OLD VALUES AND THE NEW DEAL:

JAMES L. WICK, JR.'S BUSINESS AND CIVIC CAREERS IN YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 1930-1960

by

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ABSTRACT

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James L. Wick, Jr., a product of the industrializing and progressive eras of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, ascended to a leadership position in the business and civic affairs of Youngstown, Ohio, on the eve of the stock market crash of 1929 and resulting Great Depression. Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration to the Presidency of the United States in 1933 and the formulation of his New Deal administration marked the beginning of a transformation of values and conventional wisdom in American society. The old ideals of private enterprise, individual initiative and upper-class responsibility for ensuring opportunities for less fortunate citizens to stabilize and improve themselves were replaced by a comprehensive social welfare system, numerous public works programs and a network of regulating agencies which moved government into the forefront of determining social and economic policy for the nation.

While functioning in the prime of his business and civic careers between 1930 and 1960, Wick viewed the changes in America

as an affront to individual liberty, and responded by holding fast to the values and philosophies that he had embraced in his formative years earlier in the twentieth century. His defiance of the new priorities and power structure in American business led to an abrupt and dramatic end to his career at Youngstown's Falcon Bronze Company in 1953. In working as a civic leader and public servant in organizations such as Youngstown College and Mill Creek Park in the same period, he found an environment which was less encumbered by the social and political upheaval of the era. Wick made important contributions to the development of these institutions, some of which became vital economic, social and cultural assets of the community as it encountered the post-industrial era in the late-1970's and early-1980's.

'Government Is My Shepherd'

The Government is my Shepherd,
I need not work,
It allows me to lie down on good jobs;
It leadeth me beside still factories;
It destroyeth my initiative;
It leadeth me in the path of the parasite for politics' sake,
Yea, tho' I walk thru the valley of laziness and deficit spending,
I will fear no evil;
For the Government is with me:
Its doles and its vote-getters, they comfort me.
It prepareth an economic Utopia for me by appropriating the earnings of my grandchildren,
It filleth my head with bologna;
My inefficiency runneth over,
Surely, the Government shall care for me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in a fool's paradise forever.

--"Modern version of the 23rd Psalm;" excerpt of letter to Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen from James L. Wick, Jr., February 7, 1966.

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H. William Lawson
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Forty-eight-year-old James L. Wick, Jr. brimmed with confidence and anticipation of the future during an interview with Solly Adams, a reporter for the Youngstown (Ohio) Vindicator, in August of 1931. His upbeat enthusiasm was obvious in the fragmented and informal subsequent article by Adams titled "Meet Jim Wick," which appeared in the August 18, 1931, edition of the newspaper. Wick, a Youngstown native, was in his second year as president and general manager of The Falcon Bronze Company at the time of the interview and deeply involved with several civic organizations and institutions in the city. He spoke with the highest regard for his hometown and those individuals past and present who constituted what he considered to be the social and financial underpinning of the city. Now that he had emerged as a top local executive and community leader, he was more than willing to continue the tradition of private industry and public service that was the lifeblood of his highly industrialized and rapidly expanding community nestled in the Mahoning Valley region of Northeast Ohio.[1]

In the three decades between the years 1930 and 1960, Wick functioned at the peak of his business and civic careers, channeling large amounts of time and inexhaustible energy into his corporate and community activities. Throughout this period he adhered to the values, beliefs and philosophies instilled in

him during his formative years by the men he looked to as role models--many of whom were the Mahoning Valley's leading industrialists of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In Wick's business activities were methods and goals articulated by Youngstown iron and steel baron, Joseph G. Butler, Jr., who stated in his autobiography that "my success in business has been due chiefly to industry and persistent application," and that "this industry and application arose from a genuine pleasure in accomplishing things...."[2]

While he built a record of success in his business ventures, Wick assumed numerous and progressively larger civic responsibilities and provided his family with a comfortable yet respectable and unostentatious lifestyle. He and other business executives of his generation applied the excess material resources of their collective concerns toward the production of what Andrew Carnegie in his Gospel of Wealth described as "the most beneficial results for the community--the man of wealth thus becoming a mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves."[3] Wick's contributions to the improvement of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley were disproportionate in time, energy and expertise over cash or real property, as he did not inherit nor earn a financial fortune in his lifetime. But because of the tremendous level of activity he maintained in community affairs, and the fact that he could always be counted on to "carry the ball" when an important

project came up, James L. Wick, Jr., earned the abiding respect and praise of his peers.[4]

Though he had reached the summit of his business career as the top executive of the Falcon Bronze Company and was just beginning the most important era of his nearly life-long service to the community, Wick was unprepared in 1931 for the magnitude of changes brought on by issues long festering under the surface of the American veneer, which were about to occur in society and government. A combination of pressures from the Great Depression, the emergence of a modern, urban America, the indelible cultural diversity of the new urban society and the rise of organized labor heavily influenced the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt after he took office in 1933. His New Deal administration, according to Otis L. Graham, Jr., "reflected the changed social base of the Democratic party," along with the revised moral and social attitudes of the party's new constituents.[5] Unlike the progressive era of the early twentieth century, when government was a passive, or at best silent, partner in reform measures originating from the business or professional communities, "liberalism" as defined in the New Deal meant that government was either equal in stature with private interests or the sole entity for proposing and implementing reform in American society.[6]

Wick was aware of many of the changes that were occurring in his city and throughout the nation, and of the implications built into expanding the role of government in the everyday lives of the people. Like many others of his generation, including former

President Herbert Hoover, he was deeply concerned about whether or not it was necessary to jeopardize individual liberties "for some new philosophy which must mark the passing of freedom."[7] Wick maintained his own concept of appropriate tasks for government and the private sector and stuck to the formula for urban and industrial progress embraced by his predecessors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries despite the enormous pressures of the new social and political order and the altered conventional wisdom of the post-depression era. Like the viability of any organism outside of its natural environment, Wick's subsequent successes and failures in operating a business and improving the community were heavily influenced by the adaptability of his time-honored values and methods to the demands of the social, economic and political structure launched during the New Deal.

A great deal of scholarship already exists on subjects and events of the twentieth century prior to World War II. In their examinations of either the progressive or New Deal eras of the twentieth century, several historians attempted to compare or contrast the two periods, or at least noted the watershed of social, moral, political and economic functions and philosophies in the United States marked by the Great Depression.[8] Otis Graham and George Wolfskill studied two branches of resistance to the New Deal and its policies. Graham's examination of 400 old-time progressives revealed a variety of reactions from acceptance of the New Deal as the next step in the reform movement to outright rejection, while Wolfskill demonstrated a much more

unified objection to the supposed radical measures of the Roosevelt Administration among conservatives in the 1930's, resulting in the creation of the American Liberty League.[9] An account of James L. Wick, Jr.'s, life and career provides an opportunity to view not only a transitional figure in terms of the industrial to progressive to New Deal eras of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, but also of an individual who was stubborn and tenacious enough to harbor and promote values and philosophies presumably left for dead in the aftermath of the 1932 presidential elections well into the Cold War era of the late 1940's and 1950's.

The following essay will present an overview of Wick's life and career as a businessman and civic leader in Youngstown's recent past. It will articulate the social, moral, political and economic values through which he governed and expressed himself, and stress important periods and events when his determination and adherence to a decidedly old world-view either profited or failed the organizations and people with which he was involved in the post-depression and post-World War II eras. The impact of his dual careers as an industrialist and officer or trustee of several educational and cultural institutions is important to the understanding of local history in the Mahoning Valley, and his personal appreciation of the discipline and sense of his role in the events of this century resulted in an abundance of organized and revealing documentation. His strong and compelling character and role as a mid-century transitional figure provide

insight into the history of the community and a significant individual case study for the written historical record.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Solly Adams, "Meet Jim Wick," Youngstown Vindicator, 18 August, 1931, sec. 2, p. 11.

2. Joseph G. Butler, Jr., Recollections of Men and Events: An Autobiography, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), pp. 342-3.

3. Andrew Carnegie, The Gospel of Wealth, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1933), p. 13.

4. Mary Wick Thompson, interview by the author, 13 January, 1992, Youngstown, tape recording, the Mahoning Valley Historical Society Oral History Collection, Youngstown, Ohio.

5. Otis L. Graham, Jr., An Encore for Reform: The Old Progressives in the New Deal, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 8.

6. See Graham, "From Progressivism to the New Deal: Tradition and Innovation in the Liberal Past," chap. in An Encore for Reform, pp. 3-23; George E. Mowry, "The New Deal: The Politics of Urbanism," chap. in The Urban Nation: 1920-1960, The Making of America Series, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), pp. 90-128; Robert H. Wiebe, "A Setting for Progressivism," chap. in Businessmen and Reform: A Study of the Progressive Movement, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 1-15.

7. Herbert Hoover, The Challenge to Liberty, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934; reprint, New York: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Era of the New Deal series, De Capo Press, 1973), pp. 1-2.

8. For examples, see John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner, and David Brody, ed., The New Deal, 2 vols., (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975); and Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981).

9. See Graham, Appendices I, II and III, in An Encore for Reform, pp. 187-217; George Wolfskill, The Revolt of the Conservatives: A History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1962).

CHAPTER II

JAMES L. WICK, JR.: A BIOGRAPHICAL ORIENTATION

James Lippincott Wick, Jr., was born January 28, 1883, in Youngstown, Ohio. He was the second of four surviving sons of James Lippincott, Sr., and Julia Ayer Manney Wick. Members of the Wick Family were intimately involved in the development of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley since the turn of the nineteenth century. Henry Wick, merchant, tavern keeper and great-grandfather of James L. Wick, Jr., arrived in Youngstown in 1802. Henry Wick's father-in-law, Caleb Baldwin, came to the fledgling village in 1799. William Wick, Henry's brother and a newly ordained Presbyterian minister, conducted what was reported to be the first religious service in Youngstown and the Connecticut Western Reserve in Caleb Baldwin's tavern on September 1, 1799.[1]

As Youngstown evolved from a rude Mahoning Valley frontier town to a burgeoning industrial city in the mid-nineteenth century, Henry Wick's sons and grandsons were principle investors of capital and effort in the establishment of numerous industrial and financial ventures. The wealth that resulted from these enterprises and the family's length of residence propelled many of the Wicks into the social elite of the community. They in turn combined with other leading families to form what economic historian John N. Ingham identified as a "tightly knit, highly cohesive and well-stratified local upper class" within which

members interacted and intermarried almost exclusively.[2] From 1860 until the end of the century, the base of operations for this elite network was Wick Avenue, a relatively new residential thoroughfare running up a hill overlooking Youngstown's central business district to the northeast. Here the wealthy families built sprawling Victorian mansions amid beautiful gardens and landscapes, and managed to distance themselves somewhat from the grittiness, bustle and growing squalor that were the by-products of the city's vibrant iron industry.

James L. Wick, Jr., spent his childhood on this street named for his family in the late nineteenth century, and counted among his neighbors, friends and relatives most of the current and future leaders of the city's economic and civic activities. He and his family lived in his grandmother's home at 753 Wick Avenue until they moved three doors up to 789 Wick Avenue in the mid-1880's. Though they lived alongside the upper layer of Youngstown's social strata, their branch of the Wick family did not enjoy full membership within the elite social circle. Wick's grandfather, John Dennick Wick, moved to Pittsburgh in order to pursue business opportunities and died there in 1854 at the age of 39, leaving his widow, Emily Lippincott Wick, four small children and a modest estate.[3] Emily L. Wick returned to Youngstown in 1862, and built a new home for her family on the northern edge of the rapidly developing Wick Avenue neighborhood. In 1865 she married Freeman O. Arms, a respected local businessman with interests in Youngstown and nearby Brookfield, Ohio. Emily's second-oldest son, James L. Wick, Sr., did not

share the financial successes of his uncles and cousins, working as a merchant for the bulk of his career in association with several commercial establishments in downtown Youngstown, including the firm of Wick, Arms and Bloxon, of which he was proprietor.[4] Because of his middle class background, James L. Wick, Jr., identified with the traditional image of the self-made man and rugged individualist while building his career and reputation as an adult, frequently reminding himself and members of his immediate family that they were not the "rich Wicks" of Youngstown.[5]

Wick attended Youngstown public schools for his elementary education and then the Rayen School, which was in its prime a widely regarded preparatory academy. While at Rayen, he worked on the school's monthly literary journal, The Rayen Record, serving as business manager under editor William F. Maag, Jr., a lifelong friend who followed his father in the position of editor and publisher of the Youngstown Vindicator, the city's largest and eventually only daily newspaper. In his senior year, Wick served as manager of the Rayen football team, and was responsible for raising funds to cover the team's expenses, which he accomplished by soliciting the generosity of many prominent business leaders in the community. In this endeavor Wick also encountered one detractor, his father's first cousin, John C. Wick, who lectured the young man for raising money "to finance an activity that would result in a lot of broken bones," and instead offered to supply wood and pay members of the team to chop it up as an alternative form of exercise.[6] At some point in his high

school career, Wick met classmate Clare Mary Dryer, daughter of Charles Redway Dryer, a renowned professor of geography at Indiana State Normal School. She had relocated from her parents' home to Youngstown in order to live with an older sister and benefit from an education at the Rayen School. She later became Mrs. James L. Wick, Jr.[7]

After graduating from Rayen in 1902, Wick left Youngstown to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. Though M.I.T. was beyond the realm of the affordable for him and his parents, he desired the excellence in technical training which that particular institution provided. He related his dilemma to cousin John C. Wick one day when they met on Wick Avenue. The banker and community leader saw a practical education as being of far greater value to his young relative than managing a successful high school football team, and encouraged him to follow through on his goal of attending the prestigious school. The elder Wick went so far as to offer to support him financially through his college years. James L. Wick, Jr., took the opportunity, and graduated from M.I.T. in 1906 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, never forgetting the kindness extended to him by his patron.[8] Wick returned to Youngstown after graduation to accept a position at the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, which was offered to him personally by James A. Campbell, president of the firm.[9]

While at Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Wick gained valuable experience in industrial mechanics and operations management, serving as assistant to the general master mechanic and assistant

to the chief engineer under the watchful eye of his old Wick Avenue neighbor, James A. Campbell. Two years later, Campbell, a principal shareholder of the Crystal Ice and Storage Company, asked Wick to join the firm as secretary-treasurer and general manager. Wick accepted the opportunity to manage the company and advance his standing among the up-and-coming generation in the city's business community. He stayed with the ice company until 1917, when he resigned from the position of general manager, but remained as a director and officer, and took a position in the securities department of the Realty Guarantee and Trust Company. In 1918, he left that firm and returned to the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company as a special agent. Finally in 1919, and once again with Campbell's urging, Wick went to the Falcon Bronze Company, where he remained throughout the rest of his working days.[10] Looking back at the first twelve years of his business career, Wick considered it "a rare privilege to be associated with James A. Campbell," who "inspired all who worked for or with him to excel in their assignments" and made the same aware of his abiding confidence and loyalty.[11]

James L. Wick, Jr., identified several other leading Youngstown citizens of the early-twentieth century besides Campbell as role models and sources of encouragement in his initial years as a business executive and community activist. Many of Wick's lifelong philosophies, skills and interests are reflected in the accomplishments of these individuals.

Joseph G. Butler, Jr., was one of Youngstown's most readily identifiable and respected citizens of the late-nineteenth and

early-twentieth centuries. "Uncle Joe," as he was affectionately known about town, held an interest in almost every major iron and steel manufacturing concern in the Mahoning Valley. Though Butler received little if any formal education past the age of fourteen, he recounted in his autobiography that "the few years spent in school during my boyhood did little more for me than to awaken a desire for knowledge so strong that I got more pleasure out of study and reading than out of other pastimes."[12] Art and history were the main focuses of his individual studies, and he devoted a substantial portion of his personal fortune to amassing a comprehensive home library and early collection of works from American artists. Butler's most visible contributions to the Youngstown community were the Butler Art Institute, which he built to house his highly important art collection and opened to the public in 1919, and his three volume History of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, Ohio, published in 1921, which was one of most comprehensive and reliable historical accounts of the early development of the region.

Though Wick benefitted from an extensive formal education, the engineering curriculum at M.I.T. confined him to courses work related to the field. He, like Butler, maintained a deep appreciation of both art and history which developed mainly through self-study.[13] Oil painting was Wick's favorite pastime, and with the help of a correspondence course he developed enough talent to win several awards at local and regional shows and to have a one-man gallery exhibit at the Butler Art Institute in the spring of 1941. His love of painting

attracted him to several groups within Youngstown's arts community. Wick was a lifelong, charter member of the Buckeye Art Club beginning in 1923, and served as secretary of the organization for 16 years. He sat on the board of trustees of the Butler Art Institute (later the Butler Institute of American Art) from 1937 to 1957, and joined with members of several art clubs and societies in 1942 to form the Friends of American Art, an independent membership organization with the exclusive purpose of supporting the Butler. Wick also served the initial term of president of the Friends from 1942 to 1943.[14]

Wick's interest in local history drew him to the Mahoning Valley Historical Society, which was founded in 1875. In 1909, at the age of twenty-six, he along with Butler and several others signed articles of incorporation for the society. Wick served numerous offices in the society, including one short term as president in the mid-1920's and another, continuous term from 1956 until his death. In his later years, many in the Youngstown area recognized Wick as the community's pre-eminent historian.[15] Like Butler, he compiled his recollections and research into an extensive but never-published manuscript titled "A Few Events: Notes on the History of Youngstown, Ohio."[16]

Wick played a substantial role in the administration and development of the Youngstown Township Park District, better known for its principal property, Mill Creek Park, serving as a member of its board of commissioners from 1937 to 1958. As a young man he had the opportunity to know Volney Rogers, founder, creator and early trustee of the park, who worked tirelessly for

nearly thirty years until his death in 1919 to preserve the natural environs of the lower Mill Creek Valley and make it available to the public as a center for quiet and healthful recreation. Charles Snelling Robinson was another Mill Creek Park commissioner who was also a vice president of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company and an M.I.T. alumnus. Robinson provided valuable friendship and direction to Wick as he progressed in his career in business and public stewardship.

