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A Historical Analysis of the Socio-Economic Forces Which Shaped a Small Industrial Town in Arkansas

Gordon Scott Bachus
Ouachita Baptist University

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A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORCES
WHICH SHAPED A SMALL INDUSTRIAL TOWN IN ARKANSAS

A Thesis
Presented to the
School of Graduate Studies
Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Gordon Scott Bachus

May 1968

A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORCES
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by

Gordon Scott Bachus

APPROVED:

Bob Riley

Major Professor

Paul P. Scott

James Benyman

D. W. Kilian

Dean of Graduate Studies

Dennis Hest

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facilities, and utilities. The houses and other structures
 built were company-owned and company-operated, with the
 exception of the various churches belonging and later the
 school buildings. Local citizens and company employees
 were the only occupants of the houses.

Special Agent in Charge, FBI
 U. S. Bureau of Investigation
 Report to Congress, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1951
 Copyright Company, 1951, p. 14.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1887, bauxite, the ore of aluminum was discovered in Arkansas. State Geologist, John C. Branner, announced the discovery in 1891.¹ Reports soon reached the Pittsburgh Reduction Company in Pennsylvania. This young company investigated the report, purchased land in Saline County, and started mining operations.

In 1903 the Pittsburgh Reduction Company built an ore-drying plant in Saline County, Arkansas. The establishment of this plant marked the beginning of the town of Bauxite. Laid out on company-owned land shortly after mining operations began, the town soon became a self-sufficient community with schools, churches, stores, roads, medical facilities, and utilities. All houses and buildings in Bauxite were company-owned and company-maintained, with the exception of the various church buildings and later the school facilities. Local ministers and company employees were the only occupants of the houses.²

¹Bauxite News, August, 1920.

²C. R. Cheadle (ed.), Aluminum: What the Industry Means to Arkansas (Little Rock: Democrat Printing and Lithographing Company, 1954), p. 18.

Through sixty-four years of existence the town experienced many social and economic changes. These changes were the result of the expansion and development of the aluminum industry and subsequent company policy.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. By the nature of their situation, the residents of the company-owned town of Bauxite were unusually vulnerable to change. The purpose of this study was to determine the forces behind these changes and to discover the effects of such changes upon the community in general and upon individual family life in particular.

Since all the inhabitants of the town were in the employ of the company, the market of aluminum and alumina products determined the prosperity and stability of the community. Specific periods of the growth and decline of the industry were considered in this study. These periods were defined generally as World War I, the depression years of the 1920's and early 1930's, World War II, and the years of industrial expansion after 1945.

Significance of the study. Typical of the company-owned town, this community suffered a rapid demise in recent years. Such a rapid demise justifies a study of the life cycle--beginning, development, decline--of this town.

The town of Bauxite was built in 1903 and reached a population of near 6,000 during World War II. During these years of increasing population, housing for the majority of employees was in Pine Haven, a government housing project. All government housing and all but a few company houses were moved or razed in recent years.

Company-owned towns served certain industries well after the turn of the century. These towns were not always constructed to meet the needs of a wholesome and healthy community. In some areas of the nation, company towns have been under criticism because of their unfavorable social characteristics.³ This study endeavors to reveal the forces which shaped the company-owned town of Bauxite and to determine the ensuing effects.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Socio-economic. The term "socio-economic" pertained to the structure of social and economic conditions. These conditions were considered as they existed in the early years of the life cycle of this company-owned town and as they currently exist. The socio-economic structure in this study

³Herman Feldman, Problems in Labor Relations, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), p. 228.

included the schools, religious life, community social life, and the economy of the area involved. The area involved was limited chiefly to the town of Bauxite and to a lesser degree the counties of Pulaski and Saline.

Company-owned town. The term "company-owned town" referred to the town of Bauxite, Arkansas. The town was built in 1903 by the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, now named the Aluminum Company of America. Thereafter, the company-owned town was referred to as "the town."

Forces. The term "forces" related to those tangible and intangible elements and characteristics resulting from a town being built and maintained by one industry. Tangible forces included the furnishing and maintenance of housing by the company to the employees, the planned community recreational program and community recreation building, various services offered to the employees, and wages of employees. Intangible forces included the psychological and sociological advantages or disadvantages and insecurities of living in such an environment were considered.

Transition. The term "transition" pertained to the necessary adjustments of both employer and employee in Bauxite, resulting from the growth and expansion of the aluminum industry. Periods of employment decline were studied

as well as periods of accelerated growth of the industry and increased employment.

The company. The term "company" referred to the Aluminum Company of America. The use of the company's popular title ALCOA, was used in context when warranted.

The Pittsburgh Reduction Company of Pennsylvania was the developing company of the aluminum industry in Arkansas. The name of the company was changed to the Aluminum Company of America in 1907 as a program of expansion was put into action. Subsidiary companies of the Aluminum Company of America were referred to by their specific name, rather than by the name of the parent company.

III. DELIMITATIONS

This study consisted of an analysis of the beginning, development, and decline of the town. A necessarily brief history of the aluminum industry was included to acquaint the reader with background information relating to the effects of the development of the industry upon the socio-economic conditions of the town.

An analytical study of the town was done through the use of personal interviews, reports, maps, and research. These sources illustrated the interests of the company in building a town for its employees and its own economic ends.

A definitive study of the advantages or disadvantages of life in a company-owned town was not intended.

The social and economic changes in the community of Bauxite were considered in this study. The study did not, however, pretend to express opinions concerning such social and economical changes which were not documented by appropriate records or personal interviews with individuals who experienced such changes.

The selective chronological pattern of this study began with the birth of the town and continued to the present, considering the more decisive periods.

IV. SOURCES AND TREATMENT OF DATA

The sources of information used consisted of publications found in the Riley Library of Ouachita Baptist University and the Henderson State College Library of Arkadelphia, Arkansas. The micro-filmed sources of the Arkansas Historic Commission in Little Rock, Arkansas were consulted. The Saline County Memorial Library in Benton, Arkansas offered another source of information.

Basically, this study employed the field-study method. The lack of printed material necessitated such a method. Interviews with company personnel, past and present, served to supplement the lack of recorded data.

Data gathered in the research was used in six chapters. Chapter I presented the introduction, presentation of the problem, significance of the study, definition of terms used, and the delimitations of the study. Chapter II presented a brief history of the aluminum industry. Chapter III considered the period between 1894 and 1920 and discussed the beginning of the aluminum industry in Arkansas and the initial building of the town of Bauxite. Chapter IV considered the growth and development of the town. The general period in this chapter comprised the years between 1920 and 1950. The effects of World War II were studied in detail because of marked industrial expansion during this period. Chapter V reviewed the years of the town's decline and considered the years between 1951 and 1967. Chapter VI consisted of the summary and conclusions of the study and presents recommendations and comments which seemed germane.

of America, 1947, p. 3.

Charles C. Cary, Aluminum in American Industries
(New York: Macmillan & Company, 1947, p. 1).

1947, p. 1.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

The discovery of aluminum in large quantity was late in history. "Although the earth's crust contains more aluminum than it does iron or copper or lead, less than a century ago aluminum was more precious than even silver and gold."⁴

Scientific attempts to produce a metal from alumina dated from the year 1807. "Sir Humphrey Davy, the great English electrochemist, decided that the earth, alumina, might well be the oxide of a new metal."⁵ He did not succeed in producing the new metal, but he was convinced that alumina had a metallic base and he called it aluminum. H. C. Oersted, a Danish physicist, continued Davy's investigations. "In 1825 Oersted heated potassium amalgam with aluminum chloride and then distilled the mercury from the resultant amalgam. This small lump was the first aluminum men had ever seen."⁶

After Oersted's discovery interest in aluminum waned. In 1845 a German scientist, Frederick Wohler, extracted enough of the metal to be weighable. He was the first to find that

⁴Aluminum: Its Story (Pittsburgh: Aluminum Company of America, 1947), p. 5.

⁵Charles C. Carr, Alcoa, An American Enterprise (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1952), p. 2.

⁶Ibid., p. 3.

aluminum was lightweight.

The French scientists began to show an interest in discovering a method to produce aluminum around the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1845 Henri Sainte-Claire Deville discovered how to isolate aluminum by using sodium instead of potassium. This resulted in the small particles joining to form large lumps.

Deville promptly struck off an aluminum medal and presented it to Emperor Napoleon III who saw the possibilities of the lightweight metal and commissioned Deville to make aluminum armor and helmets for his French Cuirassiers. While Deville produced and displayed several large bars of aluminum at the 1855 Paris Exposition, aluminum armor did not come until 1942.⁷

The next step in the progress of aluminum research involved an American, Charles Martin Hall and a Frenchman, Paul T. Heroult. While a student at Oberlin College, Hall became interested in aluminum and began experimenting to find a better way of producing it. He continued his work after graduation and in 1886 discovered that metallic aluminum could be produced by dissolving alumina in molten cryolite and then passing an electric current through the solution. This invention paved the way for aluminum to be produced cheaply enough for practical use.⁸

⁷A-B-C's of Aluminum (Louisville, Kentucky: Reynolds Metals Company, 1950), p. 8.

⁸Carr, op. cit., p. 12.

Hall applied for a patent which was granted in 1889. He was shocked to find that Heroult had already filed a patent application in France which predated his own. That these two young men should discover the same process at almost exactly the same time is remarkable. "But the coincidence does not end there. They were both born in 1863, thus were both twenty-three years old when they made their discoveries, and both died in 1914."⁹

As a result of Hall's and Heroult's discovery, the price of aluminum dropped from \$11.33 a pound in 1885 to \$0.57 a pound in 1892. "By the turn of the century, it was \$0.23 and reached a low of \$0.14 in 1942."¹⁰ Modern invention, coupled with the coming of free enterprise to the aluminum industry, combined to bring aluminum within the financial reach of everyone.

Another name associated with pioneering of the aluminum industry is that of Karl Josef Bayer, a German. A United States patent on Bayer's process was issued in 1894. When a license in this country to use Bayer's method expired in 1911 the process became public domain. "It is an interest-

⁹A-B-C's of Aluminum, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁰Ibid.

ing fact that the Bayer process has remained to this day the most universally used method for making alumina hydrate, which is calcined into aluminum oxide."¹¹ Bayer's process complimented that of Halls.

I. BAUXITE DEPOSITS

The first step in the manufacture of aluminum was the mining of bauxite.

Although a number of different minerals contain limited quantities of aluminum oxide, known as alumina, only in the case of bauxite have there been developed commercially processes of separating the alumina from the other materials with which it is found.¹²

Progress of the aluminum industry was related to the discovery of bauxite deposits. The World Wars and a more competitive aluminum market necessitated more intense efforts to locate and purchase ore deposits regardless of location.

Deposits in foreign countries. The industry geared its operations on the basis that the largest reserves of commercial grade bauxite are found outside the United States. "Aluminum Company of America has regularly imported high-

¹¹Carr, op. cit., p. 70.

