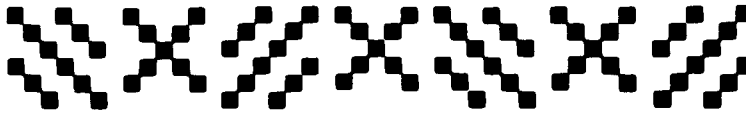


“Middletown Looks at the Lynds”:  
A Contemporary Critique by the Reverend  
Dr. Hillyer H. Straton of Muncie, Indiana, 1937

*Edited by Robert S. LaForte and Richard Himmel\**



Muncie, Indiana, “the most studied community in America,”<sup>1</sup> as presented by Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd in *Middletown* and *Middletown in Transition* has helped to shape the self-image of the urban United States.<sup>2</sup> These books, published in 1929 and 1937, are among the most influential works written on America in this century. College graduates of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s tended to derive their concepts of urban society from the Lynds’ generalizations and, in many instances, were more familiar with the socioeconomic conditions of Middletown than they were with conditions in the metropolises of Detroit, Chicago, or New York. Although it has yet to be demonstrated that the Lynds helped make sociology a legitimate discipline accepted by the American public, the fact that such a book as *Middletown* could go through six printings in its first year attests to its influence.<sup>3</sup> During the past five years America has renewed its interest in the Lynds’ studies. The rediscovery of the Lynds’ Middletown is the result of improvements in sociological and historical methodologies that have led scholars to challenge or defend the Lynds’ findings and to update or alter their earlier conclusions.<sup>4</sup>

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\* Robert S. La Forte is professor of history and Richard Himmel is librarian-archivist at North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.

<sup>1</sup> C. Warren Vander Hill, “Middletown: The Most Studied Community in America,” *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly*, XXXIII (Summer, 1980), 47-57.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Jensen, “The Lynds Revisited,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXV (December, 1979), 318.

<sup>3</sup> John Madge, *The Origins of Scientific Sociology* (New York, 1962), 128.

<sup>4</sup> See Carrollyle M. Frank, “‘Middletown’ Revisited—Reappraising the Lynds’ Classic Studies of Muncie, Indiana,” *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly*, XXX (Spring, 1977), 94-100; John Robert Printz, “Through a Glass Darkly: Value Presuppositions in the Work of Robert S. Lynd” (Ph.D. dissertation, American Studies Program, University of Minnesota, 1978); Carrollyle M. Frank, “Who Governed Middletown? Community Power in Muncie, Indiana, in the 1930s,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXV (December, 1979), 320-43;

Despite the impressive amount of scholarly literature challenging the Lynds' views, little effort has been made to determine what the citizens of Muncie thought about the studies. The people of Muncie during the 1930s appear to have been only moderately interested in what was being said about them as residents of the Lynds' Middletown. The city's two major newspapers, the *Muncie Morning Star* and the *Muncie Evening Press*, provided modest coverage of *Middletown in Transition*.<sup>5</sup> The remembrances of Lucy Ball Owsley, a daughter of Frank C. Ball, the patriarch of the Ball family—the family X of *Middletown* and *Middletown in Transition*—confirm this view. Her family generally ignored the books, the exception being her mother, Elizabeth Brady Ball, who criticized the Lynds for failing to interview the Balls.<sup>6</sup> The recently published report of a critique of *Middletown* by Lynn I. Perrigo, a scholar whose career was in part contemporaneous with those of the Lynds and who was a resident of Muncie in the 1920s and 1930s, corroborates the view that citizens of Middletown paid little attention to the Lynds' publications. Perrigo wrote at the time that "many people in the city are not aware that there is such a book."<sup>7</sup>

One Muncie resident was very much aware of the Lynds' work and disagreed profoundly with it. Dr. Hillyer Hawthorne Straton was minister of the First Baptist Church of Muncie from 1930 to 1938. In his hitherto unpublished manuscript of ten typewritten pages Straton complains of misrepresentation by the Lynds of the Ball family and of Muncie. He takes special exception to the Lynds' views of class, democracy, and community, views he characterizes as "radical, 'newdealish,' or liberal."

Hillyer Straton was the son of a well-known New York clergyman, John Roach Straton. The elder Straton had been born in Evansville, Indiana, but attained fame as the minister of the Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, where he

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Howard M. Bahr, "The Perrigo Paper: A Local Influence upon *Middletown in Transition*," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXVIII (March, 1982), 1-25; Theodore Caplow et al., *Middletown Families: Fifty Years of Change and Continuity* (Minneapolis, 1982). Five parts of a six-part series on Middletown, produced by Peter Davis, were aired on the Public Broadcasting System during the spring of 1982.

