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Curriculum Unit 80.ch.10  
by Elisa McCarthy

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Connecticut today is a densely populated part of the East Coast megalopolis, a heavily industrialized, multi-ethnic area. This is so obvious to our students that they may not realize that this has all happened comparatively recently, in a little over a century. In the city of New Britain they are surrounded by homes, public buildings, schools, and churches which they take for granted as stone and institutions, but which all grew through individuals' efforts responding to immediate social and personal need and often public struggle. The city became a city through an amazingly close public vote of 521 to 520 to move from town to city government. That was in 1871, the same year that Stanley Works, now an international corporation and the city's largest employer, decided to take a chance on cold-rolled steel. The only significant immigrant groups in town by that year were the Irish, the Germans, and the Swedes. But by the turn of the century Poles had

arrived in great numbers and the beginnings of Italian immigration were seen. These new groups came because industry offered them a livelihood; their presence changed the face and structure of the newly urbanized area. The three major forces of change in Connecticut history in the late 1800s, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration are especially visible in the everyday functions of the city and people of New Britain.

The thrust of this work will be to use the city as an example of Connecticut's growth and to use locally available primary sources as the teaching vehicle.

The materials available are vast: newspapers, church histories, town clerks' records, artifacts, buildings, the shape of the city itself. The problem of exclusion becomes the major one. What materials best exemplify the fabric of life of the majority of people? What statistics or maps best demonstrate the tremendous changes in the pattern of urbanization and immigration and economic growth? Which biographies best demonstrate the change in lifestyle? The sample lessons included will offer some of these, and the recommended sources are intended to lead the teacher and students to others.

If these materials are used for a week in senior high school as a mini-unit in the study of Connecticut they should illuminate one of the most volatile and formative periods of this state's history. If they are used throughout the year in American History to draw on as examples for other units on immigration, labor, government, etc., they will present the city as a microcosm of American growth and struggle. Any Connecticut area, I am sure, could do the same if its local resources were tapped or collected.

## Industrialization

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New Britain was typical in Connecticut history in its parish foundations and its agricultural rise; it was atypical in its factory beginnings since it lacked a large water-power supply and it wasn't on major transportation routes. Its "middle" factory period (1840s to 1860s) brought it to preeminence because of the rapid growth of numerous small companies; then the capital which was made available through partnerships and family ties made expansion easy. In 1850 New Britain, "The Hardware City," had three businesses making hardware; by 1860 there were seven. Of the twenty-four small companies in metal production in 1850, twelve used Steam power, one water power, one horse and the rest hand power. <sup>1</sup> Their products, such as hooks and eyes, brass saddlery, door bolts, etc., were generally small, labor intensive, and required little metal. By 1860 the companies had connected through partnership and expansions so that there were only fifteen companies, twelve using steam. Each company's growth was considerable, however, P. & F. Corbin increased its manpower from six to fifty in seven years; Russell and Erwin from 143 to 400 in twenty. This growth intensified during the Civil War. In New Britain, the grand list for 1864 was \$2,608,418, a large amount for a community of only five or six thousand people. <sup>2</sup> On the state level, Connecticut's grand list increased by \$40 million and its bank deposits jumped by \$10 million during the Civil War. <sup>3</sup> This change in wealth is further explained by the state's manufacturing output. In 1880, state figures for the employment and value of output were: <sup>4</sup>

*Average number of*

*persons employed*

Textiles	33,150	\$ 53,514,768
Carriages	2,136	3,430,202
Ammunition	871	1,706,852
Hardware	12,458	15,892,856
Total Metal		
Industries	9,723	\$60,587,623

Obviously the metal industries were becoming an important part of Connecticut's manufacturing scene. The number of factories grew from 5,128 in 1870 to over 9,000 in 1900.<sup>5</sup> Appendix A shows the size to which some representative New Britain companies had grown as well as their nation-wide marketing techniques and, in some cases, their continuing family control. But we can't assume that this healthy growth was without struggle any more than were other portions of New Britain's life during the period. Let's take one company as an example:

New Britain Business Directory 1900 STANLEY WORKS. Organized 1852. Capital, \$500,000. Butts, hinges, bolts, blind trimmings, etc. William H. Hart, President and Treasurer; L. H. Pease, Secretary; George P. Hart, Assistant Manager. Warehouse 29 Chambers, New York. When that company was twenty-one years old the 1873 depression staggered the country and lasted for about five years. By the end of 1873, Stanley Works, which had just started to build a new facility on Myrtle Street, was trying to sell property on Lake Street because profits had fallen badly. In order to stay open, they

borrowed at banks till the company's credit was strained, then got F. T. Stanley the founder to under write their notes . . . Hart the president had to go out and borrow personally. As he related the story in later years: 'I have probably more than a hundred times started at Mark Moore's at the top of Dublin Hill, and walked down the length of Main Street stopping at fifteen or twenty stores, borrowing money at three days later, taking the same trip, stopping at stores where I had previously borrowed money and paying the loans with money borrowed on this trip.'<sup>6</sup> Disaster was stayed off because a community effort had kept the company open. But not all their enterprises ended happily. The Tack Shop, a divergent Stanley interest acquired in 1884 at the price of \$25,000 worth of their stock, burned completely June 1st, 1892. So ended the tack business, but the several tons of tacks were "dredged out, separated by tumbling in revolving boxes" and packaged to sell cheap in big lots.<sup>7</sup> That was the canny idea of W. H. Hart, the author of many notes on his career. A family memorial volume tells an interesting company history as well. It was Hart who convinced the company to switch from paper wrapping to cardboard with a standardized label. In pushing of Stanley to produce its own cold-rolled steel, "he represented the extreme radical wing of Stanley Works policy. He was bold enough to buy in 1871, a pair of rolls, relics of a Boston fire, that had been used for cold-rolling copper-plate."<sup>8</sup> The small beginnings and "chanciness" of these dealings come as a surprise to people of the 1980s who are used to an established if not aging factory city, and for that matter, an aging factory state.