¹²Vance Quentin Alvis, "Arkansas and the Aluminum Industry" (Fayetteville, Arkansas: College of Business Administration, 1952), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

grade ores from South America to supplement that mined in Arkansas."¹³ Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation owns bauxite deposits in Jamaica and regularly imports ore from that area to their plant in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Reynolds Metals Company used Jamaican ore which it shipped to its Arkansas plant near Bauxite.¹⁴ Deposits discovered in Jamaica in 1942 represented the largest known reserves in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1949 the U. S. Bureau of Mines published information on the sources of bauxite used by the aluminum industry. The facts stated that almost sixty percent of the bauxite used in the United States aluminum industry was imported in 1949, principally from Surinam, Indonesia, and British Guiana.¹⁵

Foreign countries have been producing aluminum from bauxite for many years. "Foreign production began in Italy in 1905, India in 1908, Germany in 1914 and Yugoslavia in 1915. Extensive deposits in Rumania have been operated by German aluminum interests."¹⁶ Important deposits also oc-

¹³Carr, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁴Alvis, op. cit., pp. 6-11.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁶John Reed, "Questions on Alcoa in General," Manual for the Workers Conference Director (Pittsburgh: Aluminum Company of America, 1949), n. p. Session held April 20 and 22, 1948.

curred in France, Hungary, Italy, Greece, and Russia. Bauxite deposits in other countries included those in China, Malaya, Brazil, and the West Indies.¹⁷

Deposits in the United States. In 1883, near Hermitage, Georgia, bauxite was discovered in the course of mining iron ore. "The records show that the first domestic bauxite, 782 tons, was mined and shipped from Georgia in 1889."¹⁸

States, other than Arkansas, having bauxite deposits are Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia. The principal deposits are located in Arkansas. The deposits in Arkansas were discovered in 1887, but the announcement of the discovery was not made until 1891. Branner felt the discovery insignificant to be announced earlier. One state newspaper carried an item describing the significance of the discovery.

It is found that we have in Arkansas, in Saline and Pulaski Counties, a mineral that is used in the manufacture of aluminum, a metal of great and rapidly increasing importance, as well as for other useful purposes. This is the mineral bauxite, bozlte, sometimes called "honey-comb," through the region in which it occurs in this state. Bauxite is not a common mineral in any part

¹⁷R. C. Cross, "From Mine to Metal," Manual for the Workers Conference Director (Pittsburgh: Aluminum Company of America, 1949), n. p. Session held March 18 and 20, 1947.

¹⁸J. S. Lewellen, "History of Alcoa," Manual for the Workers Conference Director (Pittsburgh: Aluminum Company of America, 1949), n. p. Session held March 11 and 13, 1947.

of the world, and as it has a spongy, earthy appearance, and is very light, there is nothing about it to attract the attention, and this is probably the reason it has been so long overlooked.¹⁹

The discovery of bauxite in Arkansas almost coincided with the development of Hall's process for making aluminum and the formation of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company.

The deposits in Arkansas provided ore for the past sixty-four years. In 1949 the U. S. Bureau of Mines reported that Arkansas mines produced ninety-five percent of the ore mined in this country.²⁰ This figure remained steady throughout the history of the aluminum industry in America. The significance of the Arkansas deposits "lies in periods of national emergency when there is danger of imported ores being cut off."²¹ The government sought to minimize the effects of such possibilities by stockpiling imported ores.

II. USES OF BAUXITE AND ALUMINUM

The major production of bauxite went to the manufacturing of metallic aluminum. Non-metallic consumption increased when the company built a huge chemical plant in

¹⁹News item in the Arkansas [Little Rock] Gazette, January 8, 1891.

²⁰Cheadle, op. cit., p. 24.

²¹Ibid., p. 37.

Saline County in 1954. In 1957 this plant made eighty-five different chemicals which were used in the manufacturing of the following products: fused abrasives, such as grinding wheels and emery boards; ceramic products, such as tiles, chinaware, and heat-resisting glass; electrical insulations in spark plugs and supports for electric hearing elements; alum, baking powder, and sodium aluminate; and silica-alumina catalysts for petroleum and chemical industries.²²

The major use of bauxite was the manufacture of aluminum. The uses of aluminum were many. Each year 125 pounds of the metal are put to use for the benefit of every American family.²³

The various industries of the nation were the largest users of aluminum. These major industries were comprised of the transportation industry, chemical industry, electrical industry, and building industry.

Another influence on the uses of the light metal was war needs. Production soared during both World Wars.

In World War II the aluminum industry met its greatest test. Even before the threat had developed into an out-

²²Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], October, 1957.

²³Reed, op. cit.

break. Alcoa had begun a \$250,000,000 expansion program which it had well under way before Pearl Harbor. In 1940 the Reynolds Metals Company, a long-time producer of aluminum foil, entered the aluminum business with alumina and reduction plants in Alabama and mining operations in Arkansas.²⁴

Military use of aluminum was staggering. The 305,000 military planes turned out in the United States in five and one-half years of defense preparation required 3,500,000,000 pounds of aluminum.²⁵

The most optimistic planners were amazed at the growth and development of the industry.

State Geologist, discovered bauxite in Saline and Polaski Counties. He announced the discovery in 1894. This announcement led to such activity in the area resulting in 1894 and 1895 with the purchase of bauxite lands. There is no record to show who bought the first land for the bauxite mines, but the view of the old bauxite mine near George W. Mackenzie's mine honor.²⁶ A report on file in Alcoa's bauxite office is dated September 3, 1916, stated that Mackenzie had extensive holdings in the bauxite fields those years previously.

²⁴Cheadle, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁵Carr, op. cit., p. 257.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF THE ALUMINUM INDUSTRY IN ARKANSAS

1894-1920

The mining of bauxite had a slow start in the first two or three years after the ore was discovered. In 1887 a road contractor was completing construction of the highway south from Little Rock to Pine Bluff when he noticed that the crumbly, soft, gray rocks along the way were excellent for road surfacing. A short time later, John C. Branner, State Geologist, discovered bauxite in Saline and Pulaski Counties. He announced the discovery in 1891. This announcement led to much activity in the two counties in 1894 and 1895 with the purchase of bauxite lands. "There is no record to show who bought the first land for its 'bauxite' value, but the vote of the old timers gave George B. MacKenzie this honor."²⁶ A report on file in Alcoa's Bauxite office in 1947 dated September 3, 1895, stated that MacKenzie had extensive holdings in the Arkansas bauxite fields three years previously.

The General Bauxite Company, under the direction of

²⁶Lewellen, op. cit.

a man named Perry, bought land for three dollars an acre, and mined the first ore which amounted to forty tons, in 1896.

In 1897 the General Bauxite Company built a mill near the site of the present town of Bauxite and constructed a tram track from the mill to a mine which was opened a little south of the present Martin Hollow mine, which is about one and one-half miles southeast of Bauxite. This was the first actual bauxite mine opened and operated in Arkansas. Although the General Bauxite Company's operations were in the beginning quite small, they had purchased quite a large number of properties and mining rights and it soon became apparent that this company possessed some of the most valuable Arkansas holdings. As a result of this position, within a few years it became one of the most important bauxite companies in the country, ranking with the Republic Georgia Bauxite Company.²⁷

In 1899 the Pittsburgh Reduction Company sent John R. Gibbons and his son, J. Felton Gibbons to Saline County from Georgia to investigate the bauxite possibilities and obtain options on bauxite lands. This company set up a temporary laboratory in Little Rock, and soon realized the bauxite ore in Saline County compared favorable with that being mined in Georgia.

A group of men from the Pittsburgh Reduction Company began to purchase land. One of the first men from whom they bought was Columbus Brazil, who was then hired by Gibbons and

²⁷J. Felton Gibbons, "A Story of the Bauxite Industry" (Bauxite, Arkansas, 1947), p. 17. (Mimeographed.)

worked for the company from 1899 until his death January 1, 1937.²⁸ Brazil was farming on a tract of land near the southern end of the town. The foundations of his house were built of bauxite and he was having trouble keeping his fields cleared of bauxite boulders. Brazil was surprised to learn that the new-comers were looking for this very material that was giving him trouble. He became the first foreman for the company when operations began.

In 1900 the Norton Company, a concern which used bauxite in the making of abrasives, purchased its first load of ore from the General Bauxite Company. In 1905 the General Bauxite Company was purchased by the Pittsburgh Reduction Company and in 1909 the same company purchased the Norton Company. The Pittsburgh Reduction Company was in command of the bauxite mining operations in a few years after their venture into Arkansas.²⁹

The infant industry was simple. Land was cleared and a milling plant, office, and laboratory were built in the woods where the present town of Bauxite is located. All the early mining of ore was done by hand with picks, shovels,

²⁸Lewellen, op. cit.

²⁹Etta Walker Hogue, "A Brief Economic History of Saline County" (Unpublished Research Paper, Arkansas State Teachers College, Conway, Arkansas, 1959), p. 7.

wheelbarrows, and axes; the ore was dried by log fires.

The first recorded production of bauxite in Arkansas was 5,045 tons in 1899. The ore was hauled to Bryant, Arkansas in wagons and loaded into open railroad cars to be shipped to Memphis, a distance of one-hundred and fifty miles. From there it was loaded into three barges which carried it up the Mississippi River to Cairo, Illinois, and from there up the Ohio River to Pittsburgh. From Pittsburgh the route was up the Allegheny River about twenty miles to New Kensington, Pennsylvania. On that first journey two barges were sunk and a third arrived six months later, in the winter of 1900, frozen solid. Later ore was shipped on the St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad to East St. Louis for processing. In 1902, 4,645 tons of bauxite were mined which was approximately equal to the amount mined daily in 1957.

In 1901 the Rock Island Railroad extended its operations to the area of Bauxite and shipping the ore became less hazardous. Mining operations increased steadily, more people were added to the employment of the company, and a small community of workers began to settle in the area of the bauxite mines.³⁰

³⁰Bauxite News, August, 1920.

³³Interview with L. H. [redacted] [redacted]

I. A TOWN WAS BUILT

In 1903 the Pittsburgh Reduction Company completed an ore-drying plant near mining operations in Saline County.

The establishment of this then-modern ore-drying plant marked the beginning of the town of Bauxite. Laid out on company-owned land shortly after mining operations began, the town soon became a self-sufficient community with schools, churches, stores, roads, medical facilities, a water supply, and other utilities.³¹

Prior to the establishment of the community of Bauxite, a community was plotted for construction by the early bauxite speculators, Perry and Smith.³² They proposed to name their town Perrysmith, Arkansas and actually had a post office called Perrysmith. Postmaster at that time was A. W. Nicklaus.³³

The unincorporated community of Bauxite has, from its beginning, been referred to as a company-owned town. The town was built, according to one writer of its history, upon the philosophy of an English economist, James Anthony Froude.

Froude's book, Short Studies on Great Subjects, printed in 1855, mentions his views on the rights of people and the rights of industry. Froude propounded his views concerning land ownership by one man or a small group of men by using

³¹Cheadle, op. cit., p. 18.

³²Cf. Appendix A.

³³Interview with L. M. Nicklaus. Permission to quote secured.

the method of Augustus Smith who developed the Scilly Isles.

Mr. Smith at once altered the small tenures so as to make improvement possible. He broke up the small holdings and combined them into farms on which a family could be maintained in decency. He provided work at competent wages for those deprived of their potatoe patches. He drained. He enclosed the fields. He rebuilt the cottages in a form fit for human beings. He set up boat-yards, and organized the fishing business . . . He built chapels and endowed them. He built schools and provided proper teachers for them.³⁴

An Arkansas religious periodical praised the builders of the town for using Froude's concepts.³⁵

Froude's concepts were idealistic for good labor relations. The company, however, did wish for its employees a safe, comfortable place to live. As the industry developed and needs arose, the company made other expensive outlays in behalf of the town's citizenry. In so doing the company added strength to its own self-interest, that of keeping a working force intact for mining operations. Company towns were often essential to production in the early days of industry. The community of Bauxite met that purpose for the Pittsburgh

³⁴James Anthony Froude, Short Studies on Great Subjects (New York: Charles Scribner's & Sons, 1885), p. 284.