<sup>5</sup> *Muncie Morning Star*, March-December, 1937; *Muncie Evening Press*, March-December, 1937.

<sup>6</sup> Transcript of interview with Lucy Ball Owsley, Dallas, Texas, March 24, 1982, pp. 7, 10, 18 (North Texas State University Archives, Denton, Texas).

<sup>7</sup> Bahr, "Perrigo Paper," 10.

opposed religious modernism and evolutionary theory and served as a trustee of the Anti-Saloon League. He claimed to have started the first church radio station in America at the Calvary Baptist in 1923.<sup>8</sup> Hillyer Straton's achievements were not as spectacular as his father's, but before his death he had published seven religious tracts and served congregations in Muncie, Detroit, and Malden, Massachusetts. He died in Malden at age sixty-three in 1968. He was a graduate of Mercer University (Macon, Georgia) and the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Philadelphia) and had attended Columbia and Harvard Universities.<sup>9</sup>

Considering the absence of much contemporary comment by Muncie citizens and in light of the general acceptance of the Lynds' opinions by America's educated elite, Straton's counter-views are worth considering. Straton was a next-door neighbor of William H. Ball, one of the sons of the brothers who founded the Ball glass industry and a person mentioned by the Lynds. Alice Aven Straton, Hillyer's wife, has stated that during the eight years she and her husband spent in Muncie they mixed frequently with what the Lynds considered the ruling elite of the town. Straton's ministerial work, however, took him into all types of homes in all parts of the city. Straton's vocation and education prepared him to be a better-than-average observer of society; and although he possessed biases common to his time, place, and position, he does appear to be a sincere critic of the Lynds. To some extent time has given his views support, since several modern scholars tend to agree with his evaluation that the Lynds brought their conclusions with them to Muncie and believed they had found proof to support their biases there. As the following document illustrates, Straton too found support in Middletown for his convictions.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Straton, John Roach," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York, 1941), XXIX, 18.

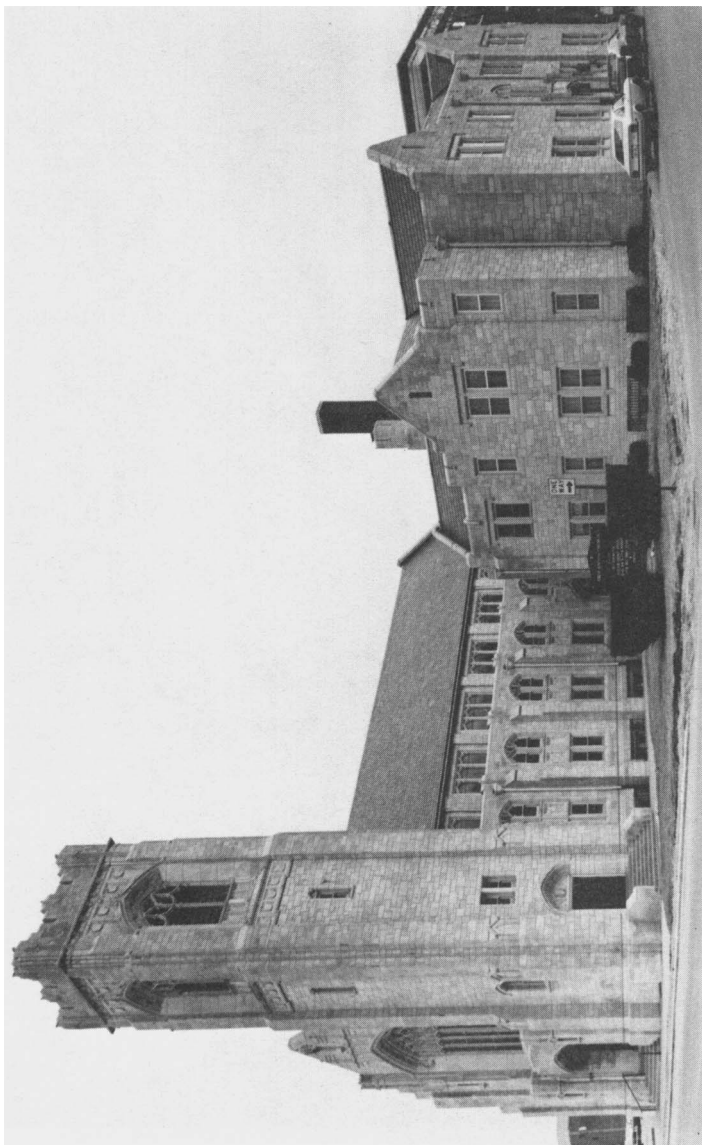
<sup>9</sup> "Straton, Hillyer Hawthorne," *Contemporary Authors: Permanent Series* (Detroit, 1975), I, 608.