The life within the factories is not easy to document. Public records and newspapers did not generally cover the worker's life or working conditions locally. Labor history is only recently being written as the value of oral history collection becomes apparent. Appendices B and C give some idea of the materials available. There is no lack of material about our next topic; New Britain was most self-conscious of its newfound glory as a city.

## Urbanization

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By 1870, 25.7% of American were living in cities. By 1890 it was 35.1%, and by 1910 just under half of all Americans lived in cities of 2,5000 population or more. <sup>9</sup> The figures for Connecticut and New Britain are shown in Appendix E. This rapid urbanization brought with it many problems: fire, disease, crime, water and sanitation problems plagued all the burgeoning cities which rapidly outgrew their service capabilities. Connecticut was in advance of most of the Unites States in its urban growth and in making serious moves to conquer the problems. New Britain's answer was to incorporate as a city in 1871 and attack the problems with vigor within the new governmental structure. From the Civil War to 1900, nine other Connecticut areas did the same: Meriden three years earlier than New Britain, and the others, including Norwalk and Stamford, in the 1890's. The politics of the process is indicated in Appendix F. The heat of the arguments, the disputed nature of the vote, the antipathy between Hartford and New Britain, the pride evinced in the newly rich city are most interesting manifestations of the struggle. Civic pride indeed brought solutions to some of the city's problems. Individual New Britain philanthropists were very generous in their gifts to their city. The reservoir and park at Walnut Hill, the Erwin Home for elderly, the Klingberg Home for Children were all private gifts. Cornelius Erwin willed his entire \$1.1 million estate to charities. But the reservoir would prove inadequate and discussion of taxation and bills for the water system and fire department fill pages of the annual municipal reports. \$1,000 was spent for a chemist for the water system analysis. In the same year, 1908, 4,343 feet of sanitary sewers were built and 2,434 feet of storm sewers. Health officials and engineers were justifiably proud of this tax expenditure. The Board of Health had just traced eight cases of typhoid fever to a milk dealer whose well had been contaminated with "undisinfected excreta lightly buried within 50 feet" of it. But, they also reported six smallpox cases, thirty-four scarlet fever, fifty-two typhoid cases, and sixty-three tuberculosis deaths. Cholera had already been eradicated, and a specific quarantining system and recommendation for the "fumigation of homes where a person had died of tuberculosis" were advised by the Commissioner. These urban health problems reflect the figures in New York City where the death rate had risen from twenty-nine per 1,000 in 1826 to forty per 1,000 in 1855, but dropped again starting in 1860 with better sanitary facilities. <sup>10</sup>

A look at Appendix G will show these problems as they were in 1881 before a Board of Health and other agencies had bean instituted. The expenditures on education are more encouraging. The \$25,000 for the Normal School shows the level of local commitment to, and leadership in, the teaching field. Since the Connecticut legislature in 1848 had appropriated the money to open a normal school (alleviating the appalling unpreparedness of many common school teachers) the city had served the state well. New Britain citizens gave \$16,250 to build the school on Main Street. City children attended the "model schools" for teacher training until 1873 when the city voted to run them itself. In 1881 citizens gave a quarter of the funding necessary to build a new and larger campus, (the \$25,000 mentioned), the state paid the rest. The school's opening ceremony is delightful to read about in contemporary newspapers.

Professor David Camp was head of this school and State Superintendent of Schools, and continued to follow Henry Barnard's more renowned career by succeeding him as president of the St. John's College, Maryland. He built in New Britain a private seminary, the Evening Commercial School for Young Men which, in 1884, was advertised as a "Private Day School with departments for both sexes." Camp was also president of the company which he and a son-in-law founded, the Skinner Chuck Company (today Skinner Precision Tools). He was also a vice-president of the New Britain National Bank. And, amazingly, he served as mayor from 1877-79. His versatility was not unusual in the public officers of his day. Of the fourteen men who served as mayor from 1871 to 1910, six had founded one or more manufacturing companies and seven had served as officers in New Britain companies. Many had been involved in founding institutes such as the library and Y.M.C.A. They

obviously had a great faith in the city and in its motto, "Industry fills the hive and enjoys the honey."