During his tenure as a Mill Creek Park commissioner, Wick joined various other members of the board in working to perpetuate Rogers' philosophy on the purpose of the park as a natural preserve, and often directly quoted him in discussions and correspondence about expansion of facilities and land acquisitions. He and his associates approved the purchase of more than 600 additional acres of land for the park and the installation of new facilities to meet the recreational needs of Youngstown's expanding residential neighborhoods. After Wick became secretary and treasurer of the board of commissioners in 1945, being only the third person to do so after C. S. Robinson and Volney Rogers, fellow commissioner Ambrose J. Wardle noted that he turned down any subsequent requests to assume the presidency of the commission, replying that "if the office of Secretary and Treasurer was good enough for Volney Rogers and C. S. Robinson, it is good enough for me."[17]

Wick was involved with the Young Men's Christian Association as a member, instructor, trustee and officer for most of his adult life. Herbert K. Caskey, who was the first full-time, paid

general secretary of the Youngstown Y.M.C.A., organized a regular schedule of night classes for members, working men and immigrants that led to the formation of a "Y" association school, which eventually became Youngstown College. Caskey was in office in 1907 when Wick began what was to be a fifty year tenure as a Y.M.C.A. trustee. As chairman of the Board of Governors of Youngstown College from 1931-1955, Wick emulated Caskey's commitment to education as a key to personal development and advancement as he worked and fought tirelessly to help create a recognized institution of higher learning in the Mahoning Valley.

Wick firmly believed that wealthy individuals in the private sector had a responsibility to provide and promote leadership, charity and sound morals and values within the community so that all of its residents had adequate opportunities to build a healthy and successful life. He admired the work of Joseph M. Hanson, an urban reformer and social worker who came to Youngstown from Kansas City, Missouri in 1908 to help deal with the social problems resulting from the panic and depression of the previous year. Hanson's skill in transforming charitable contributions into effective services for the less fortunate, and his dedication to improving living conditions for all of the city's residents resulted in many lasting benefits for the city. He and a core of dedicated leading citizens launched the Charity Organization Society, with Hanson serving as executive secretary, in February of 1908. A number of social service agencies developed through the C.O.S. and eventually spun off as separate entities. These included the Youngstown City Park Commission,

the Children's Service Bureau, several low-income housing corporations, the Mahoning County Chapter of the American Red Cross and some substantial charitable foundations.[18]

The presence of a progressive era social activist on a list of people who influenced James L. Wick, Jr. in his young adult years raises the question of Wick's personal affinity with the movement and whether or not he can be classified as a progressive. The evidence in Wick's resume to support this notion was mixed, similar to the way more recent scholarship has described the whole movement. The consequences of fragmentation and the lack of a clear pattern of activities and behavior, according to Otis Graham, Jr., are that a single definition of progressivism "remains inaccessible to those easy generalizations with which we long to make it manageable."[19]

Businessmen and reformers of the early-twentieth century shared a mistrust of government based on its previous record of inefficiency and corruption. During the progressive era however, as Robert Wiebe noted, neither group could ignore government, and both attempted to arrange their respective programs to make the best possible use of it. Progressive reformers, through a series of newly enacted laws, "sketched a new relationship between government and society which gave government continuing responsibilities to keep order, correct abuses, and preserve morality."[20] But they placed most of the power of enforcement into regulatory agencies which were separate from the legislative and executive branches, thereby relying on "the right men in the right offices to complete their system of government

controls."[21] Businessmen, while desiring to maintain the established tenets of self-determination of the marketplace, limited public interference and rewards for individuals possessing demonstrated abilities, realized the importance of stability in their respective industries and looked to utilize the government "as a mechanism for regularizing their affairs."[22]

In his role as an up-and-coming middle class businessman, Wick certainly adhered to the widely accepted business philosophies of the day. Though he had limited involvement with the agencies and programs of reformers like Hanson that were designed to address the pressing social, moral and physical problems inherent to the rapidly expanding, industrialized city of Youngstown, he could appreciate and support them based on the origins of their respective missions. Wick's most significant civic involvement prior to the First World War was the Youngstown Council of the Boy Scouts of America, of which he was a co-founder in 1913. He served as the council's first treasurer and then president from 1918 to 1919. During the civilian mobilizations in response to the two world wars, Wick was actively involved both locally and nationally, serving as assistant fuel administrator for the Youngstown steel making district in World War I, and as a member of the government code authority for the non-ferrous foundry industry during World War II.[23]

Like Hanson, Wick embraced the movement toward professionalism in social agencies and the business community, as

he and others of the middle class developed awareness of and pride in the importance of their respective vocations to early-twentieth century society.[24] His involvement with particular local and national business associations followed the progress of his career. While associated with the Crystal Ice and Storage Company, he belonged to the Middle States Ice Producers Exchange, serving as president of the organization from 1917 to 1918. He was president of The Youngstown Association of Credit Men from 1914 to 1915 and served in two periods as a director of the Youngstown Chamber of Commerce, the first from 1916 to 1918, and the second from 1938 to 1954. After entering the non-ferrous foundry industry with the Falcon Bronze Company in 1919, Wick joined the American Foundrymen's Association, and through his extensive involvement in the organization and contributions to the industry, rose to the office of President of the association from 1937 to 1938.[25]

His appreciation of professionalism carried over into his civic duties, as according to his daughter, "whenever [Wick] had an interest, he would go to a source of professional experience."[26] As a Mill Creek Park commissioner, he wanted the best landscape architect available to assist in planning the use of new land acquisitions, and based on the recommendations he received, brought in the celebrated firm of Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts to work with park officials. When the Mahoning Valley Historical Society obtained the residence of the late Mrs. Wilford P. Arms at 648 Wick Avenue in 1961, Wick called upon consultants from the faculty of the museum studies program

at the State University of New York in Cooperstown, one of the few in existence in the United States at the time, to help plan and execute renovations for the re-use of the building as a history museum.[27]

Moral values, which along with efficiency, education and professionalism were basic desired qualities espoused by social activists and businessmen of the progressive era, were paramount in James L. Wick, Jr.'s life. In keeping with the tradition of his family, Wick was actively involved with the First Presbyterian Church of Youngstown throughout his adult life. He joined the congregation in 1899 at the age of 16, was an elder from 1921 to 1948 and taught the Sunday school class for high school boys for thirty years.[28] His Sunday school class, named "The Upper Room" in honor of the New Testament story of the last supper, was a good example of his integration of desired values, as Wick provided the young men with a combination of religious instruction and introductions to business management and organizational skills. The classes were operated in the same manner a corporation or civic association was, with membership dues, officers, by-laws, a treasury, meeting minutes and decorum established by Roberts Rules of Order. Article eleven of the group's by-laws provided a carefully prescribed order of business for each hour and fifteen minute session, which included a 25-minute Bible lesson as the final item on the agenda after all the officers' remarks, reports, and new and unfinished business had come before the meeting.[29]

Wick practiced personal abstinence from alcohol throughout his life, being convinced that the substance brought evil and moral decay upon society. He was concerned with the increased popularity of drinking at the social functions of younger generations after the Second World War. According to Wick, the problems surrounding alcohol use and abuse could not be solved until "upstanding members of our community throw out the cocktail table which they roll into the living room whenever their young people or any of their friends gather."[30] As for alcohol and the work place, Wick claimed that "a man has to come in here drunk on two occasions, then he is out forever.... If he comes in drunk once, perhaps that is his fault, but if he comes in drunk again, that's my fault!"[31]

Family reigned above all else in Wick's personal order of priorities. His courtship with Clare Dryer continued while both attended college, and culminated in their marriage on May 16, 1908. The couple reared four children: Warner Arms, Mary Manney, Emily Lippincott and Harriet Dryer Wick. According to daughter Mary, Mrs. Wick was, like her husband, an open, loving and supportive parent.[32] Though Clare Wick was not as intimately involved in high-profile community activities as her husband, there were occasions when their interests overlapped. An example of a mutual interest was Youngstown College, where Mrs. Wick actively served the Friends of Youngstown College Library while her husband was chairman of the board of governors.

In 1920 the Wick family moved to 384 South Belle Vista Avenue on Youngstown's West side, an area of the city which at

that time was still predominantly rural and undeveloped. The property was formerly part of a dairy farm, and contained several acres of land, outbuildings and a large farm house. Across the street was a road that ran down into Mill Creek Park. The open lands and the park were the playgrounds of the Wick children. James L. Wick, Jr.'s involvement with family went beyond his wife and children, as he remained close to his parents, brothers and their respective families so that the Wick children counted their cousins as their closest friends and regular playmates.[33] Though not overindulgent with his children, Wick was, based on the account of his oldest daughter, attentive, generous of his time when available and genuinely interested in their activities and aspirations. When any one of them demonstrated an ability or set a goal, he did all that he could to help them achieve success. When his daughter Emily decided one summer to build a boat out of some wood found around the house, Wick enlisted one of his employees, a carpenter and patternmaker, to assist her, and the pair soon had a sturdy houseboat erected on the driveway of the family home. Picnics, recreational outings and day trips to the nearby cities of Cleveland and Pittsburgh to visit museums and other cultural centers were regular events for the Wick family.[34]

The efforts of James and Clare Wick to instill the values of education, excellence, hard work and responsibility into the lives of their children apparently paid off, as all four excelled academically. The two oldest children, Warner and Mary, were Phi Beta Kappa as undergraduates at Williams College and Mount

Holyoke College, respectively. Warner and Emily earned Ph.D.'s and built careers in academia and administration at the University of Chicago and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, respectively. Mary Wick Thompson shared her father's artistic talents, and with his encouragement received advanced training in medical illustration at Johns Hopkins University Medical School. Harriet Wick Schaff attended Vassar College and the Julliard School of Music in New York and followed in her father's footsteps at the Mahoning Valley Historical Society as a trustee, curator and then first professional director of the society's Arms Museum.[35]

After family, work was the next important activity in James L. Wick, Jr.'s, life. In April of 1919, he made the most significant decision of his business career, acquiring a "substantial interest" in the Falcon Bronze Company, a non-ferrous foundry located in downtown Youngstown.[36] He was subsequently elected to the board of directors and named secretary, and began employment with Falcon on May 1, 1919. Falcon Bronze was founded in Youngstown in 1890 by Gus A. Doeright, a highly regarded itinerant nonferrous foundryman at the time. Doeright decided to bring his business under one roof rather than continue to travel to and from the various mills and furnaces of the Mahoning Valley, and built a small, wood-framed foundry in the back yard of his residence on South Phelps Streets in downtown Youngstown. The Company was incorporated in 1895, and the officers and shareholders began an expansion of its production facilities for brass and copper castings in and around

the original plant on Phelps Street. Under the guidance of a tightly-knit group of stockholders, Falcon grew steadily during the first two decades of the twentieth century and became one of Youngstown's most profitable ventures. In 1920, one year after Wick began his association with the Company, Falcon shareholders enjoyed an annual dividend of 100%.[37]

Wick's initial interest in the company was fifty shares, which was twenty percent of the outstanding stock. By the annual shareholders meeting on January 15, 1920, his interest had grown to 72.5 shares, making him the single largest stockholder in the company. The company grew dramatically throughout the 1920's. On April 17, 1925, the firm absorbed the Lumen Bearing Company, which operated brass and copper founding plants in Youngstown and Pittsburgh, at the cost of $160,000. This purchase doubled the production capacity of Falcon Bronze and allowed it to re-enter the copper foundry business for the first time in twenty years.[38] Falcon consolidated the operations and equipment of the newly acquired firm at their South Phelps Street Plant in downtown Youngstown.

On March 26, 1926, Doeright resigned as general manager of the Falcon Bronze Company due to his failing health. At a special meeting of the board of directors on March 31, 1926, James L. Wick, Jr., was elected general manager while continuing to serve in the office of secretary, and assumed control of the day-to-day management of the company's affairs. On January 13, 1928, at the annual shareholders' meeting, the directors elected Wick to the offices of vice president and general manager. G. A.

Doeright died on December 31, 1928, and at the annual meeting of the company on January 15, 1929, the shareholders elected Wick to succeed him as president and general manager, where he remained for the next twenty-four years.

With the stock market crash less than ten months after his ascension to the presidency of the Falcon Bronze Company and the resulting depression, much of the socioeconomic climate in which James L. Wick, Jr., came of age and willingly adopted into his lifestyle gradually evaporated with the ushering in of the New Deal era. Where once invasions of private enterprise were considered "un-American," and calls for regulation of the economy "shameless demagoguery," government after 1933 demanded and begrudgingly received a vital role in determining economic and social policy for the nation.[39] The great aversion to the "welfare state" felt by so many men and women like Wick was understandable, according to Richard Hofstadter, in light of the "specific tenets" and "moral imperatives" expressed in the previous ideologies of social Darwinism, and more recently, progressivism.[40] The new conventional wisdom of the post-depression era did not concern Jim Wick, nor did it convince him to change the way he thought or conducted his affairs. It did make various efforts in his business and civic pursuits more difficult to carry out, and taxed the tremendous energy, persistence and will that were some of his more outstanding traits.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

1. For more detailed examinations of the Wick family's contributions to the early settlement of Youngstown, see Joseph G. Butler, "The Founding of Youngstown in 1797," chap. in History of Youngstown and The Mahoning Valley, Ohio, vol. 1, (Chicago and New York: American Historical Society, 1921), pp. 88-117; George Higley, "Wick Family Outstanding in Valley's Development," Youngstown Vindicator, 13 February, 1949, Sec. A, p. 14.

2. John N. Ingham, The Iron Barons: A Social Analysis of an American Elite, 1874-1965, Contributions in Economics and Economic History Series, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. 197.

3. James L. Wick, Jr., "A Few Events: Notes on the History of Youngstown, Ohio, 1971," TMs, The Mahoning Valley Historical Society, p. 135.

4. Butler, History of Youngstown and The Mahoning Valley, Ohio, vol. 2, pp. 257-8.

5. Thompson, Interview, 1992.

6. Wick, "A Few Events," p. 206.

7. Obituary, James L. Wick, Jr., Youngstown Vindicator, 16 March, 1972, p. 1.

8. Thompson, Interview, 1992.

9. Wick to James L. Wick, Sr., and Julia Manney Wick, 12 April, 1906, James L. Wick, Jr. papers, The Mahoning Valley Historical Society.

10. Ibid., Resume, 12 February, 1959, James L. Wick, Jr. papers.

11. Ibid., "A Few Events," p. 184.

12. Butler, Recollections of Men and Events, p. 345.

13. Thompson, Interview, 1992.

14. Wick, Resume, 1970, James L. Wick, Jr. papers.

15. Obituary, James L. Wick, Jr., 1972.

16. See Wick, Resume, 1970; and "A Few Events."

17. Ambrose J. Wardle, remarks from dedication ceremony for the James L. Wick, Jr. Recreation Area, Mill Creek Park, Youngstown, 23 September, 1958, James L. Wick, Jr. papers.

18. "Biographical Sketch of Joseph Miles Hanson," Builders of Youngstown File, "1908: J. M. Hanson," The Mahoning Valley Historical Society.

19. Graham, An Encore For Reform, p. 14.

20. Wiebe, Businessmen and Reform, p. 4.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., pp. 4-5; see also Wiebe, The Search for Order: 1870-1920, The Making of America Series, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), pp. 134-5.

23. Wick, Resume, 1970.

24. Wiebe, The Search for Order, pp. 112, 123.

25. Wick, Resume, 1959.

26. Thompson, Interview, 1992.

27. Ibid.

28. Wick, Resume, 1970.

29. "The Upper Room," First Presbyterian Church, by-laws, minutes and other related papers, 1934-1938, James L. Wick, Jr. papers.

30. Wick to L. A. Beeghly, 31 January, 1953, Builders of Youngstown File: "1914-L. A. Beeghly."

31. Ibid.

32. Thompson, Interview, 1992.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.; and Wick, Resume, 1970.

36. The Falcon Bronze Company, Board of Directors, Minutes, 18 April, 1919, The Mahoning Valley Historical Society.

37. Ibid., 28 April, 1920.

38. Ibid., 17 April, 1925.

39. Wiebe, Businessmen and Reform, p. 290.

40. Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, Revised Edition, (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1959), p. 11.

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLE OVER PROFIT

As chief executive officer of the Falcon Bronze Company, James L. Wick, Jr. adopted the management practice commonly referred to as paternalism or welfare capitalism, which was widely implemented in American industry and specifically by some of his mentors and role models in the Mahoning Valley in the early decades of the twentieth century. Like so many other business reforms of the progressive era, the motive behind the strategy was stabilization of labor-management relations through the institution of higher wages, safer working conditions, health and retirement benefits, production incentives, advancement opportunities for select employees and, in larger applications, corporate sponsorship of building and public works projects like worker housing, schools and recreation facilities. Such benevolence, according to David Brody in his essay titled "The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism," did not exist in the industrializing era of the late-nineteenth century, when "frantic expansion and ruthless competition" enforced a "hard labor policy ruled by the cost books and labor supply."[1]

Aside from moral obligations to improve the living and working conditions of employees and their families, businessmen found many practical benefits in welfare capitalism. Contented employees were more productive, and equitable treatment of the entire labor force, coupled with opportunities for additional

training and advancement for a few able individuals, reduced the frequency of labor disputes and strikes. Brody also noted that benefits like housing, pension plans and profit-sharing gave workers a tangible interest in their employers[2] Company unions were created in many instances to address issues and grievances related to working conditions in the shop, but the process was designed with the intent for management to maintain "full authority over the terms of employment."[3]

The system worked exceedingly well through the 1920s. In the steel industry, mill owners instituted reform measures for unskilled laborers and reduced the skilled labor pool through technological advancement, and virtually eliminated the presence of craft unions under the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers of the American Federation of Labor from their plants.[4] A nationwide steel strike organized by the radical Industrial Workers of the World union in the fall of 1919 fell apart in part because a majority of the labor force chose to leave their fate in the hands of their employers.[5] Brody found the welfare capitalism system to be so effective that its demise and the rebirth of labor unions in the 1930's may have been avoided had it not been for the "extraordinary turn in the business cycle" and the resulting economic and social crises of the Great Depression.[6]

Examples of paternalism and welfare capitalism varied throughout industrial America, as the scope of reform measures was often determined by the needs of a specific industry or the goals, vision and financial resources of the individuals making

the decisions. George Pullman sought to build an ideal industrial city from the ground up, and oversaw the construction of his utopian company town and railroad car factory in the Illinois countryside outside of Chicago. In the city of Dayton, located in the Miami Valley of Southwestern Ohio, progressive businessmen like John H. Patterson, Edward Deeds, Charles Kettering and Arthur Morgan attempted not only to reform the working and living conditions of the local labor force, but also the values and moral character of the community as a whole. Along with modern, well-designed production facilities like those of Patterson's National Cash Register Company, the results of their "grand plans" touched many social components of the Miami Valley community, including public schools, city government and massive public works projects like the Miami Conservancy District.[7]

In the Mahoning Valley, the locally-founded Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company adopted paternalism on a large scale after a disastrous strike involving its workers in January of 1916. An armed confrontation between strikers and company guards sparked a riot on January 8 in the village of East Youngstown, located adjacent to the company's sprawling steel plant to the southeast of the city of Youngstown. Angry mobs vandalized the company's offices, then burned and looted dozens of businesses and homes in the village. Order was restored only after the Ohio National Guard arrived on January 9. Youngstown Sheet and Tube, under the leadership of James A. Campbell, responded to the crisis by helping to rebuild the business district and public buildings,

and in 1917, commenced construction of a high quality housing development, competitive company stores and parks and playgrounds to serve the needs of employees and other residents of the village. When East Youngstown was incorporated as a city in 1922, officials renamed it Campbell in honor of Sheet and Tube's president and the steel company's many contributions to improving the community.[8]

Paternalism as expressed in James L. Wick, Jr.'s management of the Falcon Bronze Company from 1929 until his retirement in 1953 was not noteworthy in its scope, as the firm employed less than one hundred people, nor its scale, as it infrequently extended beyond the foundry floor. What was interesting was the fact that Wick managed to maintain the practice for nearly two decades after it ceased to be a universal policy in American industry. When organized labor arrived at Falcon's doorstep in February of 1953 and challenged management's right to control all aspects of employee welfare, compensation and policy, Wick held fast to his principles and business philosophy, and demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice everything for their preservation.

