goal of this amount would not have been out of reach, but not in 1930. Without question, the city's more prosperous citizens were concerned with the Board's endeavor but with savings meager and the Community Fund also bidding for their moneys, most found it financially impossible to support adequately both organizations simultaneously.

It was because of this set of circumstances that one of the first adventures in work relief by a purely civic organization went astray. The Poverty Board put no one to work, no one was financially assisted, and no doubt the 2,500 heads of families who banked so heavily on the scheme were disillusioned beyond comprehension.
The illfated Poverty Board, while one of the first was not the last civic organization that struggled to make dole-
ism obsolete. Before it bowed out of relief altogether, the Community Fund also took a chance at devising a work relief format. Like its predecessor, the Fund met the same fate but not for the same reasons.

It was not in the Fund's initial planning and in its schemes early stages that failure lurked. Unlike the Poverty Board's project, the plan did not envision raising funds to employ jobless men. Rather, the Fund intended to find work for the unemployed in the industrial community; it would not function as an employer but instead as a co-
ordinator between the jobless and work providing industry. This approach was theoretically sound. Furthermore, the project was blessed with skillful leadership. Henry H. Brown was not only experienced in business organization but also, like Paul Tappan, was a well-intentioned American who relied on action rather than rhetoric to see things through. Furthermore, one of the major mistakes of the Board was corrected when the Fund managed to establish, with the help of several hundred volunteers, a somewhat accurate census of local unemployment. Moreover, Brown accomplished the miraculous when he secured the assistance of many county political leaders who made available to the Fund the use of official records, motor vehicles, and other services.

As is often the case, in the final phase of the pro-
ject everything turned for the worse. Because city industry
had yet to be convinced that their assistance was vital, the Fund found it difficult to provide work for all willing participants. As a result, when the project skidded to an abrupt halt it had found employment for a mere sixty individuals from an eligible 850. And the eight per cent that toiled in a northern county bean patch did so for less than one month.

The last civic attempt to implement work relief before the Federal programs came into vogue was taken by the Mansfield V.F.W. McVey Post. Convinced even more than others that Mansfield needed "jobs not charity", veterans, who rallied around one Major Carrigan, strove to enlist the entire community in an all out effort to obtain work for the unemployed. Entitled the "Mansfield Plan", the idea was for each city block to employ one jobless individual for a specified period of time, fund him through block subscription, and make sure that he did not become a "doler." Anything home owners needed doing from mowing lawns to painting fences would suffice.

Often fanfare can create enthusiasm for a particular movement and dramatize an impending problem. The McVey Post must have understood this well. To muster public support for the scheme, Major Carrigan and his troop staged noisy rallies, delivered impassionate torch-light speeches, and lastly to signal the start of the campaign, touched off several roaring volleys from their World War One vintage field artillery. The excitement McVey Post generated, the
hopes they kindled and the promises inherent in the plan created, it was said, an aura of public patriotism "...reminiscent of the war time days of 1917." Civic leaders, politicians, and clubs pledged their full support believing that a successful formula had been found to aid fallen workers and that McVey Post was "on the right track." V.F.W.'s extravaganza also had the effect of making it nearly impossible or at least socially uncomfortable for some important sectors of public life not to comply with and give token support to this highly moral cause. Consequently, for the first time since the depression began, Mansfield's industrial and business community pledged 30,000 man-hours of work to the V.F.W. Mansfield Plan.

For a host of reasons, the Mansfield Plan, like previous work relief schemes, suffered defeat. Bubbling enthusiasm for the project lasted for but an instant, but even if public zeal could have been sustained it would not have been enough to move the plan to a successful conclusion. Failure resulted because city industry could not fulfill its promise to provide more employment. At this time, in fact, even more men joined the ranks of the unemployed, and, because relief cases rose still further during the plan's inauguration, the overall effect of a few additional jobs being secured was minimal.

Furthermore, the man-a-block idea was given a death blow by, among other things, Mother Nature. Fall and winter months were an inopportune time for performing outdoor
chores and thus the actual demand for men to trim hedges and paint fences was at a minimum. Furthermore, as the outcome of the plan indicates, it probably made little sense to home owners to employ someone to perform duties expected of the man of the house.

For these reasons the man-a-block scheme, like the plan's second component, a program for increased industrial employment, never materialized the way MoVey Post and its supporters had hoped. Consequently, the Mansfield Plan, in due time, faded away.

Perhaps the most pragmatic approach to lessen depression hardships was that adopted by Mansfield's steel workers, most of whom belonged to the area's first steel union, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (S.W.O.C.). Because they learned from first-hand but sad experience that city industry had little inclination to aid the cause of employment through split shifts and reduced work hours, unemployed steel workers did not include industry in their scheme of things. Cognizant, too, that small civic organizations could not begin to satisfy even a small part of human want, S.W.O.C. realistically confined itself to assisting union members only, their immediate families, friends, and a few nonunion employees of Empire Steel.

Since the steel industry was one of the most financially depressed of all municipal enterprises and unemployment there extensive, most steel workers had ample incentive and time to devise and implement schemes for basic
subsistence. Many of their plans showed considerable originality and daring.

S.W.O.C. was, for example, the first Mansfield organization to create farming opportunities and buying co-operatives. Needed seeds, plants and garden implements were either donated by members or by business establishments. And, to prepare garden plots and fields, the S.W.O.C. would often sponsor tractor and plowing contests whereby ground was made ready, free of charge, for planting. Also to ensure the well being of families and friends, steel workers, working in teams, repaired homes, canned fruits and vegetables, and bought in bulk provisions they could not themselves produce, beg or borrow.

S.W.O.C.'s approach to work relief, then, was highly successful but did not bring benefit to large numbers of families. Probably not more than two hundred families participated in the steel worker co-operatives or in garden projects. However, despite its limited scope, (steel workers never sought to uplift all of Mansfield's needy from the economic doldrums), the plans drafted by S.W.O.C. suited well the realities of the day.