³⁵"Bauxite," Arkansas Methodist, October 4, 1934, p. 12. James Anthony Froude thought that an ideal working arrangement would obtain if the employer provided not only an adequate wage system, but took to heart and considered it a responsibility to see that the employees had proper shelter, that they were provided for in sickness and old age, that their children were properly educated and that they might play under conditions conducive to happiness and good citizenship.

Reduction Company.

That company-owned towns were favored by industry and needed by employees is seen in this statement:

Certain industries, among which mining and lumbering are important illustrations, sometimes conduct their operations in localities so isolated that it becomes necessary to lay out a whole community. The company owns or controls not only the land and the houses, but the schools, the churches and other facilities needed, and naturally becomes the dominant force in the education, recreation, civic life of the inhabitants.³⁶

When the Pittsburgh Reduction Company decided to build a community for their employees the need was evident. Roads were poor, houses were not to be found, and transportation service in general was almost non-existent. The nearest town was Benton, the county seat, with a population of less than 1,500 people. Little Rock was twenty-two miles north of Bauxite.

Employment at the time the town was built was approximately 400. The industry was growing and the company sought laborers for new mining works. Many of the workers were farmers in Saline County, but a steady increase of new employees came from outlying areas. Houses had to be provided. Naturally the homes were an inducement for men to work

³⁶Feldman, op. cit., p. 228.

steadily for the company. The low rent added to this attractiveness. Some of those early employees included such names as McClain, Jake and Fate Styers, Ragan, Spade, Thompson, Lane, and Howard.³⁷

The company's interest in providing adequate housing, education, and social life for the employees did not end with the early construction. The company maintained the houses and added more as years passed and as the industry demanded more employees. Other advances were made in behalf of the community.³⁸ As the industry developed, the town developed and the employees benefited. These accomplishments and circumstances mark the town as unique in its classification as being company-owned.

II. DEVELOPMENT FROM 1903-1914

The aluminum industry developed slowly. By 1907 new markets were being sought. The income of the workers depended upon the stability of the industry; therefore, tracing the growth of the industry was important to this study. In 1907 a world-wide financial panic occurred. On November 15 operations at Bauxite were stopped. Many of the employees

³⁷Lewellen, op. cit.

³⁸Supra, p. 21.

of the company remained. A ready crew was put back to work in September, 1908. What was being done by the industry to guarantee future employment for workers can be seen in this statement:

While the miners were making dirt fly in Arkansas, Alcoa was busy building and expanding other links in the chain from mine to market. The East St. Louis refining plant went into service in 1903. Reduction plants and power plants to feed them were built at Niagara Falls and Massena, New York, and in the Tennessee Valley. Metal-fabricating plants were built at Messena, New Kensington, and Niagara Falls. The first continuous mill for rolling aluminum sheets was installed at New Kensington in 1907. And there had begun the aggressive search for new markets which distinguishes the industry to this day.³⁹

The development of the aluminum industry in Europe paralleled that of the industry in the United States. France, with extensive bauxite deposits, was one of the leaders in the European development. From 1910 until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the United States imported more than one-third of the aluminum used here. The United States output was, nevertheless, increasing steadily in these years. Most of the ore was coming from mines in central Arkansas. This resulted in an increase in employment of workers for the Bauxite works.

³⁹Cheadle, op. cit., p. 19.

Beginning in 1912 the milling and mining operations grew rapidly in Bauxite. Shipments increased from five to forty cars per day. With this growth the town took on new dimensions.

Noted developments in the town were the establishment of two churches. The Methodist Church was a growing institution in Bauxite from 1900. A local church was formed officially in 1904.

From the foundation of the town the Methodist Church has been a growing institution. It has been made by hearty cooperation and fine support of the American Bauxite Company and the Norton Company. Our church here was built by and has been kept in repair by the American Bauxite Company, although it is the property of the Southern Methodist Church, having been dedicated by Bishop Hoss in the summer of 1904. Before being made a station in 1919, the Church here was a part of the Bryant Circuit.⁴⁰

Details relating to the growth of the Baptist Church in Bauxite are incomplete until 1922. Before this date semi-monthly preaching services were conducted. In 1902 a congregation of Baptists began meeting in Bauxite, although no official church was formed until 1922.⁴¹ A statement concerning the company's policy toward the churches is found in a report given in 1948 by Lewellen.

⁴⁰"Bauxite," op. cit., p. 11.

⁴¹Records of the First Baptist Church, Bauxite, Arkansas.

It has been the company policy to support and encourage the churches of this community, yet it has never asked for any 'say' in the filling of the pulpits or how the churches were run.⁴²

During this early period the town experienced the beginning stages of a strong educational program. In 1902 the company assisted in the building of a three room school north of the Rock Island Railroad Station to take the place of a one room school building. These rooms provided a place for the lower grades to meet. The advent of high school education in the town began in 1911. The company built, at its own expense, the brick school north of the Rock Island Station, maintained it, and paid the insurance on it until the District could carry the cost in the mid-1940's.⁴³

John M. Paul, a graduate of the University of Nebraska, was instrumental in making the high school department a three year program. He was succeeded in 1913 by Elmore Perry, a Valparaiso University graduate. The school merited a B class rating until 1924 when it was raised to an A class school.⁴⁴

⁴²J. W. Lewellen, "Local Company Practices," Manual for the Workers Conference Director (Pittsburgh: Aluminum Company of America, 1946), n. p. Session held January 6 and 8, 1948.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴"History of Bauxite School District" (Bauxite, Arkansas: Bauxite High School). (Mimeographed.)

III. THE INFLUENCES OF WORLD WAR I ON THE INDUSTRY AND THE TOWN

The demand for aluminum in World War I was small in proportion to that of World War II. A prodigious effort, however, was required from the industry. The company was the only producer of pig aluminum on the North American Continent. "The Company had to produce aluminum to meet the war demands of America and its allies and to care for, as best it could, the requests from civilian users."⁴⁵

Industrial expansion. The company met the increased demand for aluminum by expanding the capacity of existing facilities and constructing new ones. New plants were built at Badin, North Carolina, Maryville, Tennessee, and Edgewarth, New Jersey. Production of aluminum was boosted from 109,000,000 pounds in 1915 to a peak of 152,000,000 pounds in 1917. This increase in production demanded an increase in the mining of bauxite in Arkansas.

Bauxite was shipped from Arkansas to East St. Louis. To increase the facilities for shipment of this ore when rail transportation was congested, the company built a terminal plant on the Mississippi River near Memphis, Tennessee.

⁴⁵Carr, op. cit., p. 147.

"This plant was at Bauxippi, Arkansas."⁴⁶ It became a casualty of the peace and was later sold to a shipping firm.

The industry suffered other casualties. In 1917 the company began construction of an alumina plant in Baltimore, Maryland. The intent was to use bauxite from South America at the Baltimore works. Dock and shore bulkheads were completed, sewer and water lines laid, and foundations installed for the Baltimore plant, but the job was never completed. "At the war's close, structural iron, knocked-down tanks, bricks and machinery parts, were lying about the partially completed structures."⁴⁷

As World War I progressed, considerable anxiety was felt over the ability of the Arkansas bauxite fields to supply enough high-grade ore. Use of lower-grade ore was not economically feasible. The war demand for bauxite led to the decision of company officials to make future plans for using foreign bauxite. The danger of being dependent upon Arkansas bauxite deposits was realized and foreshadowed a later shift to foreign ore.⁴⁸

What the war did to influence the research and

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 153.

⁴⁸Cheadle, op. cit., p. 20.

development of the aluminum industry can be seen in the following statement:

The war exerted a greater influence upon the subsequent course of development in the aluminum industry than it exercised in most other industries. Attention was clearly focused upon the importance of research into the constitution, properties, and industrial applications of the strong, light, aluminum alloys, and into the vast possibilities for development of special alloys for particular purposes . . . Most important, manufacturers had been compelled during the war to use aluminum, and, being familiar now with many of its advantages, kept right on using it in their peacetime products.⁴⁹

Two new companies came into the town-area during this period; the Globe Bauxite Company and the National Bauxite Company. These companies closed operations when the demand for bauxite declined.

The laborers received some of the benefits of the increase of production. New equipment was introduced. The methods of mining were crude as compared to present day, but the rush for ore resulted in some changes for the better. Stripping was done by plows and slips pulled by mules, and the ore was hauled over thirty-six inch gauge tram railroads. The Norton Company began mining operations for its increased production of abrasives and acquired two seven-ton Packard trucks which helped pull trains up the incline from the mines

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 20-21.

and then carried the ore to the out-going railroads. In 1917 the company bought two dozen bottom-dump wagons which seemed ultra-modern at the time. The small cars, called dinky cars, were improved during these years, but filling a dinky car required thirty minutes of hard work by two men.⁵⁰

World War I exerted an expansive influence on the development of the town. The increase in production demanded more laborers. "The number of people employed in 1917 was greater than in any other year to 1943.⁵¹ One can get an approximate number of employees by referring to the figures concerning employment in 1943: "The Republic Mining and Manufacturing Company increased their employment from 450 to 2,400 in 1943."⁵²

Community expansion within the town-area. More houses were needed to take care of the increasing number of employees. The company met the challenge and small towns and camps sprang into existence. These towns were enumerated in an article written in 1920:

These towns as they now exist are as follows: Bauxite, Alexander Town, Crumbia Town, Alabama Town, Church Row, Caseyville, String Town, Peaceful Valley, Battle Row,

⁵⁰Hogue, op. cit., p. 11.

⁵¹Lewellen, "History of Alcoa," op. cit.

⁵²Hogue, op. cit., p. 13.

Italy, Italy Farm, Mexico, Norton Town, Adams Hill, Swamp Poodle, and Africa.⁵³

These small segregated communities within the boundaries of the town-area consisted of the hundreds of new employees who found work in the mines. The company hospital reported the number of applicants for jobs in an article appearing in the company news media.

Evidently Bauxite is becoming nationally prominent, as the stream of applications for work continues unabated. They come from about every State in the Union, as well as some from foreign lands. Sweden and Italy have contributed somewhat to our population recently--also the addition allotted to the Mexican. [sic] Twenty-one hundred applicants have been examined by the physicians during the past eight months.⁵⁴

The workers in Bauxite were discouraged from seeking higher wages elsewhere. The company sought to keep before the employee the fact that his job meant security, and he gambled when he left. A company official wrote in an article:

Stick to your job, man. View the scenery from your own back yard. You'll very likely find right in your own camp the diamonds of success you are looking for. And by sticking to your job and getting ready for the job ahead you'll serve your nation, your family and your district far more patriotically than the man who chases all over the country for selfish ends.⁵⁵

⁵³Bauxite News, August, 1920.

⁵⁴Bauxite News, September, 1920.

⁵⁵Ibid. This plea is obviously a reference to Russell Conwell's celebrated speech, "Acres of Diamonds."

ber of problems for the company. Maintenance of law and order was irregular. Another problem was in the method of paying the workers. In October of 1920 the policy of paying the Negroes once a week was discontinued and the former method of paying every day was reinstated. This change was initiated by V. A. Rucker, "whose experience in handling Negro labor makes him well qualified for this work."⁵⁷ In December of 1920 fifty-three families and 140 single men lived in Africa. The families were housed in buildings similar to those in Mexico, each house sheltering two families. One large bunk house and two smaller buildings housed the single men.⁵⁸

The hospital and health precautions. The influx in population during the war years demanded an increase in the medical facilities and an emphasis on better health standards. A serious flu epidemic occurred in 1920, but records reveal no deaths resulting from the contagious disease. The company news media carried articles which informed citizens how to avoid contacting the illness.