That not all the city people were enjoying the honey is clear in the presence of the Poor Farm. (See Appendix H). That the old family-support social system was breaking down is clear. The parish-centered welfare system was strained in an area where migration to city-work was taking place so rapidly and where so many different churches now served. The enumeration of the poor shows many illnesses which needed other treatment (insanity and the "falling sickness") and the ages of many suggests a displacement from a rural environment. Those inmates "past fifty," after all, had been children when the first steam engines came to transformed New Britain in 1830. The Puritan work ethic received its greatest challenge in dealing with those on the Poor Farm who were "on the tramp." In 1885, 730 people had been sheltered overnight but, "They are not encouraged by luxurious accommodations . . . none of these tramps had appeared a second time." The problem of the unemployed, especially during the depressions of 1873 and 1907, was area-wide but the faith in the economic system was strong enough to counter basic questions, except as they appeared in labor struggles essentially within the factories. And the general prosperity of more happy times invited a whole new population which would change the city's very nature.

## Immigration

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For a discussion of immigrant groups in Connecticut in general, see Unit XI of this volume; for a study of the Italians in particular, see Unit XII. See also Appendix A of Unit XII. The life of immigrant groups in New Britain can be traced through town records, police blotters, church rolls and occasional editorials. Whether you follow the Irish arriving in the 1840s and after, the Sweden and Germans in the same period, the Poles arriving in the late 1880s or the Italians after the turn of the century, the pattern is a similar one of social isolation, economic struggle, establishment of their own parish through personal sacrifice, individual accomplishment in business or education and finally political success. The period of 1871 to around the turn of the century saw the acceptance of Irish and the early struggles of the Poles. The Irish had had their Church since 1853, St. Mary's was originally built on Myrtle Street, later on Main Street. Thirty-six Irish families were recorded on the Grand List for 1906-07 with holdings of over \$10,000. Politically they were astute.

The naturalization records in the New Britain Town Clerk's office are interesting; between 1875 and 1900, 3,064 persons became citizens, the vast majority from Great Britain and then Ireland. Austrians and Swedes and others registered, but almost no Poles, Yet, according to the U. S. Census, 1900 there were 1,117 Russian Poles living in the city, The Irish were taking out citizenship papers, and they were gaining power. The 1877 City Directory, although it shows that all the executive offices are held by Yankees, shows the third and fourth wards with Irish aldermen and predominantly Irish councilmen. Of the six city police, three are Irish. One, Patrick Lee, was appointed in 1871 to the first city police force, was also a councilman. When he retired he was memorialized in the *Herald* as one who had never used his night stick on anyone's head. This immigrant political and social advance took place only twenty and thirty years after the state legislature had limited immigrants' role under the "Know-Nothing" governorship of William Minor (1855). The Irish militia had been disbanded, the bishops had lost control of church property, and suffrage had been restricted to men able to read the Constitution or laws. Later, in 1868, toughened state electoral laws required " . . . one to register three weeks before the election and registry boards and polling places closed at 5:00 P.M., a distinct hardship for workers . . ." <sup>11</sup>

Politically, however, the Irish prevailed in New Britain by the time the Poles arrived. Their earliest coming is

difficult to trace. The population figures in Appendix I (with the explanation that they were considered Russian) and the obituaries of two of the earliest Polish women in the city provide some of the very little information we have of their arrival. The general pattern of Polish migration and emigration has been studied. In a very interesting piece, Richard Ehrlich points out that for most Poles "America was merely another alternative, perhaps the final and most profitable one, available to someone desperately in need of work to preserve a way of life slipping through his fingers." The Polish immigrant might have already worked in Prussia, Russia, or the Ukraine, saving money to send home to preserve the land and the family. "Long distance migration was confined mainly to the younger males . . . always their intent was to return home . . . At least 40 per cent, perhaps 60 per cent, did so." <sup>12</sup>

Whether New Britain's Poles returned at this rate is not known, but Appendix K contains references to their return to Poland as well as some of the prejudice they encountered on the job, in the courts, and in their social life. Certainly this is a good field for oral history investigation in the future. One possible reason for difficulty in finding solid population figures is expressed by a city official in the November 16, 1898 *Record*. He claimed he ". . . took the census of the city as far as possible. He says that among foreigners they didn't give exact information fearing a tax would be levied on them."

Evidently the Poles had cause to distrust those in power, for they had to struggle even to form their own church. The beginnings of Sacred Heart parish were difficult. The American bishops did not want their newly burgeoning parishes to be broken up along ethnic lines. The bishop ". . . under pressure from American nativists . . . sought to use the church as a supra-ethnic instrument for the immigrants' rapid Americanization and assimilation." <sup>13</sup> Besides, some of the Irish hierarchy might have agreed with Cardinal McClosky who said ". . . a pig shanty is an adequate church for the Poles." <sup>14</sup>

But many of the Poles didn't choose to assimilate. Under the strong leadership of Father Bojnowski, who arrived in New Britain newly ordained in 1895, they created an economic and social entity around the Sacred Heart parish. They built and supported a newspaper, *Przewodnik Katolicki* (Catholic Leader) in 1907; a stone church for Sacred Heart Parish in 1904; a religious order in the same year; a parish school in 1910; and in the 1920's an orphanage and home for the aged. There were close to twenty-five parish societies and these were the tools which kept the Poles united under Father Bojnowski. The power and wealth wielded in the parish did not go unchallenged, however. The Polish Political Club No. 1 and Mutual Aid Society was formed by thirty-nine individuals and had as its purpose ". . . to help the Poles acquire citizenship papers, to secure the appointment of Poles to such agencies as the Police Department and Post Office . . ." <sup>15</sup> This group's aims were to acquire the benefits the Irish had already achieved. But the dissenters were a challenge to the authority of Father Bojnowski and thus were denounced as holding "drunken balls, having reveries even on Sundays" and showing ". . . a hostile attitude towards the Catholic Church and its clergy." <sup>16</sup>

Regardless of the resultant split in the community which led to the eventual establishment of a rival parish, the Poles still managed political success. The 1910 election shows Polish councilmen serving from the fifth ward, and a Polish alderman was finally elected in 1918, completing the cycle for immigrant acceptance in the community.