<sup>10</sup> Straton wrote two short editorials for the *Muncie Evening Press* and a letter to *Time* concerning the Lynds' work. See "Ex-New Yorker on 'Middletown,'" *Muncie Evening Press*, April 29, 1937; "Comment," *Muncie Evening Press*, August 5, 1937; "Pastor's Picture," *Time*, XXX (July 5, 1937), 5.



HILLYER HAWTHORNE STRATON

Courtesy First Baptist Church of Muncie.



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MUNCIE**

Courtesy First Baptist Church of Muncie.

MIDDLETOWN LOOKS AT THE LYND<sup>1</sup>

Bill Nye<sup>2</sup> once sagely remarked, "I'd rather not know so much than to know so much that ain't so." This quotation rather completely expresses the attitude of Muncie, Indiana to the latest dissecting at the hands of Robert and Helen Lynd. We feel very much like the proverbial goldfish since Life has so thoroughly stripped from Middletown its previous comparative anonymity. Are we really seeing ourselves as "ithers" see us<sup>3</sup> or is the mirror in which we are reflected itself distorted so that the image is bound to be out of focus? There begins to be a large question in our minds as to whether Amy McPherson<sup>4</sup> was right when she said, "It doesn't make much difference what they say just so they are talking about you."

Is Muncie another average town, or is there a something about it that makes it just enough different to be high-hatted by a group of Hudson-bound intellectuals on one side and respected as the norm for healthy American life on the other? How does it seem to an outsider, to one who has lived and worked from the Bible-belt to the night club area, who lived over a dozen years in New York City and has traveled over the better part of the globe?

For the past seven years Muncie has been my home. This is a period long enough to get beneath the surface, to learn men for what they are and to judge organizations and institutions in the light of their fruits. The type of work engaged in is such that it carries me weekly into the homes that represent every class in the city, from the poorest to the wealthiest, from those with the least educational advantage to those with the greatest.

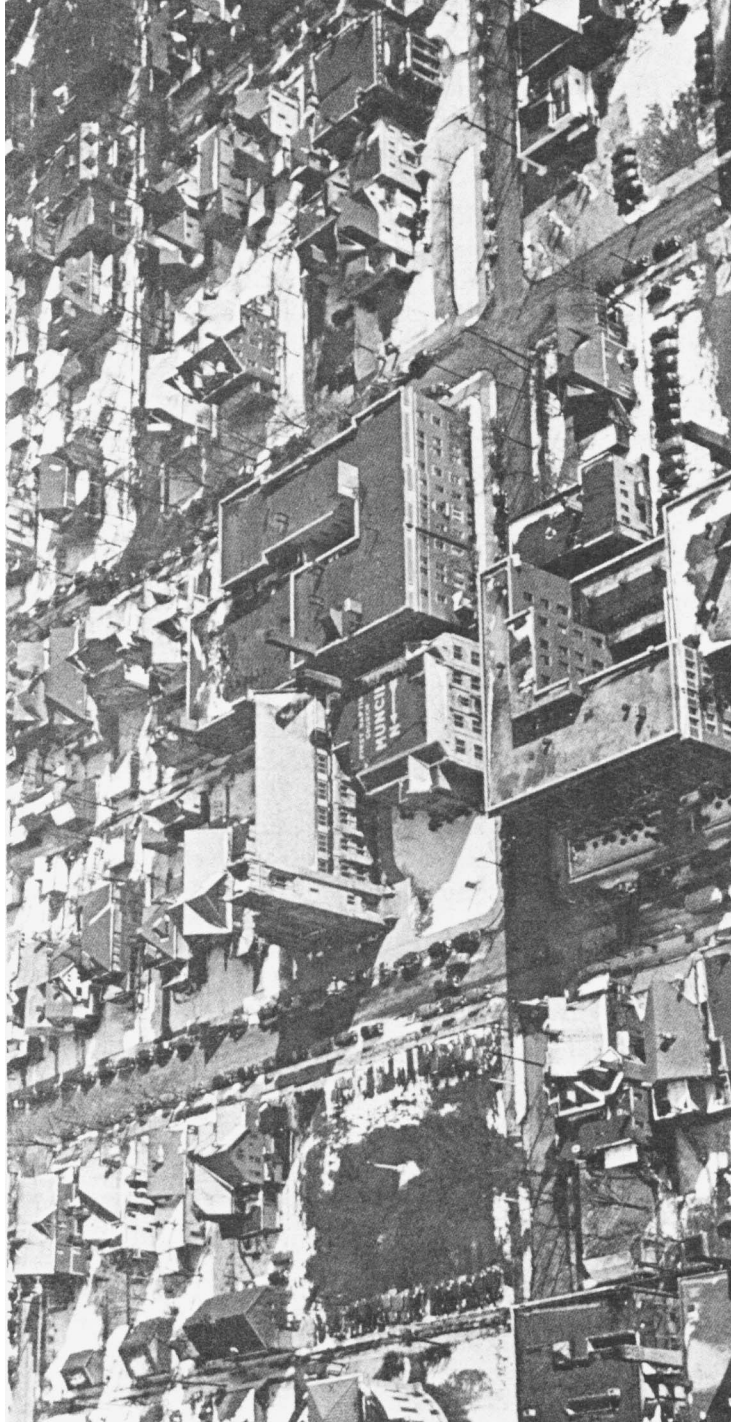
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<sup>1</sup> Hillyer H. Straton's typewritten manuscript is located in the Alvin M. Owsley Collection, North Texas State University Archives, Denton, Texas. Owsley was a son-in-law of Frank C. Ball of Muncie, Indiana. The editors have transcribed the document as nearly like the original as possible. Apparently Straton himself edited the manuscript at some point, in places crossing out certain words and phrases and inserting handwritten emendations above the line. In all but three instances what is presumed to be his final version is reproduced below. Phrases or sentences enclosed in brackets are comments that Straton deleted but that the editors felt were too illustrative of his views to be omitted from the transcription.