Attention was also given to the control of malaria in the years of the town's population increase. An interesting

⁵⁷Bauxite News, October, 1920.

⁵⁸Ibid.

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⁵⁷Bauxite News, October, 1920.

⁵⁸Ibid.

item appeared in the Bauxite News in August of 1920.

Mosquitos carry malaria. Everyone agrees to this. Mosquitos must have water to breed. The most prevalent source of mosquito breeding is from water dripping under houses from ice boxes. Catch this in a pan and empty it every day. By so doing, you will eliminate this source of malaria.⁵⁹

S. N. Hutchinson was the company physician from August, 1917 to September, 1918. In 1919 E. A. Buckley came to the town as the company physician. He remained with the company many years.⁶⁰

The hospital in the town was considered the best in the county and one of the finest in the state in the war years. Hospital facilities provided for surgical cases as well as the injured or ill patient.⁶¹

Regular weekly visits were made by the company doctor to the various camps and towns in the area. On these visits the doctor would give aid to the ill and inspect the premises to make recommendations.

Hospitalization was provided for company employees who paid a small amount into a hospital fund each month. During periods of unemployment the company made no charge for the use of medical facilities. The cost was nominal during the

⁵⁹Benton Courier, Centennial Number, March 25, 1936.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

years 1914 to 1920. The doctor calls were usually free to the employees. The company bore the major expense of building and maintaining the hospital. In return the labor for the mines was kept in good health and the families enjoyed the security of medical aid when needed.

Recreation. To meet the recreational and social needs of the community the company provided various activities. In 1918 a theatre was built which would seat 1,000 people. A 1920 news item stated:

Remember folks, this is your theatre. It is operated by the company for you, and we wish to treat it as you would your own property and observe the rules laid down by the Amusement Committee, which is composed of twenty members from among you.⁶²

As early as 1907 two tennis courts were built. Baseball was a favorite among the men. Teams were composed of workers in the mines, railroad shop, and the Norton Company. The major company team was called the Bauxite All Stars. These players engaged teams from Little Rock, Bryant, Hot Springs, and Benton.

The Mother's League was a social and service organization, and several units were organized in the town. The

⁶²Bauxite News, October, 1920.

members helped distressed families and provided social activities.

The company also provided funds for the support of a revolver club, a tennis club, and a boxing club. The boxing club grew into an organization which received state-wide acclaim. In the early twenties the fights were held on the stage of the theatre.⁶³ Picnics and dances were held in a variety of places and were well attended.

School facilities. The increase in population during the war led to an enlargement of existing school facilities. The Bauxite Public School, built by the company in 1911, was enlarged in 1920. Enrollment increased steadily in these years. In September of 1920 school opened with nearly six hundred pupils. Only thirty-one were in high school. The faculty emphasized the importance of a high school education. In 1918 the company erected four school rooms in Alabama town.⁶⁴

An important part of the school life in relation to the community was its athletic program. Citizens contributed, as did the company, toward the purchase of new equipment for the students. Football was a prominent sport.

⁶³Bauxite News, September, 1920.

⁶⁴Ibid.

Working conditions and wages. The Superintendent of the company in Bauxite from 1893 until his death in 1919, was J. R. Gibbons, a retired military officer. He was characterized as a "far-visioned" founder by the editor of the Benton Courier in an article published in 1936.⁶⁵ His death brought a new superintendent, John T. Fuller. Fuller took his place of leadership seriously as the industry and town continued to expand.

Some felt working conditions and wages could be improved. In 1915 a strike occurred at the Bauxite works. Workers were brought in from Alabama to replace striking laborers and several skirmishes developed. The company was cautious in those days, but prepared to squelch the strike at any price. Arms were kept nearby to ward off acts of violence toward any company employees. The union was not a nationally strong one and unorganized. A meeting was called and most of the miners attended, as did most of the company management. The meeting resulted in the end of the strike and the men soon returned to their jobs without their complaints being met.⁶⁶ The strike was instituted in hopes of receiving an increase in wages. Wages, however, were in line

⁶⁵Benton Courier, Centennial Number, March 25, 1936.

⁶⁶Interview with L. J. Pettus. Permission to quote secured.

with other industries in the surrounding area and the employees were receiving housing at a minimum cost. In 1918 the laborer earned twenty-two and a half cents an hour.⁶⁷ In 1914 a fourteen year old boy earned \$1.50 for a ten hour day. Contractors in the logging business used young boys more than the company. "Boys were used to carry water, to shovel, and to do other less demanding jobs around the works."⁶⁸

The bauxite industry employed approximately five hundred people in 1906, which was equal to the number employed by the other combined industries in the county. Wages were equal to those other industries and the number of employees in the mining industry increased steadily. From the beginning the bauxite ore was destined to have a high place in the economy of the area.

⁶⁷Interview with H. R. Henthorne. Permission to quote secured.

⁶⁸Interview with Charles Ragan. Permission to quote secured.

CHAPTER IV

THREE DECADES OF GROWTH: 1920-1950

From 1920 until 1940 the industry was built into an industry of national importance. The end of World War I brought new and increased interest in peacetime uses for aluminum. Virtually every government department had been a wartime purchaser of aluminum products ranging from time fuses for shrapnel to vital parts in motor construction. "Many of the manufacturers who made these products had gained their first experience in working with the metal and its alloys."⁶⁹ The demand for bauxite increased because most of these manufacturers kept using aluminum for peacetime products.

I. "THE ROARING TWENTIES"

The depression of 1920 and 1921 resulted in economic travail for the town. Arkansas mining operations slowed considerably in this period and employment decreased. The depression, though severe, was brief. Conditions in the industry improved during 1922 and the employment figure increased to approximately twelve hundred in the town.

⁶⁹Carr, op. cit., p. 165.

Prior to the depression, the company structured a system of financial assistance for employees known as the Aid and Benefit System. For each dollar contributed by its employees, a dollar was added by the company. On August 31, 1920 the fund had collected \$215 from employees and the company had donated \$215. Disbursements of \$189 were made from the fund. Funds were collected voluntarily from employees.⁷⁰ The project lasted for many years and was a relief to the needy of the community during the depression of the 1930's. Another indication that the community was encouraged to save a portion of their earnings was an add placed in the company news media which read:

590 Have money on deposit in our bank. As there are approximately 1,200 wage-earners in Bauxite, you will readily see that 50 per cent of them are savers . . . Remember, we are open each Thursday (payday) from 5 p. m. until 7 p. m.⁷¹

An investigation into the records of the churches during this period reveals that a large number of the employees attended regularly and gifts to the various churches were substantial. In 1922 the First Baptist Church officially constituted a full-time church and their offerings

⁷⁰Bauxite News, September, 1920.

⁷¹Bauxite News, August, 1920.

were substantial enough to begin remodeling an old building and adding new Sunday School rooms. The Methodist Church was the recipient of substantial financial gifts.

A period of transition and adjustment began in 1924. Imports from foreign sources increased.

Large deposits of high-quality, easily-mined ore, were developed in Surinam and in British Guiana between 1914 and 1925, and imports from these countries grew faster than did Arkansas production . . . The higher grade foreign ore could be mined, shipped, and processed at a total cost which compared favorably with that of mining Arkansas bauxite and shipping it to other states for final processing.⁷²

The result of this shift to imported bauxite caused the company to cut back employment in the Arkansas mines. Employment within the town dropped to near four hundred. Mining operations stabilized from 1925 to 1939, when another world war called for additional bauxite-aluminum. The town experienced a period of economic tranquility. The residents who remained had been in the employ of the company for several years. The company continued its interest in providing adequate community facilities and little turbulence was evidenced.

A major reason why the town continued to develop systematically was the leadership of the new superintendent,

⁷²Cheadle, op. cit., p. 22.

L. R. Branting, who came to Bauxite in 1924. An item in an area newspaper said of Branting:

During Mr. Branting's able superintendency, there have been boom years and bad years but the morale of the town has remained admirable and the civic pride of it something to be reckoned with. Mr. Branting's recognized engineering ability has systematized mining operations to a very great degree and his kindly understanding of local problems has eased the tedium of the past difficult years.⁷³

An examination of the school system and the town's recreational and social program gave evidence of community development. The enrollments of the school system shifted in the early 1920's, but stabilized around 1925. In 1924 the school system was elevated to a Class A rating by the State Board of Education. The high school graduated its first class in 1922. The company and the residents gave generously to the athletic program of the high school and the teams compiled creditable records against larger schools. A 1920 football roster listed the following boys who comprised a winning team for the Bauxite High School:

McGill (Capt.), Fullback, Brant, Right Half Back, Ed Cole, Left Half Back, George Cole, Jr., Quarter Back, Brazil, Center, Cramer, Right Guard, Price Right Tackle, Brotherton, Right End, Smith, Left Guard, Rogers, Left Tackle, Rucker, Left End.⁷⁴

⁷³Benton Courier, Centennial Number, March 25, 1936.

⁷⁴Bauxite News, December, 1920. Astonishingly, some of these players listed, ranked among some of Arkansas' greatest athletes: notably, George and Ed Cole. George Cole is assistant athletic director at the University of Arkansas.

A recreational and social program was strengthened in 1926 with the construction of the Community Center.⁷⁵

The Community House, built by the Republic Mining and Manufacturing Company and furnished by the company to the community without cost, has a smoking room, library, Girl Scout room, Boys Club room, lodge hall, large auditorium (standard basket ball court), kitchen, etc. This building is the center of community activities. In connection with it are two tennis courts and a nine hole golf course.⁷⁶

The Community was not completely free to employees, as the company withheld monthly, twenty-five cents from the pay of the workers. These Community Center dues remained a company policy for several years.

The building of a lake suitable for swimming and boating indicated the increased effort on the part of the company to provide adequate recreational facilities. Use of these facilities was restricted to residents of the town. Company and volunteer labor was used to beautify the grounds and to construct picnic tables. Flowers were planted and electric lighting installed. Use of the recreational facilities became an integral part of the town's life.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Cf. Appendix E.

⁷⁶"Bauxite", op. cit., p. 13.

⁷⁷Cheadle, op. cit., p. 23. The lake and the golf course has been closed for several years. The golf course was built in 1926 and featured nine holes with sand greens. Caddy fees were fifteen cents a round. The Bauxite High School was built on the site in 1936.

II. "THE UNCERTAIN THIRTIES"

The effects of the Great Depression were evident in the aluminum industry. The unique situation of living in a company-owned town during such a period made these residents especially vulnerable to changing circumstances. Life in the town was significantly altered.

Many of the employees were without work and on the relief rolls, while others were retained to work on reduced hourly shifts. These workers earned twenty cents an hour and worked two days a week during 1932 to 1934. Some workers earned as little as seventy-five cents a day and worked only two days a week.

The company assisted the residents of the town in many ways. A company farm produced vegetables which were given to employees. An employee remembered the huge turnip patch the company provided; it covered four acres and the turnips were free.⁷⁸ Rent for houses was greatly reduced and in some cases discontinued until the employee was able to increase his earnings. Houses which rented for nine dollars a month rented for three dollars or less. As economic conditions improved, the company raised the rents to a normal

⁷⁸Interview with R. M. Frey. Permission to quote secured.

range, which never equalled the rent in neighboring towns. Water was furnished at no cost. In specific cases no charge was made for electrical service.

The company provided an adequate hospital and hospitalization plan for the residents, spending \$48,500 on this service between 1930 and 1940. The hospitalization plan required each employee to contribute a small amount each month. This payment provided for certain coverages. The services included doctor's care, bed, meals, and medicine for one dollar a day. Non-members of the plan could use the hospital for two dollars a day.⁷⁹

The company spent \$35,958 on community recreation during the 1930's. This expense was necessitated because of the shortage of working hours in the Great Depression years, and later because of the influx of new employees.