The Great Depression was not only the most significant catalyst for change in twentieth-century American society, but also the first major obstacle in Wick's tenure as chief executive officer of the Falcon Bronze Company. A slowdown in orders began in the months following the stock market crash of October, 1929, and the company showed a substantial loss after the first half of 1931. The board of directors contemplated cost-cutting measures, including reductions in the salaries of those employees still

working full-time. On July 31, 1931, members of the management and clerical staff still fully employed signed off on a ten percent cut in salaries effective August 1, and "until [their] associates that [were] on day rates receive[d] or enjoy[ed] full time operation."[9] When the company showed continued losses through the end of 1931, the remaining employees took another ten percent cut in pay, effective January 1, 1932. In both instances, president and general manager James L. Wick, Jr.'s signature appeared prominently at the top of the list. Wick's concern and sense of responsibility for his employees extended beyond the gates of the plant during the ordeal of the depression, as he hired several laid-off employees to do odd jobs in and around his residence in order to help them help themselves through the economic crisis.[10]

Wick prided himself in being a "hands-on" manager and chief executive officer, and the relatively small size of the plant aided him in this practice. A Cleveland Plain Dealer reporter witnessed his intimate involvement during an interview with the Falcon Bronze Company chief in 1936, when Wick "leaped to his feet" after hearing "three blasts from an air whistle" and ran out of the office and into the foundry. He climbed into an overhead crane and performed the duties of craneman in pouring and casting a melt of brass. The reporter noted that this was not necessary, as the company could easily afford to hire someone else to perform the duties, but that the job gave Wick a chance to view the entire operation from above and show his employees "that they work with me rather than for me."[11]

A former employee of Falcon Bronze recalled that the president's frequent visits to the various departments of the foundry and attention to particular details of various individuals' lives fostered family-like dedication and loyalty at all levels of the company hierarchy.[12] Wick also understood that the cultivation of dedication and loyalty required more than a positive attitude and frequent personal interaction between workers and the management. He maintained a regular bonus distribution plan for production employees when business conditions were favorable, and on occasion provided "a small honorarium" for select employees "in recognition of a job well done."[13] Conversely, he had little tolerance for individuals whom he considered to be lazy or lackadaisical in their work, and made sure the employees in question were aware of his dissatisfaction.[14]

In December, 1942, Wick spearheaded a resolution subsequently passed by the board of directors creating a pension trust fund in the hope of "encouraging employees to retire at the age of sixty five and increasing their morale, efficiency and loyalty by providing them with some measure of security."[15] Initial involvement in the company's pension trust was limited to employees earning $250 a month or more, but six years later, the plan was extended to cover all regular employees. In October, 1951, Wick presented the directors with a proposal to revise the capital stock structure of the firm. He cited the fact that the Falcon Bronze Company was closely and privately held by 32 families, making it nearly impossible under its existing

structure for anyone else to buy into the company. The president recommended that the shareholders release unissued treasury stock and establish a stock purchase plan for employees who demonstrated such attributes as dependability, an ability to follow through on difficult assignments, a pleasant personality, a positive attitude toward the company, sobriety and future management potential. The return benefits of employee ownership for the company would be an incentive for workers with a financial stake in the firm to manufacture more products more efficiently, and an initiative to "provide experienced, vigorous and progressive leadership to the Falcon Bronze Company."[16] The directors passed a motion authorizing the management to continue working on an employee stock purchase plan to eventually be presented to the shareholders for their consideration.[17]

The new agenda of the New Deal had its most direct effect on James L. Wick, Jr., through his business affairs. The American business community, in correlation with the nation as a whole, suffered through a desperate situation during the early 1930's. Though much of the cure offered up by Franklin D. Roosevelt after his inauguration in 1933 was considered unorthodox, if not outright radical, the administration's early response to the economy was generally welcomed by businessmen. According to George Mowry's interpretation of the period, the National Industrial Recovery Act was "conceived by the business community and on balance, even with its wage and hour controls..., its immediate, if not long run, consequence was to bolster the health of big business."[18] The beneficial relationship faded as New

Deal legislation progressed and the administration developed and strengthened its coalition of previously disenfranchised members of American Society. The American business community, "relatively docile while sick, ... began to scan the bill for medical fees and was shocked to realize how much it had paid and was likely to pay in the future for the New Deal treatment."[19]

One of the greatest beneficiaries of the New Deal coalition was organized labor. The passage of the Wagner Act with Roosevelt's support in 1935 established the National Labor Relations Board and legitimized independent labor unions. They in turn attracted tens of thousands of semi-skilled and unskilled workers in major American industries to join their ranks of card-carrying members. A series of violent strikes hit the core of American big business, the auto and steel industries, in 1936 and 1937. The Mahoning Valley steel district became one of the focal points of efforts by the Steel Workers Organizing Committee of John L. Lewis' Congress of Industrial Organizations during a month-long strike against the "little" steel companies in May and June of 1937. A riot between strikers and mill guards in Youngstown on June 19, 1937, claimed two lives and once again resulted with intervention by the Ohio National Guard. By 1942, the newly-named United Steelworkers of America succeeded in organizing almost all of the major steel-producing companies and scores of smaller producers and subsidiary suppliers.[20]

Though never active in politics on any level, Wick's conservative background and "old school" philosophies fostered his loyalty to the Republican party. He was genuinely fearful

and suspicious of Roosevelt's New Deal and then Harry S. Truman's Fair Deal policies, especially when they affected the livelihood of American businessmen and industries. Throughout the rest of his life, as government continued to assume a larger role in regulating and controlling the American economy and private industry, Wick acted as a reluctant and often bitter sideline observer of the transformation, articulating his concerns and frustration regularly in his correspondence.

During the Second World War Wick endured elements of the New Deal bureaucracy through many of the government-controlled recovery and war production programs. Representatives of the War Production Board arrived in Youngstown in June, 1943, according to Wick, for the purpose of instructing company office personnel on "how to answer the phone, receive guests at the reception room and give us instructions on how to instruct others." His reply to this compulsory training was "my God, if we don't know how to do these things, we ought to be sent to a concentration camp!" He found it useless to object to such triviality, since he perceived the government agents as having "an exaggerated opinion of themselves." Therefore he and twelve members of Falcon's supervisory and clerical staff spent five weeknights "under the tutelage of some New Deal crack pot."[21]

Many of the government controls on raw materials and prices that came into being during World War II remained in effect in the post-war era, which in turn restricted the ability of some industries and their outside suppliers to produce sufficient quantities of materials to meet the tremendous demands of the

period. Such was the case at the Falcon Bronze Company in 1951, when a shortage of foundry copper on the open market left the plant without the raw material in late September and early October. The management turned to 19th district U. S. representative Michael J. Kirwan, the longtime Youngstown area Congressman and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who applied pressure to have 200 tons of copper released from a government stockpile in Ravenna, Ohio, where Wick claimed there was "an acre and a half of copper ingots stored shoulder high." Wick, realizing the importance of his company's products in the operations of the mills and furnaces of the American steel industry, lamented that the "broken-down, worn-out gentlemen that head up these bureaus and commissions in Washington have been out of touch with the great steel industry so long that they move and think with a mind adapted to the ox-cart age!" For the first time in its sixty-one-year history, the company president wrote, Falcon Bronze had to cease production. He claimed that "high water, strikes, concentrated corporate control - nothing has been able to stop us, but our own government...."[22]

Wick was eager to relay his personal disdain for Roosevelt to anyone who would listen. While on a trip to England in 1949, he came across a monument to F.D.R. near the American embassy in Berkeley Square, London, where he recounted:

> I told them that anybody would have done more for England in the great war than Franklin Delano had. I told them how he had been re-elected twice on a platform of keeping our boys in our own country. Boy, that just broke their hearts to have me give them the lowdown on the "Great White Father."[23]

In the middle of the Korean War, he found it to be "an outrageous situation" when billions of dollars and thousands of lives were sacrificed "to permit the Korean and the Chinaman to say whether or not he wants to go back into the Communistic union," while in the United States "a decent, respectable guy who runs a decent, respectable business is denied the right to liberty, justice and the pursuit of happiness."[24]

As America moved farther into the Cold War era, Wick grew more discouraged with what he perceived to be a diminishing number of self-reliant individuals like himself who were willing and able to achieve their goals and objectives "without running to Washington for aid when the going gets tough."[25] He saw some signs of hope in Dwight D. Eisenhower's election and the return of a Republican administration to the White House that the trend toward a big and overbearing government would at least slow down if not turn around altogether. B. C. Moise, retired Executive Vice President of the National Tube Company of Pittsburgh and a regular correspondent of Wick's, assured his counterpart that such was not the case. He labeled Eisenhower as a "weak-kneed hanger-on of the Roosevelt-Truman administrations," and explained that he "could not be expected to be anti-Truman, anti-Roosevelt, or any kind of opponent of the Fair Deal because he owed everything he had to them, including his jump over some 200 men senior to him and much better soldiers than he has ever been."[26]

The sixty-third annual meeting of the company was held on January 22, 1953, six days prior to Wick's seventieth birthday.

He had decided it was time for the company to relieve him from the day-to-day responsibilities of operating the foundry, but he still wished to be recognized for his interest in the company, and involved in future capital and product expansion, finance, bonus and insurance issues.[27] At the organizational meeting of the board of directors following the shareholders' meeting, he informed his fellow directors of his intentions and his desire to become chairman of the board, an office which the directors had the authority to grant him because of a resolution adopted by the shareholders at their annual meeting of 1952. They, in turn, passed a resolution creating the position, and elected Wick to it by a unanimous vote. The directors subsequently promoted Vice President and General Manager Louis M. Nesselbush to the office of President.[28]

In the wake of the restructuring of the company's management, a committee of employees called on the Youngstown district office of the United Steelworkers of America to obtain the union's assistance in organizing the production and maintenance employees of Falcon Bronze.[29] On February 17, 1953, James P. Griffin, Director of the United Steel Workers of America, Congress of Industrial Organizations, District 26 office, informed the company that a majority of their eligible employees had joined the union, and requested a meeting with the management concerning the establishment of a collective bargaining unit at the foundry, with the U.S.W.A. being the sole bargaining agent of the employees in that unit.[30] L. M. Nesselbush was vacationing in Hawaii when Griffin's letter

arrived, and the company turned the matter over to Harry S. Manchester, a labor relations attorney with the Youngstown law firm of Harrington, Huxley and Smith. Manchester replied to Griffin that Falcon's management was not convinced that a majority of the company's employees were members, and therefore did not wish to meet with U.S.W.A. officials until the union was certified as the bargaining agent.[31]

James P. Griffin was well-known in the Mahoning Valley and elsewhere for his aggressive, often controversial methods of organizing union locals and conducting U.S.W.A. affairs through the Youngstown district office. Since he had ascended to the director's office, a series of wildcat strikes plagued organized plants in the Youngstown district. Union violence in Ashtabula led to a conviction against Griffin for contempt of court. Despite these facts, his re-election in February, 1953, by a four-to-one margin demonstrated strong support for him from the union membership in the Mahoning Valley.[32] James L. Wick, Jr., took some measure of pride, knowing of the district director's style and temperament, in speculating on how much Falcon Bronze's denial of Griffin's request for a meeting "burned him up"[33]

The U.S.W.A. district office responded to the company's negative reply by immediately filing a petition with the National Labor Relations Board requesting a hearing in regard to organizing Falcon Bronze. The hearing with company and union officials took place on the fourth and fifth of March, 1953, before an N.L.R.B. examiner. Albert Shipka, U.S.W.A. district staff representative and leader of the union team, claimed that a

majority of Falcon's eligible employees had already signed membership cards, and demanded an immediate vote on the establishment of a bargaining unit.[34] Company representatives disputed this claim, and invoked the procedures listed under the Taft-Hartley Act for establishing a vote of the employees for or against union representation. Subsequently, both sides were required to wait ten days to receive a transcript of the hearing, and then had two weeks to file briefs with the N.L.R.B. in Washington, D.C., which would then decide if the call for a vote was legitimate.

Two other major events occurred in March, 1953, which profoundly affected the outcome of the labor dispute. The first happened on March 12, when 40 of the company's employees, along with several individuals described by Wick as "goons and pug uglies" enlisted by the U.S.W.A., struck the foundry and brought operations to a halt.[35] The strike, according to union organizers, was called because the management released a pro-union employee for no other reason than to execute the plan of a "union-busting formula used previously by the company's anti-union attorney."[36] The plan, as articulated later in an open letter to the shareholders of the company, was to "discharge one union employee to determine whether or not the employees will strike to save one individual; if employees swallow the discharge it is followed by another - and another - and another - until the union leadership is out of the plant."[37] Union leaders vowed that the strike would continue until the individual was re-hired and management allowed the union to organize the plant.

Falcon Bronze President, L. M. Nesselbush, responded to the strike by sending a statement to all employees explaining that the individual in question was released because of a shortage of work and the fact that records showed he was the last man hired. As for the larger issue apparently behind the walkout, Nesselbush claimed that the company was working within legally prescribed parameters to determine whether or not a majority of the employees wanted union representation. He concluded by asking "if the union is so certain that you, the employees of Falcon, want it to be your representative, why doesn't it follow the procedure set up by law to determine the answer to that question?"[38]

Tensions were high on both sides in the days between the N.L.R.B. hearing and the strike call. Under the supervision of Albert Shipka, the union launched an information campaign in order to galvanize support among Falcon's production and maintenance employees and to compel management to enter into meaningful negotiations. A newspaper-like leaflet titled "The Falcon Organizer" came out on March 11, which detailed the results of the N.L.R.B. hearing held the previous week. The union claimed that Falcon's management attempted to delay action on the organization petition and tried to include "six foremen, a watchman, and four alleged part-time workers in the bargaining unit."[39] Wick later confirmed the attempt by company representatives to "see to it that certain people that we wanted in the bargaining unit were in there," and the union's effort to prevent this from happening.[40] The union tract also stated

that the organizing committee offered to accept the eleven individuals proposed by the company into the bargaining unit, if management would agree to an immediate election, which they "flatly refused to do."[41]

The board of directors of Falcon Bronze held a special meeting after the N.L.R.B. hearings and reviewed the chain of events surrounding the union situation. L. M. Nesselbush reported he had learned that the request for representation by the union was linked to the dissatisfaction of some employees over the fact that he was elected president of the company, and so he offered his resignation to the directors. They promptly rejected his offer, and instead unanimously passed a motion extending a vote of confidence to Nesselbush.[42]

The Youngstown Vindicator questioned the rationale of the decision by the union and some employees to strike. An editorial asserted the right under law for employees to vote for union representation, and conceded the fact that some companies resorted to measures designed to confuse and delay the process over months and even years. In the case of Falcon Bronze the organization process was less than a month old, and therefore the editor felt that "employees have no justification for a strike."[43] The newspaper's management had more than a passing interest in the outcome of the strike. The publisher, William F. Maag, Jr., was Wick's old schoolmate and close friend. Maag's nephew, William J. "Busty" Brown, president of the paper, was also a shareholder and director of the Falcon Bronze Company.

