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Cover: Joseph Henry Sharp (1859-1953), Fountain Square Pantomime, *1892, oil on canvas, 40 x 60 in. (101.6 x 152.3 cm). The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial and Gift of the CAM Docent Organization in celebration of its 40th Anniversary, 2000.68. Cincinnati Art Museum*

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"Beneath the Golden Stairs": *Gender, Unionization, and Mobilization in World War II West Virginia*

KEVIN T. BARKSDALE

In January 1934, the diverse agricultural and mining community of Glendale, West Virginia, became home to one of the world's most noted toy manufacturers: Louis Marx and Company.[1] In that same year, German Chancellor Adolph Hitler emerged as the sole ruler of Germany and began his quest for Nazi dominance. Less than a year later, United Mine Workers of America (UMW) president John L. Lewis broke from the American Federation of Labor (AFL) to establish America's first inclusive labor organization, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). These three seemingly unrelated events ultimately collided on the banks of the Ohio River to alter dramatically the fortunes of many Marshall County, West Virginia, residents. Amidst the military preparations and industrial defense conversion accompanying World War II, the Marx Company's employees, largely female, launched a successful drive for union recognition, ultimately establishing the United Paper, Novelty, and Toy Workers' Union, CIO, Local 149. During the tumultuous war years, the Toy Workers Union negotiated with federal and state labor agencies and a determined Marx management to secure the interests of the rank and file while maintaining their patriotic commitment to America's war effort.

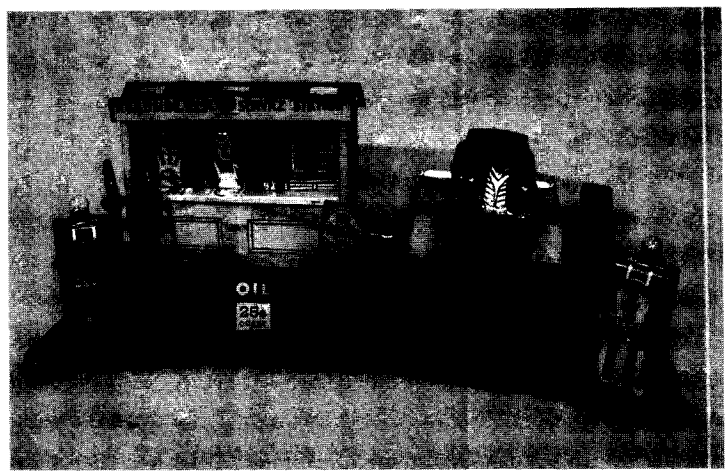


Photo provided by The Official Marx Toy Museum of Glen Dale, West Virginia. www.marxtoymuseum.com

The events surrounding the Marx Toy Workers Union during World War II demonstrates the interconnectedness of both the Marx Company and Local 149 to the regional and national labor dynamics occurring in industries across the Ohio River Valley during industrial war conversion, wartime production, and postwar industrial reconversion. By documenting the labor strife occurring within one of the Ohio River Valley's many overlooked industries, regional scholars can move beyond the well-worn paths of larger industries (such as

the automotive and mineral extraction and refinement industries) and begin to broaden their analysis of the wartime working-class and regional labor activism.

Labor historians have recently begun to incorporate female workers into the story of America's wartime economic transformation and the struggle to secure and defend workers' rights. The historiographical debate surrounding women's wartime labor principally centers on whether or not World War II was a "watershed" moment in women's history. Historian William Chafe argues that the labor demands of America's wartime economy opened employment opportunities for women, altered attitudes toward women in the public sphere, and ultimately paved the way for women's postwar "drive for equality."[2] More recent historians have challenged Chafe's assertions, arguing that the changes ushered in by the wartime economy were "modest," short-lived, or non-existent. These scholars point to the persistence of job "sex-typing," the rigid "gender division of labor," and the postwar "resurgence of domesticity" as proof of the absence or ephemeral nature of any wartime changes.[3]

The story of the Marx toy workers offer historians a unique perspective into the gender dynamics accompanying World War II. The relative small-scale of the Glendale operation, the composition of the workforce, and the radical differences between the production of toy automobiles and munitions makes comparing the toy industry to other wartime industries challenging. In studies of the automotive and aircraft industries, Ruth Milkman, Sherrie A. Kossoudji, Laura J. Dresser, and Sherna Berger Gluck examine pre-war, male-dominated industries whose enormous wartime production demands required the utilization of large numbers of new female workers to fill production quotas and positions that men vacated during the war.[4] The diverse realities of women's wartime experiences are perhaps best explored through more focused studies. Marc Scott Miller's examination of the textile industry in Lowell, Massachusetts, during World War II is an excellent example of the value of local studies in unraveling the complex and disparate wartime experiences of female workers.[5]

World War II had a dialectical effect on the female workers at the Glendale toy plant. Marx management continued to exclude the workforce at the Marx factory, comprised primarily of female employees before, during, and after the war, from managerial, technically challenging, and physically demanding positions throughout the 1940s. Despite the persistence of gender discrimination at the Marx plant and in America's postwar economy, World War II did usher in some dramatic opportunities for women workers, one of the most important of which was the increased participation of women in CIO labor unions. As women emerged as labor leaders and activists, the CIO became one of the "primary vehicles" upon which women confronted sexual discrimination in the workplace. Despite the CIO's

postwar failure to challenge the sexual status quo, many women remained committed to their unions.[6] The female employees of the Marx Company participated in the organization and activism of Local 149 and retained their leadership positions after the war.

The small town of Glendale, incorporated in 1924, lies north of Moundsville and south of Wheeling, West Virginia.[7] With its location on the Ohio River in Marshall County, Glendale is situated in the heart of the Ohio River Valley's coal mining, chemical manufacturing, and iron and steel producing region, the "Wheeling steel industrial district."[8] The Marx Company quickly emerged as one of Marshall County's principal industries, providing much needed employment and revenue for depression-ridden West Virginia. From 1934 to 1939, the Marx Company proved to be financially successful, ultimately expanding its factory and work force.[9] The national emergence of the CIO in 1935, whose widely expanded membership base and willingness to allow rank and file leadership signaled a new phase in collective labor autonomy and action, mirrored the expansion of the Marx Company.[10] The CIO's influence immediately targeted West Virginia's mineral extraction and resource manufacturing sectors. The emergent labor activism (which the establishment of the CIO inspired), the Great Depression, and the working conditions in the Marx factory led quickly to the mobilization of the Glendale workers. As early as 1939, Marx workers engaged in organizational efforts to establish a local union for their toy plant.[11]

Photo provided by The Official Marx Toy Museum of Glen Dale, West Virginia. www.marxtoymuseum.com

Prior to unionization, working conditions in the Glendale plant proved to be less than favorable. Management streamlined the production of toy automobiles by using the "piecework system," which required each employee to reach a rigidly maintained daily quota.[12] Marx management divided production into several specific departments, including press and shear operators, oven operators, die setters, painters, packers, and assembly room workers. The Marx Company also followed a strict gender division of labor that excluded women from operating the heavier machinery and engaging in the more technical aspects of toy production.[13] The gender inequalities within the Marx plant proved to be less of a concern than the immediate dangers and production pressures placed on the workers under the piecework quota system.

Describing the working conditions in the Glendale plant before the estab-

lishment of the union, Angeline "Sally" Miller, the first female production worker hired at the Glendale plant in 1934, paints a grim picture of her pre-union experiences:

> I had an accident, and I think I was new. Everyone was new. So I went to my foreman Mr. Silver [and said that] my press is repeating. It's going up and down. He said, 'Well I'll be over in a little while.'...You see that was when you didn't have a union. I could have gone to someone and said my press is repeating, then they [union representative] would say quit working...They told me that they had a guard on the press. They told me that when you run a press that the guard will knock your hand away and not to be afraid. So I went back a third time and said Mr. Silver my press is repeating and I'm kind of afraid. He said it will be alright. When I went back [to the press] the third time, and in just a couple of minutes that press came right down. It happened so quickly, I did not feel it. I went down to pick up a ware, and I could not pick up a ware. I looked down and pulled my chair back and started running. They [workers] grabbed a hold of me. They took me to the hospital up here at Glendale Hospital. It smashed the fingers right off. Then I came back to work, and Mr. Liden [another foreman] wanted to know if I wanted to go back to the press room. He wanted me to go the press room real bad. I did not know what kind of job he would give me, but I was real nervous and did not want to go. So they give me a job at the assembly room, and I was a packer. I was a packer in the assembly room."