<sup>2</sup> Edgar Wilson Nye (1850-1896) was a humorist who worked for the New York *Herald*.

<sup>3</sup> Straton is probably quoting stanza 8 of Robert Burns's "To a Louse." O wad some power the giftie gie us/To see oursels as ithers see us!/It wad frae monie a blunder free us,/An' foolish notion.

<sup>4</sup> Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944) was an evangelist and founder of the International Church of the Four Square Gospel.



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE EARLY 1930s

Courtesy First Baptist Church of Muncie; reproduced from *Thine is the Glory, 1859-1979: First Baptist Church, Muncie, Indiana, Commemorative History* . . . , p. 25.

Despite quite evident bias on the part of the authors, Muncie accepted *Middletown* with a grimace but nevertheless fairly good grace. The same cannot be said of *Middletown in Transition*.<sup>5</sup> It is quite generally felt that Robert Lynd failed to live up to his own standard of, "The social scientist as an impersonal worker selecting problems and analyzing them with bloodless concern . . . seeking to test his hypotheses rather than to prove his values. If he is honest and self-critical he does not seek to bolster his own intellectual position but rather to marshal all relevant data."<sup>6</sup>

Both books have been hailed by critics far and wide as the last word in sociological accuracy. Stuart Chase says that the latest book is "a great study, careful, *fair*, charged with the long view."<sup>7</sup> How he knows is a puzzle for he has never been here. There is a general consensus of opinion in this city that where the Lynds deal with statistical matters such as government census records, they are accurate and do present a true picture of the community such as in the fine chapter on Getting A Living. Our outstanding local editor<sup>8</sup> sums up this attitude when he says, "Eliminate from it all the old wives' tales which the Lynds evidently absorbed and then printed as truth and give both sides of controversial subjects which was not always done, and *Middletown in Transition* would present a true picture of Muncie—and also of almost any industrial city of 50,000 anywhere in the United States."

When dealing with matters of philosophy, especially regarding political and economic theories, preconceived views color the work so drastically that anything but a true picture is presented. A local columnist said, "They came here with a preconceived notion of what Middletown should be, and merely looked for a hook on which to hang their prefabricated coat of drab colors. Blind to everything else, they found certain things they were seeking, quickly rubber-stamped them as typical and left."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Father Edgar J. Cyr, pastor of St. Mary's Church in Muncie, also had served in Middletown for seven years and took exception to the Lynds' findings in the May 18, 1937, issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*, reprinted, in part, in the *Muncie Evening Press*, May 22, 1937.

<sup>6</sup> Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts* (New York, 1937), x, xv, xvii.

<sup>7</sup> Stuart Chase, review of *Middletown in Transition*, *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, April 25, 1937, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Straton is most likely referring to Wilbur E. Sutton, then editor of the *Muncie Evening Press*.