## Strategies

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The materials used to present to students the life style and history of 1871 to 1900 in New Britain were all found locally and with little research effort. This method for handling local and Connecticut history can be used anywhere. After choosing a particularly rich period of local history, or a truly representative one, the teacher needs to ground the local information in readable state histories. The two most useful to the late 19th century for my purposes were Roth and Van Dusen. Intellectual histories of the nation also add a perspective often missing from older local texts which tend to see their own area as the hub of the universe. Then the treasure hunt begins. Materials which may be checked include published local history, street directories and maps, military records, and of course, newspapers. These suggestions and other excellent ideas are contained in *Experiments in Teaching History*, ed., Stephen Batlin, et al., Harvard-Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning, Cambridge, 1977. The work also gives oral history suggestions, and local "digging" suggestions which might be useful in a class project. Of particular use in New Britain is the Local History Room organized in the Library. If your town or city doesn't have one, ask for one and start collecting materials to be contained in it. That would be a good use for student projects; it would give them permanent meaning. Such primary source materials are useful also to illustrate general American History units, adding to an understanding of Industrial America or American Immigration. Since such materials may also be used cumulatively to give a picture of a whole period, some general questions might be asked at the conclusion of the unit.

1. What were the biggest changes occurring in the illustrative society?
  2. What economic facts were influencing the lives of the People then?
  3. What political forces were at work? What were the various groups' aims?
  4. How did the everyday lives of the people differ from ours today?
  5. Which institutions, educational, church, social, of that period are still around today?
  
6. If you were alive then, where would you fit into that society?

## Notes

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1. William Ostapchuk, "A Survey of the Development of the Hardware Industry in the Ecclesiastical Society, Borough and Town of New Britain, Connecticut, 1820-1860," Thesis C.C.S.C. 1969, pp. 49-50.
2. Herbert Fowler, *A History of New Britain*, (New Britain Historical Society, 1960), p. 85.
3. David Roth, *Connecticut; a Bicentennial History*, (N.Y.: W. W. Norton and Co., 1979), p. 151.
4. Figures selected from Grace Fuller, *An Introduction to the History of Connecticut as a Manufacturing State* (Northampton: Smith College, 1915), pp. 57-58.
5. Roth, p. 149.
6. Robert K. Leavitt, "History of Stanley Works," in *Stanley World*, 1955, (no publisher), p. 37.

7. Leavitt, p. 54.
8. Lillian Hart Tryon, *Biographical Sketch of William H. Hart and His Connection with Stanley Works*, privately published, 1929), Chapter VIII, unpagued.
9. Lance E. Davis, et al., *American Economic Growth: An Economist's History of the U.S.* , (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 601.
10. Davis, et al., p. 629.
11. Albert Van Dusen, *Connecticut*, (N.Y.: Random House, 1961), p. 241.
12. Richard Ehrlich, ed., *Immigrants in Industrial America : 1880-1920* , (Charlottesville: U. Press of Virginia, 1977), p. 7.
13. Stanislaus Blejwas, *A Polish Community in Transition : Origins of Holy Cross Parish, New Britain, Conn .* , (Polish American Historical Association, 1978), p. 8.

14. Blejwas, p. 8, footnote 10.

15. Blejwas, p. 12.

16. Blejas, p. 16.

## Bibliography

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### *Background Materials*

+ Ehrlich, Richard, ed. *Immigrants in Industrial America: 1850-1920* . Charlottesville: U. Press of Va. 1977.

A collection of studies on life for the first generation.

+ Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden* . N.Y.: Oxford U. Press, 1964. A philosophic treatment of the problem of technology vs. nature from Jefferson to 1900.

### *Connecticut Materials*

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+ Fuller, Grace. *An Introduction to the History of Connecticut as a Manufacturing State: Smith College Studies of History* . Northampton, 1915.

A careful study based on early statistics of the rise of industry. Available at Yale.

\*\* Roth, David M. *Connecticut: a Bicentennial History* . N.Y.: W. W. Norton and Co., 1979.

An up to date view especially valuable for later periods. It makes an attempt to blend economic and social interpretations.

\*\* Van Dusen, Albert Edward. *Connecticut* . N.Y.: Random House, 1961. The most readable and attractive of state histories.

### *New Britain Materials*

The Local History Room of the Library, High Street, is a major source of local materials. The Curator, Barbara Hubbard, is very knowledgeable and helpful and welcomes inquiries, students and historical information to add to the collection.

\*\* Blejwas, Stanislaus. *A Polish Community in Transition: Origins of Holy Cross Parish, New Britain, Conn* . Polish American Historical Association, 1978.

