



The Gritty Berkshires: A People's History from the Hoosac Tunnel to Mass MoCA by Maynard Seider was published by White River Press (2019).

EDITOR'S CHOICE

The Modern Berkshires:
Deindustrialization, Mass MoCA, and the
Demise of North Adams Regional Hospital

MAYNARD SEIDER



Editor's Introduction: HJM is proud to select as our Editor's Choice Award for this issue Maynard Seider's *The Gritty Berkshires: A People's History from the Hoosac Tunnel to Mass MoCA (2019)* published by the White River Press. In each issue, we highlight a book that relates to an aspect of New England history which the editors feel is particularly noteworthy and would be of special interest to our readers. *The Historical Journal of Massachusetts* is especially interested in publishing articles and showcasing books that provide a historical perspective on contemporary political, social, and economic issues. At 652 pages, Maynard Seider's in-depth study offers both a highly comprehensive and deeply engrossing account of the region's untold and often overlooked history. *The Gritty Berkshires: A People's History* was awarded the 2020 Gold Medal for Best Regional Non-Fiction Book (Northeast Region) by the Independent Publisher Book Awards; it has received profuse praise from numerous reviewers. The following summary is largely drawn from the publisher's description.

Seider is an activist sociologist who taught at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams from 1978 to 2010. Having researched the area's history for more than three decades, and having been a firsthand observer to the

many contemporary struggles that he carefully chronicles, he succeeds in placing the history of the region in the context of U.S. and global history. Through the use of oral histories, union archives, newspaper accounts, and participant observation, the author focuses on the men who built the nation's longest railroad tunnel, the thousands of men and women who worked in its textile mills and electronics factories and who struck, built worker co-ops, and created community coalitions to improve their daily lives. In The Gritty Berkshires: A People's History from the Hoosac Tunnel to Mass MoCA, Seider reveals that Massachusetts' westernmost county is far more than upscale country homes, art museums, music festivals, and beautiful scenery. For the generations of working-class families who have lived in the northern part of the county, their reality looks more like Rust Belt America.

In this history, we learn how the Berkshires offer insight into so many crucial aspects of the American experience. Moving from the early 1800s to the 2010s, Seider weaves a narrative that details the area's vibrant immigrant history, slavery's role in its textile industry, the battle for national unions, and the ideological struggles with corporate elites over who best speaks for the community. These stories focus on the voices of ordinary people, as they often do extraordinary things. A particular strength of the book is that nearly 60% (433 pages) focuses on the past fifty years, from 1970 to 2019, thereby providing an in-depth and sobering portrait of the region's recent political, economic, labor, and community struggles.

Seider concludes with a case study of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (otherwise known as MASS MoCA) which opened in 1999. MASS MoCA's massive complex of buildings was originally built by the Arnold Print Works, which operated on the site from 1860 to 1942. It was then the home to the Sprague Electric Company. Until 1986 these evocative and cavernous brick buildings provided steady, highly skilled work and decent wages to generations of blue- and white-collar workers. Today the buildings attract affluent tourists to the country's largest contemporary art collection (130,000 square feet) but employ only a fraction of the former workforce at far lower wages. According to Seider, the unanswered question remains: can a tourist-service economy provide a meaningful and economically sustainable life for its residents?

The Gritty Berkshires' last chapters deal with this question both nationally and locally, exploring diverse responses amidst the nation's growing inequality and cutbacks in social services. Tragically, if not ironically, as this Editor's Choice excerpt reveals, MASS MoCA's growth coincided with the demise of the region's local hospital, despite a concerted community and labor campaign. This HJM excerpt includes the author's introduction (pages 1–7) and Chapter 24, "The Region Gains a Museum and Loses a Hospital" (pages 458–499). Maynard

Seider has published several articles over the decades on Berkshire history in the Historical Journal of Massachusetts.

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“Welcome to the Berkshires: America’s Premier Cultural Resort.” For most outsiders, including those who first view this sign on the Massachusetts Turnpike, Berkshire County calls to mind the natural beauty of its hills and rivers, summer theater and music, varied winter sports, and year-round attendance at numerous museums. But in this westernmost county in Massachusetts, gritty industrial cities and towns also dot the landscape, and although smaller than the state’s better-known mill towns such as Lawrence, Lowell, and Holyoke, they nonetheless share some of the same physical and historical characteristics. One of these cities is North Adams. Situated in the northwestern corner of Massachusetts on the Hoosic River in the shadow of Mount Greylock, the state’s tallest mountain, North Adams is just a few miles from Vermont to the north and New York State to the west.