<sup>9</sup> Similar statements were made by Sutton in "Comment," *Muncie Evening Press*, April 16, 1937.



This is nowhere more glaring than in Lynd's development of his hypothesis of the X's as a "reigning royal family . . . who dominated the town, are the town in fact."<sup>10</sup> Scientific accuracy is thrown overboard in order to present the X's as an octopus with its benevolent tenacles in everything, squeezing the life out of us poor devils who have to dance to their tune.

A small but typical illustration of inexcusable inaccuracy is the reference to the "two new X subdivisions in the West end . . . where the X's live. Since 1925 the X family has literally moved the residential heart of the city . . . This shift has been carefully engineered by members of the X family."<sup>11</sup> The facts are, and Lynd had access to them had he asked, that credit should go to a leading real estate dealer. This man was close enough to the Lynds to provide the map for the recent volume and to receive an autographed copy of the book from Robert Lynd. Never once was he asked regarding the two subdivisions or the move to the west part of the city. One of the younger X's<sup>12</sup> did put up a fourth interest in the first development, two other young men supplying a fourth each and the realtor his fourth. As for the newer subdivision, it is owned and was developed completely by the realtor in question.

The shift to the west end was inevitable because of its freedom from industry and railroad tracks. The college was located there and another family of wealth had built or planned large estates in that section. The X's had no more to do with the shift than any other of a half a dozen citizens who wished to live there.

Lynd states, "Through the early 1920's when the normal school was quickening into life, the X real estate agents were quietly buying up parcel after parcel of residential property in the then socially nondescript Normal School section of town."<sup>13</sup> This becomes positively vicious in its untruth when he adds, "These houses have subsequently been removed or improved and these extensive operations *must* have involved a tidy profit to the X family as promoters *offsetting their benevolences to the hospital and college.*" (Italics mine.)<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown in Transition*, 77. When quoting from the Lynds' book, Straton at times juxtaposes sentences and phrases; however, he does not significantly change the meaning of what the Lynds were presenting.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

<sup>12</sup> This is a reference to Frank E. Ball, the youngest son of Frank C. Ball, president of the Ball Brothers Company.

<sup>13</sup> Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown in Transition*, 83.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Again what are the facts? Property due west of the hospital was purchased for future expansion of the hospital units and to provide adequate rental property for laboratory technicians and other professional people. A full 1925-1930 market value was paid for this property the owner setting the sale price in each instance. The bulk of it today would bring considerably less than its purchase price. The X's own only 5% of residential property in this section much of it undeveloped. The scientific value of the statement that the X benevolences to the hospital and college are offset by the unearned increment of their real estate holdings can be judged when you know that these gifts are nearly twice as large as the total assessed value of *all* the real estate in the Normal School section. Were their holdings in proximity to the college divided into the average 75 foot city lot, each would have to sell for over \$75,000.00 to equal the X gifts to the college and hospital. Such rabid economy with the truth in order to develop a hypothesis is quite unbecoming one who considers himself a "scientific social investigator."

Because of their large gifts to X State Teachers College, it is natural to expect the X's to have a voice in its management, but they have been liberal in their policies and have shown complete willingness to have speakers come to the campus with views possibly divergent from their own. Lynd leaves the general impression that the college and its faculty is as subservient to the X's as he contends are the bankers, business men and preachers. In one place he says, "the local college is said to be X controlled both in its larger policies and in occasional smaller details."<sup>15</sup> Yet the National Secretary of the Socialist Party has appeared at the college as have Engelbrecht, co-author of *Merchants of Death*,<sup>16</sup> and Toyohiko Kagawa pleadingly [*sic*] passionately for the establishment of cooperatives.<sup>17</sup>