The second major occurrence was on March 30, 1953, when L. M. Nesselbush suffered a slight stroke and was incapacitated. Wick was in Williamsburg, Virginia, when the remaining Falcon Bronze directors called him home to assume control of the company.[44] He returned to Youngstown and learned that Nesselbush had experienced an arterial spasm in his brain which did not cause any damage, that his doctor ordered complete rest for at least three weeks, and that he return to the office afterward only on a limited basis. Wick responded to the news by sending a terse memorandum to the other directors of the company. He flatly rejected the notion that Nesselbush could return in a limited capacity, stating that "if anyone is to take over the office of the President of this Company, he must be able to do more than what he has been doing as General Manager." Wick recounted three previous physical breakdowns Nesselbush had suffered since 1945, questioned whether he had the stamina to endure bargaining with the union, and suggested that the directors "retire him from all participation in the affairs of the Company."[45]

The chairman of the board called a special meeting of the directors on April 16, 1953, where they discussed the president's physical condition and passed a motion relieving him of all duties and responsibilities for six months, with full pay and benefits. Wick also reported that the National Labor Relations Board had authorized and conducted a vote on whether or not the United Steelworkers of America would be the collective bargaining agent for the maintenance and production employees of the

company. Of 71 eligible workers, 67 cast ballots with 43 for the union and 24 against it. With the U.S.W.A. now established as the legal bargaining representative for Falcon Bronze's employees, the directors passed a motion instructing the company's legal counsel and available officers to bargain with the union for the best possible contract so that the plant could be reopened as quickly as possible.[46]

With Louis M. Nesselbush removed from his duties as President and General Manager, Wick resumed control of the Falcon Bronze Company and went to work on settling the firm's labor dispute. Negotiations to end the strike had been up to that point slow and unproductive. Since the work stoppage began on March 12, the company's only representative at bargaining sessions was Attorney Manchester, whom the union negotiators viewed with great contempt and labeled "the area's most notorious anti-labor attorney."[47] Wick was perfectly content to continue following Manchester's advice in keeping company management out of the bargaining process. When T. Lamar Jackson, another partner in Harrington, Huxley and Smith, called Wick on April 15 to inform him that Manchester was busy with a lawsuit in court and could not meet with the union bargaining committee, he suggested that Wick join him in a preliminary meeting with the union before the actual negotiations, and try to persuade them to allow the employees to go back to work while the bargaining agents ironed out a contract. Wick had no qualms about having such a meeting, yet saw no reason to be there in person.[48]

Wick's resentment and frustration over the situation at the foundry grew as the strike dragged on. He realized how few options he had to counteract the union's favorable status under the National Labor Relations Act, and its ability to keep the plant shut down for the duration of the dispute. He lamented that "here was a concern that has always more than pulled its weight in the community, has been most generous, has paid the highest wages in the industry and has the most liberal pension plan, yet we haven't any standing in the courts whatever, not unless some one of our boys loses his head and gets his head busted by some of these pug uglies."[49] Prior to the announcement of the N.L.R.B.'s decision on the union petition and subsequent employee vote, Wick held out some hope that common sense and loyalty to the company would prevail with a majority of Falcon's employees, who would then carry the vote in the company's favor. Still, he cynically joked that the N.L.R.B. "will delay the certification of our victory until they find sufficient evidence to declare the election unlawful due to unfair labor practices on our part!."[50]

The union organizers were also frustrated by what they perceived to be an ongoing effort by the company's management to stonewall in the negotiating process. On May 8, 1953, their impatience boiled over when pickets prevented supervisory and office employees from entering the foundry, claiming the measure was a retaliation for management allowing a customer to pick up finished materials the day before.[51] The following week, Wick signed a petition for a restraining order to halt "alleged

illegal picketing, acts of violence and disrespect for the American flag."[52] In the petition the company claimed that strikers refused to allow materials to enter the plant and customers to remove finished products, threatened employees attempting to enter with physical violence, threw bricks and bottles through windows in the foundry and caused the American flag that flew over the plant to be hung upside down. At the injunction hearing, counsel for U.S.W.A. Local 4919, now the legal bargaining agent for the employees of Falcon, argued that management was ultimately responsible for the incidents of May 8, and that they were involved in a deliberate attempt to prolong the strike by refusing to bargain with union officials. The union representative noted that as of the hearing date, there had only been three meetings involving both sides, with Attorney Manchester being the only one present to negotiate for the company.[53]

As the legal maneuvering, bickering and frustration continued on both sides of the standoff at the Falcon Bronze Company through May of 1953, it appeared increasingly evident that neither party was aware of or particularly interested in the fundamental issues that separated them. The union, angered by the company's refusal to release information pertaining to employee policy and unwilling to negotiate in the absence of key management figures, left their original demands on the table. James L. Wick, Jr., stood behind the existing wage and benefit package offered by the company, noting that Falcon's hourly wage rates were already higher than the current union scale. The

company contributed $20,000 to $25,000 more per year to its private pension fund than the standard "C.I.O. plan" would have required, something that Wick and Falcon's fund administrators wished to conceal from the union in case the company eventually had the opportunity to take on the cheaper plan.[54] At their annual meeting of January 22, 1953, Falcon's shareholders approved the management's proposal to establish a stock purchase plan through payroll deductions for employees with more than eighteen months of service.[55] With all that the company had invested in its employees, Wick felt the union's demand for a "substantial wage increase" would push the rate into what he called "the high blue yonder," which was outrageous and unfeasible for a company the size of Falcon Bronze.[56]

The struggle over union representation had deeply divided the company's work force, as demonstrated by the two-to-one victory of the union organizers in the April, 1953 election results. In a letter to the editor of the Youngstown Vindicator, four of the five workers responsible for bringing in the union never mentioned wages and benefits as priority issues. They clearly articulated that the primary reasons for their actions were the company's policy whereby certain employees were "discriminated against" and "restricted only to the dirtiest and [most] menial work," and that these same employees were "visited, threatened, intimidated and coerced because of their desire to establish a steelworkers' union."[57] A group of ten Falcon Bronze employees loyal to the company responded to these accusations in their own subsequent letter to the editor. In

regard to the union men's claim of discrimination, they stated that "anyone who is associated with or knows anything about a foundry will know that all the work is hard and dirty." The pro-company workers answered back on the issue of advancement, claiming that almost every laborer was asked at some point to train for one of the skilled positions in the plant. They related that "some men refused or felt they could not do the work," as was the case of the pro-union employee who was released March 11. Responding to the job security claims by the union, the loyal workers concluded that "we have yet to see a man fired for doing his job and doing it well."[58]

The line of division between the employees seemed to be drawn according to years of service in the company. To meet the tremendous demands for bronze and copper castings resulting from World War II, the company hired several, generally unskilled workers in the mid-1940's. These newer employees by 1953 either had not accumulated enough experience or never developed the desire to assimilate into the Falcon Bronze Company's paternalistic system of advancement as crafted and administered by James L. Wick, Jr. Evidence of tenure as a determining factor was found in the individuals who signed the pro-union and pro-management letters to the editor in March, 1953. The four union activists had an average length of service of five years and three months, while the ten company loyalists averaged nearly eleven-and-a-half years with the firm.[59] A former office worker concluded that the introduction of the new pool of

employees in and around the war years effectively "broke up the family of [the] Falcon Bronze Company."[60]

Wick realized by the end of April, 1953, that the chances of ending the strike and impasse between the Falcon Bronze Company and the United Steelworkers of America were practically nil. On April 22, he traveled to New York and attempted unsuccessfully to contact the chairman and other principals of the American Brake Shoe Company, a larger competitor in the non-ferrous foundry business. Wick returned to New York on May 6, met with chairman William B. Given, Jr., at his home, and made a merger offer whereby American Brake Shoe would take over the plant, equipment and real estate of Falcon Bronze on the basis of an exchange of stock. Agents and employees of American Brake Shoe made several trips to Youngstown to inspect the plant and production machinery of Falcon in late April and early May. Based on their findings, the firm turned down Wick's merger offer and countered with a proposal to purchase Falcon's property and equipment outright.[61]

On May 28, Wick and several key executives of the American Brake Shoe Company met again in formal negotiations. Both sides signed a preliminary agreement the next day, in which the Falcon Bronze Company would liquidate its assets and the American Brake Shoe Company would then purchase the plant, equipment and property.[62] When he returned to Youngstown, Wick presented the agreement to several other shareholders who along with him held over two-thirds of company's stock, and with their signatures gained acceptance of the proposal. The chairman of the board and

other stockholders representing 40% of the Falcon Bronze Company's outstanding shares signed a petition on June 6, calling for a special meeting of the shareholders to consider the dissolution of the firm and liquidation of its assets, signifying that they had had enough of the U.S.W.A. strike and shutdown of the plant.[63] On June 11, Wick called together Falcon's supervisory and office staff to inform them of the impending sale of the company, and to offer his hope that some of them would transfer their employment to the new owners[64]

The shareholders met on June 18, 1953, with 17,483 of the 17,839 outstanding shares represented by the owners or by proxy. In presenting the proposal for liquidation of the company, Wick and his supporters listed as factors impeding the operations of the company the incapacity of L. M. Nesselbush, president, the lack of operating and maintenance personnel due to the current strike, the prohibitive wage demands of the employees' union and the chairman's desire to retire.[65] The results of the subsequent vote on the proposal had 17,461 shares in favor of liquidation and 22 shares against such an action.[66]

Those 22 shares were held by one employee, a union supporter, who had signed proxies for the union's lawyer, public relations director and two committeemen to attend. Wick recounted that during the discussion of the motion to dissolve, the union team presented "a forty-five minute dissertation on the infirmities of Mr. Wick and his refusal to give them any information."[67] While the union attorney, Herschel Krieger, claimed to speak for all the employees in pleading that the

company be left intact, Wick counted at least thirty workers who were shareholders in attendance that were not swayed. The chairman concluded that if Krieger "hadn't talked so much, I am inclined to think that some of those present might have voted against the dissolution just because their hearts were heavy."[68] The board of directors met immediately after the shareholders' meeting and named Wick and David A. Endres, the company's vice president and secretary, as liquidating agents for the firm.[69]

News of the Falcon Bronze Company's pending dissolution brought extensive coverage from the city's only newspaper, the Youngstown Vindicator, as it cited the liquidation of the strike-bound company as yet another casualty of the "C.I.O.'s war on Youngstown industry."[70] Letters of regret and consolation from Wick's friends and business associates located throughout North America poured into his office in June and July of 1953. Wick defined his own perspective of the events which had transpired since February of that year in acknowledging each letter that came in. For him, the bottom line was that "blackmail, intimidation, coercion and C.I.O. demands all smell with the same offensive odor," and that he and his fellow shareholders did not wish to submit to the union's pressure tactics.[71] Wick concluded that Jim Griffin and his associates had "found themselves in a hot spot when they really realized what they were doing to a company that had played the game on the level; but they were not men enough to admit it."[72] He also believed that many of the employees who went with the union regretted their

actions, and that they put their faith in the union organizers who assured them that Wick "would be crawling on [his] hands and knees out to the picket shanty on March 12 and sign up on their demands."[73]

In the weeks following the announcement of Falcon Bronze's liquidation, Wick busied himself with the task of winding up the company's affairs. He signed a purchase agreement with the American Brake Shoe Company for all real property and equipment of the corporation, which would be moved from the foundry in downtown Youngstown to several of the new owner's subsidiary plants throughout the country. The sale was finalized on July 22, and the following week the remaining Falcon Bronze employees were terminated and the records of the corporation removed from the foundry.[74]

After July 31, 1953, James L. Wick, Jr., withdrew from the business community and concentrated on other activities, such as painting, world travel plans and his remaining civic functions. Despite all that had occurred in the previous six months, he was still convinced that the system of paternalism he embraced as a young man and utilized in his climb to the executive level of the business community was healthy and beneficial to both workers and employers. Wick retained some satisfaction in knowing that experienced union organizers like James P. Griffin and Albert Shipka had underestimated his resolve to hold fast to his principles, even at the tremendous cost that he, the stockholders and employees of the Falcon Bronze Company had to incur. He

entered retirement with confidence, hoping to maintain "a lot of peace of mind from [then] on out."[75]

The Falcon Bronze Company, its product line, revenues and the ninety-five jobs it contributed to the industrial livelihood of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley from 1890 to 1953 became sacrificial lambs in the conflict between leaders of District 26 of the United Steelworkers of America and the management of the company under the leadership of James L. Wick, Jr. While the U.S.W.A. organizers resorted to every measure of power entitled to them through the National Labor Relations Act in attempting to become legal bargaining agent for the employees of the foundry, Wick, with the backing of his fellow directors and shareholders, refused to recognize the legitimacy and demands of the union members and organizers over their own rights as an established corporation. They held on to their desire for self-determination throughout the struggle, even when the only option left was liquidation of a healthy and profitable company. With no legal precedent in existence to resolve the conflict in either side's favor, sheer stubbornness and a determination not to concede from both parties created the final outcome.

Though both sides lost in the battle for labor representation at Falcon Bronze, events in the months and years following the company's dissolution demonstrated that a small group of employees and the U.S.W.A. won a victory of a different kind. On August 31, 1953, three former members of the Falcon Bronze management team, L. M. Nesselbush, John C. Lopatta and Ralph W. Skerratt, Jr., along with Youngstown attorney R. M.

Hammond, incorporated the Falcon Foundry Company and obtained a plant site in Lowellville, Ohio, located to the southeast of Youngstown along the Mahoning River. The new company sold out its entire issue of stock in a matter of weeks, with shareholders including sixteen former employees of Falcon Bronze along with their families and friends. Falcon Foundry built a product line very similar to that of its predecessor, and soon attracted many of Falcon Bronze's former customers from the local and national steel industry who desired the familiar quality and customer service they had previously enjoyed. The new firm implemented a profit-sharing plan whereby one-third of the gross profits were distributed annually to all employees. The company recognized the United Steel Workers of America as bargaining agent for its employees, and has operated continuously and without any strikes from 1953 to the present, despite the loss of many valuable customers in the retrenchment of the Mahoning Valley's basic steel industry from 1977 to 1981. Today, Falcon Foundry has a diversified product line and an international customer list, and the management expects continued growth well into the twenty-first century.[76]

NOTES

CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER IV

PROMOTING CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND RECREATION IN YOUNGSTOWN

James L. Wick, Jr.'s position as a leader in the Mahoning Valley's business community provided him with the opportunity to play a vital role in several civic improvements for the expanding Youngstown metropolitan area in the first half of the twentieth century. He devoted his talents, enthusiasm, boundless energy and thousands of hours to organizations and institutions charged with promoting the moral, cultural, spiritual and educational growth of the community. Serving in the capacities of board member, officer, chairman, elder, teacher, and friend, Wick strove to help create community resources for his increasingly diverse fellow citizens to use for their own improvement. As with his business philosophy and practices, this public service was consistent with the values and sense of individual responsibility instilled in him during his youth. The results of Wick's efforts, though not always appreciated or universally accepted in his own time, have made a lasting impression on Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley as the community re-defines itself in the post-industrial era.

As previously noted in his biographical sketch, Wick's resume of civic activities and achievements was impressive. Between the years 1930 and 1960, he devoted the lion's share of his time and energy to two functions, serving as a commissioner of the Youngstown Township Park District, better known as Mill

Creek Park, from 1937 to 1958, and as Chairman of the Board of Governors of Youngstown College from 1931 to 1955. Though both institutions were conceived and nurtured in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by men Wick looked up to as role models, he went about his work in each capacity with separate and almost opposite goals in mind.

At Youngstown College, he and President Howard W. Jones shared a vision of a full-fledged institution of higher learning evolving from the old Y.M.C.A. Association School, though others intended to maintain it as such. His work with the college also drew him into an effort to establish and recognize its surrounding neighborhood containing other educational and religious assets as a center for cultural development, though having a designated area for cultural activities did not seem to be a priority in the diverse and pluralistic city of Youngstown. In Mill Creek Park, the tables were altogether turned. There, Wick and his fellow commissioners carried on with a reverence for the intentions of the park's founder, Volney Rogers. While purchasing additional tracts of land, they looked to expand on Rogers' ideal of a lush, natural preserve for quiet, healthful relaxation, while others looked to the park to fulfill different recreational needs for the still-developing city after the Second World War.

A Fight for Independence and Higher Learning

Higher education was profoundly influenced by the shift of the population from rural to urban beginning in the late-

nineteenth century. Prior to 1900, colleges and universities were located primarily amid cornfields and pastures, with course offerings concentrated on the liberal arts and agriculture. Though some private and municipal institutions existed in larger cities, their enrollments were insignificant in comparison to the size of the populations in their surrounding metropolitan areas. After 1920, as J. Martin Klotsche noted in The Urban University: And the Future of Our Cities, enrollments in city colleges and universities expanded rapidly as they "became increasingly aware of their urban environment," and new schools sprouted up in other cities "to make educational opportunities available to the many."[1]

The first truly urban institution of higher learning to appear in the State of Ohio was the University of Cincinnati, which began when its two oldest units, Cincinnati College and the Medical College of Ohio, were chartered separately in the Queen City in January, 1819.[2] The University of Cincinnati was re-chartered as a municipal university in 1870, under the provisions of a law enacted that year allowing cities to provide funding for educational activities. The urban Universities of Toledo and Akron followed Cincinnati's lead, becoming municipal schools in 1884 and 1913, respectively.[3]

Youngstown College, the Mahoning Valley's first and only comprehensive institution of higher learning and forerunner of Youngstown State University, was primarily a twentieth-century phenomenon. The college had its roots in the Young Men's Christian Association, founded in Youngstown in 1868 and

incorporated in 1885. In 1888, the local "Y" expanded its educational programs beyond the customary storefront reading room and frequent lectures on literary works, authors and religion, by offering a course in mechanical drawing. The Youngstown Y.M.C.A. built its first permanent structure in downtown Youngstown in 1892, which included several lecture rooms to house the growing schedule of evening academic and vocational classes being offered to its growing student body. Alvin W. Skardon, author of a history of Youngstown State University and its predecessors, observed the similarities between the late-nineteenth century "Y" night school and the subsequent collegiate institution. In both cases, the programs catered to and depended on "the industrial and business life of the community," especially in terms of financial support and faculty, and counted with the greatest frequency in their respective constituencies "those people who were financially unable to go away to college or who had to work to earn a living and could only go to school part-time."[4]

In 1908, the Youngstown Association School, as the Y.M.C.A. night school was then called, offered the first post-secondary program when the Youngstown School of Law opened with a class of nine students. The Association School was incorporated in 1916 within the laws of the State of Ohio, remaining under the auspices of the Youngstown "Y."[5] That same year, the Youngstown Y.M.C.A. opened a brand new, seven-story building to accommodate the ever-growing demand for the association's programs and services. In 1919, Leonard T. Skeggs joined the Youngstown "Y" as Secretary of the Education Department, and began a campaign of

rapid expansion of the Association School, especially on the collegiate level. The School of Law received authorization from the State of Ohio to grant the degree of Bachelor of Law in 1920. That same year the school offered a four-year course in business administration. In 1921, Skeggs changed the name of the school to the Youngstown Institute of Technology, and opened an evening college of arts and sciences in cooperation with faculty from nearby Hiram and Thiel Colleges.[6]

James L. Wick, Jr., first became involved with the Youngstown Y.M.C.A. in 1907, when he joined the board of trustees. From 1908 to 1909 he worked in the Association School as a mechanical drawing instructor. Wick resigned from the board of trustees in 1913 to devote his energies to the establishment of the Youngstown Council-Boy Scouts of America. After serving as president of the Boy Scout Council, he returned to the board of the Y.M.C.A. in 1919, the same year that Leonard Skeggs joined the staff. Wick became chairman of the association's education committee in 1921, and was conceivably in a position to work with Skeggs in developing the Youngstown Institute of Technology.[7]

Skeggs' institute offered a broad array of course work to persons of all ages who wished to improve their educational credentials. There were elementary schools for working boys and men, a day and evening high school, an automobile repair school located behind the Youngstown Public Library building on the city's lower North side, and a business and secretarial school. On the post-secondary level, the institute ran schools of engineering, commerce and finance, liberal arts and law.