Miller also describes the Glendale plant's failure to provide adequate on-site medical care. She states,

> Oh, how the girls use to cut their figures [fingers], and she [nurse] would use tape to put them back together. You would see the girls getting off the streetcars with all of their figures [fingers] wrapped with that tape. If you would see women with their fingers [cut] off, nine times out of ten they worked in the press room here.

Intensifying the dangers associated with the production process, management often placed unrealistic piecework quotas on the employees.[14] Sally Miller again recounted the pressures of the piecework system in 1976:

> At that time, the [production] line worked individual[ly]. Each girl worked for themselves. We didn't get no fifteen minute break in the morning or no fifteen minute break in the afternoon. And I think we started at three cents an hour. We started work at eight, but all the girls use to come in at four or five o'clock in the morning. They were afraid they would get fired if they could not make their day's work. I think at that time it was 256 [toys] a day. [If workers did not reach their quota] They would be after you. So then they had a platform laid out and had stairs [overlooking the workers]. They called that the golden

stairs...We did not make out that day, so all the girls had to tell the foreman why we did not make out that day. I remember some women use to take things home and assemble them and bring them back so they could keep up. In order to keep a job back then.

Miller also addressed the lack of grievance procedures, payment for "down time," vacation benefits, and work breaks prior to the workers organizing the plant.[15] Under oppressive working conditions, employees of the Marx Company launched their efforts to establish a union.

Between 1939 and the end of 1940, the efforts to organize the toy workers remained shrouded in secrecy. When asked if the management of the Marx Company "was against the union," Angeline Miller stated, "Oh, they were against the union. We just had to round people up and sign [union] cards and things." On January 20, 1941, Marx employees held an election, directed by the National Labor Relations Board, to determine whether the fledgling CIO union could represent Marx employees in collective bargaining with company officials.[16] After an overwhelming vote of support from the Marx employees, the Toy Workers Union entered into negotiations with the Marx Company for a "wage contract" that included a company wide wage increase of ten cents an hour, working conditions improvements, vacation pay, and a union shop.[17] The Marx Company maintained two additional regional plants, in Girard and Erie, Pennsylvania. The union leadership at the Glendale plant immediately sought the cooperation of the other unionized Marx plants during these contract negotiations, but received little support from the AFL affiliated Pennsylvania employees.[18]

Contract negotiations continued through February and into March of 1941, and involved the mediation of John Conner, a U.S. Department of Labor conciliator from the Huntington, West Virginia, office. Despite his best efforts, the talks stalled. At 7 o'clock P.M. on March 28, 1941, after two months of negotiations, the representatives of Local 149 and CIO representative Nicholas C. Vrataric led the Marx day-shift employees out on strike.[19] Soon after, the 175 employees working the night shift walked out of the plant and joined their fellow employees on the newly-formed picket lines. The overwhelming support for the union and the strike (union officials called the strike "100 percent effective") illustrated the success of the organizational drives of the previous two years.[20]

Over the next six tense weeks, as union officials, flanked by regional CIO representatives, engaged in a series of contract negotiations with Marx Company officials, the toy workers maintained a continual picket line surrounding the plant. In a scene reminiscent of the tent cities constructed in the early 1920s for picketing miners in the southern Appalachia coalfields, the toy workers erected a "large tent" outside of the plant to "provide shelter for those on picket duty."[21] Angeline Miller recounted her experiences on the picket lines,

asserting, "We just went across the [railroad] tracks built a tent and went on strike. How 'bout it!"[22] For the most part, the picketing "was peaceful," with strikers stopping only a few coal trucks from entering the plant facilities. Marx employees also staged several demonstrations in Moundsville and Glendale that did not result in any reported problems. The *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported, "a motorcade of some two score automobiles led by Alexander Ravitch, International Paper, Novelty, and Toy Workers Union (CIO) official, and by a CIO sound truck. They paraded some time through the streets of the city, most machines bearing placards urging support of the strike."[23]

Another round of contract negotiations in early April resulted in a deadlock, and the Marx workers continued to suffer under the economic pressures of unemployment. In early April 1941, the striking toy workers applied to the local branch of the West Virginia Unemployment Office for unemployment compensation, illustrating the employee's belief that the strike could possibly continue for some time.[24]

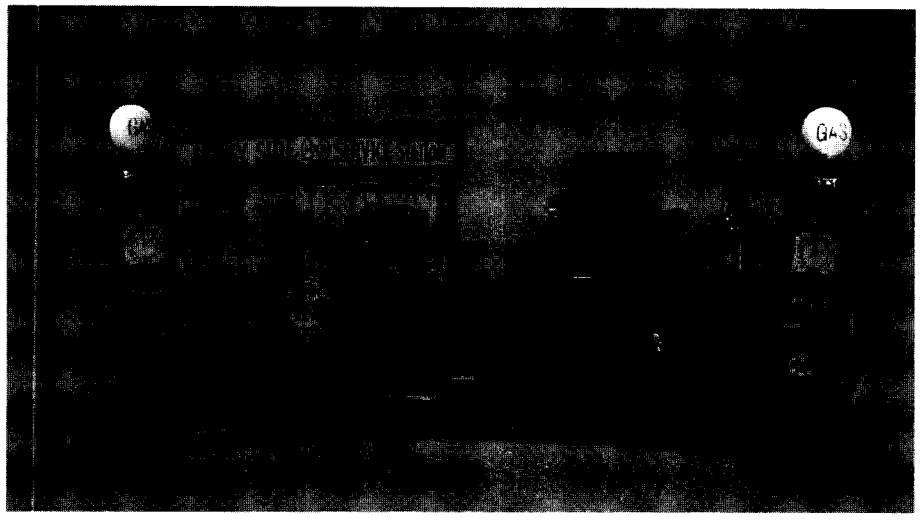


Photo provided by The Official Marx Toy Museum of Glen Dale, West Virginia. www.marxtoymuseum.com

As the possibilities for a settlement of the strike continued to erode, union officials sent a telegram to West Virginia Department of Labor officials and to the newly elected West Virginia governor, Mathew Neely, drawing their attention to the deteriorating situation in Glendale. On May 6, 1941, West Virginia's labor commissioner, Charles J. F. Sattler, announced that another round of contract negotiations would occur under the scrutiny of federal and state labor negotiators. Sattler stated, "that we are very hopeful there will be a quick settlement of differences." As union officials prepared to enter once again into contract negotiations, they received word from state unemployment office deputy, E.E. Koontz, that he had rejected their petitions for unemployment compensation, stating that the toy workers' "idleness is a result of a labor dispute and as such is not compensable under the state law." Union officials immediately filed an appeal with the state unemployment compensation office in Charleston, West Virginia. Resolutions of these unemployment compensation appeals continued for several months following the termination of the strike.[25]

The second round of contract negotiations began on May 7, 1941, and clearly benefited from Governor Neely's direct involvement, as well as that of

the state labor commission. After less than a week of protracted and heated negotiations, on May 13, 1941, union officials accepted a company proposal that granted the ten cents an hour wage increase, vacation pay, and union recognition. Marx company officials announced that "a number of workers returned to their jobs this morning [May 14, 1941], and all departments will be working again as soon as possible." The termination of the strike required six weeks of negotiations and the involvement of West Virginia's governor, the state's highest ranking labor officials, the National Labor Relations Board, and the United States Department of Labor, but the results proved to be worth the sacrifice. The Toy Workers Union Local 149 emerged victorious, securing rank and file support and confidence and a working contract for the toy workers.[26]