The schools were affected during the depression years by a shortage of food for the lunch program. The company assisted in the feeding of the school children, as did some of the citizens. Food was prepared by parents and taken to the Community Center. This was the only hot meal during the day for many of these children.

⁷⁹"The Bauxite Community Hospital," Arkansas Methodist, July 19, 1941.

The enrollment of the Bauxite School District in 1933 was 609, as compared to 600 in 1931 and 1932. This included classes held in the communities of Shaw, Mt. Olive, and Tull.⁸⁰

One factor that caused the aluminum industry to fare better than most metal industries during the depression years was the intense effort by the company to broaden the market for aluminum products.

Those were the days of the Forty Pound Club in which anyone in Alcoa, from the president to janitor, could become a member if he could sell forty pounds of aluminum.⁸¹

Bauxite mining was drastically curtailed in the early 1930's. During the years of 1932 and 1933, and the first five months of 1934, the Norton mill was closed completely. Their employees went back to farms and other part-time work until production resumed. Some of the Norton Company employees remained in their company houses for little or no rent. The Norton Company and Alcoa were anxious to retain as much of their working force as possible. The company began a large stockpiling operation with its ore. This stockpile, which the company produced to keep its skilled force together, proved to be an invaluable source of ready-ore during the

⁸⁰ Annual Report of the Saline County Supervisor of Schools, June, 1934, n. p.

⁸¹ Cheadle, op. cit., p. 23.

early days of World War II.

The Crouch Mining Company and the American Cyanamid Company were two new companies that made their appearance during the Great Depression. The ore mined by these companies was used in making abrasives and activated bauxite. Many former employees of the company found brief employment with one of these companies. Neither of these companies were successful.

The industry made a remarkable recovery from the Great Depression. In 1937 domestic production of aluminum was twenty-eight percent higher than in the previous peak year of 1930. The town became more visibly active during this period as work hours increased and new men were added to the payroll.

One visible appearance in the continued development of the town was the construction of a new school building. The building was finished in January, 1937. The Grammar School occupied the lower floor and the High School occupied the second floor. The structure cost approximately \$65,000 and was made possible by a PWA loan and

the vision and tenacity of one man, C. L. Rucker, chairman of the Bauxite school board at this time, supported by many loyal citizens who might have faltered except for Rucker's faith.⁸²

⁸²Benton Courier, Centennial Number, March 25, 1936.

The interest of the citizens in the new school is seen in the example of a community project in the summer of 1936. The citizens provided money for the purchase of a new Baldwin Grand piano for the new auditorium.

III. THE EMERGENCE OF WAR ECONOMY

In 1937 production of aluminum increased and affected the economy of the town. "Alcoa joined in with a \$26,000,000 expansion program in 1937, followed quickly by another program in 1939 which cost some \$30,000,000.⁸³ Stimulated by anticipated needs for national defense requirements, production of Arkansas bauxite exceeded all previous records. Employment in the mines rose rapidly. The economy and population of the community accelerated. In the midst of the company's activity to keep up with world demands, the Arkansas mines could not produce enough ore.

The company took action in 1939 to insure the future of aluminum. With no competition from mining operations in the United States imports from their South American mines were encouraged. The company revolutionized the industry by an increased research program in the use of lower-grade ore.

⁸³Cheadle, op. cit., p. 24.

Other companies began mining operations in Arkansas at the sign of approaching world war: the Bauxite Mining Company, Dulin Bauxite Company, J. C. Hobbble, and the Reynolds Ore Company.

The demand for aluminum appeared limitless. Before the outbreak of war, the company began a \$250,000,000 expansion. Effective planning during the Great Depression enabled the company to meet the needs of national defense.

IV. EFFECTS OF WORLD WAR II: 1940-50

World War II intensified the industrialization of Saline County. The impact of bauxite production had far-reaching effects upon the economy of the region. Bauxite production increased as a result of the development of a research project which is summed up in the following paragraph:

The most important technological development of the war for the Arkansas aluminum industry was the Alcoa Combination Process. Twenty years of research were required to perfect this development, which permits the use of bauxite containing a much higher percentage of silica than had ever been usable before. By bringing low-grade bauxite into the realm of valuable resources, this Alcoa process multiplied the extent of Arkansas' bauxite resources and has kept this state in the aluminum business.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 25.

This discovery meant that bauxite pits abandoned since 1930 after all the high-grade ore had been removed could be opened again for the remaining low-grade ore. The discovery was not only an advantage to the residents of the town and county, but it meant a certain amount of security to the government, as seen in this statement:

German submarines lay along the ocean routes of bauxite shipments from South America to American ports. It was feared in high government places that the foreign supply might be cut off entirely and that Arkansas might be called on to supply both countries.⁸⁵

Improved technology. The company and governmental officials moved swiftly to provide the necessary planning for expansion of Arkansas production. Leaders of the aluminum and abrasive companies arrived in Bauxite for conferences with local managers in planning for immediate expansion. Gasoline generators were used to generate electricity for the floodlights that were installed to operate seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. New mining and milling equipment were secured, and new trucks were acquired for transporting ore. Treedozers and bulldozers were used to build new roads and to level stripping piles; scrapers that could pick up and haul away fifteen cubic yards in one scoop

⁸⁵John W. Lewellen, "Industry and the Community" (Benton, Arkansas: 1956), p. 4.

helped to make the large production possible. The estimated value of equipment used was eight million dollars. Knowledge that the industry was facing its greatest challenge was voiced by a member of management in his statement, "The roar of these machines through the night and the blasting that shook our houses awakened the quiet village of Bauxite in no uncertain way to the fact that a war was on."⁸⁶

Rise in employment. Employment increased from 450 to 2,400 in less than two years and the Norton Company increased from 35 to 145 employees.

Local railroads were taxed to capacity in transporting the huge demand of ore. Government officials and company management soon began discussion of plans to build a refining and reduction plant near Arkansas bauxite. These plans culminated in a contract between the United States Defense Plants Corporation and the Aluminum Company of America to build and operate the largest alumina plant in the world, adjacent to the mines. "The first trees for clearing the site were pushed down on October 4, 1941 and on July 22, 1942, the plant went into operation."⁸⁷

⁸⁶Gibbons, op. cit., p. 48.

⁸⁷Lewellen, "Industry and the Community," op. cit., p. 5.

The new plant, named Hurricane Creek Alumina Plant, employed between 4,000 and 5,000 throughout the war years. The approximate employment figure of the mining and plant operations in and around the town grew to over 7,000 before the war was over.

Pine Haven Housing Project. Inadequate housing was a problem. Though the new Hurricane Creek plant was operated by the company, the company policy did not provide housing for its employees. The company provided land adjacent to the existing town and the government, under the direction of the Public Housing Authority, constructed living quarters for the added employees. The housing development was named Pine Haven. This project increased the population of the Bauxite area to over 6,000; some estimating the figure to have been as high as 10,000.⁸⁸ The project consisted of buildings similar to an Army barracks. The barracks were divided into four apartments. Approximately 3,700 of these family units were built in Pine Haven, plus a large number of staff houses for management in the new plant.

The housing project included a shopping center, bank, schools, and medical facilities. The schools were operated

⁸⁸Arkansas Gazette, June 25, 1967.

by the Bauxite School District. The increased population affected the total social and economic structure.

The population of the housing project was in a constant state of change, while population of the town remained stable. The clerk of the Methodist Church related an incident of having seventeen different people join the Methodist Church in a four month span and all lived in the same apartment at different times.⁸⁹

The school in Pine Haven was a spacious brick structure. Enrollment in the school was limited to children from the housing project. The residents of Pine Haven and Bauxite remained compartmented to a large extent.

The Pine Haven addition was never filled to capacity.

To nearly everyone's surprise, only 1,000 of the 3,700 units in the project were occupied at peak, although rents were quite low. Several explanations have been offered for the low rate of occupancy. The one most frequently suggested was that the local labor supply proved to be larger than estimated by the survey.⁹⁰

Many local farmers were able to learn new skills which gave them jobs in the new plant. These people already had homes and preferred to remain in them. Another reason offered for the low occupancy was that the Caribbean

⁸⁹Interview with Harris Hogue. Permission to quote secured.

⁹⁰Cheadle, op. cit., p. 48.

submarine menace to Alcoa shipments of foreign ore was solved and local mining operations would soon decrease; this reasoning, suggested the work in the area was temporary. Another reasonable explanation, and verified by former occupants of some of the residences in the community, was that there was considerable subdividing of existing housing in the immediate area. People rented rooms, garages, and started new trailer camps. Many workers were content to live in tents for the duration of their work.⁹¹ A problem the government had not anticipated when building so many family units was the fact that many of the workers came from rural areas and did not care to be crowded into a project.

Woodland Housing Project. Located south of the town and on company property, was another government housing project, Woodland. This community was built to house Negro workers for the new plant. The project was near another area housing Negro workers and owned by the company. The company housing for Negro workers was the settlement known in the 1920's as Mexico. The Mexicans were removed from this village on May 23, 1932. Company operations were at a near standstill when it was decided that the Mexicans must leave.

⁹¹Lewellen, "Industry and the Community, " op. cit., p. 4.

In a great exodus the weeping people of the village, with their household possessions, their livestock, and their pets, were loaded into trucks and set forth on the long trip to Laredo, Texas. There, an agent of our company remained with them for a while to assist in placing the men in suitable employment on farms and ranches, and in industries.⁹²

The 300 Mexicans who occupied this village in the 1920's were able to accumulate small bank savings and give their children an education while working for the company. They lived in small houses, considered adequate at the time.

With the outbreak of World War II an increase in Negro employees overcrowded the village of Africa. Mexico was reopened to make more houses available. In 1947 the residents of Mexico fielded a baseball team and the citizens of the town were called upon to furnish them with equipment and moral support.

The Woodland project never realized its potential. Housing was never more than ten percent occupied. The main reason offered was that the Negro family could rent a company house for four dollars a month while the government housing cost twenty-four dollars a month. Company housing was smaller and without inside plumbing, but the workers chose these accommodations because of low rent.

⁹² Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], October, 1945.

The government built a school for the elementary grades which was well attended until the closing of the Mexico camp and the project in 1953.⁹³

Adjacent towns. Adjacent towns felt the war economy. The propinquity of Bryant, Benton, and Little Rock made them major beneficiaries of the stimulated economy. Many Little Rock residents found work in the new plant and the mines during the war and did not move to the area. These employees chose to commute in car-pools. Bryant received indirect benefits. After the conflict, workers purchased government housing and moved them to Bryant.

Benton experienced increased demands upon its housing, schools, and the business community. "The ups and downs of Benton income from mining followed the trends of bauxite production in a way common to communities in mining areas."⁹⁴ Stores served new customers in crowded conditions. The housing problem was critical and the schools were overcrowded. New employees brought new income to the town. No exact figure can be made of the total volume of personal savings in the war years,

. . . but bank deposits do give some indication of the growth of the community's liquid assets. Savings

⁹³"History of Bauxite School District," op. cit.

⁹⁴Cheadle, op. cit., p. 45.

deposits in the Benton State Bank grew steadily from \$55,000 in December, 1939, to \$380,000 in December, 1945, representing almost a seven-fold increase.⁹⁵

The war economy enabled Benton and Bauxite to endure the brief economic slump at the end of the war.

V. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENTS

IN THE TOWN

World War II necessitated many adjustments in the social and economic life of the town.