Starting in 1927, the institute offered both day and evening courses through the liberal arts school. The range of offerings was so wide that an individual could literally enter the institute with a fourth-grade education, and under one roof do all the work necessary to graduate with a Bachelor of Law degree.[8]

The demand for classroom space for the institute quickly outgrew what was available in the Y.M.C.A. building. In 1923, the association leased a large house in the old upper-class neighborhood on Wick Avenue to provide space for the overflow. In 1926, the Y.M.C.A. made a permanent investment in the neighborhood when it purchased the former John C. Wick home at 410 Wick Avenue. All classes of the Youngstown Institute of Technology moved there from the downtown building and the rented building located across the street. In 1928, the Y.M.C.A. leased the former Henry Wick residence, next door to their property, in order to accommodate the ever-increasing enrollment of students in the school. That same year, the school of arts and sciences was renamed, albeit unofficially, the Youngstown College of the Y.M.C.A. In 1930, the college received authorization to grant the degree of Bachelor of Arts.[9]

Leonard Skeggs moved up to the general secretary's office in 1923, and hired Homer L. Nearpass to fill the positions of education secretary and director of the Youngstown Institute of Technology. Nearpass was a former high school teacher and administrator with a proven track record. According to Skardon, he and Skeggs, an enthusiastic promoter, made up an effective

partnership in further expanding the institute and educational programs of the "Y."[10]

As chairman of the education committee of the Y.M.C.A. Board of Trustees, James L. Wick, Jr., appreciated Leonard Skeggs's energy and enthusiasm in building and promoting the institute in the 1920s, but was increasingly frustrated by the fact that Skeggs operated as "a one-man band" and rarely involved Wick and his committee in the decision-making process.[11] Wick recounted that he confronted Skeggs with his concerns after a meeting one day, and told him "that Leonard had [his] resignation effective whenever he wished." Wick went on to say that he "was bold enough to recommend that the 'education department' of the Y.M.C.A. be placed under the control of a non-sectarian board of leading and representative Jews, Catholics, Protestants and non-believers," which signified his desire from the outset to have the larger community embrace and support the programs of the Association School[12]

From 1928 to 1931, a series of events transpired that demonstrated the commitment and invaluable support of the local business community to the development of the Y.M.C.A.'s education department and the Youngstown Institute of Technology. In 1928 a Development Committee of the "Y" Board of Trustees proposed a $1,000,000 expansion plan that included the construction of a new building for the education department. Frank Purnell, Assistant President of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co., embraced the plan and almost singlehandedly raised the million-dollar goal from local industries and individuals, including a $250,000 pledge

from his company. Y.M.C.A. president Leroy Manchester appointed a building committee with James L. Wick, Jr. as chairman, and charged them with securing plans for and constructing the new education building to replace the existing structure at 410 Wick Avenue. The committee produced plans for a multi-purpose, Tudor-style collegiate building. They laid the cornerstone on May 24, 1931, and had the building ready for occupancy in September of the same year.[13]

At a meeting of the board of trustees of the Y.M.C.A. on July 28, 1931, General Secretary Leonard T. Skeggs announced the appointment of a separate board of governors to control the operations of the Youngstown Institute of Technology, which at that point administered all of the educational programs of the "Y". This board was to be made up of 26 men of various religious denominations, as Wick had suggested previously, and functioned under the authority of the Y.M.C.A. board. Attorney Franklin B. Powers, a "Y" trustee, was appointed to prepare a charter for the fledgling college. James L. Wick, Jr. was named chairman of the new Board of Governors of the Institute.[14]

Skeggs also introduced thirty-six-year-old Howard W. Jones to the trustees at this meeting, and announced that he had joined the staff as assistant general secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in charge of the education department. Jones, a native of Palmyra, Ohio, was a 1920 graduate of Hiram College and later received a Master's Degree from Western Reserve University. His previous experience included the Y.M.C.A. preparatory school in Cleveland, where he served as an athletic coach, teacher and then principal,

and Hiram College, where he was assistant to the president until coming to Youngstown. Jones later received an honorary doctorate from Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, and thereafter carried the title of "Doctor."[15] Wick introduced himself to Jones after the meeting and shared with him his feelings on the enormity of the task that lay ahead for the board of governors and administration of the college. He recalled asking Jones "have you burned your bridges behind you?"[16]

Wick, Jones and the institute's new governing body faced several important and difficult issues in the early 1930's. The problems ranged from the mundane, such as whether the proper name for the school should be the Youngstown Institute of Technology or Youngstown College, to more serious matters like the awkward relationship between the institution and the Y.M.C.A. and the duplication of responsibilities inherent in Jones' and Homer Nearpass' positions. The conflict that developed between the two men at the end of 1931 was the first issue the Board of Governors acted on decisively, and the outcome set the tone for the future development of the institution.

In having both an assistant general secretary in charge of educational activities and a secretary of the education department, Skeggs and the trustees of the Y.M.C.A. expected Jones to supervise the whole education department while Nearpass concentrated on the collegiate division.[17] However clear their job descriptions were, differences of opinion arose between the two due to the fact that Jones possessed a strong background in college administration and Nearpass had most of his previous

experience in secondary education.[18] Wick saw the ramifications of this issue and called Leonard Skeggs back from a vacation in Canada in the fall of 1931 with the request that his executive committee "have the authority to employ or discharge the secretary of the educational department or they were unnecessary."[19] Skeggs was upset about the interruption of his vacation, but granted the authority to the committee.

The conflict between Jones and Nearpass reached the surface in December, 1931, when, according to Wick, "Nearpass led a revolt against Howard Jones." The details of Nearpass' alleged insubordination were not articulated, but, on December 21, the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors called both men before them to hear their respective sides of the story. After deliberating on what they heard, the committee passed a motion instructing Jones and Wick "to release Mr. Nearpass and take whatever action they thought best in order to cause the least embarrassment to both the school and Mr. Nearpass."[20] With Nearpass's dismissal and Leonard Skeggs' death in 1933, the name "Youngstown Institute of Technology" and the philosophies that directed its operation through the 1920's faded away. Howard Jones assumed full control of the education department of the Y.M.C.A., and directed his attention and faculties toward transforming Youngstown College from an all-purpose Association School to an exclusively collegiate institution. Though Jones was the architect of this process, he could not have achieved his goals without the unswerving support of James L. Wick, Jr., and a group of Wick's friends and allies on the Board of Governors,

who, through their energy and influence, developed funding and a close working relationship between the college and the Mahoning Valley's business community.

James L. Wick, Jr., and Howard W. Jones also developed a lifelong friendship, based on their mutual admiration for each other's abilities in their respective positions, shared dedication to the advancement of Youngstown College and common interest in the role of academia and education in the progress of the community and society as a whole. Their rapport was the foundation of a very effective working relationship which sometimes took them beyond the office or boardroom in overseeing the development of the college. An example occurred in September, 1948, while plans were under way for a new Youngstown College library.

The two men traveled to Wick's vacation home in Rockport, Massachusetts, and visited the libraries of Amherst, Williams and Mount Holyoke Colleges, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After discussing the organization and operations of each facility with their respective librarians, Wick led Jones on an extensive tour of Boston's historical sites, providing so many accounts of individuals and events gathered from his own studies that Jones lightly insisted that Wick "take a chair in history at Youngstown College!"[21] Years after their initial acquaintance and friendship, Wick stated to another old friend that "of all the fine administrators in Youngstown and in the Steel Industry, there is no one abler than Howard Jones," and that he "always operates better than his budget, and he is so

very fair and still insists on those old fundamental basic principles that you and I were raised on."[22] Jones told Wick at one point in their relationship that "it has always been a privilege to work with you,...the loyalty which makes you unsparing of your own time and strength for the College is something I value tremendously."[23]

Jones and Wick both realized that Youngstown College could never reach its full potential as an institution of higher learning as long as the Youngstown Y.M.C.A. maintained a controlling interest in its operations and finances. With the goals of autonomy and collegiate-level academic standards on their common agenda, the two new friends worked diligently to attain success, utilizing their unique talents and differing approaches in the process. Howard Jones, according to Skardon, labored "quietly but effectively behind the scenes" throughout the 1930's, expanding the college-level offerings of the school and gradually weeding out elementary, secondary, and vocationally-oriented courses.[24] Wick, with his zeal and moral convictions behind him, made discussion of the issue of an independent university a frequent item of board meetings at the "Y" and the college from 1931 onward.

Wick's greatest adversary in this debate was Leonard Skeggs. Their conflicting opinions led to an argument that resulted in an exchange of strained letters in which Wick requested specifics of the organization of the school and Skeggs provided such, along with an elaboration of his concerns over the possibility of the institute becoming larger than the Y.M.C.A. itself and the need

to preserve the school's mission of serving the educational needs of the whole population of Youngstown.[25] Wick presented these letters, along with the results of other inquiries, to the Executive Committee of the institute's Board of Governors on November 10, 1931, and posed the question of whether or not the board should govern an Association School or a separate college, since it appeared to be prohibitive to attempt to conduct both under one administration.

The committee members present held the consensus that the link between the school and the Y.M.C.A. was, at least for the time being, unbreakable. C. S. Robinson, committee member and vice president of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company, interjected his concern over trying to establish an independent college with its own funding sources in the depths of the depression, stating that he would "hate to start out and raise any money now." Chairman Wick concurred with this sentiment. Howard Jones felt that maintaining the status quo on the school's relationship to the "Y" would not affect their ability to grant degrees, but he also thought that having standard collegiate degrees was necessary, stating "we must not have a second-rate school, and we will have a second-rate school if we do not have standard degrees."[26]

The committee also voiced their preference for the name Youngstown College, and urged Wick and Attorney Franklin B. Powers to continue work on a charter for the college. The Executive Committee met again in December, 1931, to examine a draft of articles of incorporation for Youngstown College, which

listed the purpose as being "the education of such persons as shall apply and are qualified therefore, in such branches of knowledge, customarily taught in approved high schools and colleges, as shall be selected and established therein by the Board of Trustees." Membership in the contemplated corporation was limited to 33 individuals, of which ten were to be trustees of the Youngstown Y.M.C.A., and three to serve ex-officio in their positions as general secretary of the "Y", superintendent of Youngstown City Schools and superintendent of Mahoning County schools.[27] The committee recommended that the charter be brought before the full board of the college, and then the Board of Trustees of the Y.M.C.A. This proposed charter never appeared again after January, 1932, when Attorney J. E. Bennett, a supporter of Skeggs' position on the school, became President of the "Y." According to Wick, "about the first thing [Bennett] did was to stop Franklin Powers' legal work on a charter."[28]

The negative effects of the Y.M.C.A.'s control over Youngstown College were poignantly demonstrated at the end of 1932. The "Y" carried an operating deficit of $30,000 in December, 1932, and the executive committees of the association and Youngstown College met to discuss the budget committee's plan to have the college absorb $6,881 of the shortfall since it was operating in the black. The joint committees voted to accept the budget committee's plan, despite Howard Jones' concern that the cuts would have a negative effect on the college staff which was already underpaid in comparison to other institutions. James L. Wick, Jr., viewed this matter, and subsequent instances where the

Y.M.C.A. board tapped money out of the profitable college to cover other departments that were running in the red, as "a dishonest use of funds," and was even more convinced of the need for the college to be a separate entity.[29] Skardon noted that the "Y" trustees considered the practice to be perfectly legitimate, considering the fact that "the College buildings had been purchased by Y.M.C.A. funds and were owned by the Y.M.C.A., but that no rent was charged for their use."[30]

Maintenance of the status-quo in the stressful relationship between Youngstown College and the Y.M.C.A. continued through the mid-1930's, until pressures from the larger academic world bore down on the college and created an impetus for change. Criticisms and disciplinary actions from organizations like the Ohio College Association and North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, both of whose membership and accreditation were vital to the continued development of Youngstown College as a full-fledged institution of higher learning, forced the trustees of the college and the Y.M.C.A to act.

Youngstown College's application for admission into the Ohio College Association in 1935 was rejected on the basis of four discrepancies: inadequate academic credentials for many faculty members, a need for higher academic standards, limitations in the college's library facilities and a complete lack of endowment funds. In 1936, the College re-applied and Ohio College Association reviewers again visited Youngstown. They noted improvements in the academic integrity of the institution and

stated that, except for the lack of a production endowment, "Youngstown College has arrived at the standard which qualified it to be admitted to the Ohio College Association...." The review team recommended that Youngstown College be admitted and the endowment requirement waived for a period of five years, so that a fund could be initiated. The executive committee of the association tabled the college's application, choosing instead to follow very closely its own conditions for membership.[31]

Three significant items came before the Board of Governors at their meeting of March 22, 1935. James L. Wick, Jr. was re-elected chairman, the board conferred the title of President of Youngstown College upon Howard Jones, and a report of the Committee on Authority to Grant Degrees recommended that the college be reorganized as a separate corporation in order to ensure "the attainment of high standards of scholarship amongst its students, the proper accreditation with the education associations generally involved, and the assured power to grant degrees." After a lengthy discussion, the board passed a motion to approve the recommendations.[32] Two years later, the boards of the Y.M.C.A. and Youngstown College reached an agreement on language and content of a proposed charter, and J. E. Bennett, President of the Youngstown Y.M.C.A., Paul B. Davies, General Secretary of the "Y", Howard Jones and James L. Wick, Jr., signed articles of incorporation for Youngstown College and filed them in the office of the Ohio Secretary of State.

Though the College became a distinct educational institution when it incorporated in March of 1937, and its members and

directors were able to manage budgets and expenditures, approve policies, determine the use of its properties and facilities, and appoint the president, it remained attached to the general operations of the Y.M.C.A. and ultimately subject to the desires of its board of trustees. The new corporation had the right "to acquire, hold and dispose of property," yet the college's existing physical plant was still owned by the "Y."[33] The incorporation of 1937 proved to be a compromise between Wick, Jones and their supporters who strove to create a full-service collegiate institution and those trustees of the Y.M.C.A. who wanted to maintain control over what they considered to be the "Y's" education department.

The partial autonomy that the 1937 incorporation provided for Youngstown College did not satisfy the standards of the larger academic community. In 1940, President Jones received notice that the University of Pittsburgh no longer accepted course credits for students transferring from Youngstown College since the school was not a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The Pennsylvania State Department of Education also wrote to inform the College that it no longer recognized the school as a teacher training institution because of its lack of accreditation. Word was out that the North Central Association was considering a ruling whereby teachers graduating from non-accredited Colleges could not teach in accredited high schools. Jones and Wick realized that accreditation was imperative to both the short- and long-term future of Youngstown College. However, with the minimum

requirement for membership in the North Central Association being a production endowment of at least $500,000, and the fact that the college had no endowment funds, Jones recommended to the board that they "delay until we had better hopes, at least."[34]

Two years later, the Board of Governors of Youngstown College applied for membership in the North Central Association, and in February, 1943, two examiners visited the campus. Their report listed the college's many positive attributes, such as its close relationship with several local industrial firms, rapid expansion of programs and facilities, strong leadership in the Board of Governors and a positive perception from the community. Areas of concern included the low salaries and limited opportunities for professional development and research for faculty members, the weakness of the general curriculum for all degree programs, maintaining the business school on a sub-collegiate level, lack of provisions for student financial aid and the overcrowded physical plant.[35]

Because of these critical shortcomings, plus the ever-confusing, interlocking financial and physical relationship with the Y.M.C.A. and lack of an endowment, the North Central Association rejected Youngstown College's application for membership. In June of 1943, the association enforced their previous ruling on the college's school of education, which singled out Youngstown College graduates as being ineligible for hire as teachers in senior high schools until accreditation was secured.[36] The North Central Association's decision proved to be the final motivating force to end the reluctant and sometimes

abrasive twelve-year-long process of weaning Youngstown College from the Y.M.C.A. In November of 1943, the Board of Trustees of the "Y" passed resolutions authorizing an investigation toward transferring all real and personal property being used by Youngstown College to the members of the college corporation. The school's Board of Governors met shortly afterward and approved the actions of the "Y".[37] The two boards completed the separation on January 11, 1944, when the Y.M.C.A. transferred ownership of the physical plant of Youngstown College to the college corporation, and the college accepted responsibility for the educational programs previously administered by the "Y."[38]

For James L. Wick, Jr., that day marked a personal victory in the long fight with the members of what he later referred to as "that old decadent Y.M.C.A. board."[39] The ties between the college and the Y.M.C.A. were not completely broken, as in an apparent gesture of appreciation for all that the "Y" did to develop the institution, members of the Youngstown College Corporation amended their articles of incorporation to state that "at least a majority of the Trustees shall be persons who are also acting either as trustees, or as General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association of Youngstown, Ohio."[40] Still, the board and the administration of Howard Jones now held the future of Youngstown College firmly and exclusively in their hands. Examiners from the North Central Association returned in February, 1945, to view the progress of the college. With the transfer of ownership duly recognized, the association approved Youngstown College's membership on April 6, 1945.[41]

As Youngstown College gradually moved out of the auspices of the Youngstown Y.M.C.A. and established itself as an independent institution, the Mahoning Valley's industrial leadership assumed a larger supporting role in developing the college's programs. In 1940, several local companies donated scientific apparatus and industrial testing equipment, which Louis A. Deesz, a combustion engineer at Republic Steel Corporation and part-time instructor at the college, assembled into a laboratory in the basement of the carriage house at 416 Wick Avenue.[42] After the college was accredited by the North Central Association in 1945, the Board of Trustees formed a committee to establish an endowment fund as prescribed by the association. Over the next ten years, the endowment grew from an initial $2,500 contribution from the General Fireproofing Company to $1.5 million as the result of widespread backing from the business community.[43]

Local steel executives realized the importance of having high-quality educational resources available in close proximity for the future success of their companies. As technology and scientific analysis grew in importance for steel and other metals-producing industries, the demand for educated and experienced professionals in the offices and laboratories throughout the Youngstown area increased. In March, 1940, the Mahoning Valley Industrial Council, of which James L. Wick, Jr. was a member, informed the Board of Governors of Youngstown College of a recently-approved resolution authorizing its public relations committee to "study the desirability of encouraging Youngstown College to become more of a vocational school." The

council assured the board of governors that their suggestion did not call for curtailing development of the liberal arts component of the college, but instead for expanding upon the present offerings of the school. The secretary of the M.V.I.C. added that he was sure any formally adopted recommendation from their public relations committee would also "provide for proper housing and financing" for development of a vocational program.[44]

President Jones and the board of governors responded most notably to the interest of local industries by working throughout the World War II era to mold the college's array of technical courses and laboratories into a single engineering department. In July, 1944, they entered negotiations with the trustees of the William Rayen estate to lease the old Rayen school building on Wick Avenue. Later that year, the department moved in and thereafter was known as the William Rayen School of Engineering. In October, 1944, the board approved a measure allowing Jones to apply to the state department of education for authority to grant the degree Bachelor of Engineering.[45]

Local businessmen had interests in other Youngstown College activities. When the Board of Governors approved a plan to inaugurate a varsity football program starting with the 1938-1939 school year, one of the issues that arose was how would the players be able to secure part-time or seasonal jobs to help them defray the cost of attending Youngstown College, since athletic scholarships were not available.[46] The broad representation of Mahoning Valley business and industry leaders on the board of

governors insured that players had opportunities to earn money and, in some cases, eventually secure permanent employment.