For all intents and purposes, the history of the Local 149 begins with the 1941 strike. The 1941 strike forced the Marx Company to recognize the union as both a CIO affiliated industrial union and the collective bargaining agent for Marx employees. With this formal recognition, union officials began the process of strengthening the union. For most of the Marx employees, Local 149 was their first experience with unionization. Both regional CIO and local union leaders spent the next few months introducing the Glendale employees to the union structure, CIO history, and union's agenda. In their first meeting, held at the Knights of Pythias Hall in Moundsville, after the conclusion of the 1941 strike, union members elected the organization's executive committee, established departmental grievance committees, and began their affiliation with regional unions by electing delegates to the Tri-County Industrial Union Council and applying to the Marshall County and West Virginia State Industrial Union Councils.[27]

Throughout the second half of 1941, Local 149 fought to secure unemployment compensation and wage increases, engaged in philanthropic community outreach programs, and assisted company officials in securing highly-sought after defense contracts during industrial defense conversion. On June 21, 1941, union officials held a special meeting to address the still-lingering questions regarding unemployment compensation applied for during the 1941 strike. After reviewing the West Virginia Unemployment Office's reasons for denying the claims, union officials, led by factory physician, Dr. D.B. Early, decided to appeal the decision "within twenty days." The appeal process stretched into 1942, but ultimately became a secondary issue as the Marx Company, supported by Local 149, struggled to secure lucrative defense contracts.[28]

Community outreach emerged as one of the union's earliest priorities and the members of Local 149 engaged in numerous wartime civic causes and community development projects. The Marx workers sponsored an annual Labor Day parade and picnic held in Wheeling Park, inviting other local unions to

attend the festivities, and collected donations for the construction of a children's playground in Glendale. Local 149 also amassed donations throughout the war for the United Services Organization (USO), the Red Cross Fund, various war bond drives, and union members in the military.[29] Clearly the toy workers felt a high degree of civic pride, responsibility, and war patriotism, but Local 149 also launched these efforts to prevent the perception that union members were unpatriotic. Wartime strikes, demands for wage increases, and big business's unrelenting propaganda campaigns often led many Americans to accuse union members of being un-American, unruly, and even treasonous. The members of Local 149 demonstrated that one could maintain both loyalty to one's country and a fierce working-class consciousness.

Despite the CIO's support during the 1941 strike, most members of Local 149 remained unaware of the inner workings of the international organization. After the Glendale workers secured victory in the 1941 strike, regional CIO officials expended a considerable amount of time and effort to educate Marx employees regarding the history and purpose of the CIO. As early as September 1941, the union's regional director, Tom Starks, gave "a very interesting and inspiring talk on the history of the Congress of Industrial Organizations."[30] Undoubtedly, Starks aimed his lecture at securing the support of the union members and introducing the members to the CIO's political agenda. Over the next few years, members of Local 149 relied on the support and direction of the international organization and the CIO regional office depended on Local 149 for support in national and state elections, local and regional organizational drives, and for financial support.

The establishment of grievance committees and procedures proved to be one of the more difficult early efforts of the Toy Workers Union. Prior to the resolution of the strike, in February 1941 the union elected the first "official" departmental grievance committee representatives and instructed them to "have a notebook and write down all suggestions to cover their department." Over the next year, the grievance procedures underwent considerable expansion and alteration. In June 1941, the number of grievance committee members grew to include both departmental and shift "committeemen." In July, the executive board established the executive grievance committee and elected two executive committee representatives to oversee the complaints and procedures. Most early grievances involved shift assignments, seniority rights, concerns regarding working conditions, and of course, wage increases. For the most part, the toy workers embraced the departmental grievance representatives and flooded the executive committee with suggestions and complaints. However, several of the "committeemen" experienced resistance to their elevated standing within the union structure and their efforts to work in conjunction with company management and employees to address rank and file concerns. Workers expressed alarm over press room grievance representative Martha

Pyrick's fraternization with a company foreman. Press room workers accused Pyrick of "talking to the foreman too much" and using her position to "get good jobs." After attempting to resign from her position, "Sister Pyrick was asked to keep her job as stewart [by union leadership] as she has been doing very good work."[31]

In October 1941, growing worker discontent over wages re-emerged as the central concern for Local 149. As the union struggled to draft and approve a series of by-laws regarding the union structure and membership fining procedure, newly elected Local 149 president Donald Whorton and the executive committee engaged in a series of negotiations with company officials concerning additional company-wide wage increases of an additional ten cents an hour.[32] Archie B. Marcus, Marx Vice President, flatly refused to "give any kind of raise" and union officials immediately contacted regional CIO officials at the Wheeling Industrial Union Council to ask for their advice on securing a raise. By mid-December, union officials received a letter from Marcus outlining the "the steps we should take regarding the raise."[33] Negotiations for the wage increase continued throughout 1942 and 1943, but concerns over securing defense contracts quickly took precedence over the pay raises.

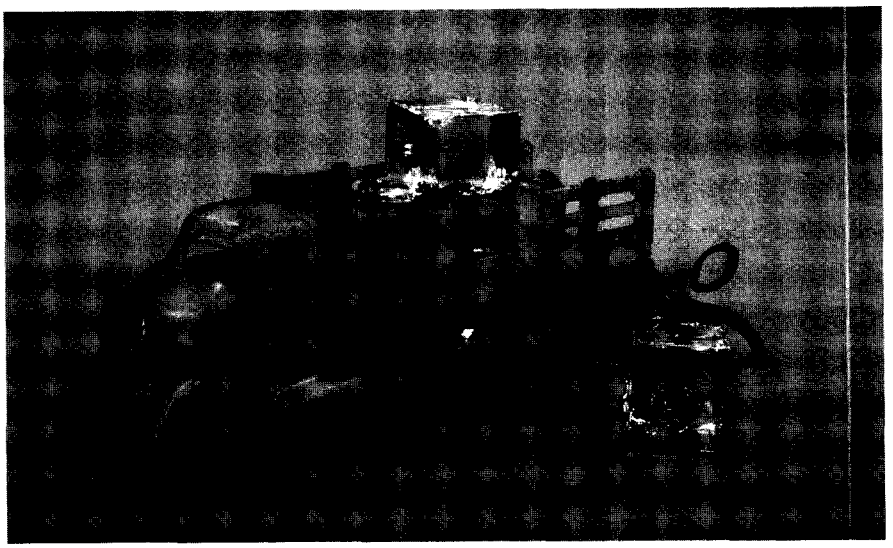


Photo provided by The Official Marx Toy Museum of Glen Dale, West Virginia. www.marxtoymuseum.com

Late in 1941, West Virginia's critical wartime industries began their conversion from civilian production to war production. By early 1942, "practically all of the output of the state's leading manufacturers and the production of the natural resource industries directly or indirectly went into the defense or war effort." Lucrative defense contracts, industrial expansion, and employment opportunities accompanied defense conversion, and smaller non-essential state industries scrambled to secure defense work.[34] At the Glendale plant, consumer production centered on the manufacturing of steel toy cars.[35] As local Marshall County industries secured defense contracts and the newly-established War Production Board placed restrictions on steel usage, union officials grew concerned over the possibility that the Board might exclude the plant from wartime production conversion.[36] In a special meeting held on January 17, 1942, union officials organized a committee to "go to

Washington, D.C. and find out why [the] Marx Plant does not have defense orders." As the situation at the Glendale plant worsened, the union's efforts to secure defense contracts faltered and the federal government informed the Marx Company that toy production had to end by June 30, 1942.[37]

By late April 1942, the toy workers and Marx management received word that the War Production Board had awarded four defense contracts to the company. Company officials informed the Marx employees that the machinery at the Glendale plant, once used to mass-produce children's toy automobiles, would now produce thirty-caliber artillery shell casings.[38] After securing the defense contracts, Marx management began the long, arduous task of preparing both the employees and the plant for defense production. For the employees, defense production required additional training, citizenship confirmation, and a thorough government investigation of employees and management. The conversion of the factory machinery began in early May and continued until defense work began late in 1942.[39]