Even though limited in scope or totally unfruitful, these attempts to augment work relief, undertaken by various local groups between the years 1929 to 1933, cannot be labeled as useless. For future work relief schemes they had real significance. Of utmost importance, these projects put the crucial problem of chronic unemployment squarely
before the public eye. And, in several instances these plans forced Mansfield's citizenry to become an active participant in combating unemployment, even though that participation was often not sustained nor honored completely. One of the early civic efforts also provided the area's first statistical examination of the problem. Without question the information gained from that study and the precedent it established was of considerable value to later municipal and Federal work programs. These early projects were a valuable training ground for many of the area's civic leaders enabling them to learn from their mistakes. Men like Henry Brown and Major Carrigan who had given leadership to many early schemes remained active in the giving of relief and became, in later years, highly effective welfare administrators. Several of these early attempts also served to emphasize the necessity of enlisting the full participation of industry. As the temporary success of NRA proved, these early organizations were heading in the right direction. Further, since these early citizen organizations and the men who controlled them agreed on the preferability of work relief over the dole and exposed the futility of expecting industry to provide more employment, a climate of public opinion was created which made oncoming Federal projects more acceptable and thus more effective. Lastly, that civic forces were organized to help the downtrodden proved that in the municipality there were individuals who did not seek selfish gain or remain oblivious to need, but instead cared profoundly for mankind.
Notes - Chapter IV

1. MN, Nov. 1, 1932.
2. MN, March 8, 1932.
4. MN, April 16, 1931.
6. MN, Nov. 21, 1930.
7. MN, Dec. 18, 1931.
9. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. MNJ, Dec. 27, 1932.
17. MN, March 17, 1932.
20. MN, Sept. 15, 1931.
21. MN, Nov. 27, 1931.
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24. Ibid.
Chapter V

The NRA

The effects of the National Recovery Act (NRA) passed by Congress on July 28, 1933 provided Mansfield, Ohio, as well as other American cities, with a much needed and welcome reprieve from three hard years of depression. While the NRA failed to wipe away depression conditions in Mansfield and elsewhere, nonetheless, by forcing cooperation between city industry and the jobless public, it did initiate a brief period of re-employment and industrial recovery. Along with Federal work relief programs, inaugurated about the same time, the NRA fired the hopes and spirits of thousands of Mansfielders in their gravest hour.

Some indications of industrial recovery, re-employment and restoration of workers' wages were actually in evidence a few months prior to the NRA. An upswing in industrial production and retail business trade began in late May, 1933. While spring and summer months had always brought relief, in some measure, to Mansfielders, the 1933 interval was unlike any previous period of regeneration. Recovery was so rapid that many believed the depression had finally lifted.

By the middle of May, in fact, work at the industrial complex in Mansfield displayed "...a pace that had not been equaled since the boom days of 1929."¹ City newspapers headlined the fact that the Steel Mill operated at near total capacity.² Westinghouse Electric recalled 300
of its employees and, in addition, reopened a subsidiary, the Mansfield Enameling Plant, which had been idle for over two years, giving work to an additional 75 men. In all, by the end of the month, 1900 men and women were employed at the electrical appliance firm.\(^3\)

More Mansfielders held jobs during these months because most plants were on increased production schedules. Westinghouse employed three eight-hour shifts. Humphreys Manufacturing, producer of porcelain products, added two hundred workers to operate in shifts on a twenty-four hour arrangement, five days per week. Like Humphreys, Mansfield Tire and Rubber had an all day production schedule but went further in operating on a six day work week. Tappan Stove implemented a strenuous schedule of nine hours per day, six days per week which necessitated the employment of 150 additional assembly line workers. Even a firm new to the city from New Jersey, Kinkel Knitting Mills, added 65 garment workers to operate on a twenty-four hour schedule.\(^4\)

The number employed in city enterprises by early July, 1933, not only equaled but even surpassed that of 1931. In just a little less than two months approximately 2,000 men and women had returned to their various occupations.\(^5\) Empire Steel recalled all of its laid off personnel, as did Westinghouse. Empire now had 1,355 on their payroll, Westinghouse 2,475, and about 1,000 were officially working at Mansfield Tire. At the Ohio Brass Corporation, especially hard pressed between 1929 to 1933, about 700, many
of whom had not worked for nearly two years, found their services desired once again. Jobs were so plentiful at this time and easily accessible that many men were known to hold two jobs at once.

The rapid rise of re-employment and manufacturing production was accompanied by a series of wage increases or wage restorations. Empire Steel restored a 5 per cent wage cut to over 1200 employees, in mid-July, and shortly thereafter raised the minimum wage there to 31 cents per hour. Kiln operators at Ohio Textile Products garnered an increase in wages of not less than 10 per cent as did workers at the Mansfield Tire and at Humphreys.

This unprecedented industrial boom in the spring and early summer of 1933, however, was largely an attempt by Mansfield industrialists to "beat the gun" before wage code provisions, and other New Deal measures to speed employment, could take effect. It did not represent so much a natural upswing in business activity as a move by factories in the city in anticipation of General Hugh Johnson's national campaign to place a floor under wages until NRA codification was complete. Thus, the NRA's goal, to get employers' pledge to accept a blanket agreement to uphold NRA standards on hours and wages, was already largely reality before NRA was signed into law.

While its actual activities were tended to confirm what Mansfielders had already implemented, the debut of NRA
in Mansfield in July 28, 1933, was greeted with wild enthusiasm, and touched off a tremendous coordinated public campaign against the evils of unemployment. The NRA was the big story in the summer of 1933.

With a parade to commemorate the NRA, on September 2, 1933, the city enjoyed the biggest celebration in its history. Two miles of floats, blaring high school bands, and 2,500 jubilant, marching workers enthralled a throng of 15,000 onlookers. The spectacle and the cause it represented prompted Mayor Lantz to shout, "America has gone to war," against unemployment. "The emergency," to put as many to work as possible, declared the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce, was "...greater than in 1917 and 1918."