An example was Ralph W. Skerratt, Jr., a native of nearby Girard, Ohio, and a member of the initial football team of 1938. At the conclusion of the season, Skerratt asked for a part time job and was told to "see James L. Wick, Jr., at the Falcon Bronze Company." He worked part time during the school year and full time in the summers. When World War II began, Wick secured draft deferments for Skerratt until he voluntarily went into the military. Skerratt returned to Falcon Bronze after the war to become production manager at the plant, and was one of the first four employees to receive company stock incentives in 1952. After the shareholders liquidated the company the following year, he incorporated with several other former employees to form the Falcon Foundry Company. Skerratt rose to be president and then chairman of this firm.[47]

The end of World War II brought an anticipated surge of admissions to Youngstown College, with a large number of veterans coming in under the G. I. Bill. From a wartime-low enrollment of 786 during the spring term of 1944, the student body swelled to 4,328 in the fall of 1947, with roughly half being veterans.[48] The influx of students filled the college's existing classrooms, laboratories and meeting rooms beyond capacity. The board and administration temporarily alleviated overcrowded conditions by accepting invitations to use rooms in other Wick Avenue institutions like the Butler Art Institute, St. John's Episcopal Church and the public library, and by obtaining four U. S. Army

surplus pre-fabricated barracks buildings from Camp Perry, Ohio, which were placed behind the main building.[49]

The college's educational offerings grew with the student body. In August, 1948, President Jones announced that Youngstown College would begin offering courses in conjunction with the Youngstown Hospital Association's nursing training program. The hope was that the two institutions would work together to form a four-year, bachelor of nursing degree program.[50] At the college's annual meeting on March 21, 1949, the trustees and members of the corporation launched a fundraising drive to build a long-awaited library building to replace the cramped and under-utilized facility in the main building. In 1950, members of the library building committee, including Wick, chose to build on property located behind the Butler Art Institute on Bryson Street.[51] The fundraising drive netted $1.3 million in pledges from the community, which covered construction costs of just over $1 million and provided additional funds to start an endowment for the new facility.[52] The college dedicated the new building on May 8, 1953, with Keyes Metcalf, Harvard University Librarian, as keynote speaker.[53]

In March, 1955, 72-year-old James L. Wick, Jr., announced his intent to step aside as chairman of the board of trustees after 24 years in that capacity. He told his fellow trustees at the annual meeting of the college that his decision was based on the fact that the institution was embarking on another large campaign to raise funds for further expansion, and he felt a younger person with strong ties to the community should succeed

him.[54] Youngstown College was still a private, non-denominational institution that depended solely on student revenues and the generosity of the community. While the future looked as uncertain as ever under these circumstances, Wick could look back on a remarkable period of growth and change under his chairmanship.

In less than a quarter-century, the college evolved from an Association School under the Y.M.C.A. to an accredited institution of higher learning, with a broad offering of recognized academic programs. Enrollments rose from a few hundred to over 4,000 after the Second World War, then leveled off near 3,800. The college boasted a sizable endowment fund, plus a scholarship fund of nearly $25,000 to help provide higher education to even more individuals in the community.[55]

In honor of Wick's many contributions, the Board of Trustees approved a testimonial resolution at their meeting of May 24, 1955, and also accepted the faculty's recommendation that he receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts at the June commencement. Howard Jones handled the duties of bestowing the honorary degree at the ceremony, and in his tribute declared that "no one has a more detailed understanding of the school's development or a deeper devotion to its welfare, a devotion that has led him to be unsparing of his energies and substance in its behalf."[56] At a special meeting of the Youngstown College Corporation in May, 1955, the members approved a change in the name of the institution to better reflect the position it had attained in the community and larger academic world. Youngstown

University had a new identity to correspond with the shift in leadership in its board of trustees.

Organization of Culture in the Fragmented City

James L. Wick, Jr.'s involvement with Youngstown College, First Presbyterian Church, the Butler Art Institute (later the Butler Institute of American Art) and the Mahoning Valley Historical Society, all of which were located in his old Wick Avenue neighborhood on Youngstown's lower north side, stimulated his interest in the evolution of the district from an exclusively upper-class residential area in the nineteenth century to a unique center for educational, spiritual and cultural endeavors by the mid-twentieth century. Up until the 1930's, the changeover was spontaneous, and included some commercial developments alongside the remaining residences and newer cultural enclaves. With the arrival of Youngstown College and its continuous demand for more space to house ever-expanding educational programs after 1931, Wick and some of his fellow trustees and civic boosters attempted various strategies and methods for preserving and enhancing the cultural flavor of the neighborhood and to promote it as an attractive and cohesive asset in an otherwise diverse and fragmented community. These individuals harbored a secondary and less pronounced motive of wanting to ensure the availability of additional properties for future expansions of the college and other related organizations on the street.

Attempts at organizing urban neighborhoods occurred in almost every American city in the early-twentieth century for a variety of reasons. Patricia Mooney Melvin discussed the progressive era neighborhood organization movement in The Organic City: Urban Definition and Neighborhood Organization, 1880-1920. She found that early neighborhood reform efforts, which took the form of settlement houses, community centers and neighborhood improvement associations, originated from the long-standing social work tradition, which "portrays the community as an organism, focuses on the members of the working and lower classes, and identifies social disorganization and conflict as the major problems confronting local areas."[57] The focus of Melvin's work was a World War I era neighborhood organization experiment conducted in Cincinnati's highly transitional Mohawk-Brighton district under the leadership of progressive reformer Wilbur C. Phillips.

Phillips' organizational effort in the Mohawk-Brighton neighborhood was a scientific experiment centered on the introduction of child health care organizations, facilities and professionals within the neighborhood to determine what improvements would result and whether or not the residents embraced the various associations and committees that were formed to administer the project. The experiment was a component of a larger organization plan designed to affect the entire city of Cincinnati, and started off with broad-based private and political support. Melvin found that, by 1920, the experiment had disintegrated after Mayor John Galvin, in response to the

growing threat to the political establishment created by the organization movement, publicly questioned Phillips' socialistic orientation in the heat of the post-war Red Scare, and members of the city's elite social welfare network denounced the organization once they realized how little control they had over it.[58]

After 1920, according to Mooney, urban neighborhood reformers began to recognize the pluralistic nature of the city, and "community organizing...increasingly fostered separatism rather than unity within a larger metropolitan community."[59] The wide diversity of Youngstown's population in the twentieth century, which was closely defined in the ethnic settlement patterns of the city, made it a quintessential pluralistic community. Within this diversity, James L. Wick, Jr. and his fellow proponents of the Wick Avenue cultural district labored to create a center for what they considered to be the cultural livelihood of Youngstown. Between 1930 and 1960, they experienced mixed results in their efforts for two primary reasons. The group consisting of former and current Wick Avenue residents and leaders of the representative organizations lacked organization, consistency and planning, which resulted in the expenditure of most of their energy and momentum in launching negative public reactions to further commercial encroachments in the district. More importantly, the organization failed to convince the political leadership and general public of the importance of establishing and preserving a cultural center on Wick Avenue.

Even with the construction and opening of the new education building in September, 1931, the Y.M.C.A. never achieved its goal of incorporating the entire education department and Youngstown College under one roof. In 1938, the Y.M.C.A. board of trustees purchased the property at 416 Wick Avenue, which they had leased since 1928, for continued use by the college. This parcel included the former Henry K. Wick mansion, called East Hall by the college and home to the business and secretarial school, and a carriage house known as West Hall, which was used by the art department.[60]

In 1935, the three-block section of Wick Avenue that encompassed Youngstown College, bounded by Rayen Avenue to the South and Scott Street to the North, in the middle of which sat the College, included 22 private residences, eight cultural institutions, six commercial establishments and five vacancies.[61] Private and institutional residents of the neighborhood learned of another commercial infiltration in 1939, when Youngstown City Council passed legislation allowing the Coca-Cola Bottling Company to build a plant on two lots in the 600 block of Wick Avenue. The Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of the college met to consider this action along with a petition being circulated by other Wick Avenue residents opposing the change. After deliberation which brought out differing opinions on the matter, the committee voted four to two, with one abstention, to authorize Chairman James L. Wick, Jr., to sign the petition on behalf of the College.[62]

Wick and Howard Jones both believed that Wick Avenue was the logical location for future expansion of Youngstown College, and realized that the board had "immediate work" to do in securing options for the purchase of additional properties and raising funds for future development.[63] In a meeting of the Board of Governors in March, 1940, Wick asked for and received authorization to form a planning committee to "study and plan for the future growth and development of the College," and to "direct an orderly development of the college particularly as to proper sites, architecture, financing, etc., for additional buildings and ground."[64] Wick appointed J. Russell McKay, Vice President of the Home Savings and Loan Company of Youngstown, to chair this committee, which included two Wick Avenue property owners, Philip H. Schaff and Joseph G. Butler III, William F. Maag, Jr. of the Youngstown Vindicator, J. E. Bennett, President of the Y.M.C.A., Paul Davies, General Secretary of the "Y", and Howard Jones. Wick worked closely with McKay and the committee as they commenced work in the spring of 1940.

One of the first issues to be addressed was the proposed widening of Wick Avenue from downtown to McGuffey Road on Youngstown's North side, which carried State Route Seven and U.S. Route 62, two major designated highways. Wick wrote to the Mayor of Youngstown, William B. Spagnola, and voiced his opinion that "the best interests of the College and the [Butler] Art Gallery can be served by keeping the street its present width." He suggested an alternative route on which to direct traffic through downtown Youngstown and away from Wick Avenue, and recounted that

increased truck traffic caused vibration in the walls of the Butler Art Institute that forced its trustees "to have to varnish many of our fine masterpieces."[65]

In March, 1941, the committee considered the purchase of the former Charles D. Arms residence at 626 Wick Avenue, one block North of the existing campus, for use as the Youngstown College Library. The building had been vacant for several years, and the outer stone walls were the only salvageable feature of the property. After authorizing Howard Jones to make up plans for renovating the building into a library, the committee met again in May with local architect Arsene Rousseau, Youngstown's fire chief and chief fire inspector and an assistant state fire marshall. Rousseau presented three plans for renovating the building that followed mandated fire and safety regulations. The differing cost of each plan reflected the number of stories in the building being designated for public use. An alternative to renovation was completely razing the building and constructing a new facility on the property. At a follow-up meeting on June 6, 1941, the committee learned from Philip H. Schaff that he had arranged for a ten percent discount in the purchase price of the property, and passed a motion recommending to the boards of the College and the Y.M.C.A. that the property be acquired and put to use for the purposes of the College.[66] The lack of any further action on the property indicated that either the board of the college or the Y.M.C.A. did not consider the property to be a worthwhile investment.

While the Planning Committee studied the Arms residence, the Rossi Brothers Funeral Directors Company purchased the former Thomas residence at 616 Wick Avenue and proposed to use it as a funeral home. On June 5, 1941, the committee met and passed a motion opposing the Rossi Brothers' plan for property, instructed Philip Schaff to draft a letter to the City Planning Commission voicing the concerns of the college's planning committee.[67] The subsequent letter, sent over Wick's signature, stated the committee's concern that "not only our present buildings and campus must be secured and protected, but that nearby property must be so controlled that its use and occupancy will not run contrary to the cultural ideals and principles for which this institution stands."[68] The City Planning Commission rejected the Rossi Brothers' request, who then along with the former owner of the property, Mrs. Charles Thomas, appealed to the Mahoning County Court of Common Pleas. Judge David Jenkins heard the case in July of 1941, and upheld the decision of the Planning Commission. In elaborating on his verdict, Jenkins stated that the Commission was acting fairly and within the level of discretion allotted to it. As for the fact that three other funeral homes were in operation on Wick Avenue at the time, Jenkins noted that since the proposed site was located south of these, and closest to the College and other cultural institutions, the commission had the right to try "to maintain 'a semblance of what cultural centers we have.'"[69]

Youngstown College directly benefitted from this decision, as within the next month, it consummated a merger agreement with

the Dana Musical Institute of Warren, Ohio, and the trustees of the Y.M.C.A. purchased the Thomas property to house the College's newly-formed Dana School of Music.[70] In its first year of existence, the Planning Committee of the Board of Governors of Youngstown College concentrated on the acquisition of available properties for future expansion of the college, and fought to keep commercial interests like the Rossi Brothers from infiltrating the Wick Avenue neighborhood. Little if any effort was applied to studying the needs and priorities for the physical growth of the College, or compiling a comprehensive plan for acquisition of funds and property to accommodate future development.

As the United States entered the Second World War and Youngstown College faced a subsequent decline in enrollment due to military service and the lure of wartime employment opportunities, the issue of planning for expansion went dormant. James L. Wick, Jr.'s interest in the Wick Avenue neighborhood as a cultural district continued beyond his association with the college. In December, 1944, he joined residents and institutional representatives in the Commission for Development of The Youngstown Cultural Center, and was a member of the "Plans and Area Committee" chaired by Philip H. Schaff.[71] The mission of this organization was to protect the rapidly emerging cultural district from encroachment by entities not consistent with its religious, educational and residential profile. The commission's goal of dedicating the Wick Avenue neighborhood exclusively to cultural pursuits eventually influenced the City Planning

Commission, which in May of 1946 recommended to City Council that a zoning provision establishing a three-block-wide district from Wick Avenue westward be approved. The Youngstown Vindicator hailed the recommendation as a desirable effort to "protect a district which has naturally grown into a cultural area," and by acting on it, Council would set a legal precedent, whereby "everyone will then be on equal footing, with no more disputes about individual case, and no more risk that the plan will be frittered away by delay."[72]

In the week following the news of the Planning Commission's recommendation, a storm of protest arose from property owners in the proposed "cultural corridor," who argued that excluding business development would adversely affect property values and lead to a decline and blighting of the neighborhood. Because of the backlash, Council left the proposal in committee.[73] The Youngstown Vindicator reconsidered their original position on the City Planning Commission's recommendation, noting that it left a lot of room open for interpretation that could ultimately be detrimental rather than beneficial to the district.[74] No follow-up on the recommendation came from the Planning Commission, and the issue of a carefully defined cultural district around Wick Avenue and Youngstown College remained in flux.

The following year, members of the Commission for the Youngstown Cultural District protested the use of the former Hitchcock residence at 655 Wick Avenue as a bathhouse and convalescence home. The City Planning Commission dismissed the

protest over the so-called "Health Haven," based on the fact that the facility was a state licensed convalescence home and therefore allowed into Residence "C" zoning areas. The commission heard complaints from the owner and operator of the home and Charles Owsley, a Youngstown architect with property holdings within the disputed cultural district. Owsley charged that the actions of the cultural district commission had stagnated property development in the neighborhood, and asked "for a definition of 'just what the cultural area is?'"[75]

After the bathhouse controversy, the Commission for the Development of the Youngstown Cultural Center faded out of view. Youngstown College acquired properties on Bryson Street, located one block west of Wick Avenue, and the Butler residence next to the art institute on Wick Avenue in May and June of 1946. In 1950 and 1951, the college received as gifts from the respective families the Pollock and Ford mansions, located on opposite corners of Wick Avenue and Spring Street.[76] In 1952, two Cleveland developers announced plans to construct motor inns on Wick Avenue, one of which was to be located directly across the street from the Butler Art Institute and the College.[77] The announcement disappointed James L. Wick, Jr., who lamented the lack of support for previous efforts to establish a cultural district and the college's inability to purchase the property when it was available.[78] The Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of the college responded to the news, by asking President Jones to "discuss the matter with the backers of the project and attempt to dissuade them from constructing a motel

[across from the College and Butler Art Institute buildings]."[79]

In April, 1953, the City Board of Zoning Appeals received a request to use two adjoining Wick Avenue residence properties for engineering and administrative office space from the Lombard Corporation, an engineering and consulting firm. One of the properties, at 631 Wick Avenue, was previously owned by Mr. and Mrs. Philip H. Schaff, who inserted a restrictive covenant in the deed that prohibited subsequent owners from changing the present zoning regulations before selling the residence. Schaff purposely included these conditions to protect the neighborhood and future interests of Youngstown College.[80]

Amid the protests that arose from the request for a variance, John R. Covington, attorney for the Lombard Company, assured Wick that the purpose behind the request was not to rezone the properties but to facilitate an alternate use for them while keeping them zoned residential. Covington stated that in the event that the company liquidated, the College would be protected and the property still residential, "and we could not sell it for commercial."[81] Based on these assurances, Wick later stated that "I as Chairman of the Board of Governors of Youngstown College and a member of the Cultural Center's Executive Committee, did not oppose [the Lombard Corporation]."[82] In May of 1957, City Council approved a zone change for the property at 655 Wick Avenue from Residence "C" to Commercial "A" in order for International Business Machines Corporation to build a new office and business education building

on the site. No protests came from Youngstown University since it was negotiating with IBM to move some mechanization methods classes from its business school to the proposed new building.[83] In November of 1958, after negotiations failed in an attempt to sell the former Schaff property to the university, the Lombard Corporation, whose property was next to IBM's, asked City Council for a zoning change from Residence "C" to Commercial "A" for its two lots on Wick Avenue, announcing that it wished to demolish the former residences and construct a combination office building and motel on the lots.[84] A broad-based protest erupted after the announcement that included almost every cultural and educational institution on Wick Avenue. James L. Wick, Jr., emerged as the leader of the movement, obviously incensed over the Lombard Corporation's disregard for the promise they made to him as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Youngstown College six years prior.

After a five-month delay, the City Planning Commission voted to a three-three deadlock on Lombard's request at their meeting of May 19, 1959, which was the equivalent of no decision.[85] The company asked the commission to reconsider its proposed zoning change in September of 1959, and at a hearing on November 11, the commission voted five to one in favor of their request.[86] The proposal then moved on to Youngstown City Council for final consideration.