Amid the preparations for defense work, union officials once again launched their campaign to secure wage increases for the Marx employees. The conversion of the plant to military production required the company to negotiate a new "defense work contract" and union officials planned on using these negotiations to secure the desired pay increases.[40] During this negotiation period, the members of Local 149 confronted the growing pressures placed upon them by management, the War Labor Board, and the international governing body of the CIO to submerge their working-class interests for the patriotic cause of winning the war.[41] These internal pressures created tensions within the union and between management and union officials. In May 1942, the CIO sent a large committee to the monthly union meeting to stress the importance of labor's cooperation with the war effort. D.K. Harris, leader of the CIO delegation, briefly addressed the union members, stating, "We must win the war with weapons of democracy and not those of Nazis." The toy workers needed little patriotic rhetoric to secure their support for the war effort. As early as May 1942, union officials made plans for a flag raising ceremony celebrating the defense work at the Glendale plant. The union also took time out of meetings to applaud the efforts of Marshall County's enlisted men, to raise money to purchase war bonds, and to provide financial support for war relief efforts.[42]

Despite the efforts of the CIO and the high level of patriotism that the toy workers displayed, union officials remained dedicated to securing wage increases under the new defense contract. Once again, Marx employees and their union proved that maintenance of working-class interests and American wartime patriotism could exist simultaneously. As local CIO representative Frank Lassic stated, "Life is dear, but liberty is dearer, without liberty you might as well be dead!"[43] Throughout the remainder of 1942, union officials actively engaged in contract negotiations with company representa-

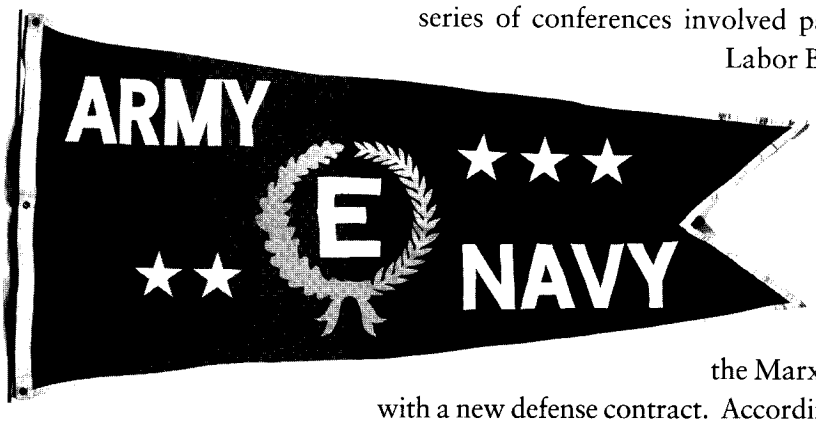
tives. Securing the ten cents an hour pay increase proved to be exceedingly difficult; indeed, management accused union officials of being "unpatriotic." In a speech delivered to union officials in September 1942, Ray Van Dyne recalled that Marx Vice President Archie B. Marcus accused union officials of being "unpatriotic, because [they] are asking for a raise of ten cents an hour, just when [Marcus] was trying to begin defense orders." After meeting with Marcus and company officials throughout October, union officials reluctantly accepted a new defense contract on November 15, 1942. The new contract provided for a raise of five cents an hour, as well as defense work insurance, recognition of union seniority lists during the defense rehiring process, and the opportunity for the Local 149 to organize the newly converted plant in nearby McMechen. Local union officials accepted the contract, but growing discontent within several departments almost assured the likelihood of labor conflict in the future.[44] Despite the dissatisfaction over the defense work wage structure, the Marx employees embraced the opportunity to join the war effort. By the end of 1942, workers at the Glendale plant began the production of munitions.

During the first four months of defense production, officials of Local 149 confronted the problems associated with defense conversion and industrial expansion. In January, the executive committee established a safety committee to address the new dangers associated with the manufacturing of military ordnance. Union officials promoted the use of safety equipment, including "safety shoes" and "defense apparel" and pressed the company to increase its medical staff. Local 149 also confronted the growing rank and file concern over seniority hiring practices for defense work. Prior to defense production, Marx officials "laid off" most of the work force to make the necessary factory conversion for military production. Bound by the newly signed 1942 defense contract, the union contract required that the Marx Company honor employee seniority when rehiring for defense production. Over the next several months, representatives of the union grievance committee addressed dozens of complaints that the company ignored seniority lists and hired employees out of sequence. Despite growing concerns over company hiring practices and the defense work pay scale, the Marx employees embraced defense work and set their sights on the military's highest award for factories engaged in defense work, the Army and Navy "E" Flag.[45]

In late January 1943, union officials again broached the subject of pay raises. Officials of Local 149 sent a request to the National War Labor Board and representatives of the CIO, in Washington, D.C., to review the wage structure defined in the 1942 defense contract.[46] The year 1943 proved to be hectic for members of the National War Labor Board, as the federal agency received thousands of complaints, petitions, and grievances from unions confronting many of the same wartime problems as the Marx workers.[47] Over the next

three months, the National War Labor Board failed to address the petition of Local 149, and union officials and company employees grew increasingly impatient to have their grievances resolved. In mid-March, union officials again met with Archie B. Marcus to discuss renegotiating the 1942 defense contract. Marcus refused to negotiate a new contract but offered a "small" raise. Over the next few weeks, union officials desperately sought a conference with representatives of the National War Labor Board and CIO officials, but received very little acknowledgment. On Wednesday, April 26, 1943, exasperated at the situation, the three hundred employees of both the Glendale and McMechen plant launched their second strike in less than two years. As the *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported, "The employees are remaining away from their jobs in protest against the failure of the War Labor Board to act on a demand for a wage increase of two to six cents an hour."[48]

With two critical defense contracts in the balance, company representatives hastily called a meeting with union officials. The *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported that "A.B. Marcus, vice president of the Louis Marx Company arrived by plane in Glendale last night in order to begin a series of conferences today in the offices of the Glendale plant." The negotiations that followed Marcus's arrival illustrates just how interconnected and essential the Glendale plant proved to be to the war effort. The ensuing series of conferences involved participants from the National War Labor Board, as well as a federal labor conciliator, the Pittsburgh Ordnance Department, regional CIO representative D.K. Harris, high-ranking officials within the Marx Company, and a committee comprised of members of Local 149. By April 30, 1943, the Marx Company presented union officials with a new defense contract. According to union minutes recorded during a special meeting held on that day, negotiations failed to achieve the desired pay increases. Despite failing to secure their stated strike goals, union officials once again reluctantly accepted the new working contract.[49]



Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati Historical Society Library

Three critical realities explain why the union officials accepted the new defense contract. First, the CIO pressured Local 149 to "accept the recommendations of our committee [the CIO Advisory Council of the National War Labor Board] and return to work." Second, the National War Labor Board guaranteed a "speedy" consideration of the union's petition for wage increases, which ultimately proved to be the central issue behind the walkout.[50] Third, rumors spread around the Glendale plant that the War Production Board planned to cancel the artillery shell casing contract at the Glendale plant. Together they

combined to defeat the "unauthorized strike" maintained by the toy workers. On May 3, 1943, the *Moundsville Daily Echo* triumphantly announced that the "Marx Plants are Working." The combined pressures of the 1943 wildcat strike and the increasing demand for munitions led the National War Labor Board to resolve the labor dispute quickly. In mid-June 1943, the War Labor Board finally reached a "settlement" of the Marx case and provided an undisclosed pay increase for the West Virginia defense workers.[51]

After the conclusion of the 1943 strike, union officials once again engaged in the day-to-day affairs of addressing grievances, supporting national, regional, and local war relief efforts, maintaining union committees, assisting the CIO in organizing additional regional factories, and supporting pro-labor state and national political candidates. In October 1943, the Marx employees received news that the War Production Board terminated the Glendale plant's artillery shell casing contract. The loss of the contract sent a wave of concern through the ranks of both management and employees. In late November, Marx management informed employees that the War Production Board granted a petition to resume toy production for a limited period of time. In addition, company officials secured a new defense contract, to begin December 15, 1943, to produce fragmentation bombs for the military.[52] As unusual as it might sound, from November 26, 1943, to January 19, 1944, workers at the Glendale plant simultaneously produced toy automobiles and fragmentation bombs.[53] The dual production process waylaid many of the fears of the Marx employees and provided the Marx Company with a guaranteed war contract until the conclusion of the war.