Mansfield's business and industrial leaders cooperated splendidly with the NRA drive, for to have done otherwise would have been to risk being labeled as unpatriotic. In the first week alone, 300 NRA canvassers visited 5200 homes in the city and 1500 employers pledged their support of NRA guidelines. The Blue Eagle emblem, believed to represent "...the symbol of hope and confidence in the intelligence and integrity of the Roosevelt leadership", was displayed in the windows of hundreds of stores and industries.

Further employment in Mansfield was wrought by the efforts of the National Recovery Act. City retail establishments quickly adopted the code of a 40-hour work week, a $14.00 minimum wage, and provided 10 to 25% more employment at their firms. When the feverish NRA drive had
ended, more citizens were employed in city factories than at any other time since the depression began. Almost 800 worked at Ohio Brass, and 2600 received paychecks at Westinghouse. In all, 6,500 Mansfielders were employed by eleven major firms, an increase in employment over 1931 of 8%.

While there were more wage earners in 1933 than in 1931, pay envelopes were considerably thinner. And the value of products in 1933 was still approximately one and one-half million dollars less than in 1931.

The 1933 industrial and employment boom in Mansfield lasted but for a few months, after which time the city again reverted to its earlier posture of gloom and despondency.

In some ways, this brief period of forced, unnatural, recovery had adverse side effects for the municipality, particularly in the months immediately thereafter. The news of Mansfield's good fortune in mid-1933 traveled far and wide and prompted many families both within and outside the state to rush to the city in the hope of securing employment. Often accustomed to lower standards and willing to work for less, out-of-state individuals were frequently hired by factories in preference to native Mansfielders. Many more newcomers discovered that Mansfield did not have jobs for all and thus became entirely dependent on city relief offices for subsistence. This influx of peoples, most of whom became jobless in the winter of 1933, was
largely responsible for the great number of relief cases in late 1933 and pushed the cost of city welfare up to $80,000.00 in that year.\textsuperscript{16}

Since the temporary favorable conditions seemed to imply that the worst of the depression was over, many citizens moved out of the homes of relatives and friends in search of private lodgings. The result was not only an immediate severe housing shortage but also, after unemployment again became widespread, more evictions than ever before.

Nevertheless, on the balance, the advantages wrought by the NRA in Mansfield certainly outweighed any disadvantages. The optimism instilled in citizens by signs of recovery had beneficial effects as well as unhappy ones. For one thing, the public's faith in the soundness of city banks was restored and even strengthened. Thus, there was no recurrence of the 1931 "banking runs" or unusually heavy withdrawals. The balance between deposits and withdrawals was more favorable in 1933 than in any depression year, and compared to 1931, banking clearances were appreciably higher.\textsuperscript{17}

Increased employment in the spring and summer of 1933 also resulted in fewer crimes in the area, a decline in the number of mortgages, and a spectacular drop in the number on the dole from a high of over 2,000 in early 1933 to just 400 cases in August.\textsuperscript{18} This favorable development afforded local officials with more funds and time with which to
pursue federal sponsored work relief programs. During the NRA period city hall instituted a $31,500.00 street program and, later, county officials issued $27,000.00 in bonds to finance CWA construction.19 Thus, the NRA experience provided a valuable breathing spell for municipal leaders who in turn used this time to lay the groundwork for future depression activities.

Most important, the NRA made Mansfield industry more humane and responsible to its social obligations during this time of national and local disaster. Even after NRA codes fell into repute and were voluntarily abandoned, business and industrial establishments continued to show sincere concern for Mansfield's problems and the unemployed. Many plants such as Empire Steel, Mansfield Tire, and Westinghouse maintained split shifts, and reduced hours so as to give jobs to as many as possible. Of further importance, the NRA also did much to eradicate unwholesome practices such as child labor in Mansfield, as in other American communities.

Finally, although good times shown on the city but for a few months, these months of 1933 were a great benefit to its citizenry, psychologically and materially. It gave them a glimpse of what their city and nation could be again precisely at a time when reassurances were needed most. The 2,000 Mansfielders who gained jobs by virtue of the NRA also discovered a new pride in working for a living once again rather than dependence on the dreaded, inadequate, but often
necessary, dole. In retrospect, for Mansfield, the NRA experiment, at the time of implementation, was not a dismal fiasco, as many historians make it out to be in general, but rather a brief but cherished reprieve from a long, agonizing depression.
1. MNJ, May 22, 1933.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. MNJ, July 10, 1933.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
9. MNJ, Sept. 12, 1933.
10. MNJ, Aug. 1, 1933.
11. MNJ, July 22, 1933.
12. MNJ, July 28, 1933.
14. MNJ, July 28, 1933.
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17. The Mansfield Chamber of Commerce, Mansfield, Ohio An Ideal Location, (Mansfield: Chamber of Commerce, 1940), P. 11.
18. MNJ, Aug. 1, 1933.
Chapter VI
The New Deal And Mansfield

Students of the Great Depression today know that the array of programs which flowed so profusely from Washington, starting with the institution of the Federal Emergency Relief Act of May, 1933, did much to assist those stricken by the forces unleashed in 1929. Mansfield, Ohio, of course, benefited by these Federal endeavors in the way of work relief schemes and other projects of less, though of not insignificant magnitude.

At the beginning of New Deal efforts, a brief period of recovery was experienced in mid 1933, largely attributable to the NRA, but basically Mansfield was not much better off than it had been in 1932, a year that many felt could not be equaled for its lamentable dark aspects. In fact, Mansfield was actually worse in 1933-34 than at any other time since the economic imbroglio began. The facelifting unique to 1933 was visibly but unhappily at an end. Mansfield's industrial community reverted to its gloomy self in rapid fashion. Westinghouse Electric Corporation slumped to a work capacity of only 50% and employed well under 1,000 workers on a part-time arrangement.¹ "Conditions," said its vice president "were still serious", and closure seemed minutes away from becoming cold reality. Operations at Mansfield Tire and Rubber Company seemed even more in doubt for the plant was now running at a puny $33\frac{1}{3}$ of capacity and had turned out in

-65-
huge numbers the bulk of its employees. More disheartening, an industry which had moved earlier to the city and had promised employment for hundreds never began operations at all.