On December 16, 1959, City Council met to decide the issue, which in the previous weeks had spawned a large protest and petition drive involving students and officials of Youngstown

University and representatives from other Wick Avenue institutions. Wick, representing the neighborhood, and Murray A. Nadler, legal counsel for the Lombard Corporation, took almost two hours to present their respective arguments at the meeting.[87] After tracing the cultural evolution of the neighborhood and alluding to Judge David G. Jenkins' landmark 1941 decision on the Rossi Brothers Funeral Home matter, Wick referred to the events of 1953 when the Lombard Corporation asked for and received a variance for use of the properties at 631 and 639 Wick Avenue from the City Planning Commission. The commission granted this under the condition that no other uses or alterations be made with the property except what is permitted under Residence "C" zoning. He stated that Dr. Lombard, president of the company, "accepted these limiting restrictions and immediately moved in without compulsion, but of his own free will, and with full knowledge of the promises made to me by one of his attorneys."[88]

Wick mentioned recent cultural developments in the district, including the continued expansion of the University, which in his estimation involved a total investment of $5.2 million in the past six years. He concluded his presentation with a plea to City Council to disregard the Planning Commission's decision for the good of the city, stating

> do not yield to the aggressive persistence of Mr. Lombard. Even though he has been able to influence the Planning Commission to favor him, do not betray the high purpose of every religious and cultural institution in this area. Protect it and make sure that there be no invasion of it for the personal gain of any petitioner.[89]

In his address, Attorney Nadler dismissed Wick's argument that the company was threatening the cultural district, stating that the firm merely wanted to replace two converted residences with a single office building better suited for the work it was currently doing, and that a professional engineering office was in keeping with the cultural activities in the neighborhood. Nadler asserted that the real issue at hand was "the university's desire to acquire the property 'at their price,'" and that school officials were attempting to force Lombard into a sale by blocking the zone change request.[90] As for the restrictive covenant on the property at 631 Wick Avenue, he informed the meeting that Lombard had revised its request for a zoning change and only wanted to build an office building without the motel. The petition no longer included the former Schaff property, but only the 100-foot wide lot next door to it. This parcel was immediately South of the new IBM office building for which Council granted a zone change two years prior without opposition from the university, and Nadler concluded that "'fairness' dictates his client be given the same consideration."[91]

At this point, the city's planning director, Edwin H. Folk, made an unusual request to address council on an impartial basis, based only on his professional experience, and comment on what he had previously heard. He stated that in his capacity as planning director for the city, he did not "remember a case 'backed by fewer facts than the present one,'" and implored council to discover the facts of the matter before acting.[92] He offered

his opinion of the proponents of the cultural district in the following manner.

> Folk charged the supporters of the cultural center with failing to take positive steps for its development. He said getting together to oppose zone changes is not enough. He said that when the current issue arose, he approached Wick, Jones and others and asked them to meet with the planning commission to discuss ways of expanding the cultural center with government aid. He said they agreed it was a good idea, but never got together with the commission.[93]

One week after the eventful hearing on the zone change, City Council met again and voted 5-2 in favor of Lombard's request. Youngstown University officials requested referendum petitions from the city clerk on December 30, 1959, and on January 22, 1960, the university's legal counsel filed petitions containing 5,262 signatures, delaying the ordinance granting a zone change to the Lombard Corporation.[94] Attorney Murray Nadler filed affidavits challenging 2,074 of the signatures on February 2, along with 110 signatures on a withdrawal petition from the referendum petition. Lombard claimed that the challenged signatures either were not names of individuals listed as registered voters, were filled out incorrectly or did not meet legal requirements as the persons who signed as circulators did not themselves gather the signatures. Two lawsuits were filed the first week of March on the premise that the referendum petitions no longer had the required minimum number of valid signatures.[95]

On March 25, 1960, one day before a preliminary hearing on Lombard's suits, the university's legal counsel requested that the entire referendum petition be withdrawn, conceding that a

large number of the signatures were invalid. Judge David G. Jenkins, who nineteen years earlier decided the Rossi Brothers zone change appeal, dismissed the law suits pending written proof that the petitions were withdrawn.[96] The next day, university president Howard Jones provided the following statement.

> At the time the referendum action was initiated, it was felt to be imperative that the university be protected in its plan and need for future expansion. Since the filing of the action, the plight of the university has received active study, and new developments indicate it is no longer imperative that the school move north on Wick Avenue. The urban redevelopment program may enter the picture, as may a new definition of the downtown cultural area of Youngstown."[97]

While James L. Wick, Jr., and Howard Jones led the fight against the Lombard Corporation's zoning request on behalf of institutions and residents of the cultural district, other members of the Board of Trustees of Youngstown University backed away from the controversy. Wick went to the board with his concerns over the possibility that the City Planning Commission might reconsider the action taken in 1953 in March of 1959, and the trustees authorized their executive committee to arrange an appeal if the planning commission ruled in favor of the company.[98] Yet, in February, 1960, during the referendum petition drive and legal maneuvering after City Council's decision, when Jones appraised the Executive Committee of recent events, the committee concluded that no further action was necessary on their part.[99] It appeared that many members of the board could not clarify in their own minds what the cultural district should be, or whether or not it was important to the future of the university.

James L. Wick, Jr.'s ardent support of the Wick Avenue cultural district through his work with Youngstown College, membership on the commission founded in 1944, and leading role in the political and legal squabble of 1959-1960, demonstrated his trademark tenacity and willingness to fight the hard battles to advance what he believed in. His efforts to preserve the existing cultural assets on Wick Avenue and guarantee that properties would be available for future expansion of institutions like Youngstown College, The Butler Institute of American Art and the Mahoning Valley Historical Society, reflected his vision of what the neighborhood should be. Unfortunately, he and his associates in the struggle could not sustain popular support for their efforts, nor could they convince average citizens, elected public officials and business leaders that a protected area for some of the community's cultural assets was necessary or even desirable.

In the aftermath of Youngstown City Council's approval of the zoning change for the Lombard Corporation property, W. Frederic Miller, minister of the First Presbyterian Church, wrote to Wick to offer his regrets over city council's decision. Yet he also stated, in concurrence with City Planning Director Edwin H. Folk, that "the time has now come to set up a permanent Culture Center committee which will meet regularly and include in addition to the interested institutions on the hill, the City Planning Commissioner, the First Ward Councilman and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce."[100] Such an

organization never materialized, leaving the concept of a cultural district in Youngstown to continue to evolve on its own.

Trustee of Volney Rogers' Vision

Unlike Youngstown College, Mill Creek Park was an established and extensively developed community asset when James L. Wick, Jr., took a seat on its Board of Commissioners in 1937. Wick understood, as did the individuals who served the commission prior to and during his tenure, that his primary function as a servant of this public trust was stewardship rather than leadership. Progress in further developing the park was generally defined by an adherence to its founder's original philosophy in establishing the nature preserve, and only in a few instances did it reflect contemporary standards and priorities. Wick's role as a park commissioner and public servant contrasted sharply with his career as a mid-twentieth century industrialist who constantly strove to avoid government interference in his affairs. The respect that he and others of his generation and mind-set had for institutions like Mill Creek Park was an indication of their affinity for the beliefs that led to its founding, and their view of the park as an example of the positive and desirable role that government could play in the lives of individuals.

Mill Creek Park was the brainchild of Volney Rogers, a native of Columbiana County, Ohio, who read law in his older brother's office in Mt. Gilead, Ohio and passed the bar exam before moving to Youngstown in 1872 to establish a law practice.

As a transplanted citizen in the city, he quickly distinguished himself as a competent and efficient lawyer, and also worked to improve conditions in his gritty and bustling adoptive home. Rogers served as City Solicitor for two terms, from 1878-1882, and after joining the American Civic Association, embraced and studied the many urban reform measures advocated by the association to make cities cleaner, healthier, and more aesthetically pleasing. Because of his rural upbringing, he maintained a deep-seeded appreciation of and affiliation with the natural environment. Rogers spent much of his free time studying the natural sciences and taking long walks through rural and undeveloped areas outside of the city. Eventually, he discovered Mill Creek gorge with its abundant natural beauty, and frequently returned to it afterward.[101]

Rogers concluded that this area, "practically shut off from the world, which I had found so interesting, should be preserved, in the main, as made by Nature, and believed that the only way this could be done was for the public to own and protect it."[102] He investigated and found there was nothing the city of Youngstown could do to obtain the land, since it was located entirely in unincorporated Youngstown Township. Rogers immediately began work to secure the interests of 154 landholders in and around the gorge, and signed contracts with each of these in order to reserve the land until a governing body was established and charged with purchasing the property.

He prepared a bill for the state legislature that provided for the establishment of a township park commission comprised of

three members, who would be appointed by the county court of common pleas, and solicited signatures for a petition from notable citizens of Youngstown, which urged the passage of the legislation. The "Township Park Improvement Law" was passed by the legislature, and in the election of 1891, residents of Youngstown City and Township passed a bond issue that provided funds for the establishment of the Youngstown Township Park District and the purchase of lands previously secured by Volney Rogers.

Rogers was one of the first three Commissioners of the Park District selected by the judges of the Mahoning County Court of Common Pleas. Another brother, Bruce Rogers, was hired as the first superintendent of Mill Creek Park. Volney Rogers worked tirelessly as a commissioner and advocate of the Park, serving continuously until his death in 1919.

Mill Creek Park continued to grow after Rogers' passing, with subsequent trustees consistently honoring his intention to avoid as much as possible man-made developments.[103] The park district acquired 270 acres of land above Mill Creek gorge, through purchases and gifts, in 1924, and soon after built a large reservoir named Lake Newport. In 1928, after a bitter land dispute with a private country club, the park constructed and opened a public golf course on nearly 200 acres of land south of Lake Newport and the city in Boardman Township.[104] During the Great Depression, publicly-funded Mill Creek Park received numerous relief project grants under the Civil Works Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress

Administration, Federal Emergency Relief Administration and National Youth Administration. Hundreds of unemployed workers and young people were put to work building roads, retaining walls, picnic pavilions and a nine-hole golf course, and maintaining various existing facilities within the park.[105]

James L. Wick, Jr.'s contact with the park and the Mill Creek valley began when he was a boy, as he recalled ice skating in the winter months with his friends from a pond behind a lower dam at the mouth of Mill Creek up the valley to the present site of an impounded reservoir named Lake Glacier, which at the time was the site of some small industrial activity.[106] The Wick family residence from 1920 onward at 384 South Belle Vista Avenue on Youngstown's emerging west side was within walking distance of the park, and he and his family spent many days swimming, boating, hiking, picnicking and painting in this natural preserve. As a proponent for further residential development and improvements within this section, Wick joined with other residents to form the Bears Den Improvement Club in the late 1920's. The primary item on the club's agenda was promoting the proposed construction of a large bridge across Mill Creek Park to link Youngstown's south side with the west side. Such a span would create access for west side residents to the rest of the city, and curtail increasing traffic congestion on the park's roads.

Plans for the bridge initially evolved during World War I, and, in 1925, a bond issue to fund its construction was turned down by voters in the city of Youngstown.[107] The Bears Den

Improvement Club sought once again to bring the bridge issue to the forefront. Wick participated in formal and informal meetings with the Youngstown Chamber of Commerce Special Tax Committee, the Board of Commissioners of Mill Creek Park and the board of Mahoning County Commissioners, who stressed that they could not authorize construction of the bridge until a connecting road was built on the west side of the Mill Creek valley.[108]

The Special Tax Committee of the Chamber of Commerce considered the issue even further, and in May of 1929, recommended to the board of directors of the Chamber that a series of connected roads be built through the park and into the west side neighborhood by County and park officials. The committee recommended that the Warren Avenue bridge project be set aside, feeling that "an improvement as expensive as a bridge across the ravine [was] not needed."[109] Members of the Bears Den Improvement Club, many of whom were members or, like Wick, current or former directors of the Chamber of Commerce, decided not to contest the decision, and voted to accept the approved report of the Chamber's Special Tax Committee as outlined.[110]

James L. Wick, Jr., became a Commissioner of the Youngstown Township Park District on May 10, 1937, following an appointment by the judges of the Mahoning County Court of Common Pleas.[111] His role then expanded from a neighboring resident with a vested interest in developments to the west of Mill Creek Park, to a steward and protector of Volney Rogers's life's work. Over the next twenty-one years he served admirably and effectively, always striving to maintain a balance between preservation of the park's

natural areas as proposed by Volney Rogers and providing adequate opportunities and facilities for relaxation and recreation by the citizens of the community. His frequent concern over the need for comfort facilities throughout the park created a humorous situation, as fellow commissioner A. J. Wardle, Jr. recounted after Wick's retirement.

> Purely in the spirit of fun, at various times one or another of the Commissioners has been designated, unofficially of course, as Commissioners of something ridiculous. Maybe Mr. Wick harped a little on the need for toilets in various places in the Park. In any case it earned him the title of Commissioner in charge of backhouses. This brought up a lot of laughs and also eleven additional pairs of appropriate and well designed comfort stations which I assure you are much appreciated by visitors to the Park.[112]

Acquisition and preservation of additional lands in the upper Mill Creek watershed and other areas surrounding the park was a primary issue for the Board of Park Commissioners during Wick's tenure. Agricultural and suburban development in or near the bottom of the Valley in Boardman and Beaver Townships, located directly south of the City of Youngstown, had already affected levels of the stream and water tables and created abnormal flooding during heavy rainfalls. The Commissioners turned to Luther T. Fawcett, a consulting civil engineer, who compiled and presented a report on conditions in the watershed on March 20, 1939.

Fawcett reiterated the concern over maintaining an adequate water supply in Mill Creek and its tributaries in order to assure the future of the park as a recreation spot and natural preserve for the citizens of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley. He discussed the trend of a growing number of city dwellers who,

with "a vision of a farm," built country homes "promiscuously on all roads where land can be purchased at reasonable prices." The clearing of the land of its trees and vegetation to make room for houses and yards, plus the installation of drainage ditches and storm sewers hastened the run-off of precipitation and lowered the water tables and stream levels.[113]

In order to prevent further problems, Fawcett made three recommendations for action by the Park. One proposal called for the reclamation and reforestation of as much of the Mill Creek valley flood plain as possible, which would allow water levels of the creek and its tributaries to be controlled by the natural retention and release of water. The two other suggestions involved man-made measures, including the construction of dams and reservoirs to retain and release water in the upper portion of the valley or the drilling of wells near the creek from which water could be pumped during dry periods.[114] The Commissioners, in Volney Rogers' spirit of conservation, chose acquisition and reclamation, and launched efforts to buy and conserve land in what became known as the southern extension in Boardman Township even before Fawcett's report was presented to them.

Between 1939 and 1942, the park acquired 610 additional acres of land in the southern extension in parcels ranging from a few acres to 254 acres of hardwood forest purchased from William J. Hitchcock, Jr. In requesting the approval of the judges of the Mahoning County Court of Common Pleas for the acquisition and reforestation project, Wick assured them that the commissioners

were not planning to make "any extensions to Mill Creek Park proper."[115] On April 7, 1940, the commissioners approved a plan to reforest and otherwise return the newly-acquired land to its natural state.[116]

In 1942, the commissioners of the Youngstown Township Park District became involved in another important land acquisition effort downstream near the Bears Den section of the park on the rapidly developing west side of the city of Youngstown. James L. Wick, Jr., played an important and well-documented role in obtaining and developing this parcel of land, located in close vicinity to his home. The tract of approximately 65 acres was U.S. Government surplus land, and at the time the park district expressed an interest in it, was mired in a bureaucratic debate over which government agency was responsible for administering it. Wick fully utilized his will, persistence and personal contacts with various movers-and-shakers between 1942 and 1947 to weed through several government departments and finally obtain the land.

Originally part of the Wehr family farm, the land was purchased by the United States Department of Interior, division of Federal Subsistence Homesteads, in 1934 and administered locally, along with several other tracts in Mahoning County, by Mahoning Garden Homesteads, Inc. The plan to utilize the land for depression-era subsistence homesteads was never utilized, and the local controlling entity was eventually dissolved.[117] After meeting with the district director of the Farm Security Administration, and corresponding with the Federal Housing

Administration, Park officials found out that the land was now under the jurisdiction of the Federal Public Housing Authority of the National Housing Agency.[118] The commissioners contacted that agency, making a request that the land next to the Bear's Den section be donated to the Park, and were informed on March 26, 1943, by the assistant general council of the National Housing Agency that it was not legally possible to transfer ownership to the land until it was declared surplus and listed for competitive sale in the open market. [119]

At this time it became clear that World War II priorities superseded the desires of the Park commissioners to acquire the land. Congressman Michael J. Kirwan of the Nineteenth District, which included Youngstown and Mahoning County, and William F. Maag, publisher of the Youngstown Vindicator, were now involved with the issue, and both conceded that no action would be taken until completion of the war effort. Kirwan promised that he would introduce legislation asking the government to donate the land to the park once the war ended.[120]

The commissioners, Kirwan and Maag did not have to wait until the end of the war for action to occur in regard to the desired land. In May, 1944, the park commissioners were informed through P. L. Strait, Director of the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority, that the tracts of government-owned land desired to be added to Mill Creek Park were officially declared surplus, and turned over to the Public Buildings Administration for further disposition.[121] The park commissioners responded with a letter to Robert J. Hayes, Assistant General Counsel,

National Housing Agency of the Federal Public Housing Authority, requesting that the land comprising the Wehr farm tracts either be donated, dedicated or sold to the park district.[122]

The commissioners received a response from Hayes informing them of yet another bureaucratic shuffle in authority over the land, stating that it was now in the hands of the Public Buildings Administration.[123] They promptly wrote to W. E. Reynolds, Commissioner of the Public Buildings Administration, and informed him of the Park District's interest in the land adjoining Mill Creek Park's boundaries and their hope that these parcels could be transferred to the Park either through donation, dedication or exclusive purchase agreement.[124] At the same time, the commissioners also contacted Congressman Kirwan, requesting that he contact Reynolds personally to "put in a good word" for the Park District and set up a meeting between all parties.[125] Reynolds responded, stating the interest of his office in selling the property, but that disposition must follow the provisions of the Act of August 27, 1935, As Amended, Relating to Federal Surplus Real Property, which called for a "public sale of the land to the highest responsible bidder."[126]

Authority for disposition of the surplus lands transferred to a regional office of the Federal Public Housing Authority in Cleveland in the summer of 1945. William F. Maag made James L. Wick, Jr. and the board aware of this development.[127] The commissioners instructed Superintendent Albert E. Davies to contact W. E. Reynolds and Congressman Kirwan in order to confirm that such a move had transpired. H. G. Hunter, Acting

Commissioner of the Public Buildings Administration, informed Kirwan that with the enactment of the Surplus Property Act of 1944, priority for obtaining surplus lands was extended to state and local governments, second only to the Federal Government. Also, since the tracts of land in Youngstown and Mahoning County were seen as primarily rural lands, it was not clear as to whether or not the property that the Board of Park Commissioners was interested in would remain under the Authority of the Public Buildings Administration or be transferred to an appropriate agency in the Department of Agriculture.[128]

In January, 1946, the Park Commissioners learned that the surplus land had been assigned to the Farm Credit Administration's regional office in Marion, Ohio.[129] With the proper bargaining agent for the Government finally identified, the Commissioners began negotiations to acquire the land. The Federal Farm Mortgage Corporation, located in Louisville, Kentucky, made a public notice of the pending sale of several surplus properties located throughout Mahoning County, including the 65.757 acres adjacent to the Park, on April 21, 1946. Project Manager Tully Fox forwarded the appraised market value of the land, which was $20,000, and assured them that Youngstown Township Park District had priority in obtaining the land under the Surplus Land Act of 1944. The Commissioners expressed their interest in purchasing the land on June 4.[130] On June 17, they sent an official application to purchase the land, but declined to make a monetary offer, based on their hope that "a substantial discount in the purchase price be allowed

because of the benefits which will accrue to the United States by its proposed use."[131]

The request for a discount on the appraised market value of the property resulted in having the park district's application sent to the director of surplus property disposal for the Farm Credit Administration, who was located in Kansas City, Missouri. Officials of Mill Creek Park were advised that the decision-making process for their request would take approximately four to six weeks.[132] The four to six week period turned into more than six months, and the commissioners expressed their impatience and frustration over the bureaucratic standstill through a series of letters, phone calls and contacts with individuals involved in the matter from October, 1946, through January, 1947.