Acquisition of a new defense contract offered union officials an opportunity to renegotiate their newest working agreement. In January 1944, realizing that the production of fragmentation bombs posed a much more dangerous manufacturing process than production of artillery shell casings, union officials formed a "contract committee" to engage in contract negotiations with the company. Local 149 officials argued that increased dangers of the production process warranted wage increases that were proportionate to the hazards that workers might incur. After the company resistance generated during the previous two rounds of contract negotiations, union officials realized that the 1944 contract talks required union members "to stand solidly behind each other."[54]

Late in January, after a series of contract discussions between company management and the contract committee, both sides agreed to a "working agreement" that left open negotiations over wages but did not halt production of the new defense line. Union officials again sent a petition to the National War Labor Board "explaining the situation pertaining to the bomb wage setup, and protesting against working at the present rate of pay, although we will work on the bomb if necessary, and under protest, until a suitable wage

is established." Over the next six months, the working contract underwent considerable revisions and company officials granted the contract committee several important concessions. Some of the more noteworthy of them included: "time and a half pay for working six consecutive days and all time over eight hours in a day;" upholding maintenance of membership agreements by "having new employees sign union cards when they fill in their personal records in the [personnel] office;" increased vacation pay benefits; and a new wage structure based upon a "bonus plan" established by the National War Labor Board and Marx management. Members of the contract committee agreed to a thirty-day trial period for the "bonus plan...rather than accepting no raise at all."[55]

In May, after the thirty-day trial period expired, company officials presented the contract committee a new contract and union officials quickly called a meeting to vote on whether to "accept or not to accept the new contract." Local 149 members "read the contract article by article" and accepted all but two of the articles in the new contract. The contract committee voted to submit the rejected articles to the National War Labor Board for further review. CIO representative Frank Lassick stated "that the decision for this contract rests wholly on the action of the WLB." Despite the concerns over the two articles in question, by May union members had voted to accept the newest contract and await the decision of the National War Labor Board.[56]

In August 1944, the board handed down its decision on the wage increases and increased vacation pay benefits being sought by Local 149. The board once again provided a small pay increase and an improved vacation plan for the Marx employees and "Brother Lassick" showered praise upon the contract committee for its efforts. Lassick stated that, "he thinks we [Local 149] are rather fortunate in getting what we did when the Little Steel Formula and the War Labor Board are considered. He praised the efficiency of the officers and the committee for their past work and also the unity of the local and its officers."[57]

The McMechen employees of the Marx Company experienced some dramatic changes during the second half of the year. In June, after having previously been engaged in manufacturing seventy-five-millimeter artillery shell casings, the McMechen plant converted to producing three-inch artillery shells. Moreover, in July, the War Production Board awarded the McMechen plant with the prestigious Army and Navy "E" flag as a reward for the employees' high level of production and low rate of worker absenteeism.[58] By the end of 1944, workers at the McMechen plant produced both the three-inch artillery shell and a sixty-millimeter artillery shell for the military.

The second half of 1944 also brought profound changes to Local 149. In August 1944, union officials engaged in fund raising drives to support the CIO's National Citizens Political Action Committee and worked to establish a local Political Action Committee for Local 149. In December, 1944, management informed union officials that the National War Labor Board placed the

"bombs" being produced at both plants on the "essential list." Therefore, the Marx Company and its employees pressed to maintain production of the bombs "seven days a week." Being placed on the "essential list" provided Marx employees with increased employment and pay opportunities, but reignited concerns over the company's seniority hiring practices.[59]

In what seemed like an annual event, the year 1945 opened amid growing concerns over wages and the safety of the Marx ordnance workers. In January, union officials requested a conference with Archie B. Marcus to renegotiate defense wages. Union officials calculated that the average day's pay for a Marx employee, estimated at eighteen dollars per day, fell well below the wages of employees engaged in similar types of production in other munitions factories. Growing discontent reemerged over the previous wage increases that the National War Labor Board had granted and the unwillingness of the Board to settle labor disputes in a timely manner. Contract negotiations resumed in February and only in April did Marx officials finally offer the employees a new contract. The members of Local 149 voted to accept the contract, though "exclusive of the rates of pay." In May, after another round of negotiations, Archie B. Marcus refused to alter pay rates and union officials once again petitioned the National War Labor Board for a conciliator. The meeting between the federal labor conciliator, Marx management, and union officials occurred in June and union officials presented the new pay rate offer to union members at the June 10, 1945, meeting. In a vote of seventy-three for and three opposed, union members accepted the new pay rates.[60] As the war wound down in Europe and the Pacific and the War Production Board eliminated defense contracts, the newly secured defense contract provided but a brief moment of labor tranquility.

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By the end of May, the War Production Board curtailed the production of artillery shells at both Marx plants and preparations began for the reconversion of the Marx plants for the resumption of manufacturing toys. Newly-elected union president Edith Burgess led the union executive committee in preparations for industrial reconversion, a new round of company rehiring, and, predictably, a new working contract. In preparing to convert the Marx plants back to toy production, management halted production at the

McMechen plant and began transferring senior employees back to the Glendale facility. Returning servicemen and a group of newly- hired female press operators joined the transferred McMechen employees.[61] Management engaged in a repeat of the "lay offs" that occurred during the conversion process. The reconversion period in West Virginia brought with it spiraling unemployment figures, leaving thousands of returning servicemen and previously employed defense workers to compete for the scarce jobs. The transformation of the Marx workforce created enormous pressure on union officials to maintain seniority lists, to secure employment for members, and to protect the shifts and wages of existing and returning employees. Marx employees, eager to resume toy production, feared that the newly-hired employees could possibly slow down toy production and reconversion.[62] Local 149 officials struggled to secure positions for "laid off" union members, to control company-hiring procedures, and to maintain support for the union during this period of employee transition.

After resumption of toy manufacturing in the fall, concerns over company pay rates again dominated union meetings. While attempting to maintain seniority hiring lists and secure desired shifts and departmental placements, union officials included a request for a thirty percent "across the board" pay increase, in a list of demands submitted to the company October 10, 1945. Union officials gave the company's vice president, Archie B. Marcus, seven days to respond to the wage demands in order to avoid a strike vote.[63] In a letter sent on October 18, 1945, Marcus "advised the union that a thirty percent increase could not be granted." Union officials immediately sent letters to United States Department of Labor, the National War Labor Board, the National Labor Relations Board, and the CIO, "petitioning the conducting of a strike vote within the plant."[64]

Indications of the tensions between the rank and file and management became apparent on October 19, 1945, when some five hundred Marx employees engaged in a "protest demonstration" in Glendale. As worker militancy increased, union officials received word from federal labor conciliator, Martin E. Swanger, that the current union contract required a "four weeks and two day" period of negotiations before a "strike or walkout" could be voted upon.[65] Swanger advised union officials to hold all demands for wage increases "in abeyance until after a strike vote was conducted on November 30, 1945." As preparations began for the strike vote, Robert C. Edwards, Chairman of the International Organizing Committee, CIO, advised Local 149 officials to attempt to "organize the Erie and Girard plants." Edwards argued that these plants "were holding up" wage increases and stated that the three plants "needed to be united, regardless of which plant." Edwards concluded by offering union officials "any help that was needed for the strike vote" and "to contact the international office and it [assistance] would be obtained."[66]

With the clear support of the CIO and the sanction of the U.S. Department of Labor, union officials met on November 25, 1945, to make final preparations for the strike vote and to "adopt a policy to be used after the strike vote has been conducted." Union officials prepared the secret ballots to be used for the vote, scheduled for November 30 in the Glendale plant's cafeteria. Local members also gave permission to the union's executive committee to call the strike after the tabulation of the votes and to send a letter to company officials to begin "negotiations as soon as possible after the strike vote has been conducted." On December 1 the *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported that "Workers of the Louis Marx Co. plant in Glendale on Friday voted overwhelmingly in favor of a strike if necessary to support demands for a wage increase. In balloting conducted by the NLRB, the workers registered 287 votes for the strike and 33 against."[67] At the regularly scheduled union meeting held on December 9, union officials discussed the results of the vote and made preparations for negotiations with Archie B. Marcus, scheduled for the following day.[68] As 1945 drew to a close and Americans reveled in the defeat of the Axis forces and the end of the war, Marx company employees and management stood poised on the brink of yet another conflict.