Before visiting North Adams in 1977, I had never been to the Berkshires: I had the outsider’s view of it as a lovely tourist destination. Starting off from Amherst, and after more than an hour of scenic driving on two-lane country roads, I passed through Adams on Route 8, south of my final destination. And there, in the middle of an intersection, stood a statue of William McKinley. President McKinley? Up to this point Washington and Lincoln had been the only presidents I had ever seen memorialized by statues. And now, McKinley? Here? I knew him only as the president who had led the country into the Spanish-American War. Had this monument been erected to honor him for taking control of Cuba, for adding the Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam to the country’s possessions?

If I had stopped the car and walked over to the statue, one of the engravings near the base would have informed me about McKinley’s leadership in protecting American industry, which was, in fact, the reason for the statue. I knew nothing of the 1890 McKinley Tariff, passed when the future president served in the House of Representatives. Just beyond McKinley I saw red brick mill buildings on the right, several still in operation, and a long line of single-story brick housing on the left. I later learned that the Plunkett family, the most famous residents of Adams (with the possible exception of the Anthonys, whose daughter, Susan B., was born there in 1820, but who left in 1826) had been the big cotton mill owners in town and good friends of McKinley and his wife. The president had made three trips to Adams and stayed in the Plunkett mansion; on his last trip he laid the cornerstone for

the beautiful yellow brick library that stands just south of his statue's raised right arm. In September 1901, when an assassin's bullet took McKinley's life, Adams became the first community in the country to install such a memorial. Apparently the mill owners had wanted to show their gratitude for his tariff, a piece of legislation that raised the price of British textiles and allowed domestic producers like the Plunketts to escape foreign competition, grow their markets, and expand their operations.

I had a lot to learn. In North Adams, where, in 1978, I would start teaching at what is now Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), I would discover a rich industrial history. It had previously been a textile town, but since the 1940s, Sprague Electric Company had become its leading manufacturer, producing capacitors—components that store electrical energy—for the domestic, aerospace, and military markets. I had grown up in a union household, had worked in a transformer factory in California, and, as a sociologist, had a strong interest in blue-collar work and activism.¹ North Adams, then, seemed a good fit for my interests.

I went on to teach at the college for thirty-two years, during which time I also supervised students who interned at local unions; I developed the course "Social History of North Adams"; and I joined other academics and industrial and healthcare workers in establishing the Northern Berkshire Labor Coalition. The coalition began right when deindustrialization hit North Adams in the mid-1980s. Sprague's closure, along with cuts in needed social programs, brought a wave of despair into the area. The coalition served as a vehicle to bring people together from a variety of workplaces so they could get to know each other, brainstorm, and support one another. Those meetings led to the publication of a newspaper, educational classes, picketing and strike support, and assistance with worker-ownership projects.

With the disappearance of factory jobs, our work shifted, and so did the focus of the social history classes I taught, as we observed and speculated what would come next. About a year later, we learned that efforts were underway to create a new, huge museum of contemporary art that would occupy the buildings where a print works and a capacitor manufacturing plant had stood. Soon after, a group of us got together to write a local history play.

Called *The Sprague Years* and performed in 1995 for audiences that ranged from area schoolchildren to Sprague retirees, the play dramatized the history of contested labor relations at Sprague and concluded by raising questions about the role of the prospective museum. When the museum—the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA)—opened in 1999 with a mission to advance the economic development of the hard-



Berkshire County Map



Massachusetts and Berkshire County Maps

The map of Massachusetts (top) shows the Berkshire County region in gray. The detailed map (left) shows the cities and towns of the Berkshires. Pittsfield is the county seat, while the art museum MASS MoCA is located in North Adams. The North Adams Regional Hospital, previously the county's largest employer, was also located in North Adams.

hit region, my students and I tried to evaluate that promise. Later, I worked with others on a documentary film project, and in 2012, we completed *Farewell to Factory Towns?* The film chronicles the industrialization and deindustrialization of North Adams, the coming of MASS MoCA, and the subsequent social and economic consequences. It premiered at MCLA and played at community forums and cable access television stations throughout western Massachusetts and at numerous film festivals outside of the region.

With the completion of the film, I decided to edit some of the written material I had already completed on local labor history and to work further on its integration, a project that would encompass material starting at the beginning of the nineteenth century and continuing to the present. Hence this book.