The residents of the town were accustomed to a closed community. They were accustomed to buying their food and clothing at the company store, receiving treatment in the local hospital, and calling the company plumber when needed. These customs were continued during the war years. More people with increased demands necessitated some changes in these practices.

Unionization. The paternalism of the company was lessened after union activities were begun. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935, introduced into Congress by Robert F. Wagner, gave labor the right to organize, to bargain collectively, and to have more control over employment.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 49.

Union activity began in the early part of 1941. The Bauxite works employees joined the Aluminum Workers of America, C. I. O., in October, 1941. Wages before unionization were forty-five cents an hour for a laborer and fifty-five cents an hour for a foreman. After unionization wages increased immediately to fifty-five cents an hour for the laborer. Foreman salaries increased proportionately. Union negotiations helped to improve working conditions in the mines and plants as well as to increase wages. A retirement program was instituted by the company in 1949 after a ten-week strike. No pickets were used because the company agreed to close the plant until the issue was settled.

Unionization brought other changes. Previously, the company provided jobs for men who became too old to work in the mines. This practice is described in a recent article:

When a man became too old to work in the mines, he was given a sack and a stick with a nail in the end of it and was put on the street crew at full pay. The members of the street crew were supposed to pick up stray bits of paper around town but mostly they just sat under trees and slept. Nobody seemed to mind.⁹⁶

After the unions came, the street crew was discontinued. Better wages, with the continuation of the policy of low rent, brought about a higher standard of living. Reaction to unionization resulted, however, in a less flexible company policy.

⁹⁶News item in the Arkansas Little Rock Gazette, June 25, 1967.

Education. In 1940 the district's enrollment was 896. Pine Haven Elementary School was built in 1943 and Woodland School was built in 1943-44. In 1941 the company made a contribution of \$4,000 for new equipment for the Domestic Science Building.⁹⁷

The largest enrollment for Bauxite schools was 1,306 in 1944-45. Enrollment remained above 1,000 from that year until 1952.

With the curtailment of mining operations in 1945, many of the residents moved from Pine Haven. The elementary school remained, but some houses were sold. In 1948 the Bauxite School District purchased five buildings from the Public Housing Administration. These were moved to School Street where they were converted into apartments. A statement concerning these apartments appeared in the company news media:

For the first time in its history, Bauxite is able to provide its faculty members with attractive, strictly modern and very comfortable apartments in which to live. Not only are they close together so as to permit companionship and conferences, but in addition they are so close to the school itself that inclement weather and shortage of time to reach class-rooms are now no handicaps.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Lewellen, "Local Company Practices," op. cit.

⁹⁸News item in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], January, 1949. The apartments were occupied in September, 1949. They were rented cheap: two-bedrooms, nine dollars a month, three-bedrooms, twelve dollars a month, and one-bedroom, six dollars a month.

Two major building projects following the war were the construction of a shop and a gymnasium. The shop or Manual Training Building, was built in the summer of 1947. The gymnasium was started in 1948 and completed in February of 1949.

In 1949 the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades moved from the Bauxite High School to the newly purchased Pine Haven Elementary School. The first, second, and third grades continued to use the old Primary School until 1955. The change of the three grades to the Pine Haven school in 1949 brought complaints from several Bauxite parents. The parents felt their children were going to an "out-of town" school, though it was only a few blocks from the limits of the town. Their objections ceased because of the quality of teachers who were employed at the school.⁹⁹

Religious activities. Religious activities centered around the Methodist, Baptist, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, and Catholic churches. Of these the Methodist and Baptist were predominate. As early as 1943 noticeable sociological characteristics were evident in the congregations. The Methodist Church was referred to in colloquial

⁹⁹Interview with Mrs. Harris Hogue. Permission to quote secured.

language as the "foreman's church," and the Baptist Church was commonly called the "laboring man's church."¹⁰⁰ Residents recall that many laborers did not wish to attend church with foremen. This practice disappeared by 1945. At this time new foremen were appointed by the company and several of these were Baptists. Those who did not wish to attend church with foremen left the Baptist Church.¹⁰¹

The church buildings were kept in good repair. The company furnished housing for ministers. Indications of church use of company facilities is seen in the December, 1947 issue of the Pick and Shovel. Ministers wrote Christmas messages in the company news media.

On a fall Sunday morning in 1948 several residents of the town decided to count the number in attendance in all churches of the community. The population of the town, excluding adjacent housing projects, was 1,200; there were 800 people in church.¹⁰² A substantial number of these lived in the housing project of Pine Haven.

Recreation and Social Activities. As the population increased recreational facilities and social programs were

¹⁰⁰Interview with Harris Hogue. Permission to quote secured.

¹⁰¹Interview. Permission to use name not secured. The sociological pattern for such behavior is discussed in the work of Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor.

¹⁰²Interview with Harris Hogue. Permission to quote secured.

improved. The company policy toward the community recreation program was summed up by a member of management in a Management Workers Conference. He states concerning community recreation:

If such a program is entirely company supported there is a marked loss of interest by participants and a definite incentive is absent. The company believes in a liberal contribution policy for worthwhile, wholesome recreation, and considers such money contributed as a good investment.¹⁰³

Several community recreational programs were initiated during the war years. In 1947 the town boxing program was reactivated after an absence of more than six years. H. W. McDermott, a company foreman and promoter of amateur boxing in the town, was responsible for reviving the sport. Residents of the town praised the boxing program and contributed generously, in money and attendance, toward its success. McDermott was assisted in his program by other company employees: Charlie Bauer, Woody Bell, Herman Hogue, J. T. Patterson, and Charlie Ragan. Between forty and fifty participated on the boxing team in 1947. In August of 1947 a match between the North Little Rock Boys Club and Bauxite was held. In October the Bauxite team was matched against the McGehee Boys Club.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³Mac Trimble, "Community Problems," Manual for the Workers Conference Director (Pittsburgh: Aluminum Company of America, 1949), n. p. Session held April 27 and 28, 1948.

¹⁰⁴Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], August, 1947.

Softball and baseball were popular. The company built a diamond and grandstands in the 1920's and maintained them for many years. In 1946 six teams were entered in the Alcoa Softball League. The teams were composed of employees in various departments.

The Scouting program was widely accepted in the community. In 1947 the program received leadership under the direction of Harris Hogue, a company foreman, who conducted a Scout Master's Training Course. A cross-section of company employees received awards for completing the course and are indicative of the support which the Scouting program received. These men included Scouters Lindsey, Reed, Cross, Applegate, Daggett, Deer, Stanley, Hoff, Hopper, and Bell.¹⁰⁵ Another indication of the interest the community had in its Scouting program can be seen in the list of names of residents attending the annual Ouachita Area Council, Boy Scouts of America banquet at Henderson State Teachers College in February of 1949.¹⁰⁶

Other recreational opportunities available for residents were fishing and swimming in company lakes, tennis

¹⁰⁵Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], May, 1947.

¹⁰⁶Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], February, 1949. Attending the banquet were: Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Hopper, Mr. and Mrs. John Reed, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Lewellen, and Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Branting.

courts (which were resurfaced by the company in 1947), and the various activities at the Community Center. Receiving much credit for filling the spare hours of the community was the well-equipped library in the Center.

War mobilization. Emphasis towards purchasing war bonds would not be considered important to a communities social and economic structure unless the entire community was involved. The employees of the company demonstrated their social and economic attitudes as they voluntarily reached the company's quota set for war bond drives. The company exceeded its quota of \$85,000 in the Fifth War Loan Drive.

Nearly ninety-five percent of all employees participated and their purchases through wage deductions to the end of July totaled fifteen percent of the entire payroll. . . Let's show our fighting men that Bauxite is back of them not just ninety-five percent, but one hundred percent.¹⁰⁷

A large number of young men served in the military forces during World War II. The local news media gave ample coverage to former employees who had joined the military service.

Decline in mining operations. After 1943 cut-backs in aluminum production were evident. The annual rate of

¹⁰⁷Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], July, 1944.

production had risen to 1,100,000 tons. In 1944 the production was less than that of 1943. The War Production Board ordered substantial cut-backs for all her plants, including Hurricane Creek. The decline was anticipated as early as August, 1944 when an article in the Pick and Shovel stated the WPB rulings concerning production of aluminum.

The ruling of July 15th includes provision for the substitution of aluminum for other metals and critical materials not so readily available. . . . The W. P. B. emphasized that although the new order preserves restrictions that are essential to protect war production, anyone who wants to use aluminum for some purpose not covered by the order, or who wants to increase his use over the allowed limit, may ask for permission under regular procedures. . . . All of these liberalized rulings are intended to lay the ground work for eventual conversion of our industrial production to peacetime output. . . . The War Production Board will retain control over aluminum to make sure that the manpower requirements of war production are fully met and that labor is not diverted too soon to production of peacetime goods. No immediate large scale resumption of civilian production is expected.¹⁰⁸

In another article dated February, 1945, the editor of the company news media commented on a failure of the employees to meet the company's quota for purchasing war bonds. Reasons for this failure are reflected in the following statement:

The period following the last days of 1944 and extending to the present date has been one of uncertainties.

¹⁰⁸Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], August, 1944.

A considerable number of men have been shifted, and naturally, there have been unusual expenses over the holidays. The cost of living has gone up little be little.¹⁰⁹

Another evidence of a production decline was the closing of Mill No. 2 at the Bauxite works. This mill had operated continuously for two years. Some of the men were shifted to jobs in Mill No. 1 and others found employment elsewhere. Articles which sought to prepare the readers for the peacetime change-over appeared regularly in the company news media. The Pick and Shovel advised that the change-over would not be easy and that many workers would be forced to leave. One article stated that "patience and cooperation would enable us to get back to orderly, normal peacetime procedure in the shortest possible time and with the least uncertainty and disruption."¹¹⁰

Company housing and other facilities. Following the decline in mining and the change-over from war production to peacetime production the local management made an appraisal of company housing. The rumor was circulated before World War II that the company was anticipating a change in policy concerning discontinuing the maintenance of the town. In

¹⁰⁹ Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], February, 1945.

¹¹⁰ Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], August, 1945.

1948 company housing was appraised as follows:

. . . 296 rental units in undefined limits of Bauxite; This does not include the residents of colored tenants sic in Mexico camp nor several houses located on farm land around Bauxite which the company rents. 223 or 75% are rented by actively employed workers: 18 or 6% are rented by employees who are laid off or on a retired status: 22 or 8% are occupied by tenants now employed in some community industry such as schools, churches, stores, beauty shop, and barber shop: 30 or 10% are rented by tenants having no connection at all with the company. Some of these formerly worked for us, were laid off and were eventually dropped according to rules regulating seniority, others occupied by widows of past employees: 3 or 1% of the houses are vacant.¹¹¹

The hospital was not functioning fully in 1948. The company stated it would be happy to lease the hospital to any reputable doctor or group of doctors. The company's offer was not accepted and the hospital was closed.

In Trimble's report information regarding more stores in the town was expressed. The company's position was that business potential did not justify more stores. The company store's inventory reflected a variety of items. The store was leased for \$100 a month plus one cent for each gallon of gasoline sold. The company store featured a payroll deduction system for the convenience of employees. In the event of financial crisis, installment payments were allowed by the store.

¹¹¹Trimble, "Community Problems," op. cit.

¹¹²Interview with Erven G. Hendrix, Jr. Permission to quote secured.

CHAPTER V

YEARS OF DECLINE: 1951-1967

The dissolving of the community was in no way related to a decline in the bauxite and aluminum industry in Arkansas. In 1952 the company constructed a \$54,000,000 processing plant in the town-area. This plant employed approximately 1,000. Company leaders decided another company town was not needed. The residents of the town realized from this decision that the company was making serious plans toward eliminating the expense of providing a town for its employees.