By 1934 the number of Mansfield firms had decreased sharply in number from eighty-one companies in 1931 to only sixty-four. This represented an industrial casualty rate of 20%. Furthermore, over a two year period the total wages paid by all industries to workers slumped about $590,000.00 and the value of products during the same period had declined over $150,000.00.

The number unemployed was ominous. Only 7,000 men and women in early 1934 were employed, and because of reduced hours and wages most of these were underemployed. Thus, more than one-half of the city's work force were without any visible means of livelihood. In 1930 a mere 750 persons were listed as unemployed, hence by 1934 the rapid growth of unemployment had been staggering. It appeared in early 1934 that the depression was slowly but surely exercising its ascendancy over city industry and city workers.

It seemed, too, for the most part, that the city's entire social structure had broken down. Years before most people were optimistic and seemed ready to do battle with the depression; they made the rounds of factory gates regularly searching and often begging for a job opening. But in 1934, many lost self-assurance. One man remarked: "Instead of looking for work I went to the Trades Council and played
When once they had been confident, they now felt inadequate; it was as if some innate deficiency kept them from securing employment. Even when spring brought flowers and trees to full bloom, it was not uncommon for public leaders like Bryan Styer, a city councilman, to encounter grown men sitting on porch stoops, not speaking, just sitting and staring.  

Many Mansfield men in 1934 began to feel inferior and to lose self-respect. Being jobless and fearing social and personal condemnation, many severed their ties with friends, with the opposite sex, and with social organizations in which they had long been active. Fewer fraternal organizations existed in 1934, courtships declined radically, and the number of marriages tumbled to a new low for a four-year period. City churches fighting for sheer existence offered to workers neither counsel nor help to ease their plight. Without means of support, without social stability, and without hope in the future most men spent their hours in hopeless inactivity. Reflected one steel worker, "We really didn't do anything I guess but saw a little fire wood when the mood would hit us."  

Most citizens attempted to ward off starvation as best they could. Scores of individuals, trained for and previously active in various professions turned into field hands, stock boys, and drifters. A college professor worked opposite an illiterate West Virginian, stoking blast furnaces two days per month. An accomplished tool and die maker,
after being evicted from his home, forsook city life to cut thistles on a country farm in exchange for his family's lodging. A once prosperous grocery store proprietor took to selling apples at a city intersection. Some, who found no work at all, moved in with and became dependent on relatives; as many as four families came to live under one roof.

In 1933 evictions and foreclosures mounted in the area as it did across the entire nation. A shanty town whose homes of orange crates and cardboard stood squarely atop the city dump. A man and his family lived in a wagon on the eastern edge of the city, and a small baby died from exposure in a drafty barn that its parents called home. Young, single, familyless men slept in open storm sewers and, in early morning hours, sought nourishment in garbage pails awaking slumbering citizens.

The number of families on relief roles in 1934 was appalling. Over 85,000 people in the municipal vicinity were dependent entirely on city and county assistance. For the Community Chest the burden of relief was, in their words, "not [their] problem," and thus it bowed out of philanthropic activities altogether. City hall, adamant in its opposition to issuing bonds for relief, ran out of welfare funds six times in one month and, cognizant of their failure, came to detach itself from the problem through innocuous activities like garbage can drives and the changing of street names.

These predicaments of a once proud city were certainly
not fully eradicated through New Deal programs. It would be more correct to state that New Dealism had the beneficial effect of tempering the problems, of making them more bearable, and far less severe.

In fact, at first glance, Washington's initial adventure in work relief, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, looked as though it held out little to the distressed masses. There was much that left little to be desired so far as organization was concerned: eligibility required a person to be financially destitute, with no car, possessions, or personal savings at all; monetarily for workers there were great monetary disparities and inequities—some made $15.00 while others made $45.00 per month; 17 projects stagnated because of slow, cumbersome, inefficient record keeping; and employment fluctuated since work was available at one time and not another.

Despite these numerous misgivings, FERA activities in Mansfield, in evidence from 1933 to the summer of 1935, proved—in the main—highly beneficial to the city's jobless and to the cause of community development. With FERA money and through its supervision, ten civic projects of importance were completed and 37 others started, which gave work, at various intervals, to over 1,000 heads of households. Thus, in retrospect, it was an appreciable beginning.

It took the Civil Works Administration (CWA) to correct the defects of FERA and put New Dealism on a sound
footing. It did this primarily because it was a federal operation from top to bottom. CWA workers were on a federal payroll, not that of the city or county, which meant they were not prone to the corruption and the inconsistencies which were often characteristic of political subdivisions. Furthermore, the CWA selected half of its workers directly from relief roles; the other portion were people who simply needed self-sustaining work but did not have to demonstrate their humble posture by submitting to a humiliating "means" test. Consequently, since CWA lifted relief's social stigma, many individuals did not hesitate to join their programs.

Hundreds of CWA workers discovered, too, that the program was more profitable from the standpoint of monetary compensation than that of FERA. Under CWA workers averaged $15.00 per week whereas they received only $6.50 under FERA regulations. This was made possible by the fact that CWA paid existing minimum wages, not relief stipends based on complicated, inequitable formulas or stingy, county quotas.

Also, CWA work projects ran smoother and were more abundant, primarily because of the decentralized nature of the operation. The Community projects undertaken had only to be forwarded to, and approved by, the CWA state office not by way of Washington's long, complicated channels.

Highly flexible, too, were the quotas which set the number of participants allotted work for each month. If, for example, it was found that more needed and desired work,
which was the case just two weeks after CWA began, then the quota would be adjusted accordingly to give employment to as many possible. In one week alone, the quota was raised five times. As a result of CWA's liberal and realistic policy, 2,650 men in November of 1934 worked on community developments.