THE NORTH BERKSHIRE REGION

During most of the nineteenth century, the area we now call North Adams was the north village of the town of Adams. As the north village industrialized in the mid-1800s, however, it developed a separate identity from the more agricultural south village. Ultimately, in 1878, North Adams separated from Adams and became its own town. In 1896, as it continued to grow, North Adams incorporated a mayor-council form of government, as it transitioned from town to city.² It has always been the largest community in the region, the center for markets and work, but is also integrally tied in to its neighboring towns.

Most similar to North Adams, Adams also has a rich industrial history, though with some continuation of its agricultural heritage. Clarksburg and Williamstown—smaller towns along the north and south branches of the Hoosic River—share an industrial past, though Clarksburg now displays a more rural look while Williamstown seems energized by its prestigious landmark, Williams College.³ Cheshire, Savoy, and Lanesborough are smaller area communities without much commerce today, but they help make up what's called North Berkshire, along with the town of Florida, whose altitude of 1,895 feet makes it the highest community in the state. Even more intriguing, within Florida can be found the area of the central shaft of the Hoosac Tunnel. There, one can easily imagine the scenes of workers with pickaxes leaving their crowded shanties that filled this area more than a century and a half ago.

The region extends beyond the state line and includes the communities of Stamford, Readsboro, Pownal, and North Pownal, Vermont. The latter, in particular, has an important mill history, notably from the 1934 textile

strike. While the focus of this book will be the city of North Adams, the coverage includes the entire North Berkshire area.⁴

Two mountain ranges—Hoosac to the east and Taconic to the west—that are part of the lengthy Appalachians serve as boundaries to the region. The Hoosic River traverses the area and provided the waterpower for the early mills that facilitated the growth of manufacturing in this scenic valley.⁵ In North Adams, the north branch of the river heads toward Clarksburg, while the main branch travels west to Williamstown, north through southwestern Vermont, and then on to New York State, eventually emptying into the Hudson River. A different river system, the Housatonic, runs through the central and southern parts of Berkshire County and provides power to Pittsfield and Dalton, and then on to Lee and Great Barrington. It continues to cut through the valley into Connecticut and ultimately drains into Long Island Sound. Geologically, the two rivers and their watersheds divide the county north and south: beginning as springs that emanate in a field at the base of Mt. Greylock, part of the Taconic Range, the water that flows north becomes the Hoosic, and the one to the south becomes the Housatonic.⁶

The area's natural features helped spur the growth of industry in North Berkshire. Entrepreneurs chose to build mills by the Hoosic River in order to take advantage of its abundant power. In the 1850s, the state, along with several private investors, chose the Hoosac Range as a site to drill a 4.75-mile railway tunnel that would offer a western gateway for local and regional trade. It would take twenty years and the deaths of nearly 200 workers for the Hoosac Tunnel to be completed.

Already well-known as the home of the tunnel, North Adams achieved national publicity in 1870 when its largest shoe manufacturer, Calvin Sampson, imported seventy-five young Chinese men to replace striking workers who were members of a secret union of shoemakers called the Knights of St. Crispin. That event marked the first time that industrialists brought Chinese workers east of the Mississippi to break a strike.⁷

By 1900, with a population of 24,200, North Adams surpassed Pittsfield to become the largest community in Berkshire County. Immigrants and the children of immigrants from Ireland, Italy, French Canada, and Poland predominated, although smaller numbers of Russian Jews, Welsh, and African Americans also settled in the area. North Adams not only served as the trading center and railroad hub for the communities of North Berkshire, but also for some rural towns in nearby Vermont and New York. Because of the mountains to the east and west, North Berkshire residents have tended to live and work within their region.

Historically, while some have headed south to find work in Pittsfield, residents generally have not ventured west to Troy, east to Greenfield, or southeast to Northampton. Residents long had access to one or two newspapers that covered their region and, with a single state representative representing them, North Berkshire's political integration was assured.⁸

In the 1920s, as sixteen passenger trains a day moved into and out of North Adams, one writer described the area as:

. . . nervous with the energy of twentieth century America. No city of twenty-five thousand people in New England has as great variety of retail establishments: merchants must stock goods for workers of different nationalities and notions, and for a large farming population, whose lean pocketbooks force their owners to "close buying."⁹

With the ups and downs of the textile industry, however, hard times often meant that wages stayed low and, in many households, both adults labored in local factories.