James L. Wick, Jr., assumed a leading role in expediting this long-awaited decision from the Federal Government. Through various contacts like the park district's legal counsel and his old friend William F. Maag, Jr., Wick was able to obtain reliable information on the status of the park district's request and keep the pressure on the Farm Credit Administration to move along with their decision. Maag's interest in the government land went beyond his desire to see the Park obtain the land adjacent to it, as he too was interested in purchasing a tract from the old Mahoning Garden Homesteads project located in Boardman Township near his residence.[133]

Wick's involvement in obtaining a final decision from the Government and closing the deal on the 65 acres of land culminated with a personal visit to Washington, D.C., authorized

and supported by his fellow commissioners, in January, 1947.[134] Wick made arrangements through Nineteenth District Representative Michael J. Kirwan to meet with officials of the War Assets Administration. On January 18, Wick and Kirwan first met with J. B. Huyett, who received them openly and was ready to sell the property in question to the park at its appraised value.[135] Wick informed him that the park commissioners felt they were entitled to a discount in accordance with the Surplus Property Act of 1944. At this point, the meeting transferred to the office of Robert Whittet, who was responsible for setting and granting discounts.

A lengthy discussion ensued in Mr. Whittet's office. Huyett declared that a definite policy for granting discounts on surplus land would be available within a week to cope with the large number of requests for government surplus property. However, he also warned that if any discount was taken from the appraised price of the property, the commissioners could also expect limited use restrictions attached to the title for the land. Wick saw a problem with restrictions, as he was considering of either selling or trading that portion of the government property that fronted on the McCollum Road, so as to avoid tax assessments for future improvements to the street. He then told Huyett "that the park, then, would pay the appraised price and he should notify Mr. John Moore of Louisville (Federal Farm Mortgage Corp. office) of our intent to purchase at the appraised price, on the condition that there would be no strings tacked to the sale and that we would get the title-in-free."[136]

At the conclusion of these meetings, Wick indulged in some other park-related business by visiting Washington's Rock Creek Park, one of the National Capital Parks operated by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. He toured the park extensively with Harry T. Thompson, Assistant Superintendent, and noticed many startling similarities between Rock Creek and Mill Creek Parks. The most notable parallels were the main geographic features, as both were situated in "a rocky gorge with a stream running through it and roads to make it accessible," and that both parks contained nineteenth-century gristmills.[137]

On January 23, 1947, the park commissioners were officially notified by C. F. Robinson, Deputy Administrator, Office of Real Property Disposal of the War Assets Administration, that they were not eligible for a discount on the price of the property they sought to purchase, and when surplus property was purchased at full market value, limiting restrictions on use did not apply. Robinson concluded by recommending that the commissioners proceed with closing on the property with title-in-clear.[138] The commissioners did so, and on January 31, 1947, presented an application and checks in the amount of $20,000 to Tully Fox, of the Marion, Ohio office of the Farm Credit Administration.[139]

The Park Commissioners proceeded with developing plans for the use of the newly acquired property. Wick corresponded with Harry Thompson of Rock Creek Park in Washington, D. C., asking for his recommendation for a capable and respected landscape architect with expertise in designing park and recreation

lands.[140] Thompson responded with a resounding endorsement of Henry V. Hubbard, a longstanding partner in the firm of Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Massachusetts. [141] Wick was then authorized by the Board of Park Commissioners to consult with Olmsted Brothers in regard to development of the land.[142]

In response to Wick's request on behalf of the Board of Commissioners of Youngstown Township Park District, Olmsted Brothers sent Carl Rust Parker in May, 1947, to meet with the board and inspect the park's current facilities and newly acquired land. Olmsted Brothers then submitted a proposal to be consulting landscape architects for Mill Creek Park, along with creating the plans for what was commonly called the "government land." The commissioners accepted the proposal, and authorized commencement of site planning for the government land.[143]

In July, 1947, Olmsted Brothers submitted a preliminary study for future development of the 65 acres of former government land and adjacent Bears Den section of the park. The plan called for construction of a multi-purpose recreation area that included tennis courts, play fields, six picnic shelters, a large service building with refectory, locker rooms and toilets, a public swimming pool, a 16-acre sugar bush with sugar house and large, cleared and graded areas for playfields. It did not include any proposed development for the portion of the property that fronted on McCollum Road, except for an entrance into the area, as it was still thought that this land would and could be sold or traded for other lands adjoining the Park.

The preliminary plan encompassed more than the commissioners imagined it would, and Wick responded to Parker and Olmsted Brothers to articulate his concerns and criticisms over the proposed use of the land. He referred to Volney Rogers' goal to provide an area for quiet, healthful relaxation and recreation framed in the beauty of the natural environment. Wick viewed the inclusion of a swimming pool in the plan as the single greatest affront to that philosophy, as it would instigate the clamor and excitement that Rogers had so carefully tried to avoid. He reminded Parker that the primary responsibility of the Board of Commissioners was to "carry on the way we think old Volney Rogers, the creator and founder of the Park, would carry on."[144]

After doing some investigation, Wick wrote a second letter to Parker, in which he provided an inventory of recreation facilities such as swimming pools, athletic fields, playgrounds and tennis courts located throughout the city of Youngstown and under the control of the Youngstown City Parks and Recreation Commission at that time. In lieu of these, Wick stated that the park commissioners felt that such active recreation areas were not necessary in Mill Creek Park, and that Youngstown residents saw the Park serving other primary purposes.

> We believe that the public in Youngstown look to Mill Creek Park to provide a tranquil, peaceful, natural park, or virgin forest with ample picnic facilities and more shelters with space for soft ball and games for an intimate group -- space where you get the God-made atmosphere. Let us get away from the mechanical, man-made atmosphere that prevails all through our industries here.[145]

Wick concluded with his own vision of development of the land, stating "let us make a meandering road up through this government property that can be served many, many, many grills. Let us plan to reforest it so that within the next, twenty, twenty-five or thirty years, we will have a very splendid forest there."[146]

In response to Wick's letters, Carl Rust Parker replied that Olmsted Brothers was satisfied that the proposal for a pool in Mill Creek Park was unwarranted. He persisted, though, with the notion that a substantial portion of the government lands should be developed for recreational purposes, and not simply reforested. Parker stated the belief of the firm that installation of these facilities was necessary as a justification for purchasing the land in the first place, and that "conversion of the area into a forest will not entirely meet the immediate needs of the rapidly increasing population near this section of the park." He felt that it was prudent to delay any revisions to the plan until he could schedule a visit to Youngstown, and that passing ideas and revisions by correspondence was unproductive and could create an unnecessary increase in the final price. Parker concluded by stating the firm's desire to "carry out the wishes of [the Park] Commission in so far as possible, and at the same time justify the use of [their] services as... consultants."[147]

The planning process slowed down as both sides worked to establish some consensus over the future use of the former government land. The issue of further land acquisition and/or exchange in and around the government property came to the

forefront in the fall of 1947. The idea of selling or trading the strip of government land that fronted McCollum Road had been around since the later negotiations with the U.S. Government in 1946. In September, 1947, Parker recommended that the commission consider purchasing or exchanging some of their land for a large, residentially platted area immediately east of the government property. In his opinion, "the acquisition of all this land...would round out the Bear Creek area in a most desirable manner, and in the future permit a much more advantageous development."[148] The commissioners followed up on Olmsted Brothers' recommendation by asking James E. Bennett, Jr., park counsel, for his opinion regarding the sale or exchange of a portion of the government land, and the purchase of additional, adjacent land.[149]

In the fall of 1948, the commissioners instructed Superintendent Davies to consult with the state forester and Olmsted Brothers about reforesting the site.[150] Olmsted Brothers submitted a planting plan for the property in January, 1949, that involved the screening of the perimeters adjoining McCollum Road and residential properties and softening the transition from the government land to the already wooded Bears Den section of the park. The plan left the center portion of the land open, as it was in their original preliminary plan, so as to "not seriously interfere with a possible future development of this area as a recreation center." The plan also showed the preliminary placement of a drive winding down from McCollum Road to the existing Bears Den Drive in the Park, with an intersecting

footpath running from McCollum to the Bears Den section.[151] In August, 1949, the commissioners instructed the superintendent to proceed with the planting of an evergreen screen along the north boundary of the property, which fronted on McCollum Road. This action also signified that the idea of trading or selling land fronting the road was put to rest.[152]

The debate over the eventual use of the former government land disappeared from park records and Wick's correspondence from 1948 to 1950. Then, in February and March, 1950, Olmsted Brothers submitted a second preliminary, then final, comprehensive plan for the government property.[153] This final plan followed the preliminary plans in emphasizing the property as a center for several forms of recreational and athletic activity. The plan included the use of all land purchased from the government, and its most prominent feature was three graded, step-like plateaus along the southern boundary of the property. The lower plateau contained a baseball diamond, the middle one a football field and softball diamond and the top one the service building, children's playground with apparatus, two paved parking lots and all-purpose courts for tennis, basketball and volleyball.[154]

The commissioners deferred approval of the plan at that time in order to study it more closely. They passed a motion officially naming the government property the Rock Ridge Area on April 20, 1950, and shortly afterward began approving Olmsted Brothers' plan and authorizing construction of the recreation area in phases, starting with the drive from McCollum Road to

Bears Den Drive and the main parking lot. In the course of receiving the preliminary plans and conferring with Carl Rust Parker of Olmsted Brothers, the Board of Park Commissioners turned from a fundamental interpretation of Volney Rogers' philosophy on the development of Mill Creek Park, and recognized the requirements of the present-day community.

In August and November, 1951, the commissioners signed contracts for grading of the recreation area and installation of storm sewers and a catch basin.[155] These were completed in the fall of 1952, and the new athletic fields at Rock Ridge were seeded and fertilized and a base course of paving material was laid for the driveway, parking lot and tennis courts.[156] Further development of the area ceased at the end of 1952 due to a shortage of funds, but the commissioners remained sensitive to the need to make city residents aware of progress on the tract of land. Therefore, in October, 1953, they directed the superintendent to open the drive into the Rock Ridge area so that the public could view the progress to-date.[157]

Development in the Rock Ridge area resumed again in 1955, after funds came in from the passage of an additional .4 mill tax levy by Youngstown voters in 1954.[158] The commissioners received bids and awarded contracts for the finish coarse of pavement on the driveway and parking lot, baseball backstops and football goalposts, playground apparatus, roller skating rink, an enclosed shelter, toilet facilities and a spray pool.[159] At this point, the Commissioners had invested nearly $204,000 in the Rock Ridge recreation area and installed almost all of the

components in Olmsted Brothers' master plan. The area officially opened to the public on Sunday, July 7, 1957, with a carnival-like atmosphere and athletic contests to demonstrate the new facilities.[160]

In the summer of 1958, James L. Wick, Jr., reflected on his involvement with Mill Creek Park over the past 21 years, and thought about what issues and problems lay ahead for the park district. He submitted his resignation to the Court of Common Pleas on July 5, 1958, stating that "I am convinced that I should do so...in order that you can appoint a more active younger man, one who is more intimately associated with the active affairs of our community and who will, therefore be more effective in managing the Park and successfully achieving the Park's objectives." In this same letter, Wick listed a few of the objectives that he viewed as being priorities for the Park in the coming years, and concluded by stating that "its is not necessary for me to state that I have cherished and appreciate the honor that [the judges] bestowed upon me in May, 1937, when you appointed me membership on the Board of Park Commissioners of the Youngstown Township Park District."[161]

At a meeting of the Board of Commissioners on August 28, 1958, Wick's former colleagues passed a resolution honoring him for his long and dedicated service to Mill Creek Park.[162] In September, a special ceremony and dinner was held at the Rock Ridge recreation area, where the resolution was read and Rock Ridge was officially renamed "The James L. Wick, Jr. Recreation Area." The dedication was fitting, according to current board

President A. J. Wardle, Jr. since Wick was always concerned with purchasing additional land, even "when there seemed to be a dozen other ways that available funds could be spent to good advantage." In concluding, Wardle said "Mr. Wick, we wish you every happiness in your retirement, and we thank you for your magnificent contribution to the welfare of Mill Creek Park."[163]

NOTES

CHAPTER IV

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

By 1960, James L. Wick, Jr., had almost completely withdrawn from the activities that defined his career and commitment to the community of Youngstown in the prior three decades. He remained on the Board of Trustees of Youngstown University through the mid-1960's, as they and Howard Jones continued to struggle to meet their financial obligations with almost entirely private support. Jones retired from the Presidency of the institution at the end of the 1965-1966 school year, about the same time that Wick stepped down from the board, marking a symbolic end to the private era of the University as the trustees made arrangements to enter the school into the state university system. In the last years of his life, Wick focused on two subjects he loved and appreciated, painting and history, but never had adequate time to pursue because of his numerous commitments.

The most consuming activity of Wick's "retirement" was the Mahoning Valley Historical Society. After incorporating in 1909, the society experienced only sporadic activity in the ensuing fifty years, and searched in vain for a permanent home. Wick maintained contact with the organization throughout these years, serving as trustee and occasionally, president. In 1956, he began another term as president, found the historical society to be nearly defunct, and contemplated dissolution of the organization and transfer of its collections to the Western

Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland. The society received a new lease on life in March, 1961, when it assumed ownership of the residence property and personal belongings of the late Olive F. A. (Mrs. Wilford P.) Arms, in accordance with the terms of her will.[1] In February, 1964, after extensive remodeling and installation of exhibits, the Arms Museum opened to the public at 648 Wick Avenue.

Wick was the primary force in organizing the collections and records of the society in this period. He also compiled the "Builders of Youngstown File," a unique, chronological reference collection organized according to the individuals and institutions that he recognized as playing a key role in developing the Mahoning Valley from 1796 onward. Wick was immensely satisfied with his completed exhibition and interpretation of the community's history, relating to William F. Maag, Jr., his pride in "rescuing from oblivion the virtues and achievements of those like you who were the Valley's builders."[2]

He continued to keep abreast of events in the United States and the world in the 1960's, and grew increasingly distressed with the continued expansion of the welfare state and perceived power of organized labor. With his perspective still firmly entrenched in the conventional wisdom of pre-depression America, he was convinced that a growing percentage of the American population no longer "apply themselves to their jobs or studies," "do not choose to live within their incomes," or "set aside anything for a rainy day," and no longer "assume any responsibility for their self support."[3] Such a view, though

exaggerated, was understandable from someone who did not embrace or even accept what George Mowry referred to as "private industry's consumer-credit operations" in the 1920's, and "the New Deal's deficit financing a decade later."[4]

Richard Hofstadter stated in The Age of Reform that the New Deal era "represented the triumph of economic emergency and human needs over inherited notions and inhibitions."[5] For James L. Wick, Jr., his inherited notions and inhibitions did not always lead to failure in this period, nor did they always apply to the activities and accomplishments of his career. As an industrial leader, he continued to follow the system of paternalism under which he benefitted and rose in Youngstown's business community, and expected his employees to do the same. The new social and legal priorities of the era overwhelmed Wick in his effort to maintain paternalism and keep control of the Falcon Bronze Company in the hands of those individuals who owned it. He and his fellow stockholders, when forced into a corner, willingly sacrificed a healthy, viable and growing company, along with the opportunity for future financial rewards, rather than comply with the demands of labor.

As Chairman of the Board of Governors of Youngstown College and a confidant of President Howard W. Jones, Wick focused his attention and energies on the potential benefits of having a full-service institution of higher learning in the community, rather than the limitations inherent in the mission of the Y.M.C.A.'s education department and Association School. Youngstown College and the other institutions that resided on

Wick Avenue embodied his vision of what was urban culture. He and his fellow supporters worked for twenty years to try to set the neighborhood apart from the surrounding central city, yet never convinced the larger community of the importance of doing so. As a public servant on the Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek Park, he achieved success in developing the section of the park that later bore his name by setting aside his personal beliefs, and those of founder Volney Rogers, to accommodate the perceived needs of the community in the mid-twentieth century. With his assistance Youngstown College and Mill Creek Park continued to evolve into recognized social, cultural and economic assets to the City of Youngstown.

After Wick's death in 1972 at the age of 89, the Mahoning Valley underwent another upheaval of values, conventional wisdom and priorities as the community's lifelong association with the iron and steel industry all but ended in the nationwide retrenchments of the late-1970's and early-1980's. Business leaders and public officials were forced to contend with a vacuum in the Valley's economic base, while the United Steelworkers of America shifted their emphasis to other districts around the country in an attempt to shore up the power base that evaporated with the hundreds of thousands of lost steel jobs.

Amid the turmoil and efforts to formulate a new identity for the community, Youngstown State University, as it has been called since becoming a public institution in 1967, has taken a more prominent role in its "symbiotic" relationship with the region, providing technical and professional expertise, developmental

partnerships and employment opportunities, along with its traditional educational programs, to stimulate progress in the social, economic and cultural aspects of the community.[6] In 1988, voters in Mahoning County approved the establishment of a metropolitan park commission to administer Mill Creek Park and future recreational developments by voting in favor of an additional, county-wide tax levy to provide necessary revenues, and the Youngstown Township Park District gave way to the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District. The transition reflected the desire of many in the Youngstown metropolitan area to expand the influence and support of valued community assets. James L. Wick, Jr., would have been content to know that some of the institutions formed in his day and supported and developed by him are part of the old and still solid foundation on which the community continues to build its present and future.

NOTES

CHAPTER V.

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