The city's Civil Work Administration also did much to upgrade existing local welfare services, something that had been needed for four, long years. It was more than a service to Mansfield's unemployed when in December, 1933, CWA director Earl Nist forced all county, city, townships, and philanthropic relief into a single office under the auspices of the Federal Re-employment Office.

This consolidation and the establishment of a federal office greatly reduced politics in relief, an unholy mixture that had been a blight on the community for several decades. Half-starved men no longer had to depend upon the good wishes of, or the wooing of scores of politicians, for the Re-employment Office was the only source of federal employment; it alone took applications for work, screened them solely on the basis of need, and finally channeled acceptable, unemployed citizens directly into CWA operations. As a means to place hundreds of men to work, it was both a rapid and an uncorruptable process.

As time would indicate, in addition to providing employment for literally thousands, CWA also benefited the entire city and surrounding community. With massive funds
at its disposal and an organization to match, CWA had the means to develop and did develop basic projects in the area that for years had been neglected by a cautious, tight-fisted local government. The list of civic improvements wrought under its auspices was exhaustive and of lasting worth to the Mansfield area: CWA teams removed hazardous, antiquated railroad tracks that dissected city streets; it cleaned and repaired miles of city streets and boulevards; and dredged and revamped the city reservoir. But without question, the most significant CWA contribution to city life was the construction of a municipal airport. This project not only gave months of paying jobs to 1,400 men but also, upon completion, introduced the city to the ways of the Twentieth Century.  

The amount of CWA funds made available and utilized in the Mansfield area was, for the times, phenomenal. From November, 1933, to November of the following year, the city's CWA chapter pumped approximately $600,000.00 into direct relief services and community work projects.

It seems, too, that the CWA was popular with and benefited almost everyone. For the unemployed it represented, of course, life itself; for frustrated, hungry, city retail merchants it meant increased sales and profits - due to the public's increased purchasing power of 15-30% over 1933; and for city fathers, the CWA assumed about one-half of the normal welfare burden and reduced relief expenditures. Even skeptics, who, with Jeffersonian tendencies, ever fearful of all things federal, had to confess that it was a
splendid alternative to dreaded doleism.

In the month of December alone over 1,100 men worked in some capacity for the agency. It was said that during this cold but holiday filled month an old, cherished custom was again instituted after almost four years of near total absence - gifts were again exchanged between friends and families. Mayor Lantz was absolutely correct when he stated that because of the CWA Mansfielders had a Christmas "for at least one more year."27

One of the most remarkable features of Federal work relief programs in Mansfield was their longevity and almost immediate transition to a new administration of the program. Some agencies, like the FERA, continued uninterrupted for two years, others like the CWA terminated after one year only to be replaced, within weeks, by a like scheme. It was, in fact, just two months after CWA phased out that the Public Works Administration arrived to take up the programs it had started or intended to start. In effect, PWA kept work relief rolling through the summer months of 1934, and into the following year.

One of the first city institutions to benefit from its good offices was the Mansfield General Hospital which, with PWA materials and labor, expanded its site at a cost of over $15,000.00.28 Mansfield city hall, also with PWA backing, implemented a 13 point civic improvement program which resulted in the erection of two long needed storm sewers.29 Another grant of sixty-one thousand dollars
provided homeowners in the southern end of the city with a new water works plant. Moreover, PWA improved six city streets at a cost of $21,500.00, and in July, $57,000.00 was added to FERA city airport funds to ensure its completion. In August alone, the total expenditures of PWA activities totaled $34,934.00, most of which went for workers' wages.

The area's Works Progress Administration tackled and completed even larger projects costing far more than any other agency before it. Twenty-four county projects, for example, utilized $114,000.00 of WPA funds, while twenty city projects took $600,000.00. By the end of 1935, the WPA had begun and completed a city swimming pool, a public school, a county fair grounds, parks and game areas, and seventeen road bridges. For the city of Mansfield it made the impossible possible. The municipal sewage plant, for over two years, had been condemned officially by state public health authorities and unofficially by the citizenry. It was said that because of the stench even sewer workers, long immune to the hazards of their work, cared not to and some could not maintain the plant. Only with WPA funds amounting to $140,000.00 was it possible for city fathers to ensure, with the construction of a new plant in December, 1935, the health of over 35,000 people.

These multitudinous work relief programs, as beneficial and electrifying as they were, seemed always to detract from the activities and benefits wrought by other federal agencies that did not engage in work relief projects as such. In
many ways these agencies rounded out the New Deal program which had, by design and confession, something for everyone who felt the pinch of 1934, not solely the unemployed, although these correctly had first priority. The Mansfield community had in its midst many federal organizations of this nature.

To cite a creative example, home garden programs were devised by the FERA in conjunction with an ever active V.F.W. organization. Under this plan, free seeds and all necessary garden implements were granted to interested families who, in turn, produced their own crops. At one point, over 6,000 families took part in the plan which had the happy result that many did not go without basic food stuffs in the 1934-35 winter.

Also operating in the municipal area was the Ohio Relief Production Unit, (ORPU). This federal agency, upon leasing a vacant factory, produced articles needed for relief and shipped them to relief organizations throughout the state. In its nine months of existence, Mansfield ORPU assembled 2,400 beds monthly and employed 103 city men.

In addition to direct relief, work relief, garden plans, and the ORPU, a transient shelter, operated by federal funds, was established by the city. Through this program, the city, with federal funds, housed, clothed, and fed drifters for two day periods; the vagrants, in turn, would repair clothing and shoes for a total of 30 man hours. A decrease in crime, vandalism, and loitering in 1934-35 resulted largely from
this project. It had the effect, too, of reducing the number of vagrants in city jails which prior to this period where filled to capacity nightly.38

Mansfielders were also assured of adequate nourishment through the Richland County Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation which fulfilled a double assignment by stabilizing farm incomes and administering food commodities. Instituted in 1934 under the direction of G.V. Sowers, in that year this agency distributed to eligible families fourteen different kinds of food products valued at $40,000.0039

Since actual distribution of foods was under its control, the needy, after 1934, no longer had to rely on the inequitable voucher and the independent grocer who had abused this system.