Textiles and shoe production remained dominant as late as 1940. In a city whose total population (including children) numbered nearly 23,000, some 6,600 workers worked in nine large mills.¹⁰ As textiles declined, capacitor production at the expanding Sprague Electric Company increased. Employing the bulk of the region's workforce, Sprague—with over 4,000 employees at its height in the mid-1960s—became the leading producer of capacitors in the world. Yet, just two decades later, Sprague closed its doors, and the region's residents—along with millions of others in similar communities in the Northeast and Midwest—had to face the difficult consequences of deindustrialization. Questions about the future, the state's subsidy of a massive new art museum, the closing of the region's 132-year-old hospital, and the viability of a service economy continue to face the region's population to this day. . . . [The remainder of this article is excerpted from Ch. 24: The Region Gains a Museum and Loses a Hospital].

1980s ECONOMIC SETBACKS

By the mid-1980s, with the loss of manufacturing jobs, North Berkshire residents found themselves confronting the same set of problems that other historic industrial communities faced. Besides the layoffs at Sprague Electric, over 500 additional production jobs had gone by the wayside in 1984. The situation appeared so grim that Holly Taylor, a veteran local reporter, wrote:

“The outlook is the worst since Berkshire Hathaway . . . pulled out in 1957, leaving . . . a jobless rate of 22 percent.”¹¹ From 1984 to 1990, fourteen manufacturing plants in North Berkshire had closed, leaving 5,000 workers without employment. Besides the Sprague closing, the shutdown of Adams Print Works (formerly Arnold Print Works) hit the area hard. The company could not be saved, even with an eighteen-month reorganization and a \$3.3 million loan transfusion from private and public sources.¹²

A workers’ assistance center study concluded that over three-quarters of those who had lost their jobs wanted to stay in North Berkshire, but where would the new jobs come from? One possible solution came in 1986, when local activists and academics joined together and founded the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition. The coalition had the single objective of trying to deal with the critical economic and social problems facing the region.¹³

In their 1982 path-breaking book, *The Deindustrialization of America*, economists Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison gave a name to the phenomenon that had hit the gritty Berkshires and much of the rest of Rust Belt America. The authors defined deindustrialization as the “widespread, systematic disinvestment in the nation’s basic productive capacity.” They wrote that “disinvestment” occurred, despite the fact that the corporations closing the factories—whether it be Penn Central, in control of Sprague in North Adams; GE in Pittsfield; Nabisco in Chicago; or RCA in Monticello, Indiana—remained flush with cash, and more than profitable. Rather, they decided to invest in other manufacturing locations, inside or outside of the United States, or in other sectors of the economy, including finance. The reasons were to achieve higher profits, but the results were “shuttered factories, displaced workers, and a newly emerging group of ghost towns.”¹⁴ Factory closings ordered by conglomerates, such as Penn Central, appeared to be even more devastating than those coming from independent, smaller companies.

In just four years, from 1981 to 1985, an estimated 11.5 million workers became unemployed due to deindustrialization, roughly 12 percent of the national labor force.¹⁵ In the middle of the Rust Belt, Milwaukee’s manufacturing job loss of 56,000 from 1979 to 1983 surpassed the city’s job loss during the Great Depression.¹⁶ And while the national media focused on the Midwest in stories on deindustrialization, the phenomenon also impacted New York State and New England, and even industrial communities in the South and California.¹⁷

The new jobs created after deindustrialization generally paid less, offered few if any benefits, and lacked security. Only half of the new jobs from 1979

to 1986 provided middle-income wages, compared to nearly 90 percent of new jobs from 1963 to 1973.¹⁸ The state of Massachusetts added nearly 500,000 service-sector jobs in the 1980s and 1990s, but most of those that paid well could be found in the greater Boston area.¹⁹ In North Berkshire, the only employment growth in the early 1980s emanated from the low-paying service sector. The best service-sector jobs—at Williams College, North Adams State College (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts), and North Adams Regional Hospital—stood in high demand, and could only employ a minority of the population. With the layoffs at Sprague accelerating in 1984, Williams College received 600 requests for non-teaching, service employment during the first week of September alone.²⁰ Absent other opportunities, many workers turned to the employer X-Tyal, despite the fact that it provided a low-paying, unstable, and unsafe work environment.²¹

In 1986, North Adams had the highest unemployment rate in the state, ranging anywhere from 25 to 30 percent. In other social measures—teen pregnancy, child sexual and physical abuse, and the high school dropout rate—the city fared quite poorly.²² Clearly, new job opportunities and economic gains were needed, but none appeared on the horizon.