I. HOUSING

Government housing projects. The government closed the Hurricane Creek plant two months after VJ Day. When a new contract was signed, the plant was reopened in April, 1946. In the interim many people moved from Pine Haven. Staff houses located in the project were sold in 1946 and 1947. Disposal of the dwellings was carried on with a minimum of difficulty. After 1957 the remaining housing in the project consisted of four faculty apartments belonging to the Bauxite School District. In 1950 Bauxite township, which included Pine Haven, had a population of 2,495; the

unincorporated town population was 2,459.¹¹³ City mail delivery was begun in Pine Haven during World War II and continued until 1965.¹¹⁴ The barracks were sold to individuals.

A hastily conceived outfit called Quick-Way Homes bought all the barracks and moved in with chain saws. The prospective customer would pick out the section of barracks that he wanted to call home, and the Quick-Way people would whack it off for him on the spot and move it to his lot.¹¹⁵

The last of these quarters were moved in 1957.

The Negro housing project, Woodland, was closed during this period. Most of these families who stayed in the employe of the company moved into housing in Mexico camp. Mention of the disposition of Mexico camp is made in an article in the company news media in 1953:

The one hundred house village of Mexico camp has now become one of seventeen because of our Company's decision to put the houses up for sale and removal. . . . Several of these were moved to our neighboring city of Benton.¹¹⁶

¹¹³United States Bureau of the Census, Seventeenth Census of the United States: 1950. Number of Inhabitants, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 4-17.

¹¹⁴Interview with W. S. Huggins. Permission to quote secured.

¹¹⁵News item in the Arkansas [Little Rock] Gazette, June 25, 1967.

¹¹⁶Editorial in the Pick and Shovel [Bauxite], July, 1953.

Company housing. The removal of company houses was slower than the removal of the government buildings. The company continued its maintenance service, even though the town declined, until around 1960. The company encouraged the employees to own their own homes. Each edition of the Pick and Shovel carried pictures of homes purchased or built by employees, along with articles expressing the advantages of a family living in its own home. Articles and pictures of this nature were especially heavy in the issues from 1950 to 1958, the year the publication ceased to operate.

Several prominent buildings were razed in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The Bauxite Club House, built in 1903 and enlarged in 1920 and a former quarters for company staff and teachers in the Bauxite schools, was razed in May, 1955. The theatre, constructed in 1918, used as a store in the mid-thirties, and remodeled for movie use in the late thirties, stopped showing films in 1957. It was razed in 1966. The hospital, which served the community for many years, was in disuse in the late 1940's and served as a doctor's office until it was moved in 1964.

Company houses were bought and moved from the main section of the town as they became vacant, beginning in the mid-fifties. The change was slow, but progressive. The company store was out of business in 1960. The building was razed three years later.

In 1960 the population of Bauxite township was 885, this included the immediate neighborhood of West Bauxite. A 1962 map of the Bauxite Fire Ward showed forty-nine dwellings in the town. A revision of the map in 1967 revealed twenty-nine houses.¹¹⁷

Bauxite School District. Enrollment declined in 1953 from above 1,000 to 750. Enrollment remained near 600 from 1955 to 1967. In 1949 the Bauxite School District was consolidated with the Siddell, Tull, Shaw, and Mt. Olive Districts. Since the mid-fifties, students in the outlying area have been bussed into the Bauxite schools. In 1950, under the leadership of Superintendent Marvin Terrill, the Bauxite School District was admitted to membership in the North Central Association, which accredits secondary schools. With the death of Terrill in 1961, O. C. Hopper became the new Superintendent of schools.

The Woodland school was operated by the Bauxite School District until the closing of Mexico camp in 1954, at which time the remaining Negro children attended a Negro school in Benton.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Cf. Appendixes C and D.

¹¹⁸Prior to this date the Bauxite School District paid the expenses for Negro youth above the sixth grade to attend Horace Mann School in Little Rock. Letters of notification to teachers in the Negro elementary school concerning the closing of that school are in appendixes F and G.

In the years of numerical decline some significant additions were made to the schools. The Commercial Building, part of the shopping center in Pine Haven, was obtained from the Public Housing Administration through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, for school purposes at no cost to the district in May, 1954. "This was converted into a cafeteria, auditorium, band room, and class rooms. Construction began June, 1954 and was completed in January, 1955 at a cost of \$100,000."¹¹⁹ In February, 1955 a new cafeteria was opened in the Pine Haven Elementary School. Four hundred and ninety-five children were fed on the opening day. Several new classrooms were added to Pine Haven and all elementary students were moved to that school from the old Primary School in Bauxite.

The high school plant was improved in 1956 with the addition of a large, modern cafeteria and new band room.

Churches. The remaining churches after 1960 were the Methodist and Baptist. Membership of these churches reflect the decline of population. The First Baptist Church had an enrollment of 559 in the Sunday School in 1950. In 1955 the Baptist Sunday School enrollment was 469, and

¹¹⁹"History of Bauxite School District," op. cit.

contributions for that year were close to \$18,000. In 1958 the Baptist Sunday School enrollment was 322 and in 1965 it was seventy-eight. Contributions in 1965 totaled near \$11,000. In 1959 around 200 members left the membership of the First Baptist Church to form a new church in Benton. The remaining families carried on an active church program until 1967.¹²⁰

The First Methodist Church had an enrollment of 458 in its Sunday School in 1953. In 1955 it declined to 170 and by 1961 to 144. The 1965 Sunday School enrollment was eighty-four. In 1967 there were 124 members of the Methodist Church and fifty-five enrolled in Sunday School.¹²¹ Despite the decline of the community both churches have continued operation on a full-time basis. Plans call for both churches to continue until July, 1969, the date the company has set for the official closing of the town.

II. REMAINING RESIDENTS

The twenty-seven families of the town received notification, June 19, 1967, from J. W. Wells, manager of Alcoa's Arkansas operations, which stated that as of July 1, 1969

¹²⁰Records of the First Baptist Church, Bauxite, Arkansas.

¹²¹Records of the First Methodist Church, Bauxite, Arkansas.

Bauxite would cease to exist.¹²² The families were not surprised to receive official notification of the town's demise, as the company had previously promised to notify them two years in advance. The letter from the management stated:

Although it doesn't change the situation, we all know the passing of Bauxite was inevitable and only a matter of time. It is always a little sad to see the passing of a community or a venerable old home which has justly occupied a position of stature in the regard of many people. Again, we regret very much that such a time has come.¹²³

¹²²Cf. Appendix H. The town never legally incorporated. Law enforcement was the work of a Constable and later a County Deputy Sheriff. The company paid the salaries of these men.

¹²³Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The discovery of bauxite in Saline County and the subsequent development of the aluminum industry presented the initial need for a company-owned town near mining operations. For sixty-four years the forces which shaped the town were determined by the development of the industry. From its inception, the town was operated under the paternal guidance of the company. The philosophy of the company-owned town required company housing, company recreational programs, and a company-provided educational system. The company considered this philosophy no longer economically or socially feasible.

A major factor which led to the decision to terminate the town was unionization. Unionization was accomplished as the result of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, which gave labor the right to organize, bargain collectively through representatives, and to have more control over the status of employees. The organization of the local union was effected in 1941 with the increase of new employees brought into the aluminum industry because of the Second World War.

Unionization resulted in higher wages and improved working conditions and these moves increased the cost of

aluminum production. This cost was off-set by the company with the dissolving of the town. Other factors involved with the termination of the town were the cost of maintenance and better transportation.

This investigation revealed that the emergence of World War II and the demand for aluminum prolonged the town's existence. The company did not terminate the town, but rent for housing was increased and other restraints were placed upon the labor force. These actions were counter-measures against encroaching unionism.

Periods of historical significance which influenced life in the town were the early years, 1903-1914, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, and industrial expansion after 1945, and the Korean War. During these periods the citizens were especially vulnerable to whatever force was shaping the industry. The most influential and lasting of these periods were the war years. Following the Korean War the decision to terminate the town was activated by the company and by 1957 most company houses had been moved.

The social structures of the town were completely dependent upon the economic policies and influences of the company. Social stratification was accomplished and maintained by the paternalistic nature of the company toward employees. Segregation was apparent in housing and education.

Basically the company provided two types of housing: those built for the laboring force and those built primarily for management. One street of houses occupied by management was commonly referred to as "silk-stocking row." The management houses were the last to be moved. The company perpetuated racial segregation by constructing a community named Mexico, that housed Mexican laborers. In the early 1930's the Mexicans were trucked back to the Texas border. The Negro village, Africa, was terminated along with Mexico, in 1953.

A traditional effort to maintain separation of Negro and white students was to bus Negro students above the sixth grade to a Little Rock School. This expense was met by the Bauxite School District. Educational opportunities for the employees children were excellent throughout the history of the town.

The termination of the town in no way reflects the decline of the industry. More ore is being presently mined than at any other time in the company's history. In addition to local ore, South American high-grade ore is being shipped to local plants to be blended with local ore. World-wide expansion of the industry has served to stabilize the economy of the area since World War II. Employment figures have been stable since 1955. In 1967 there were approximately 2,464

aluminum workers in Saline County, and the hourly laboring wage was \$2.67.

The foundations of company policy which necessitated the town have become economically and socially obsolete. With this change of policy the town has become a casualty of modern industrial success.

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B. INTERVIEWS

- Bass, C. L. Company employee for thirty-three years.
Recording Secretary for local union of the United Steel
Workers for the past fifteen years.
- Bethel, James C. Company physician.
- Brazil, John. Company employee for thirty-four years.
- Gould, Leonard A. Company employee for forty-two years.
- Hendrix, Erven G. Grocer in Bauxite for thirty-four years.
- Henthorne, Mrs. H. R. Church clerk for the First Baptist
Church.
- Henthorne, H. R. Company employee for thirty-four years.
- Hogue, Harris. Company employee for thirty-two years and
a former clerk for the First Methodist Church of Bauxite.
- Hopper, O. C. Superintendent of the Bauxite School District.
- Huggins, W. S. U. S. Postmaster in Bauxite for twenty-five
years.
- Lindsey, Earl. Company employee for thirty years.