Some 1,450 families depended on the FSCC for over three years. Without question, with the CWA providing both wages and commodities and the FSCC giving of surplus commodities, Mansfielders resisted the immediate threat of malnutrition or starvation which without previous assistance had plagued them for over five long years.

Municipal and county home owners were not neglected or left unaided by New Dealism. Their plight in these turbulent years was especially serious not only because of economic conditions but because also unscrupulous building and loan associations persisted in ruthless foreclosures and evictions. Thus, one family, lost their home to one of these organizations with just two installments left on their mortgage.40 Between January and the last of June, 1930,
alone a total of 37 families were made homeless because of the apparent disregard for acceptable and ethical business practices by Building and Loan Associations.

The Home Owners' Loan Corporation, adopted by Congress in June, 1933 assisted homeowners in meeting this ugly reality by permitting the mortgager to turn in defaulted mortgages for guaranteed government bonds. Despite the sorry fact that some loan associations did not agree to this arrangement and continued foreclosures, the HOLC from the moment it opened its doors to two blocks of anxious property owners, managed to help re-finance and thus save 275 Mansfield homes.

These New Deal Programs, the FERA, the CWA, the PWP, the WPA, and other lesser subsidiary federal organizations, lifted the city of Mansfield, Ohio, and the surrounding area from the terrible doldrums of 1934-35. It did this through work relief, direct relief, the housing of transients, the feeding of entire families, and lastly ensuring people's lodging.

Federal work relief schemes transformed dolers into workers and in doing so gave thousands of unemployed Mansfielders a new pride in the "Joys of Earning a Living." Most important, one-half of all families in the Mansfield area for the first time since 1929 were supplied sufficiently with proper clothing, shelter and food. The alternative to Federal assistance between the years 1933 to 1935, a local newspaper correctly stated, "...would have been starvation
The Great Depression was still omnipresent when 1935 drew to an end. The New Deal in Mansfield did not completely eradicate all the economic and social ills common to the scene for five long years. Nevertheless, New Dealism by challenging the depression made its consequences less severe than at any time since 1929. Mansfield, Ohio, in late 1935 acted and looked differently; thousands were again working, looking to the time when the unhappy experiences of the 1930's would be history. Because of the New Deal, many citizens believed, as did the Mansfield News Journal, that their city "...was on its way to a saner, sounder era of advancements."
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Chapter VII

The Depression - An Assessment and Conclusion

There was a significant transition in the course of the depression in 1935 in Mansfield. While it would be approximately four years before the decade of the Great Depression gave way to World War II, the period of greatest crisis was over in this year for the community. After 1935 economic hardships were never manifested in the cruel manner characteristic of 1929-1935.

Signs of this development were in evidence throughout the city. For the first time since the market crash occurred, employment in the area reached its 1929 peak. 8,775 men and women were employed, which represented one-fourth of the total population. Major plants in the municipality called back hundreds of laid off personnel. In April, 1935 Empire Sheet and Tin re-employed 1,000, bringing the total work force there to 1,800 in all. Three hundred and fifty workers rejoined Westinghouse to make a total of 2,900 employees. Production at Mansfield Tire went from 33⅓% to 60% of capacity, and employment rose accordingly to meet the new production schedule.

The wages and salaries of most Mansfielders in 1935, while still below 1929 figures, were considerably better than in previous depression years. 1,000 tire builders received, early in the year, a six per cent pay boost. Electrical workers garnered a five per cent increase in wages. City teachers got a much deserved and long awaited salary hike.
Appointed city employees received a five per cent wage increase. Railroad workers in the area secured a restoration of 2.5% of a 10% reduction in wages. Production and wages rallied to such heights that in the first week of September, 1935, the payroll of four major factories, representing 5,000 workers, totalled a record-breaking $360,000.00.

A turn toward increasing prosperity was reflected elsewhere. For the first time since 1930, the public was buying a sizeable amount of luxury goods in addition to necessities. Automobile sales in the city rose 30 per cent over 1934. More radios, jewelry, and sports clothing were purchased at this time. Increased attendance at sports events and amusements reflected not only more affluence but a renewed interest in things other than immediate problems.

Partial economic recovery in 1935 also resulted in fewer crimes, less numerous transients, and less delinquency than in previous months.

The general public of Mansfield, moreover, had a new, healthy, political awareness. Angered over a new gas contract, negotiated by the Ohio Fuel Gas Company and city hall, a citizens' league formed to defeat the contract through an initiative and referendum. Almost 5,000 citizens joined the league's campaign for a 65¢ rate. After heated debate and a mass rally on the steps of city hall, the gas company accepted the league's demands and in June, 1935, refunded $230,000.00 to gas consumers as excess charges.
spirit of reformism was also matched by greater public participation in local politics. The 1935 municipal elections attracted more voters than had been the case since 1929. Citizens became perceptive voters, more aware of issues, and less inclined to be swayed by the luster of leaders of the national Democratic party in their choice of local officials. At the peak of F.D.R.'s popularity, Mansfielders elected an entirely Republican city administration while remaining overwhelmingly favorable to state and national Democrats.

Relief services were more firmly established and adequate in 1935. In the interest of efficiency, Richland County became the federal work relief hub of a nine-county network. Community development programs reached a high point. In June, alone, the city and county utilized $420,000 in federal aid for local projects. Criticized earlier for failing to secure federal assistance, city fathers implemented so many programs in 1935 that they were accused of "grabbing" federal funds and spending recklessly.

Benefitting by the numerous federal programs, organized philanthropy was again able to enter the welfare arena on a more realistic basis. After a year's total absence, the Community Fund was reorganized and became active in Christmas programs, clothing drives and other limited philanthropic activities in keeping with its financial situation. In 1935, the Fund collected $46,200.00 for the needy which indicated both increased prosperity in the area and a splendid revival
of public cooperation with the goals of philanthropy. Increased industrial production, more employment and re-employment, a substantial rise in wages and salaries, a decline in crime and lawlessness, more and better organized federal work programs, and increased philanthropic services made the year 1935 for Mansfield, Ohio, a "year of accomplishments."