To make matters worse, the kinds of social programs to aid the unemployed and poor that had been developed during the New Deal and the 1960s War on Poverty were being dismantled. Attacks on unions—the key institution that protected the rights and wages of workers—accelerated, particularly in 1981, after President Ronald Reagan fired the striking unionized air traffic controllers who were members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO). Reagan’s action “made union-busting just another management program to reduce labor costs.”²³

MASS MoCA COMES TO TOWN

In 1982, North Adams Regional Hospital celebrated its centennial. Besides fully serving the region’s medical needs, the hospital also stood as a major job provider. At the same time, the blue-collar job outlook looked grim, with the decline of Sprague and other smaller industrial plants. When Sprague closed in 1985, North Adams was faced with acres of empty, productive space and no manufacturing suitors willing to step in.

While some still hoped for good-paying industrial jobs, tourism had moved to the top spot in local economic development plans. In February 1986, a big tourist idea arrived from outside the city. Thomas Krens, the director of the Williams College Museum of Art in the neighboring town of Williamstown, called on John Barrett, the blue-collar mayor of North Adams. Krens had

connections with the world-renowned Guggenheim Museum in New York and represented an elite college located in Williamstown. The men seemed to be unlikely allies, but before long they reached an agreement to transform the Sprague buildings on Marshall Street into what would become the world's largest museum of contemporary art. More importantly for the region, the museum would be an engine of economic development. Krens represented a new type of museum director, one who merged a background in art history with one in business, a director-entrepreneur as interested in expanding and building new museums as in bringing in popular exhibitions of art. He may have seen the vacant buildings in North Adams as a depository for the art that New York's Guggenheim didn't have room for, but in any case, his proposal called for a brand new museum of contemporary art. An up-and-comer in the museum world, Krens was a big guy, and a strong exponent for his point of view. He wanted the Sprague properties for the museum and had no problem providing the economic data that would impress the political elite in North Adams and the state for the project's economic development possibilities.

With his young assistant and Williams College graduate, Joseph Thompson, Krens wrote a two-volume business plan, which argued that the museum would be an economic benefit to North Adams and the North Berkshire region. (The fact that both authors had strong reasons for wanting the museum to become a reality, and that they hoped to receive state funds for it, would seem to question their neutrality or even objectivity in researching and writing the crucial report, yet no media outlet or government official raised that issue.) Relying on previous studies of culture-based development and economic models, they estimated that the museum would generate over 600 full-time equivalent jobs. They also anticipated numerous tenants in offices constructed within the museum complex, as well as a small hotel and restaurant on site. In addition, Krens and Thompon assumed that the Greylock Glen development project in neighboring Adams that was primed to include numerous "second homes" would bring an additional audience to the museum complex. (That version of Greylock Glen never got off the ground.)

Moving from the economic benefits of the museum, Krens and Thompson heralded its image-enhancing function for North Adams, a city not only devastated by unemployment, but one whose residents reportedly felt defeated.²⁴ Quoting from the Governor's Task Force, they noted their objective: "To promote the Northern Berkshire Region both to its residents and to others in order to build a positive self-image and to attract visitors and business." They further wrote that the Massachusetts Museum of

Contemporary Art (or MASS MoCA as it came to be called), “[would] become . . . an unmistakable gesture of community achievement, and [that] community achievement is a vital factor in providing regional and personal esteem.”²⁵ Krens and Thompson then quoted from a 1983 report on Philadelphia, written by Michael Rubin and Theodore Hershberg:

Perhaps the most important measure of a city’s attractiveness is the quality of life it affords its residents. The term “quality of life” implies a comprehensive assessment of the accessibility and value of a wide variety of human services and facilities. *It is replacing “standard of living” as an index of general welfare.* (Italics added.)

For area residents whose standard of living had been in decline from massive deindustrialization and whose economic future appeared bleak, Krens and Thompson’s seeming acceptance of a different meaning of “quality of life,” should, at a minimum, have raised eyebrows. However, one should remember that the business plan had been written not for laid-off factory workers but for business and political elites. Interestingly, one of the museum’s biggest backers whose disapproval would have doomed the museum’s chances, Mayor John Barrett, also saw the psychological advantages of the museum, yet downplayed its job-creating function:

[Tom] Krens was saying it would create 600 jobs, I didn’t see it that way. [T]his was an image game. If you ever go back and read about Ronald Reagan . . . I didn’t agree with anything he said but you know what, I adopted his philosophy: make people feel good even if isn’t good. And if we could create that excitement in the community, people who had been downtrodden for years—you know, little or no hope—they would start to believe in the community and people would come here . . . That’s what it was all about with me from day one: how can I use this to better the community? It went far beyond my wildest expectations.²⁶

Without a well-publicized alternative proposal for the huge Sprague property, and with residents hungry for jobs, most residents of North Adams appeared supportive of the museum. Governor Michael Dukakis, who often vacationed in the Berkshires, liked the idea, and in 1988, the Legislature approved a bill granting \$35 million for the development of the museum. That grant proved to be decisive for the museum’s success. As Director Joe

Thompson remembered it years later, “Absent that, there would have been no MASS MoCA.”²⁷

Not everyone expressed enthusiasm about the overall plan. What impact would it have on the poor? Some raised concerns about escalating rents in the working-class neighborhood that bordered the prospective museum. Would the service-sector jobs that would be created as a result of the museum—part of the 600-job promise from Krens and Thompson—pay anything close to a living wage? Further, local artists worried that they might be shut out of the museum and access to the tens of thousands of tourists that MoCA officials anticipated. Still, 10,000 local residents signed a petition calling for the museum to be built.²⁸

Anthropologist Cathy Stanton interviewed local residents, and many saw no other alternative for an economic revival than the museum. At best, it presented a mixed picture. After all, for former textile and Sprague workers who had produced cloth and electronic parts for most of their lives, they would “hav[e] . . . to come to terms with the fact that in the absence of other good options, they now find themselves becoming [a] service economy . . . for wealthier regions and populations.”²⁹ I heard that same concern voiced by some of the two-dozen North Berkshire workers that I interviewed during the same time period:

So what am I going to do when I’m 45? Am I going to wash dishes or am I going to clean up rooms at the Glen? . . . I don’t want to do that . . . I don’t just want to survive . . . I want to be able to improve my life . . . I do not want to be a guard at an art museum . . . North Adams is a grubby, beautiful . . . town . . . I think it’s marvelous.

Concern over low-wage service-sector jobs led one respondent to worry about the need to work two jobs and its consequences: “Working ‘sunrise to sundown just to make ends meet’ is no way to ‘enjoy the Berkshires.’”³⁰

Soon after he proposed MASS MoCA, Thomas Krens left the project to run the Guggenheim Museum, and Joe Thompson became the prospective museum’s coordinator. At the same time, the state economy, the so-called “Massachusetts Miracle,” went into decline, and a prime museum backer, Governor Michael Dukakis, lost his bid for the presidency. Unfortunately for the project, Dukakis’s successor, Republican Governor William Weld, voiced skepticism about the museum’s financing.

James Welu, director of the Worcester Art Museum and supporter of MoCA, shared his worries. “A major concern is whether a constituency could

be developed to support such a large undertaking into the future,” Welu said. And then, getting to the crux of the matter, he added, “Historically, museums follow affluence, they don’t usually create it.”³¹

Governor Weld told the museum planners to return \$688,000 in planning and design funds that Dukakis had delivered in his last week in office. Weld also challenged the museum’s supporters to raise more private funds to supplement the state monies. When museum supporters met the fund-raising challenge, Weld came back on board to back the museum.³²

THE STRUGGLE FOR HOUSING

Just as deindustrialization—as a word—had only recently entered the American vocabulary, “homelessness” (hardly mentioned in the late 1970s) had now become part of the American lexicon and, for millions of Americans, a reality in their lives. Demand for low-cost housing had risen as more and more Americans saw their paychecks diminish, but, at the same time, the availability of such housing had contracted. After 1970, from an estimated surplus of about 2.4 million low-income units, a dramatic shift in the national housing market meant a deficit of 3.7 million low-income units in 1985. The federal government had virtually disappeared from the market. In 1978, the Housing and Urban Development budget for subsidized housing stood at \$32.2 billion, and ten years later the Reagan administration had slashed it to \$9.2 billion. In addition, the government reduced incentives for private developers to build low-income housing and deregulated the savings and loan industry, which led to high interest rates for mortgages. And for those not able to buy, rents kept going up. The result: from 1.2 million to 2 million Americans were homeless by the late 1980s. Not willing to take any responsibility for the crisis, in 1984 President Reagan remarked: “People who are sleeping on the grates . . . the homeless . . . are homeless, you might say, by choice.”³³