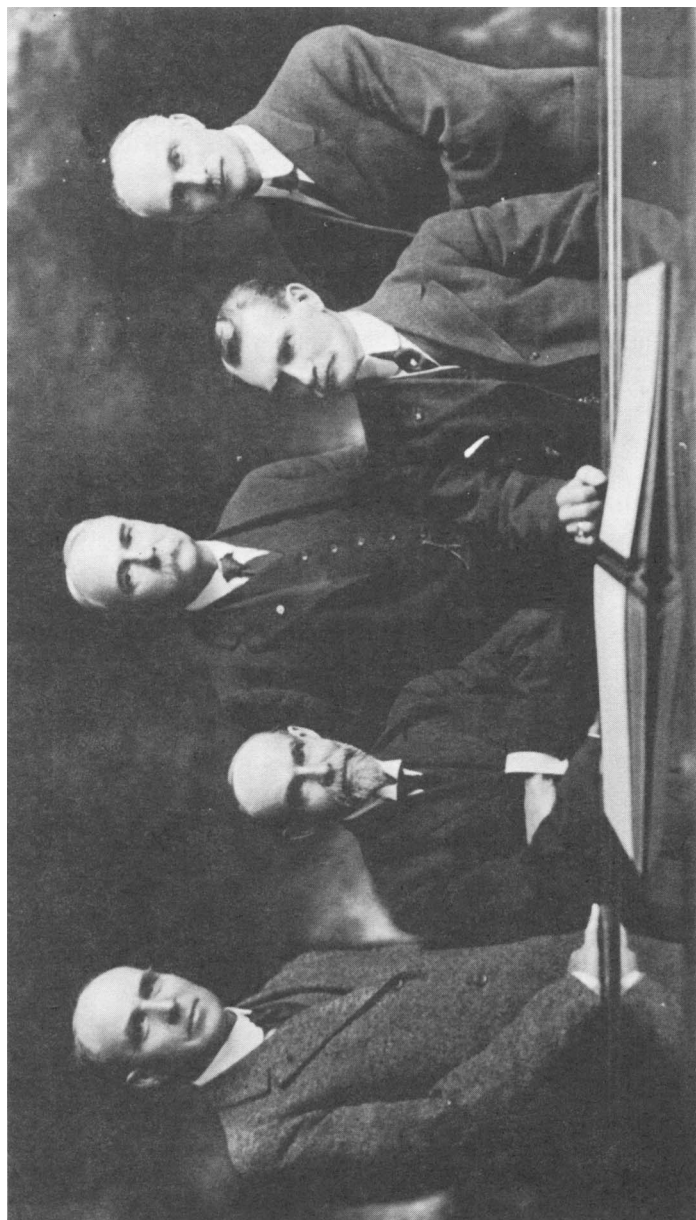
What sort of people are the X's anyway? They are not perfect, they have their share of faults, but by and large it would be hard to find a higher type of American citizen. To an unusual degree, they recognize their wealth as a public trust. Simple in their taste and unostentatious in their manner of life they almost lean over backwards in the democracy of their attitudes. [When the time came for marriage, the sons and

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

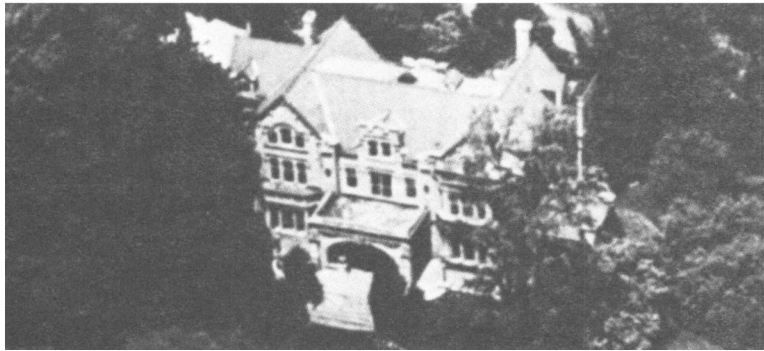
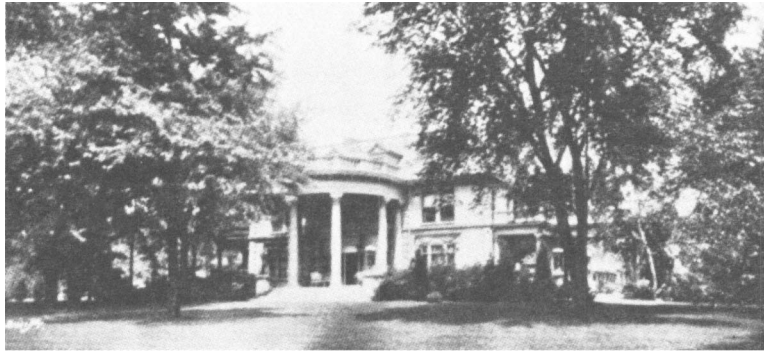
<sup>16</sup> Helmuth Carol Engelbrecht (1895-1939) and F.C. Hanighen wrote *Merchants of Death: A Study of the International Armament Industry* (New York, 1934).

<sup>17</sup> Toyohiko Kagawa (1888-1960) was a Japanese Christian social worker who organized numerous cooperatives in Japan.



LEFT TO RIGHT: GEORGE A. BALL, WILLIAM C. BALL, FRANK C. BALL, LUCIUS L. BALL, EDMUND B. BALL,  
C. 1920

Courtesy North Texas State Archives, Denton.