A pamphlet containing good information on the tensions within the early Polish community. Found in Local History Room.

\*\* Dabkowski, Stan. *Newspaper Outline for Ethnic History of New Britain* . Unpublished. Federal Writers Project, New Britain District, 1940.

Found in Local History Room.

\*\* Fowler, Herbert. *A History of New Britain Connecticut* . New Britain Historical Society, Inc., 1960.

A highly readable work.

\*\* Larson, Kenneth A. *A Walk Around Walnut Hill* . New Britain: Art Press; 1975.

Main thrust is architecture but the biographies and general background are very well written. Available in schools.

+ Ostapchuk, Dr. William. *A Survey of the Development of the Hard-ward Industry in the Ecclesiastical Society, Borough, and Town of New Britain, Connecticut, 1820-1860* . Unpublished manuscript. CCSC master's thesis, 1969.

Excellent, thorough treatment of the early period.

Tryon, Lillian Hart. *Biographical Sketch of William H. Hart and His Connection with Stanley Works* . New Britain: privately published, 1929.

Found in Local History Room.

\*\* *New Britain Centennial 1871-1971* Centennial Commission. Available in schools.

*Municipal Records of New Britain* . 1871 on.

Local History room.

*City Directory of New Britain* broken years.

Local History Room.

*New Britain Record* (Newspaper) 1871-1932.

Spottily available in local History Room and State Library.

*New Britain Herald* 1880 on.

Fairly complete except 1914. In *Herald* Library on request, 1 Herald Square.

## Appendix A

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### NEW BRITAIN BUSINESS DIRECTORY 1900

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These are a sampling of the businesses based in New Britain. Which are familiar to you? Which are still in the city? This directory and those for other years are to be found in the Local History Room.

These are not all the companies in New Britain, but . . .

1. Of those included, how many are metal-based? How many produce *small* metal products?
  2. Of the non-metal manufacturers, what are the products?
  3. Which companies have the largest capital? Why? Which have the smallest capital? Why?
  4. Study the organization dates of the companies. Do they fall into any patterns?
  5. Study the names of the incorporators and officers. Where do you recognize them from in the city?
  6. How many of the officers carry over from one company to another? Is there a pattern?
  7. Just for fun look at the list of mayors in your *Centennial Book* p. 92. What names are familiar?
  
8. Which companies had out of town offices? What does this tell you?

An interesting statistic on American marketing: In the U. S. the numbers of traveling salesmen or

“drummers” was as follows:

1860-1,000

1870-7,000

1880-28,000

What was happening? (From Lance E. Davis et al., *Economic Growth* ; 1972)

## Appendix B

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### EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

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How would the hiring information in the city affect the power of the unions?

There is not much available information on labor conditions in the city, but we do know about labor laws in the state of Connecticut. 1885-6 was the early high-point for Labor’s power; 37 members of the General Assembly were Knights of labor. They helped establish a Bureau of labor Statistics, factory inspection laws and others. Although the Knights of labor declined, the American Federation of Labor rose, and the Connecticut Federation of Labor started in 1887. Besides fostering local unions they also tried to influence public opinion positively. They helped lobby for the state legislature’s passage of the following:

1895-Establishment of State Board of Mediation and Arbitration

1895-Blacklisting of employees forbidden

1901-Establishment of free public employment bureaus. (For more information see Van Dusen, *Connecticut* , pp. 254-256.)

#### **Questions:**

1. For what purpose would workers want the establishment of free public employment bureaus?
2. If they hadn’t been “free” before, and “public,” then what might have been the problem
3. In the article from New Britain what fear did the labor organizer indicate?
- 4 What do you think was the city’s rationale for attaching an employment bureau to the Board of Charities? Read the Welfare article in this series for further understanding.

5 In the last paragraphs notice the pay and hours listed. What is your reaction? (Sorry about the cut-off, but that's what can happen to primary source material!)

(figure available in printed form)

## Appendix C

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### MAPPING OUR GROWTH

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(Please note: a rod = 5 1/2 yds. or 16 1/2 ft)

*IN THE LOCAL HISTORY ROOM* (Second floor Main Library, on High Street)

1. From the 1869 map (before city incorporation), in the Southern and Western part of town how many mills do you see? Of what kind? Why don't the Eastern streams seem to have mills using them for power? Think of the *look* of the area.
2. Tracing the Hartford, Providence & Fishkill R.R., what major road in New Britain today did it parallel going West? (Check on the 1902 map.) Why was the New Britain Branch R.R. necessary in relation to another railroad?
3. Which of the 6 districts would your present home have been in? Mark it on your classroom map.
4. In 1869 (the Baker-& Tilden Map) which land holdings were the largest owned by individuals?
5. The factories were generally found concentrated in what streets? Which factories seem to be the largest? Name 8 or 9.
6. Check the single family residential pattern. Especially on Elm, High, Orchard, East Main, notice the residences of the factory owners. What generalization can you make for 1869 as to their location?
7. Where do the majority of Irish names occur? Name streets.
8. On the *1875 View* the pattern of factories and estates becomes clear. Locate 3 or 4 of the larger mansions as to street. What was the advantage of the location?
9. Find several areas of workers housing. Name the streets. How do you conclude that this is cheaper housing? (Copy of this map to be made for schools -)
10. From 1869 map, what was the function of the Walnut Hill Park water supply? How do you know?
11. How far would you have to travel to be out in the country? Answer in direction, miles, streets.