Local 149 officials began 1946 by trying desperately to avoid the looming strike. At the first union meeting of the year, held on January 13, 1946, union officials sent a letter to Archie B. Marcus stating:

> Six weeks have elapsed since our strike vote was taken for the purpose of obtaining a 30% wage increase. During this time only one attempt to negotiate a settlement has been made. In view of that fact, the issue is still alive. The recommendation was made at our regular meeting held on January 13, 1946, that you be contacted and asked to come in to meet with the Union Committee as soon as possible, in an attempt to make some progress in obtaining our objective.[69]

Union officials also drafted letters to Alec Bail, CIO International Secretary-Treasurer of the Playthings, Jewelry, and Novelty Workers Union, and Robert C. Edwards, Director of the CIO Organizing Committee, requesting their support and advice during the negotiations.[70] Archie B. Marcus arrived at the Glendale plant on January 29 and offered union officials a ten percent pay increase. Union officials rejected Marcus' offer and once again "picket lines appeared around the Glendale plant."[71]

On Tuesday evening, February 19, union officials again led the employees of the Marx Company out on strike. The strike came after negotiations engaged in that day resulted in a "deadlock," motivating union officials to release this statement to the press: "The company had failed to comply with a proposed wage to follow the 18 ½ cent an hour increase set up by steel and other industries and the workers have called a work stoppage while officers and committee continue to negotiate with the company."[72]

The 1946 strike proved to be the longest and most difficult walkout for the Marx employees. Tensions emerged between union members as the "unauthorized" strike created internal opposition from several employees. As one worker argued, "We should go back to work and continue negotiations, because some of the members were not able to stand the strike insanity." Additional pressures mounted upon the union leaders, as CIO representative Frank Lassick informed the executive committee "that the [international] union officials did not approve of the work stoppage." Led by CIO president Philip Murray, international union officials discouraged postwar "wildcat" strikes. CIO leaders believed that the union could "trade a reconversion no-strike policy for a new higher wage formula" and that "a rash of bitter strikes would utterly deplete the union treasury, fragment the union, and wreck the CIO's larger chances of securing a strike-free across-the-board wage package." Despite the mounting pressures, Local 149 officials held fast with their determination to stay out on strike, believing that "If we go back [to work] now, we will show the company our weakness, and chances for an adequate increase would be small. We are fighting for a principle and should stand as a unit!" Union officials hastily made plans for picketing assignments, blockading the plant, and the next round of negotiations.[73]

Over the next five weeks, union representatives met with federal labor conciliator, Martin E. Swanger, West Virginia State Labor Commissioner, Charles J.F. Sattler, and company officials in two rounds of negotiations. Despite the proclamation of the *Moundsville Daily Echo* that "Friday Parley May Break Marx Strike," the first series of meetings, held on March 8-9, 1946, did not result in the settlement of the strike. Union officials rejected the company's counter-proposal of a fifteen cents an hour pay increase, stating that Marx employees "are determined not to return to their jobs until that demand [thirty percent raise] was met."[74] The second round of negotiations took place on March 28 and 29. During the conferences held between Marx officials and Local 149 representatives, Archie B. Marcus presented union officials with a new wage proposal. The complex pay arrangement essentially maintained the fifteen cents per hour pay increase, but provided a wide range of production incentives and annual pay raises. Urged by CIO representative Frank Lassick to accept the proposal, stating "that the [contract] committee was in a bad position because of the unauthorized walkout, and also the forthcoming coal strike made the possibility for a larger increase slim," union officials voted to "accept the wage proposal." Union representatives quickly reserved Eagles Hall, in Moundsville, to present the company proposal to Marx employees for a vote. On Saturday evening, Marx employees voted to end their five-week old strike and accept the company's third proposal. For the third time in less than six years, members of Local 149 launched a strike that resulted in company concessions and wage increases.[75]

The chaotic events from 1941 to 1946 surrounding the United Toy Workers

Union, Local 149, and the Marshall County Marx plants clearly illustrate the interconnectedness of the Ohio River Valley's smaller industries to the war effort. During the war years, union officials repeatedly negotiated with the National Labor Relations Board, the War Production Board, and the National War Labor Board. Many of West Virginia's highest-ranking civilian and military officials, including the West Virginia governor, state labor commissioner, and several state agencies, also participated in the events occurring in the small community of Glendale.

Local 149 also fit into the larger context of the CIO's international organizations. Through connections and memberships in the United Paper, Novelty, and Toy Workers' Union International, the Wheeling Industrial Union Council, and the CIO, the members of Local 149 participated in the national labor dynamics occurring after the Great Depression. The strikes at the Marshall County Marx plants corresponded with larger national periods of labor unrest. The events surrounding the 1941 strike for union recognition in Glendale reflected the broader efforts of hundreds of thousands of American workers, both male and female, to secure union recognition and employee rights during wartime industrial conversion. As the tenuous agreement between business, labor, and the federal government suffered under the violent stains of wartime production and demand, hundreds of unauthorized "wildcat" strikes occurred in 1943 in almost every industry engaged in defense production. Within this context, the year's brief strike at the Marx plants linked the West Virginia toy workers to the growing concerns within the working-class over pay rates and working conditions in America's defense industries. Finally, the events that unfolded during the 1946 work stoppage, which accompanying industrial reconversion and labor's growing concerns over the postwar roll back of worker's rights, paralleled the national dynamics shaking America.

The production of essential military munitions in West Virginia's only toy factory connected the Marx employees to the millions of United States defense workers. Many of America's defense workers experienced the same problems and tensions resulting from industrial defense conversion, production, and reconversion. Scholars often focus on male-dominated, large industries, overlooking smaller industries or those incorrectly viewed as less essential to the war effort. They thus neglect the vital story of unionized women in wartime workplaces.[76] The working-class struggles and industrial dynamics occurring in Glendale, West Virginia, illustrates the central role these smaller industries and marginalized female workers played in America's war effort at home and abroad.