An Assessment

Many citizens of Mansfield today hold the opinion that their city experienced fewer difficulties between the years 1929 to 1935 than did most other American communities. While this era brought economic chaos and privation never before known in the city's history, there is, nevertheless, much evidence which substantiates this popular viewpoint.

The rate of unemployment, in the Mansfield area, for example, was not so serious as it was in many other American cities. While this Midwestern industrial center had a jobless figure in 1932 of nearly 50 per cent (which represented a high for the first five years of the depression) some other communities had an unemployment rate of 90%, which often held constant for several years. All of the larger American cities such as Detroit, New York, and Pittsburgh experienced more joblessness per 1,000 persons than did Mansfield.

The same situation prevailed in a majority of Ohio cities which closely resembled Mansfield in population and the number gainfully employed before 1929. One such Ohio city
was Marion, Ohio, which, like Mansfield, had a total population of over 30,000 and a pre-1930 labor market of approximately 14,000 people. Yet more people were unemployed in Marion between 1929 and 1935 than in Mansfield in these years. In 1930 alone, Marion had 724 out of work and 271 laid off, compared to 604 and 121 respectively for Mansfield.18

The disparity between the two cities in relation to the unemployment problem was further indicated by the amount of federal funds channeled into the two areas between 1929 and 1935. In January, 1934, the Mansfield community received $7,000.00 from Washington for welfare purposes while conditions in Marion necessitated over $23,000.00 in that month.19 Furthermore, for two years Marion did not fail to receive $30,000.00 to $1,000.00 per month more than Mansfield.

Marion garnered more federal funds than Mansfield, because it had more people dependent entirely on relief for subsistence. In January, 1934, 1,860 cases were serviced by the FERA in Marion whereas in Mansfield FERA aided about one half of this number, 997.20 While in a few winter months of 1934 and 1935 the number on FERA rolls in Mansfield came within 100 to 200 cases of Marion's total, at no time during the depression did the number of cases in Mansfield ever exceed that found in the westerly community.

In addition, depression conditions in Mansfield were not, in the judgment of state relief officials, sufficiently critical as to warrant state aid for welfare purposes. From 1929 to 1933 Mansfield received from the state only its
regular allocations of utility, gas, and license tax money, while thirty other Ohio communities, many of whom had fewer inhabitants than did Mansfield, were the recipients of substantial state assistance. In 1933, Springfield received $414,394.00, Bucyrus, $45,524.00, Sandusky $130,540.00 and Marion $170,746.00.

Also, compared to other Ohio cities, the tax delinquency rate in Mansfield was appreciably lower. In 1932, the delinquency rate in the Mansfield area was only 10% compared to a gigantic 83% for Cuyahoga County, 60% for Lucas County, 41% for Stark County, and 32% for Franklin County.

Finally, unlike the majority of Ohio cities, Mansfield city fathers did not utilize the Pringle-Roberts Bill, which permitted political subdivisions to issue bonds for relief purposes, until long after the depression began. While the bonded indebtedness of many cities skyrocketed during the depression, Mansfield, even though it operated on a drastically reduced budget, was able to reduce its debts substantially.

A number of salient factors, operating collectively, made the first five years of depression in Mansfield less awesome than in many other American communities.

Firstly, the Mansfield area was fortunate in having diversified industry in its midst. The bulk of the wage earners in the city were not dependent on one industry or the manufacture of a particular product for their livelihoods as was the case in other Ohio cities such as Lorain where the greater majority of people were involved in steel production.
or in Akron where the rubber industry employed approximately
84% of all workers. Unlike laborers in these basically
one product industrial centers, when one enterprise failed
or slumped in Mansfield it did not affect the majority of
wage earners. Further, when economic conditions forced an
employer of great numbers, like Empire Steel, to release hun­
dreds of laborers, these men, in turn, frequently found work
in other factories whose products were not so adversely af­
fected at that time. Because of the diversified nature of
manufacturing in the city, it was common for many men to hold
three or four jobs in one year and while such jobs were often
short in duration they kept unemployment from reaching huge
proportions.

Furthermore, Mansfielders, in the main, suffered less
than many other Americans. because most major industries in
the area pursued, during the depression, expansion and en­
gineering programs which promoted employment and assured
these plants of continued operations. In response to Pres­
ident Hoover's drive for industrial recovery, industries in
the area with funds provided by the Fourth Federal Reserve
District on industrial rehabilitation spent in 1932 approx­
imately $265,000.00 on new machinery and in improving their
physical plants. Later, Westinghouse released $200,000.00
in corporate funds for warehouse and factory development and
added the production of refrigerators to its existing line
of products. The diversification of products and expansion
program at Westinghouse necessitated more man power, making
employment there high by depression standards. Of all the factories in the Westinghouse chain "The Mansfield plant stood up during the depression better than any other of [their] plants."26

Empire Sheet and Tin Plate Company, formerly Empire Steel, also embarked in 1935 on an enthusiastic $300,000.00 expansion program to meet increased production orders.27 Hundreds of additional workers were hired to meet the national call for more processed steel with the result that the payroll at Empire in that year was a record breaking $250,000.28

While at reduced production, the Ohio Brass Corporation carried on an extensive engineering and experimental program which was so successful that it gained a $435,000.00 federal contract for powerlines for Boulder Dam.29 This project retained the services of engineers and provided a full year's work for Ohio Brass assembly line workers.