12. The 1902 map shows considerable change. There are many new public services shown, such as schools, cemeteries, hospital, the Town Farm. Mark at least 5 such on your map.

## Appendix D

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### NEW BRITAIN BIOGRAPHIES

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Why not try to become better acquainted with some of the leaders of New Britain on your own? The following men were all industrialists whose place in New Britain was very important and whose lives are most interesting and fairly easy to find out about. Seth North

Joseph Shipman early industry  
Frederick T. Stanley  
The Pattersons William and Edward

The Corbins Frank, George, Waldo, Andrew, and later Philip William Hart

Lorin Judd

The Landers Charles and George

Justus Traut Try to answer these questions:

1. What generally was his contribution to the industrial world? How did his company or work interact with others in the city?

2. How did he organize the rest of his life? Was he one of New Britain's multi-interest citizens who worked in politics or the church or in education?

3. What was his background? Was he trained in the field where he made his fortune? Besides the books available to you in the school, Kalarson's *A Walk Around Walnut Hill*, the *New Britain Centennial*, Lillian Hart Tryon's *New Britain*, try the local History Room for clippings, folders or biographies. Also, if you can find important dates in his life, look in the *Herald* Office library. You might also want to check the Town Clerk's records for deeds, Grand lists when available, citizenship papers, etc.

Equally valuable would be research on workers in the factories, particularly before World War II. Their remembrances are not usually recorded and history students need to know about their lives. Be sure to know

something about the factory before you talk to the worker. What size was the factory? What were its products? What were its markets? This information is generally available in the local History Room.

What you want to discover from your interview is:

The nature of his job: What machines did he use? How difficult was it? What were the working conditions? Did he change jobs in the company?

The nature of employment: What was the pay and benefits? Was it unionized? How were problems handled?

The nature of his life style: Where did workers generally live? What was the transportation? Was education available for adults? Etc.

A little gentlemanly prodding on your part and some genuine interest should take you a long way.

Oral history tapes and training tips are available from Friends of the Library, High Street.

## Appendix E

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### CONNECTICUT MOVES TO THE CITY

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When Did We Become Urbanized?

(From Grace Fuller's *An Introduction to the History of Connecticut as a Manufacturing State*; Smith College, 1915)

1. From the chart below, when did New Britain achieve its greatest percentage of population increase? Why was this happening?
2. Population figures for New Britain prepared by the Chamber of Commerce show (1910) 43,916 people. Is this consistent with the rate of growth in other charts? Why?
3. Which size towns drop in actual population? Where are these people going to?
4. Actual population figures tend to rise all the time, therefore, which chart more accurately shows the move to the city?
5. Choose two statistics that show definitively that Connecticut's population has shifted before 1900, using charts 1 to 3.
6. Where does New Britain fit in the chart to the left? Please note that the figures in the chart below run only from 1840 to 1880

7. Interestingly the Chamber gives these statistics for 1010, New Britain.

White, native parents	8,755
White, foreign or mixed parents,	17,037
White, foreign born	18,015
Black,	94

What conclusions can you draw from that?

*(figure available in printed form)*

## Appendix F

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### NEW BRITAIN BECOMES CHARTERED AS A CITY 1871

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The population of New Britain rose from 5,500 in 1860 to 10,000 in 1870, and the citizens were feeling their power.

“So, in 1870, the General Assembly of Connecticut granted the borough a charter of incorporation which gave greater civic powers to the governing officials and recognized the importance of New Britain in the economy of the state . . . After incorporation their first act was to raise money to operate the city government. The first tax levy for the city was five mills, with a five per cent discount for prompt payment.”

(from Herbert E. Fowler,

History of New Britain, 1960) Connecticut in 1837 passed legislation to empower the state to charter corporations, evidently the first state to do so. The advantages would be the same for a city as a business: extended life, rights as a “body” in court etc., and limited liability.

I. Excerpted from the *New Britain Record* , Jan. 6, 1871 (newspaper to be found in local History Room)  
“New Britain a City” “ . . . The borough exists under a shockingly slipshod and incomplete patchwork of charter, private acts and municipal ordinances . . . They were right and proper for the exigencies which made them necessary . . . but inadequate to her present condition . . . let New Britain take a name and title commensurate with her rank among the cities of Connecticut. “Citizens . . . will appear at Union Hall, Friday the 13th day of January at 1 o’clock p.m. and vote the acceptance of this charter.”

II. Excerpted from the *New Britain Record*, Jan. 6, 1871

“Twenty Reasons for a City Charter”

“1. The census shows a sufficient population for a city.

“5. The borough Charter makes no provision for a police department.

“6. The borough charter makes no adequate provision for a fire department.

“7. It has been found impracticable to assess benefits for sewers under the borough charter.

“11. New Britain already has the water works, gas works, side and cross walks, criminal court,

etc. which usually make expense when a town becomes a city.

“12. The city charter provides no source of taxation not existing under the Borough charter of by Borough usage.

“19. No member of the common council can, while a member thereof, become interested in any contract the expense of which is to be paid by vote of the council.