1. *Moundsville* [West Virginia] *Daily Echo*, January 5, 19, 1934; U.S. Department of Commerce, *6th Census of the United States 1940: Characteristics of the Population, West Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1941), 58; Marshall County Historical Society, *History of Marshall County West Virginia 1984* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth, 1984), 25.
2. William Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

3. Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex During World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Role, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981); Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982).
4. Milkman, *Gender at Work,* passim; Sherrie A. Kossoudji and Laura J. Dresser, "The End of a Riveting Experience: Occupational Shifts at Ford After World War II," *American Economic Review* 82 (May 1992): 519-525; Sherrie A Kossoudji and Laura J. Dresser, "Working Class Rosies: Women Industrial Workers during World War II," *Journal of Economic History* 52 (June 1992): 431-46; Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, the War, and Social Change* (Boston: Twayne of G.K. Hall, 1987), passim.
5. Marc Scott Miller, *The Irony of Victory: World War II and Lowell, Massachusetts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).
6. Milkman, *Gender at Work,* 84-127.
7. *History of Marshall County 1984,* 25. Glendale, originally named Glen Dale, was first established in 1891 on a five-hundred acre farm owned by William Erskine.
8. James G. Jones, "West Virginia in World War II" (Ph.D. diss., West Virginia University, 1952), 40-51. Most of West Virginia's iron and steel output originated in the northern panhandle. The Wheeling steel industrial district encompassed the greater parts of Ohio, Brooke, and Marshall counties, West Virginia. Several large companies made their homes in the district, including the Wheeling Corrugation Company and the Wheeling Steel Corporation. Additionally, these large corporations "owned and operated coal mines at Beechbottom, West Virginia." A Brooke County plant owned by the Koppers Company, Inc., of Pittsburgh produced a large number of chemicals "derived from coal tar."
9. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* February 2, June 10, 1939. The Marx Company built an addition to its large brick factory, originally containing the Fokker Aircraft Company. The addition enabled the company to increase the number of workers from approximately five hundred to approximately eight hundred.
10. Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 3-7. The CIO expanded its membership base by opening union enrollment to minorities and women.
11. Members of the United Toy Workers Union Local 149, interview by George Parkinson, January 7, 1976, transcript, Toy Workers Union Oral History, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Morgantown, West Virginia (hereinafter TWUOH). The West Virginia and Regional History Collection number for the oral history audio recording is 1123.
12. Milkman, *Gender at Work,* 20-21; 1941-1961 Seniority Lists, United Toy Workers Union Local 149, box 5, file folders 5-13, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Wise Library, West Virginia University, Morgantown (hereinafter TWU); 1941 Contract, box 1, folder 1, TWU. The United Toy Workers Union Local 149 collection consists of eleven manuscript boxes and two microfilm rolls containing the notes taken at union meetings by the recording secretary. The recording secretary's notes are labeled RS, with the corresponding date of the union meeting. The West Virginia and Regional History Collection number for the TWU manuscript collection is 2428.
13. Ibid. The Marx Company did not use female workers at the Glendale plant in the die-setting department, nor were they included in management positions, as plant guards, or as heavy press operators. The dynamics of "sex-typing" and the division of labor based upon gender are well documented.
14. Members of the United Toy Workers Union Local 149, January 7, 1976, TWUOH; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* January 15, April 9, 1934. From its opening in 1934, the Marx Company drew from a huge pool of unemployed workers. When news first spread of possible manufacturing jobs at the Glendale plant, the Marx Company became "besieged by job seekers, mostly men." In the spring of 1934 the Marx Company already had four thousand applications on file and a constant crowd in front of the plant looking for employment. The huge numbers of unemployed Marshall County employees clearly made the toy workers expendable.
15. Members of the United Toy Workers Union Local 149, January 7, 1976, TWUOH. "Down time" referred to the periods during the production process in which workers engaged in tasks that did not result in manufacturing toys, therefore not adding to the day's production quota. The periods included time spent waiting on supplies and machinery failures.
16. Ibid.; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* January 20, 1941. The *Moundsville Daily Echo* reports that some eight hundred employees of the Marx Company "are secretly voting as to whether Local 149 of the United Paper, Novelty, and Toy Workers Union, C.I.O. shall represent the employees in negotiating with the company."
17. Ibid., March 23, 1941, Recording Secretary's Notes (hereinafter cited as RS), January 31, 1941, microfilm reel 1, TWU; RS, February 14, 1941, microfilm reel 1, TWU. During their February 14 meeting, the Toy Workers Union drew up a new contract proposal, which included wage increases based on governmental cost of living estimates and improvement of working conditions, to submit to Marx management.
18. RS, January 31, 1941, microfilm reel 1, TWU. Union president Donald Whorton solicited the support of the Girard and Erie plants and their union representatives, but the AFL affiliated union offered little support.
19. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* March 23, 1941; *Wheeling Intelligencer,* March 29, 1941. The *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported that three meetings occurred during the month of March between Conner, Archie B. Marcus, vice-president of the Marx Company, and union officials, with each meeting ending in a deadlock.
20. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* March 29, 1941. The *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported that workers on the 2:30 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. shift walked out on Friday, March 28, and the Marx Company had removed dies and other equipment to the safety of the Erie plant. Employee estimates at the Glendale plant placed the number of toy workers at approximately eight hundred.
21. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* March 29, 1941; *Wheeling Intelligencer,* March 31, 1941. The number of picketers ranged from seventy-five to "several hundred," depending upon the early spring weather.
22. Members of the United Toy Workers Union Local 149, January 7, 1976, TWUOH.

23. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* March 29, April 24, May 6, May 24, 1941; *Wheeling Intelligencer,* March 31, 1941. The first demonstration occurred on April 23, 1941.
24. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* April 4, 6, 24, 1941; *Wheeling Intelligencer,* April 9, 1941. The union proposed "the workers return to their jobs pending inspection of the company's records by the governor (West Virginia Governor Mathew Mansfield Neely) or a representative." The company rejected this offer and the "strikers consider themselves locked out." The company made a counter-offer of a three or four cents an hour raise, but the proposal was rejected by the Toy Workers Union. The *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported that "some 400 applications for compensation have been filed" but "no claims have been paid."
25. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* May 6, 1941. After a meeting of the Toy Workers Union, union officials sent Governor Neely and company president Louis H. Marx a telegram stating their "desire to reach a settlement of the strike on terms proposed by the union as soon as possible." Striking toy workers had filed some 430 claims unsuccessfully. The state unemployment compensation office began preparations for the appeal process, which included priority consideration for appeals filed by Marx employees who did not support the strike.
26. Ibid., May 14, 1941; RS, May 12, 1941, microfilm reel 1, TWU; 1941 contract, box 1, folder 1, TWU. The specific details of the contract negotiations and management concessions are unknown, but local newspapers reported the wage increase.
27. RS, June 7, 1941, RS, June 8, 1941, microfilm reel 1, TWU,. The union elected Jean Hartzell president and Fran Hummel vice-president.
28. Ibid., June 21, 1941, January 17, 1942. Reasons cited for the denial of claims include: the stoppage occurred because of a labor dispute, the union members called strike, and no members attempted to break the strike. Information on the ultimate result of the appeal is not available and the union meeting notes do not mention the issue after January 17, 1942.
29. Ibid., July 7, 12, December 27, 1941, January 10, 1942. The Union invitees included local United Mine Workers of America members and the "members of the smelter's union."
30. Ibid., September 13, 1941.
31. Ibid., February 14, June 7, July 23, September 13, 1941.
32. Ibid., October 11, 25, 1941. Between October and December 1941, union officials debated the merit of article five of the newly drawn up union by-laws, which provided for fines for member failing to attend mandatory union meetings.
33. Ibid., November 22, December 12. 1941.
34. Jones, "West Virginia in World War II," 14-15, 134-135. West Virginia's manufacturing sector continually expanded throughout the war, with defense production increasing employment by forty-four percent over the 1939 employment estimates.
35. Members of the United Toy Workers Union Local 149, January 7, 1976, TWUOH.
36. Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972), 8-12; Jones, "West Virginia in World War II," 22-23. On January 6, 1942, in order to allow the federal government to "assert a firmer grip on [wartime] economic mobilization," President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the War Production Board. The War Production Board oversaw the conversion of industries to military production, regulated the manufacturing of "nonessential production," and restricted the usage of "scarce materials" (such as iron and steel). The War Labor Board divided the United States into regions and districts "to facilitate the operation of the board." The Glendale plant, as well as all of West Virginia, came under the jurisdiction of the Cleveland, Ohio, regional office. Additionally, Glendale also came under the jurisdiction of the district office maintained in Charleston, West Virginia, and the sub-district office in Wheeling.
37. RS, January 17, 1942, microfilm reel 1, April 1942, TWU. The union appointed two delegates, Jake Burley and Local 149 president Donald Whorton, as well as CIO representative Mr. Brandon, to go first to the two Pennsylvania Marx plants to "get their cooperation," and then on to Washington, D.C., to secure defense orders. The date of the April meeting is not recorded in the collection.
38. Ibid., April 11, 1942, January 10, 1943; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* October 2, 1942. The conversion of the plant to defense work remained "clouded in secrecy" and the first confirmation of what the Glendale plant actually produced during the war is found in the notes of the Local 149's recording secretary. The thirty caliber artillery shell casings are also referred to as "cups."
39. RS, April 9, 1942, microfilm reel 1, November 29, 1942, TWU. Defense conversion required the company to provide the War Labor Board investigators with birth certificates, employee work records, and citizenship records for foreign-born employees.
40. Ibid., May 23, 1942. Prior to securing the defense contracts, union officials worked closely with CIO representatives to draw up a new contract to offer to management. The union abandoned this contract proposal upon learning of the coming defense contracts.
41. Polenberg, *War and Society,* 25-26. President Roosevelt established the National War Labor Board in January 1942 "to settle labor conflicts in war industry."
42. RS, May 23, 1941, June 27, July 11, 1942, microfilm reel 1, TWU.
43. Ibid., August 22, 1942.
44. Ibid., November 14, 15 29, *1942; Decisions and Orders of the National Labor Relations Board: Volume 51, July 1, 1943- August 19, 1943* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1944), 72-73. Prior to defense work, the Marx Company used the McMechen plant, approximately two miles from the Glendale plant, as a warehouse to store steel. After procuring defense contracts, the company expanded its operations into the McMechen facility and began producing seventy-five millimeter artillery shell casings in February 1943.
45. Ibid., October 24, 1942, January 10, 23, February 21, 1943. The Army and Navy awarded the "E" Flag to factories who exceeded production levels set by the War Labor Board. Receiving this flag often brought new defense contracts and opportunities for more jobs. By 1943, the Marx Company had rehired some three hundred of the original eight hundred workers to fill defense worker positions.
46. Ibid., January 24, 1943. By April 1942, control over industrial wages belonged to the National War Labor Board. In July 1942, in a effort to stabilize spiraling wages and appease worker's demands for wage increases, the board adopted the "Little Steel" formula. The plan provided for a pro-rated wage increase for many workers, but did not threaten the livelihood of industries. The "Little Steel" formula alleviated some of the tensions between labor and management regarding wages and provided the board the "power to revise the Little Steel formula, or to permit