Mansfield was also fortunate in having in its factories businessmen of the first rank. The closing of two important industries in the city was avoided solely by the determined efforts of two very adroit entrepreneurs. Empire Steel in 1931 was just one step removed from complete cessation of operations and the public auction block. It had, at this time, just $143,000.00 in operating funds and a $126,000.00 monthly payroll to meet. Under the direction of receiver Carl Henkel, however, Empire was masterfully reorganized and continued production although on a limited basis. Through Henkel's efforts, work was retained for about 1,279 Mansfield-
ers for a period of over two years. It would have been a serious blow to the area's total economy if Empire had closed, since this plant paid out in wages three and one-half million dollars over a twenty-five month period. Thus, Henkel, by keeping Empire Steel in operation, even at reduced production, truly performed "...a valuable service to his community and his fellowman." 30

Barnes Manufacturing, another important major employer, escaped sure closure when a federal court placed it into a receivership under the direction of E. J. Gilbert. 31 He protected both the stockholders and creditors, by successfully putting the plant on a profit basis once again. Through Gilbert's resolute leadership, the Barnes organization withstood the depression and went on to establish itself later as one of Mansfield's soundest industries.

Banks in Mansfield by remaining sound likewise contributed to the city's admirable performance in the face of evil times. The fate of the city's entire economy depended greatly on these vital institutions. All four banks survived a near disastrous panic in 1931, and, after the 1933 Banking Holiday, reopened to go on to operate unfettered in successive years. Unlike financial institutions in neighboring towns like Shelby, Ohio, where depositors were limited to just 5% of their total savings, banks in Mansfield were so secure that they permitted their customers to withdraw all their funds if they so desired. As early as 1934, all Mansfield banks were paying faithfully 2 to 2 1/2% interest on
each deposit whereas many similar institutions across the country had been, by that time, closed for over three years. 32

The public's faith in the city's banks was an important factor in Mansfield's ability to weather the depression. After the 1931 banking run, the citizenry's fears gave way to faith in, and cooperation with, the city's banks. Some sectors of civic life had an unwritten agreement with bank executives that they would not cash their checks on days known for their heavy withdrawals. School teachers, in particular, voluntarily refrained from cashing checks until bank executives felt it expedient that they should do so. Groups of laborers from a large factory also abstained from submitting their pay checks to banks for as many as two months. 33 As a result of the public's understanding of the problems faced by financial institutions, an inappreciable amount of money, for depression times, was withdrawn from banking vaults between 1929 to 1935 and, thus, the day to day financial business of the city continued uninterrupted.

Finally, retail businesses and major industries in Mansfield helped to keep unemployment at a lower level by offering as many jobs as possible to the jobless public. While the NRA first introduced this means of combating hard times, the business community, long after the passing of NRA, continued this method with considerable vigor and effectiveness. One of the leading exponents of creating more employment was the Mansfield Tire Company. Its officials continually maintained, after 1933, a "...spread of employment
policy", by introducing four-hour work shifts. Through this humane plan over 200 men were given jobs who otherwise might not have had them. Westinghouse Electric also employed a similar practice after the NRA period. Empire Steel made a particular effort to employ many as possible especially in the winter months, noted for scant work and increased needs. In December, 1933, Empire made Christmas brighter for over 4,000 youngsters by recalling 1,000 family men for a few months' work. Many steel executives also donated, from personal and corporation funds, hundreds of dollars to organized charity. Concern for the welfare of their workers went so deep that one president of the steel mill reportedly gave money to the S.W.O.C. union for use in its cooperatives.

Conclusion

Even though the city of Mansfield, through diversification of industry, energetic and adroit business leaders, soundness in the city's financial structure, and the spirited cooperation of public minded citizens - suffered less during the great depression than did many other communities, the years 1929 to 1935 were, nevertheless, for the city and its peoples, unparalleled for their hardships.

While the problems in each and every year of the depression were somewhat similar, there were discernible periods and points of transition in the five-year period.

The first three years after the Wall Street Market crash
were the most harrowing in the entire economic crisis. Without federal and state assistance, the municipal government was powerless to meet all of the demands for relief which hard times put squarely before it. Thus these years brought unprecedented crime and lawlessness as well as widespread disillusionment and apathy. Eventually there even developed public antipathy toward the nation's business community and toward organized philanthropy which was financially and philosophically unable to care for the hundreds of unfortunate people common at that time. Civic attempts to relieve human despair were unfruitful. For those public-spirited citizens and for those whom they desired to help, 1929 to 1935 was a period of seeming helplessness in the wake of grave social and economic problems.

The NRA, Washington's first experiment in economic and personal regeneration, while not the solution to Mansfield's and America's dilemma, did usher in a brief period of improved conditions in the middle months of 1933. For a few months, at least, industry rallied and Mansfielders again found the joys of earning a living. The most important outcome of the NRA period, however, was the liaison which it established between the city's industrial complex and the community. Thereafter, manufacturers became more concerned and willing to do their part in relieving economic distress by implementing share-the-work-schemes and other work-giving programs which, in the final analysis, did a great deal to keep unemployment figures from escalating further.
With the advent of New Deal work relief administrations, which commenced in 1933 and were in full swing by late 1934 and 1935, humbled citizens were at last properly assisted with food surplus, clothing, and shelter. The programs sponsored by the FERA, the CWA, the PWA, and the WPA wrought many long-needed civic improvements. More important they gave life-sustaining employment to as many as 2,500 men and women, thus stimulating a new optimism without which recovery, in any degree, would not have been possible. Furthermore, during these more happy years the city's social structure regained a larger measure of stability. Lawlessness declined, a fewer number of homes and businesses were threatened by foreclosure, and faith in the American system and in its leadership was largely restored.

The year 1935 witnessed the conclusion of the most challenging years in Mansfield history. A distinct break with four long years of untold hardships occurred at this time making 1935, "a year of accomplishments." Strong indications of a gradual return to normalcy were reflected in a favorable reversal of the employment picture, an increase in the public's purchasing power, a sharp rise in business and industrial activity, and in a return of obvious public concern and leadership in matters relating to the political, social and economic life of their city.
Notes - Chapter VII

2. Ibid. 22. MNJ, July 26, 1933.
4. Ibid. 24. MNJ, Nov. 1, 1932.
8. MNJ, Feb. 20, 1935. 28. Ibid.
12. MNJ, April 18, 1935. 32. MNJ, Nov. 23, 1934.
17. MNJ, Jan 3, 1936.
20. Ibid., p. 82.
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