- McBee, W. H. Company employee for forty years. Retired.
- Perkins, Jack. Company employee for thirty years and a union vice-president.
- Perdue, Orea. Company employee for thirty-five years. Active in union interests. Deceased since interview.
- Pettus, L. J. Former company employee. Retired. Resident of the area since 1896.
- Ragan, Charles. Company employee for twenty-five years.
- Reed, John O. Company employee for thirty-two years.
- Richards, Frank W. Employed by Reynolds Metals Company.
- Ricketts, Ed. Barber in Bauxite for thirty-five years.
- Schell, R. L. Company employee for twenty-five years. Chief engineer of Bauxite works.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

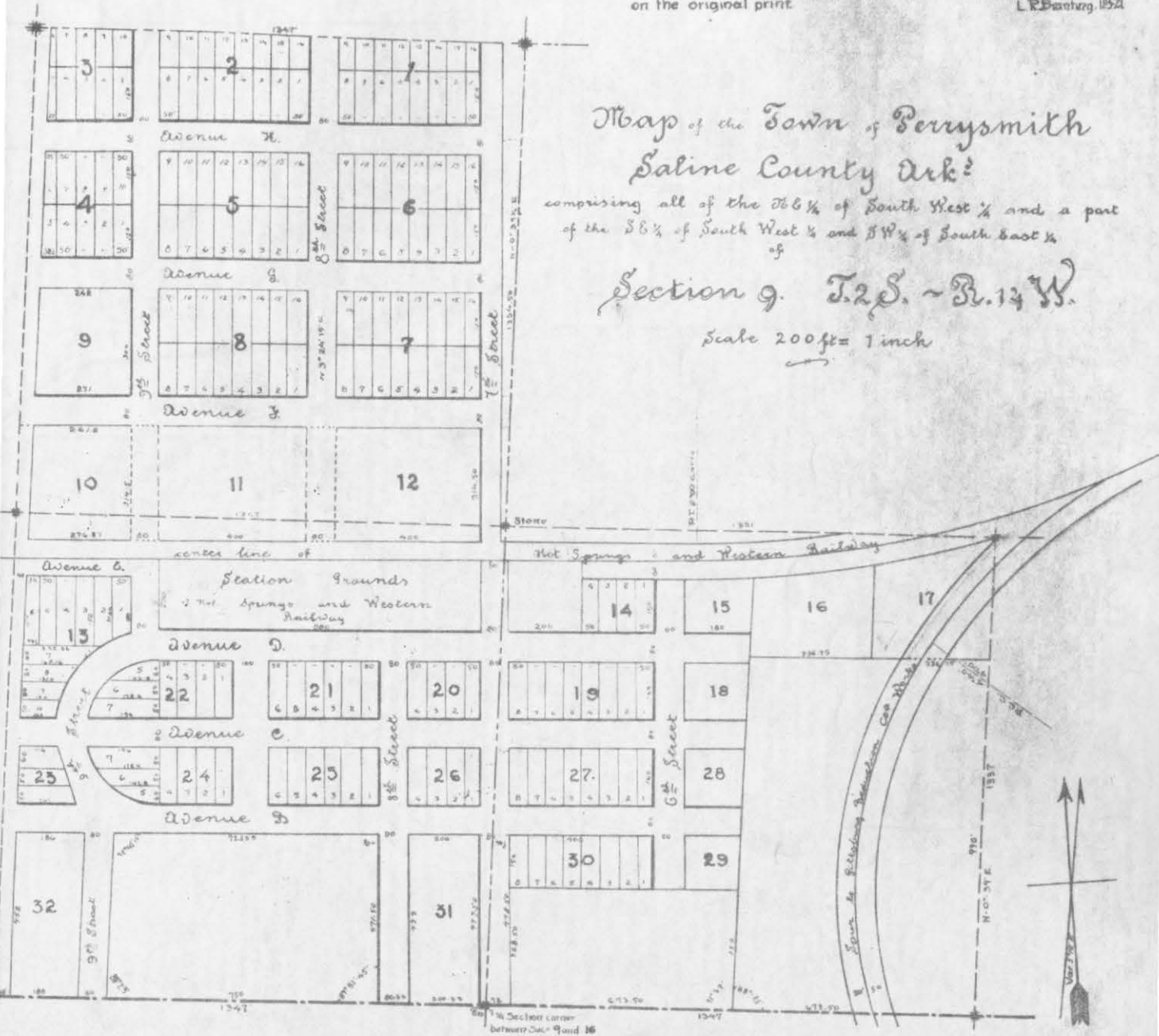
Copy of plat of town of Ferrysmith, Ark. traced from print of plat based on survey made by Joseph E. Smith prior to 1902. There are several errors either in the original survey or in the platting thereof which are shown on this map as they appeared on the original print. L.R. Banting, 1852

Map of the Town of Ferrysmith
Saline County Ark.

comprising all of the $SE\frac{1}{4}$ of South West $\frac{1}{4}$ and a part of the $SE\frac{1}{4}$ of South West $\frac{1}{4}$ and $SW\frac{1}{4}$ of South East $\frac{1}{4}$ of

Section 9. T.2S. ~ R.14W.

Scale 200 ft = 1 inch



APPENDIX B



NORTHERN

BAUXITE A
NORTHERN

87

Tailings pond

Hurricane

11

Pine Haven

Tanks

Tanks

Tank

Chimney

Tanks

10

Lignite

Pine Haven

PACIFIC

Bauxite

MINES

X
T
E

B
A
U

OPEN

Woodland

Blue

23

Dotty Lake

Little

INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. - 1956

M R-2173

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
5000 yard grid based on U. S. zone system, C
10000 foot grid based on Arkansas (South)
rectangular coordinate system.

28

27



ALUMINUM COMPANY OF AMERICA
RAW MATERIALS DIV.
 ENGINEERING DEPT. BAUXITE WORKS

BAUXITE FIRE WARD MAP 88

In Charge	RLS	Drawn By	R.D.	Traced By
Scale	1" = 400'	Date	9-26-62	Checked By
C-I555-BM		Folio No.	12-1	Drawer No.

2-SW-9

1-SW-9

2-SE-9

1-SE-9

2-SW-10

CHURCH GRADE SCHOOL

PIKE ST
F.H. 215

CRISP

F.H. 30
F.H. 32
F.H. 33
F.H. 34
OIL TANK
PLANT NO. 2

3-SW-9

4-SW-9

3-SE-9

4-SE-9

3-SW-10

F.H. 6

F.H. 35

NORTON COMPANY

2-NW-16

1-NE-16

2-NW-15

2-NE-16

WADE ROAD

MINES SHOP

4-NW-15

3-NW-16

4-NW-16

3-NE-16

4-NE-16

3-NW-15

16

APPENDIX D

89

ALUMINUM COMPANY OF AMERICA
 RAW MATERIALS DIV. BAUXITE WORKS
 ENGINEERING DEPT.

BAUXITE TOWNSITE AND FIRE WARD MAP IN
 SEC.'S 9, 10, 15, & 16. T-2S, R-14W.

REVISED 5-4-67

In Charge	R.L.S.	Drawn By	R.D.	Traced By
Scale	1" = 400'	Date	9-28-62	Checked By

C-1555-BM Folio No. 12-1
 Drawer No.

TO CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION AND
FORMAL OPENING OF ITS COMMUNITY BUILDING THE

American Bauxite Company
BAUXITE, ARKANSAS

WILL ENTERTAIN ITS EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS
WITH A BARBECUE AND PROGRAM ON

SATURDAY, JULY 3, 1926

AND EXTENDS TO YOU AN INVITATION TO BE PRESENT

May 26, 1953.

Prof. C. E. Knox,
Woodland School,
Bauxite, Arkansas.

Dear Prof. Knox:

You were recently notified that you had been reelected as teacher in the Woodland school for school year 1953-54. Since that time, however, developments have occurred in the Mexico Camp Area which makes it impossible for us to determine at the present time just what teaching personnel we will need for the coming year. As a result of this the school board at its last meeting rescinded its previous action, and asked me to advise you that as soon as we know our needs for next year you will be advised accordingly.

Very truly yours,

BAUXITE PUBLIC SCHOOLS,

MPT:ED

M. T. Terrell, Superintendent.

August 24, 1953.

Mrs. Nanette Kamack,
1020 Hickery St.,
North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Dear Mrs. Kamack:

I am enclosing your teachers certificate and other papers.

I regret that the Woodland School had to be closed which necessitated the loss of your services. Your work in the Bauxite School System was highly satisfactory and I hope that you will find no difficulty in securing employment elsewhere.

Very truly yours,

BAUXITE PUBLIC SCHOOLS,

MTT:ED

M. T. Terrell, Superintendent.

enc/

ALUMINUM COMPANY OF AMERICA

P. O. BOX 3000 BAUXITE ARKANSAS 7200

J. W. WELLS, Operations Manager



ALCOA

June 19, 1967

Rev. Gordon Bacus
215 Pine
Bauxite, Arkansas

Dear Rev. Bacus:

It has been generally recognized for several years that eventually the town of Bauxite would cease to exist. Movement already has progressed in that direction to the extent only 27 houses remain.

Alcoa is in the unenviable position today of spending roughly three times rent income on repair of the remaining houses. In addition, the houses are getting old, tired and run-down and would require sizeable capital expense to really make them attractive for occupancy.

Under this situation, with considerable regret we must give the two years notice guaranteed you several years ago. We hope you will be able to obtain other suitable housing so your present house can be vacated no later than 1 Jul 69. The house you now occupy will be sold for movement to some other location when vacated. If you are interested in purchase for such removal, you will be given first right of purchase, and you may ascertain sale price by contacting either Tome Garlington or Mrs. Campbell.

Although it doesn't change the situation, we all knew the passing of Bauxite was inevitable and only a matter of time. It is always a little sad to see the passing of a community or a venerable old home which has justly occupied a position of stature in the regard of many people. Again, we regret very much that such time has come.

Sincerely yours,

J. W. Wells
Operations Manager

JWW:ep

A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORCES
WHICH SHAPED A SMALL INDUSTRIAL TOWN IN ARKANSAS

Master of Arts

Bibliography

This study covers

An Abstract of a Thesis

Presented to the

School of Graduate Studies

Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Gordon Scott Bachus

May 1968

Bachus, Gordon Scott, A Historical Analysis of the Socio-economic Forces Which Shaped a Small Industrial Town in Arkansas. Master of Arts, American Civilization, May, 1968, 93 pp., Bibliography, 38 Titles, Other Sources, 24.

This study considers the influences and forces which shaped the lives of people who resided in a company-owned town. The town, Bauxite, Arkansas, was established in 1903 by the Pittsburgh Reduction Company. The company's name was later changed to the Aluminum Company of America. Employees labored in the adjacent bauxite mines and ore-drying plant.

It was necessary to trace the development of the town in the most decisive chronological periods. Those periods included: (1) The early years, 1903-1914, (2) World War I years, (3) The "Roaring Twenties," (4) the "Uncertain Thirties," (5) World War II years, and (6) Years of industrial expansion after 1945. The most difficult years for the company and the employees were the years of the Great Depression, and the most profitable were the years of international conflict, 1914-1918, 1939-1945, and 1950-1952.

Since all the inhabitants of the town were in the employ of the Aluminum Company of America, the market of aluminum and alumina products determined the prosperity and stability of the community. A necessarily brief history of the aluminum history is presented. Termination of the town

was begun by the company in 1947. The official date for closing the town-area as a place of residence is July, 1969. The population of the town grew from 400 to approximately 10,000 during World War II and received aid from the government for housing of aluminum and bauxite laborers. The demise of the town offers an unusual opportunity to study the forces which shaped its history.

The field-study method was the basic research tool used in this study. More than twenty interviews were held with present and former residents of the town; all having worked for the company in some capacity, with the exception of three businessmen and a school official. Only data which seemed germane became a part of the study. Another major source of information was the local news media, owned and operated by the company. The Bauxite News was published monthly for seven months in 1920 and the Pick and Shovel was published from 1941 until late 1958.

The social structure in the community was considered as it altered during the various periods of study. Especially important to this study was the influence of economic depression and economic affluency. The role of the company was considered as it influenced the social structure of the community as well as the economic structure. Social institutions studied were the educational facilities, the churches, housing,

and recreational programs. The wage scale of the laborers was considered as it varied from the early years, through the Great Depression, and following unionization in 1941.

A major factor leading to the company's decision to terminate the town was unionization. The demands of the union increased the cost of aluminum production. The company was forced to eliminate some of its operating expense to meet the rise in production costs and termination of the town was one solution. Other reasons for terminating the town were improved transportation and the willingness of a large majority of employees to commute from nearby towns to their jobs. Maintenance of houses was another primary factor leading to the termination of the town. The houses were old and in need of repair. Although the company had kept the homes in repair for many years, the decision to close the town was evidently justifiable in the minds of the remaining residents.