The housing reality in North Berkshire reflected the problems nationwide. Already one third of households in North Adams faced monthly rents deemed “unaffordable.” And now the publicity given to the coming of MASS MoCA and the Greylock Glen project in Adams heightened fears that gentrification would make its way to the area and raise rents for low-income tenants even more. After all, Thomas Krens himself had speculated that, in the future, River Street would be like Fifth Avenue, New York City. Local realtors welcomed that future. For Mike Deep, it meant “We’re catching up with the rest of the world . . . North Adams has a new image, and the city feels better about itself.” However, those households who could not catch up and needed

subsidies to obtain rental units from the North Adams Housing Authority faced a lengthy waiting list.³⁴

The cry for affordable housing grew, and by 1987 the local press, including the *Transcript*, the *Berkshire Eagle*, and the *Advocate*, reported extensively on the crisis. A new citizens group, the North Adams Tenants Organization (NATO), began organizing, and raised the issue of rent control as a way to stabilize the increased cost of housing. Michael Wilber, former union president at X-Tyal, served as chair of NATO and was one of sixteen candidates running for City Council—only two of whom supported rent control. Opponents saw it as “a bureaucratic intrusion in the free market” and instead called for more housing to be built. Ironically, at roughly the same time, the City Council, responding to pressure from neighbors who didn’t want a thirty-six-unit housing development in their “backyard,” voted against it.

Michael Wilber lost his Council race, but NATO continued to function, and the rent control issue gathered more support. Tenants packed City Council meetings and “almost uniformly spoke of sudden rent increases with no improvements to the property, while landlords . . . warned that rent control was discriminatory regulation of business, would discourage further investment and job creation in the city, and could lead to abandoned buildings and other problems.” Wilber called for a sizeable committee, including local residents, to study the issue, but the Council instead appointed a Rent Control Subcommittee composed of only three, all from the Council. In an editorial entitled “What’s ‘fair’ in rent wars?” the *Transcript* reviewed the pro and con arguments, and stated the following:

Rents are leaping, in some areas, more than 100 percent . . . And the elderly, which make up more than 65 percent of the city’s population, and who live on fixed incomes, just can’t pay those prices . . . Residents have pressured the City Council to take some action on rising rents in North County. That pressure is bolstered by Help Line’s recent announcement that its calls about placement for homeless people has increased mightily . . . There’s no way to please everybody completely . . . But it is the renters, especially, who look to the council for the definition of “fair.”³⁵

The subcommittee said “No” to rent control, but the NATO campaign continued, and they invited Council members and the press to inspect the conditions of rental units in the city. In two press reports on the inspection, readers learned of apartments with leaky pipes, a room without glass windows,

unsteady fire escape stairs, poor wiring, cockroaches, and the lack of a second escape door. Wilber “hoped the tour would encourage councilors to push for stricter enforcement of city building codes.” He went on to say that complaints to City Hall didn’t get filed. In response, Mayor John Barrett, who refused an invitation to go on the tour, stated that no complaints on the apartments in question had been filed. Then he added: “I’m tired of these people. They [NATO] haven’t lifted one finger to help . . . out the city. They just set their own agenda for their own political reasons.”³⁶

Editorially, the *Transcript* viewed the role of NATO much differently than did the mayor: “NATO has done its part in bringing the issue of substandard rentals to public attention, by its very existence, by its tours, and by making City Council take notice.” The newspaper exhorted property owners to respond.³⁷ Just prior to the tour, a front-page article in the *Advocate* illustrated the responses of landlords to claims of substandard conditions in their rental units. Charles P. Norcross, co-owner of thirteen buildings with rental units, “blamed careless tenants for costing landlords thousands of dollars in otherwise unnecessary repairs.” From Berkshire Valley Management partner Steven C. Morrison’s view, “70 percent of all violations are caused by tenants and 30 percent from daily usage.” Morrison went on to say that “landlords can limit tenant-caused damage” by “a more thorough screening of prospective renters.” He spoke of a new North Adams landlord association that “will begin sharing information about good and bad tenants . . .” Of that proposal, tenants rights’ advocate Enid Shields responded, “This tenant blacklisting could only have a further chilling effect on renters who complained, formally or informally, of any substandard housing conditions.”³⁸

The reality of an increasing homeless population led the region’s leading non-profit organization, the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition, to set up a task force to bring in shelter services for those in need. To support the effort, Alan Bashevkin, the coalition’s coordinator, along with two students from the University of Massachusetts Medical School, wrote a 1988 policy paper, backed up with their research findings, entitled “The Need for Comprehensive Shelter Services in the Northern Berkshire Area.”³⁹ Among their findings:

- Emergency Help Line calls that related to homelessness increased by 27% from 1985–87.
- Actual cases of homelessness were on the rise, with 44% of the cases involving families.