“20. The best provisions of the charters of all the smaller cities in the state have been incorporated into the New Britain charter.”

**Questions:**

1. How many of these reasons are inspired by civic pride and how many are purely practical?

2. What criticisms are already being answered in this editorial?

3. The term “borough” refers to an incorporated town of lesser size than a city. New Britain had become a borough when it separated in 1850 from the town of Berlin. The citizens of Kensington and Worthington parishes had petitioned the change. New Britain’s center then had become a borough and the less inhabited area the town of Mew Britain. Its population then had been 3,029. What other areas in the state would you guess were going through the split-off from larger, older pariah and town areas?

III. Excerpted from the *New Britain Record* , Jan. 13, 1871 “All opposition to the adoption of the city charter seems now to be adoption to the single proposition that city limits should extend north to include that part of New Britain known as Dublin Hill.

“ . . . When the borough was extended s few years ago the were left out of that extension as it was understood at the time, and not since disputed that they wished to be left out . . . A serious obstacle to admitting them seems to be . . . borough indebtedness, \$100,000.

“It seemed unwise and unjust to include in the number subject to this indebtedness a district which did not incur it.”

IV. Excerpted from the *New Britain Record* , Jan. 20, 1871.



## “The Charter Election”

“At 3 o’clock ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ began to run neck and neck . . . From that hour active canvassing was going on in the hall, on the steps, along the street. The opposition made use of the familiar tax argument, but this was sufficiently answered by the almost uniform vote of the large tax payers in favor of the charter. At 7 o’clock the polls were closed, and counters retired to discharge their duty.

Whole no. of votes	1,041
Yes	521
No	520

To this declaration Col. Moore publicly protested basing his protest on the fact 2 votes found folded together and discounted. The dense crowd in hall expressed their satisfaction further in considerable vociferous cheering in the streets, hand shaking, bonfires, promiscuous dancing in the hall . . . The result was somewhat unexpected. Many voters strongly in favor staid away from the polls because from the overconfident sir of the opposition they had received the impression that no hope remained.” V. From the *Hartford Times* , as quoted in the *New Britain Record* , Jan. 20, 1871.

“The charter we are told has been crowded upon the people of New Britain . . . It is designed to afford easy offices and comfortable salaries for a little ‘ring’ of Radical managers and runners. It divides New Britain into 3 wards instead of 4 according to the natural lines which would take Main Street one way and the railroad the other, for boundaries. Instead of this it separates moat of the Democratic vote into a ward by itself, where it will always give 200 majority and so carves out the other two, that the radicals think they are always sure of both by at least 50 majority . . . the offices by them to be awarded will be numerous.”

III, IV, V 1. Who lived on Dublin Hill? What might be part of the purpose of not including them in the city?

2. What costs do you think might be included in the \$100,000 debt left from the borough?

3. What do you learn about the voting procedure that is surprising?

4. Was the *Record* for or against incorporation?

5. Why might the *Hartford Times* be against the are becoming a city?

6. This manipulation of voting area is called “gerrymandering.” Do you know of any districts so arranged today?

## Appendix G

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COMMUNITY EXPENSES published town report, 1881

Which of these problems are still with us?

These are bills paid by the town (the larger district than the city itself) to firms and individuals for specific expenses. The dates and check number are to the left. 1. How many are really business items? Of what nature? 2. What is the nature of the majority of bills? "Pest" house is short for pestilence. What does that mean? How many items are health related? How many would fall under welfare today? 3. The names printed here are those caring for the poor. In the later municipal records the names and amounts of the welfare given were published. Your comments to that?

*(figure available in printed form)*

This is the actual budget for the same year for the town: 1. What items are the costliest?

2. Any comment on the salary expenses? 3. Items 6-11 might be considered welfare accounts. Any comment? 4. The last items explain the state tax collection system. How did it work?

## Appendix G

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*(figure available in printed form)*

## Appendix I

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### IMMIGRANT POPULATION STATISTICS

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These first figures were "prepared by New Britain Chamber of Commerce in 1922." Not all are quoted, just the most significant. This was found in the Local History Room.

Nativity of the Foreign-Born Whites in New Britain

	1910	1920
Austria	1,972	623
Canada	508	439
Czecho-Slovakea	—	360
England	871	730
Germany	1,605	1,112
Hungary	147	109
Ireland	1,435	986

Italy	2,005	3,177
Lithuania	—	1,246
Poland	—	1,152
Sweden	2,381	2,102
Turkey	203	—
Armenia	—	153

1. Which immigrant groups dropped from 1910 to 1920? How many of these would be related to WW I, and why? 2. The heaviest immigration was obviously coming from 3 main countries. See the statistics for Connecticut below and see how New Britain's pattern fits in. Immigrant Settlements in a WPA Federal Writers' Project for the State of Connecticut, 1938, prepared by Samuel Koenig, Ph.D., Hartford State Dept. of Education, 1938. (The M on the left stand for thousands.)

1. This information obviously explains the absence of Polish immigrant figures for 1910 in New Britain and the Russian figure drop. Why?

2. If the figures in the accompanying paragraph (above) are correct, then Polish immigration in 1920 would match which other countries'? What country's immigration is making the most spectacular rise?