Reproduced from Frederic A. Birmingham, *Ball Corporation: The First Century* (Muncie, Ind., 1980), 91, 92.



Courtesy Stoeckel Archives, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

HOMES OF FRANK C. BALL, EDMUND B. BALL, WILLIAM C. BALL,  
MUNCIE, INDIANA

daughters of the X's invariably took mates from the strong middle class from which they themselves sprang. Not once has there been a union of their wealth with the means of other wealthy families. This infusion of new and vital blood is one of the strengths of the family.] It is just not true that "the X's hold people at arms length."<sup>18</sup> Simple proof of this is the ease with which any member of the family may be seen. While it is natural that the bulk of their friends are among the business class, at a large social event in their homes such as the Garden Club [or the D.A.R., fully 20%] and other civic organizations many of those present will be from "south of the railroad."

In *Middletown in Transition* the south side is presented as serfs of the X's standing in constant dread of them and cordially hating their overlords. The falsity of this view was never more fully exploded than during a Chautauqua meeting held in the heart of the south side during the middle of the depression when the crowd was addressed by Billy Sunday.<sup>19</sup> When Sunday paid a compliment to the X's he could not go on with his speech for five minutes because of the hand clapping. Why? At this very time the X's were building new warehouses to stock with jars so their people might not be unemployed. During the recent sit-down strikes, X employees wholly on their own initiative bought space in the local papers to express their appreciation of and loyalty to the X's.<sup>20</sup>

Are X employees satisfied with their wages? Some are not. Some never would be. Since the appearance of *Middletown in Transition*, I have asked a dozen different employees just how they felt they were treated. Every single one was satisfied and felt that they were getting and would continue to get a square deal. One man said, "Sure, I'm satisfied, why shouldn't I be. I've worked for them all my life, they treat me good and pay me well. Our wages are decided at a conference with the X's in the fall and they stick by us and we stick by them."

Lynd seldom sees the woods for the trees and especially is his vision obscured by his pet fence of "planned economy".<sup>21</sup> In

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<sup>18</sup> Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown in Transition*, 95.

<sup>19</sup> William Ashley "Billy" Sunday (1862-1935) was a popular evangelist who preached a fundamentalist theology.

<sup>20</sup> Lucy Ball Owsley, in answer to a question about her father's reaction to strikes, stated that he would temporarily close down the plant if he thought a strike unjustified. Transcript of interview with Lucy Ball Owsley, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Lynd's idea of a planned economy is best elaborated in his work *Knowledge for What?* where, among other conclusions, he states that planning and control are necessary for a culture to grow in "serviceability to its people" and that private capitalism cannot assure the general welfare and must be replaced

the light of the above knowledge there is a large reason for questioning other of his conclusions. For purposes of invidious comparison, wage scales of 1935, when the second visit was made to Muncie, are quoted in the book when in other instances figures from as late as *February, 1937* are used. Why were not February, 1937 wage scales, which in some instances were up over 100%, employed? Because Lynd wants to draw a picture of the business leaders of Muncie consciously holding down the standard of living of the working class.

The facts are that today the hourly rate in most industries here is over 25% more than in 1929 and the *actual* income is above that of 1929, with the men working forty instead of fifty and sixty hours. If the rates are somewhat less than in metropolitan centers, the cost of living is likewise less. Muncie is fortunate in approaching Henry Ford's idea of the Greenbelt city of the future,<sup>22</sup> where a goodly proportion of the factory workers are living on small farms and are thereby able to produce much of their own food products.

[Constant reference is made to the low X wage scale. This too is open to debate and there are compensating factors such as the]. In the X plant for instance there is a group life insurance policy for each employee paid wholly by the company. They warehouse products in off seasons to insure continuance of employment. An X job often means one for life. At present there are 18 employees who have been there over 40 years, 62 employees over 30 years and 152 over 20 years. Over ten percent of the employees have been with the company longer than 20 years.

Lynd's propensity for anything that is radical, "new-dealish", or liberal is exhibited time and again. According to Lynd, there is only one church, "that of a small doctrinally liberal denomination where one hears today religion awake and on the march."<sup>23</sup> To him the old religion and the old faith is dying and had better die. He has a right to his views but it is

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by other methods of managing the economy. See Robert S. Lynd, *Knowledge for What? The Place of Social Science in American Culture* (Princeton, 1939), 209, 220.

