

Hazelton: A City That Wouldn't Give Up Dying Coal Town Makes Comeback By Itself Without Handout

HAZLETON, Pa. (NEA)—This is about a city that wouldn't give up. Hazelton, high up in the Allegheny mountains but low on the industrial ladder, is battling for its life. Its 40,000 population, its labor unions, its newspapers, its businessmen have joined forces to try to bring new strength to the city. They are doing it on their own without asking anybody for a handout.

The problem was that Hazelton found itself losing population and losing employment. Its major industry was coal mines—shaft coal mines in times when the trend was toward cheaper strip mines.

The city had tried to attract a war industry, but failed. Since 1935, it had tried to attract other plants, but failed. And, therefore, when returning war veterans came home and looked for jobs, they failed, too.

People began to move away. In 1938, Hazelton's schools had 7,100 students. In 1946, only 3,300. In 1912, Hazelton's mines had payrolls of about 14,000. In 1946, less than 7,000.



CELEBRATION: Down Hazelton's main street comes the parade that marked ground-breaking for the new industry two years ago. This year the industry starts operation — and a \$3,500,000 payroll.

Familiar

That trend and these statistics were familiar to the Board of Directors of Hazelton's chamber of commerce, which met in 1946 knowing that their city had to do something or face a bleak future. The obvious solution was to entice some large company to build a big plant in the city.

A list of companies planning to build new branch plants was obtained. Those of national scope which would hire large numbers of male employees were studied.

Out of the list, the Electric Auto-Lite company of Toledo, O., makers of automotive electrical equipment, was contacted. It wasn't particularly impressed with the idea at first. Hazelton although it had the available labor and was an overnight freight haul to a market of 30,000,000, had some drawbacks—it isn't on a main highway or main railroad line or airline.



CAMPAIGN: A Hazelton policeman serves a mock subpoena on a salesgirl to kick in for the city's future.

Persistent

But the Hazelton delegation was persistent. They brought Auto-Lite officials to their city, showed them fine locations for the plant, impressed them with the labor pool available, argued, talked, and finally won.

They signed a contract, but it meant their work was just beginning. The company would locate its branch in Hazelton, if—and it was a big if—Hazelton could raise \$500,000.

Hazelton, in addition to the half-million, was to take out bank loans, in the name of the Hazelton Industrial Development Corp., for another \$700,000, which were to be applied to the cost of the plant. The company, at \$90,000 a year for 10 years, would pay \$900,000 to purchase the plant. It would also invest more than \$2,000,000 in fittings and equipment.

Everybody

Victor Diehm, a Pennsylvania Dutchman and president of the chamber of commerce, had led the search for an industry. Now he took over the drive and told the town:



VICTOR DIEHM: "Succeed—or pull up stakes."

"This is not a project of the chamber of commerce. It is a project for the entire city. We are all in this one and if we don't succeed—well, thousands of us might just as well pull up stakes."

That was Hazelton's challenge—to raise that money. Actually, they raised more than enough. Inside of four weeks, \$650,000 in cash was put up, and the deal made.

Publicity

The daily newspapers ran as many as 15 stories a day on the campaign. The radio station put on spot announcements every 15 minutes. Motion picture theatres voiced reminders after each show. Badges were given to contributors. Store windows featured Auto-Lite products. Booklets were dropped from airplanes. A huge thermometer on the main street showed the progress, day by day.

told their contributions should total 1 1/2 per cent of their 1946 gross sales. Doctors and lawyers were "expected" to give at least \$1,000 each. The town's wealthy citizens were contacted and told what was expected of them. The town's poorer classes were canvassed by 500 door-to-door volunteers.

Unions Aid

Unions invited chamber of commerce speakers. One union gave \$1500 and promised individual contributions. Mine operators gave generously. A plan was arranged whereby persons, whose money was tied up in investments, could borrow from banks to make their donations in cash.

According to chamber of com-

merce records, the Hazelton drive marked the first time that an American city had lured a new industry solely through a cash drive. The \$650,000 raised averaged out to about \$16 per citizen. There were no bonds, no stocks, no promises to repay. Every dollar was an outright gift.

Hazelton achieved its aim. The Electric-Lite company's new wire and cable plant will be opened October 18 at a dedication led by the governor of Pennsylvania.

For a town that was on the way down, Hazelton will have a new industry guaranteeing a \$3,500,000 annual payroll. And there will be no imported labor; the whole payroll stays in Hazelton.

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\$30,000 Found In Old House

WELLINGTON, O., Oct. 20 (AP)—What would you do if you found more than \$30,000 in cash in your basement?

Well, that is exactly what 60-year-old Richard A. Cordray says he will do—keep it, if possible.

Cordray said he found the money September 29 when he knocked out a partition to make way for a gas furnace.

The 56-year-old, 16-room mansion was built by G. H. Palmer, Cordray, Wellington's sanitary engineer since 1937, bought the home 15 years ago from Charles Ross. Both Palmer and Ross are dead.

All Cordray's four children are grown, and he lives alone with his wife.

"I bought the house and I expect to keep what is in it," he said. Ross was described by the townspeople of the time as an "eccentric plunger." Renters occupied the house for a number of years before Cordray bought it.



IOWA GROWS BEANS, TOO—George Rink, of Muscatine, Ia., stands with some of his beans, the longest five feet, grown from an Italian seed planted around the base of a tree.

Tobacco Worms Lay On Eggplants

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP)—Tomato and tobacco hornworms range farther than the two plants for which they are named, reports Dr. Harold T. Reynolds of the University of California. His studies show that these creatures use the Jimson weed (which nobody cares about) as a base of operations from which to attack potatoes, peppers and eggplants.

Tomato and tobacco hornworms are closely related by Dr. Reynolds says an entomologist can easily tell them apart. Both have been chewing up American plants since colonial days and they've recently got to be quite a pest in California.

Restaurant Men Teach Courtesy

WASHINGTON, (AP)—Courtesy is a trump card in the restaurant business, says a spokesman of the Washington Restaurant Association.

Courtesy and sound financial training will be stressed in an educational program which the association is launching to improve the standards of the business. Supervisors, waitresses and everyone in the business will be admitted to the classes.

"Statistics show," said the spokesman, "that 50 per cent of the people who enter the restaurant business drop out after the first year. By the second year, the figure is 80 per cent."

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Student Aid Plan Perpetuated

LOS ANGELES, (AP)—When Francisco Bravo was a young medical student, he worked nights at a gas station and could study only in the intervals between cars. He wondered then if there wasn't some way life could be made easier for ambitious Mexican-Americans of limited means. Now, as Dr. Francisco Bravo, he has found the answer. He helps them himself.

Last year he gave \$10,000 of the earnings of his Bravo clinic to finance a scholarship at the Stanford university school of medicine for Rodolfo Ponce, of Rivera, Calif. Recently he gave William Diaz, of Riverside, Calif., \$2000 to cover a four-year course at the school of pharmacy of the University of Southern California.

Dr. Bravo attaches one string to these awards. The young men he befriends must promise to aid other Mexican-Americans who desire professional careers.

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