3. In the 1870's and 1880's what countries are supplying most of the immigration?

## Appendix J

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*New Britain Herald* articles available in Local History Room.

The lives of these two women tell a good deal about the lives of the early Polish immigrants. The fact that Mrs. Traceski was the first woman to settle points out that the men arrived first for jobs, sometimes returning home later, sometimes bringing their families. The Traceskis came from Austrian controlled Poland; the majority of Poles came to New Britain from the Russian controlled area. Tomasz Ostrowksi is thought by some to be the very first Pole to permanently settle, but records are hard to find. (See Stanislaus Blejwas, *The Polish Community in Transition*, pp. 6,7.)

1. Date the real arrival of Poles to New Britain. From the other story you can see when the numbers increased rapidly.

2. What function did Grandma Wiacek serve in the Polish community? What factors in the immigrants' lives made staying close together necessary?

3. What was the work load involved in being a housekeeper? What was the basic difference from today?

4. Trace the movement of the children of these 2 pioneers. What patterns do these families show in second generation movement? "The Poles in Connecticut concentrated in the 4 counties of Middlesex, New London, Tolland, and Hartford . . . While a great many Poles went into factory work, more went into farming than did representatives of any other immigrant group." David Roth, *Connecticut*

a Bicentennial History, p. 153.

(figure available in printed form)

## Appendix K

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### NEWS ARTICLES ON IMMIGRANTS

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The Poles in New Britain: articles mentioned in a Federal Writers' Project finished in 1940 by Stan Dabrowski

Interest in ethnic studies isn't just a post- *Roots* happening. Several Connecticut writers did projects for the Federal government as employment projects during the Depression of the 1930's. This material was gathered by one man about New Britain. Unfortunately, the *New Britain Records* are not all still in existence. Some are in the State Library on Capitol Avenue in Hartford. You might wish to verify some of his stories.

Jan. 14, 1897 Polish Births in New Britain in 1896 amounted to 52.

April 7, 1893 Eight Polish laborers employed by a mason contractor went on strike. Earned only 25 cents a day, and contractor claims they weren't worth that much.

Nov. 7, 1895 Beer and Broken Glass.

Angry Poles Charge on A Crowd of Boys..Stone Thrown Through the Windows of the Old N. Lee Shirt Factory. Tells of Poles bothered by youngsters . . . Poles were supposed to be making merry and were annoyed . . . details.

Nov.11, 1895 Another Polish Fight. Details . . . Judge Andrew gave the Poles some good advice about the evils of intemperance and told them to let liquor alone.

APRIL 23, 1892 Editorial Nearly 50 Polish immigrants arrived in this town last week. Tells editorially what they were thought of, their using up other people's jobs for less money. Referred to as "human live-stock".

Dec. 26, 1895 A Big Polish Fight. On Myrtle street..took half police force to quell . . . details.

July 21, 1893 On advertising letters to foreigners. The number of Poles in the city with unpronounceable names makes distribution difficult.

Jan. 4, 1896 Story throwing light on Rev. Kaminsky, who tried to organize another Polish parish on Chestnut street. Bishop Tierney disapproves of him.

August 7, 1897 Poles Leaving Town for Old Country to get away from depression. (Extracted in whole) Gives reasons why.

Oct. 7, 1897 Page 4 Col. 2 Y M C A Opening.

Oct. 22, 1897 Polish Laborers Hire Their Own Conveyances to Ride To Work. Tells how several Poles got fired from a city job because they secured one of their own countrymen to take them to and from work, rather than do it from an Irish firm, at higher wages, without telling the foreman.

Oct. 26, 1894 Pole calls at Record office and Makes Unwarranted Attack on Human Language. (Treatment of article shows prejudice against this Pole. Extracted in full for future use)

Nov. 2, 1894 There are 1000 members in the Polish parish who bought land from Horace Booth to build church. Rev. Misicki is at present in charge. The site was on Lafayette Street, 100x200 feet, for \$1,500 dollars.

Oct. 26, 1897 An Italian boy arrested this afternoon for absence from school. The boy was locked up for a short time at the police station while he was under lock and key he did more than cry and yell. Finally the boy's father took him home and promised to have him in school later on.

1. What example does he give of newspaper bias against the Poles? What prejudice are they encountering?
2. What work-related difficulties do they have?
3. What example does he give of cooperation and growth within the Polish community?
4. What seems to be the position of Sacred Heart Church in the Polish Community?
5. What areas of the city are mentioned?
6. Is there a pattern to be seen in the immigration of Poles?
7. What will be the next immigrant group to arrive in large numbers?

8. In a paragraph, summarize what seems to be the pattern for life of the new immigrant groups. Do you think this pattern would hold true for others?

## Appendix L

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1. Do you think the headline is justified? Why?
2. Why is the definition of terms for “homes where language other than English is spoken” necessary? What difference would it make for the teaching process?
3. What might be the reason or reasons for the fact that “There are no pupils in the high school the language of whose home is other than English?” What social effects would this have?
4. What is the philosophy of the last paragraph? Think about it. Does the idea still hold true today?
5. When you can get to the local history room look at the 1903 map and locate the schools. Would you have guessed these neighborhoods as having the most recent immigrant population? Where were the immigrants *not* living?

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