<sup>22</sup> Straton may be confusing the "greenbelt cities" of the Roosevelt Resettlement Administration with Henry Ford's "village industries" program. Ford boasted that his towns of Iron Mountain (Michigan), Green Island (New York), and Hamilton (Ohio) "would 'take the factory to the country.'" See Allan Nevins and Frank Ernest Hill, *Ford: Decline and Rebirth, 1933-1962* (New York, 1962), 72.

<sup>23</sup> Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown in Transition*, 308.

merely his opinion. Judging by the fruit of community impact churches where a more "conservative" gospel is preached are certainly equally awake to their social obligations plus their individual responsibilities.

This radical attitude is probably the genesis of one of the most uncalled-for and inaccurate statements in the entire book. The president of the local college<sup>24</sup> is referred to as "just one more small-time politician' irrelevantly put in charge of a state educational institution to divert him from running for Congress."<sup>25</sup> All of this is ostensibly manouvered by the X's. If the X's wanted to keep such a man from Congress why in the name of sanity did they put him in charge of the school in which they have such a large monetary interest? Likewise why did they appoint him as an outside director of a new Foundation they have just established?

The facts are that this man is unusually statesman-like. He has constantly stood for forward-looking measures but keeps his feet upon the ground with a remarkable degree of acumen. He typifies the best of the conservative thinkers in our nation and so he is maligned just because he refuses to stumble after every will-o-the-wisp of "planned economy." Were a vote taken to discover the most useful and the best loved man in this community, apart from the X's, this man would unquestionably be chosen.

What about the culture, the pattern of life, of Muncie as compared to a typical metropolis such as New York City? The large city suffers by comparison rather than otherwise. We are fortunate in having a college here and doubly fortunate in having some of the greatest pictures in the world permanently on exhibit through the generosity of one of the X's. From a musical standpoint probably a larger proportion of Muncie people are interested in good music than is the case in our metropolitan centers, where the support of opera and symphony orchestras is economically possible. Through the Civic Theatre our people get the thrill and satisfaction of bringing at least entertaining drama to their fellow citizens. Why they don't even have fox hunts in Central Park in New York City!<sup>26</sup>

The true measure of a community is always its people.

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<sup>24</sup> Lemuel Arthur Pittenger (1873-1955) was the president of Ball State Teachers College from August 1, 1927, to December 31, 1942.

<sup>25</sup> Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown in Transition*, 216-17.

<sup>26</sup> This is a reference to fox hunts in Muncie sponsored by, among others, William H. Ball. See Margaret Bourke-White, photographer, "Muncie, Ind. Is the Great U.S. Middletown," *Life*, II (May 10, 1937), 20.

Without a question the worst vice of Muncie people is their small-town delight in gossip. This is true in churches, clubs, business offices and around lamp posts. Lynd is justly criticized for using this "flannel mouthed gossip" as a prominent business man put it, as the basis for so many of his assertions.

However, after having said this, if Muncie is typical in any way of the best of American culture it is in its people. A leading citizen well said that the Lynds applied to this community every device known to the investigator except the stethoscope and thereby they missed its heart, its most vital organ. There is a comradeship about Muncie people that is heartening. There are differences in physical possessions but the democratic tradition is hale and hearty here. A man is respected for what he is and not for what he has. In our churches, lodges, and community affairs those in high station and low work shoulder to shoulder for the common good, totally devoid thank God, of the poison of class consciousness. The sons of the rich and the sons of the poor sit side by side in the same school, go to the same camp and play in the homes of one another. When the time comes to make the greatest decision in life the sons and daughters of the rich marry those in moderate and even poor circumstances and are themselves strengthened thereby.

The American frontier of opportunity to rise is not closed to the people of Muncie, the Lynds to the contrary. We have a splendid group of younger self-made men. The Muncie youth with ambition finds a hundred helping hands and a thousand cheering voices urging him on. If there is not the chance to rise from the factory floor there once was there are double and triple the chances to get specialized training and come back into responsible positions in the plant.

There have been numbers of instances in which factory managers have arranged working schedules so that a young man can work six hours at night and take a full course in the local college. There is a boy here that comes definitely to mind. He is from a home of the most limited advantages. His father is paralyzed from the hips down, his mother works in a local factory. Clean, upstanding and hard working his ambition is to be a lawyer. There is only one way for him to attain his goal and that is to work in a local plant and go to college at the same time. This he is doing and some day he will arrive for he has it in him.

Muncie has its faults, its failures, and its shortcomings, but its people have an abundance of character, that quality that



has made our country great and good. There is much to make our hearts ache, there is much that we need to improve. There is much that we will change for the better. We are on our way and if "we are walking into the future with our faces turned toward the past", we are at least marching forward and the backward look is only to preserve the best in the culture that we have known.