raises to correct certain inequalities." From the day of its establishment, the National War Labor Board maintained complete control over rates of pay of defense production industries. Polenberg, *War and Society,* 20-21.

47. Polenberg, *War and Society,* 160-63; Jones, "West Virginia in World War II," 85-87. Several labor disputes in major defense industries, many resulting in strikes, forced the board to mediate these conflicts. Some of the more noteworthy conflicts emerged in rubber industry (namely, in Akron, Ohio), shipyards, automobile industry, and the coal industry. Some 400,000 miners struck on four separate occasions in 1943.
48. RS, February 21, March 21, 1943, microfilm reel 1, TWU,; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* April 30, 1943.
49. RS, April 2, 1943, microfilm reel 1; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* May 1, 1943. Details of the new contract are not available.
50. RS, April 30, 1943, microfilm reel 1, TWU; Polenberg, *War and Society,* 159-60. On December 23, 1941, the CIO and additional "spokesmen for labor and business" agreed to a "no-strike pledge." Tensions emerged between the CIO and Local 149 over the maintenance of these no-strike pledges. Clearly the recommendations of the CIO during the 1943 strike reflected their desire to uphold their end of the agreement.
51. RS, November 21, June 20, 1943, microfilm reel 2, TWU; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* May 3, 1943. The details of the settlement are not available.
52. RS, June 30, July 15, December 19, November 21, 1943, microfilm reel 2, TWU. CIO representatives asked Local 149 to help to organize the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in December of 1943. The reasons for the cancellation of the contract are not extant.
53. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* December 1, 1943; RS, November 21, 1943, microfilm reel 2, TWU.
54. RS, January 9, 1944, microfilm reel 2, TWU. Frank Lassick made this statement during the union meeting of this date.
55. RS, February 6, 20, March 19, 20, April 4, 1944, microfilm reel 2, TWU; Polenberg, *War and Society,* 158-59. The "bonus plan" consisted of a guaranteed three cents an hour raise, and increased pay for high levels of production. In the summer of 1942, the National War Labor Board accepted the "maintenance of membership" agreement, in which "trade unions demanded a closed, or at least a union shop," to protect unions against "raids by rival unions" and to assure that "new war workers would be required to join [the established unions]." The compromise created a "fifteen-day escape period workers could resign from the union and keep their jobs; after that, they had to remain members for the life of the [defense] contract." CIO representative Frank Lassick and representatives of the War Labor Board advised union officials to accept the bonus plan.
56. RS, May 7, August 14, June 4, 1944, microfilm reel 2, TWU. The union rejected articles seven and eight, which dealt with pay increases in specific departments and vacation benefits.
57. RS, August 13, 1944, microfilm reel 2. The strict wage control structure, established by the Little Steel Formula and maintained by the War Labor Board, often proved difficult to circumvent during contract negotiations.
58. RS, June 4, 1944, microfilm reel 2, RS, May 7, 1944, microfilm reel 2. By the end of July, both the Glendale and McMechen plants were producing artillery shells. The Glendale plant never received an "E" flag owing to the frequency of worker absenteeism and the constant labor strife that surrounded the plant's rank and file.
59. RS, August 13, 1944, microfilm reel 2, RS, December 10, 1944, microfilm reel 2, RS, January 14, 1945, microfilm reel 2.
60. RS, February 11, 1945, microfilm reel 2, RS, April 8, 1945, microfilm reel 2, RS, May 6, 1945, microfilm reel 2, RS, January 10, 1945, microfilm reel 2. The executive board voted thirty-three to twenty-one to accept the contract, but reject the rates of pay.
61. RS, May 6, 1945, microfilm reel 2, RS, June 10, 1945, microfilm reel 2, RS, August 12, 1945, microfilm reel 2, RS, August 30, 1945, microfilm reel 2. Donald Whorton remained president of Local 149 from 1941 until August 1945. Marx management first transferred die-setters, the more senior skilled workers, to the Glendale plant.
62. Jones, "West Virginia in World War II," 167-68. Jones estimates that "reconversion cutbacks" cost West Virginians some twenty-five thousand jobs.
63. RS, October 7, 1945, microfilm reel 2, TWU. Union officials began discussing the thirty percent pay increase during wage negotiations in February and March 1945, but reconversion preempted further discussions on the issue.
64. RS, October 19, 1945, microfilm reel 2. Marcus did agree to previous union demands for seniority-based shift assignments, stating that "any employee with two or three years seniority shall be given their shift preference."
65. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* October 20, 1945; RS, November 11, 1945, microfilm reel 2, TWU. The Marx workers protested the low wages at the plant and apparently remained dissatisfied with the shift arrangements.
66. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* February 22, 1946.
67. RS, November 25, 1945, microfilm reel 2, TWU; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* December 1, 1945.
68. RS, December 9, 1945, microfilm reel 2, TWU.
69. Edith Burgess to Archie B. Marcus, January 19, 1946, microfilm reel 2, TWU; RS, January 16, 1946, microfilm reel 2, TWU.
70. Ray Van Dyne to Robert C. Edwards, January 17, 1946, microfilm reel 2,, TWU; Ray Van Dyne to Alex Bail, January 24, 1946, microfilm reel 2TWU.
71. RS, February 10, 1945, microfilm reel 2, TWU; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* December 21, 1946.
72. *Moundsville Daily Echo,* February 22, 1946; RS, February 24, 1946, microfilm reel 2, TWU. Marcus made a second offer to union officials of a "10% + .02 cents an hour increase."
73. RS, February 24, 1946, microfilm reel 2; Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 222-23. Union officials issued cards to all employees informing them of when and where to join the picket lines.
74. RS, March 10, 1946, microfilm reel 2, TWU; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* March 9, 1946.
75. RS, March 30, 1946, microfilm reel 2, TWU; *Moundsville Daily Echo,* March 30, 1946.
76. Jones, "West Virginia in World War II," 129.