- The length of homelessness averaged 18.3 weeks.
- The vast majority of homeless people were in fact local.
- 50% of the households interviewed had at least one member who had been a steady full-time employee, but had lost his or her job through cutbacks or plant closings, or in some cases, they were single mothers who had to quit work to care for their children.
- A shortage of housing subsidies kept some from attaining rentals.

Finally, the task force recognized that, while numerous agencies provided helpful services, those services needed to be centralized.⁴⁰

Two years later, with the help of the Northern Berkshire Community Development Corporation that was supported by state and local funds, the Family Life Support Center (FLSC) opened in Adams. The facility, a large house in Adams just across the town line from North Adams, provided housing for both individuals and families and programs to prevent homelessness. The FLSC was also called the Louison House, in honor of the decades of service that Terry Louison provided North Berkshire through her advocacy for the poor that went back to the 1960s when she first served as director of the local Community Action Agency.

NATIONAL NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES CONTINUE

The cutbacks continued under Democratic administrations as well as Republican ones, and were highlighted by policies promulgated by President Bill Clinton. Clinton pushed hard to “end welfare as we know it,” joining Republicans in changing a program that had originally been fashioned to help mothers and their dependent children into a workfare program, which often took moms away from their children during the day. He also signed legislation increasing the length of prison terms for non-violent offenders, thus accelerating the growth of the prison population, a trend that hit African Americans particularly hard. He turned against his labor union base by getting the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) passed, an act which only increased the loss of middle-class jobs in the Midwest and Northeast.

The kinds of policies that Reagan, Clinton, and successive presidents—including Bush, Obama, and Trump—championed have come to be labeled “neoliberal.” They include promoting the private market; cutting back on

consumer safety, environmental, and financial regulation; reducing aid to the poor and working classes; cutting taxes on corporations and the rich, and privatizing public resources.⁴¹ All the while, the military budget saw increases and American wars continued and accelerated. At the same time, the Democratic Party moved further and further to the right, depending on and supporting Wall Street banks, while ignoring and even growing hostile to its previous connection with labor unions.⁴²

MASS MoCA OPENS

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art grew closer and closer to reality. The road ahead proved not to be without controversy as disputes over poorly designed retraining programs and the paucity of local construction workers hired for the renovation work broke out.⁴³ In 1995, below a huge banner headline, “MoCA HAPPENS!”, the *Transcript* covered an official ceremony at the courtyard of the former Sprague complex before 300 people. Lt. Governor Paul Cellucci signed a document certifying that the museum had satisfied all needed requirements and would be funded by the state. Under a subhead, “Cheers, tears of joy in city,” *Transcript* reporter Rosemary Jette waxed poetic about the future awaiting North Adams:

Jubilation, pride and a sense of excitement not seen in the city for years mixed with the brilliant sunshine and clear blue sky, which were the perfect backdrop to what each official spokesperson at the event described as a cornerstone on the economic growth expected to follow the creation of the cultural factory of the 21st century.⁴⁴

Four years later, on Memorial Day 1999, the museum opened to great acclaim amidst a crowd of 10,000. Thirteen years had passed since Thomas Krens first broached the idea to Mayor Barrett. Ironically, for a city that had put almost all of its eggs in the Sprague basket, only to be devastated when that company left, it seemed to be betting its whole purse on MoCA and what had come to be called the “creative economy.” But could that new economy, powered by art and cultural innovation, be the answer? Would the shift from manufacturing work to service jobs—in hotels and inns, in gift shops, restaurants, and other retail outlets—provide local residents with a living wage and dignified work? Would those things be enough?⁴⁵

In each of its first two years, MoCA attracted about 100,000 visitors.⁴⁶ In addition to the art, the museum offered films, concerts, and dance recitals. Over time, in the North Adams downtown, away from the museum, a mixture of the “old” and the “new” coexisted, with change being the constant. Long staples of the community, Molly’s Bakery and Mr. Cobbler, closed, but so did a relative newcomer, Staples, the city’s only big-box office supply store.

A year after MoCA opened, while vacancies still existed on Main Street, John Kifner of the *New York Times* wrote: “[m]ore than two-thirds of the town’s shops are occupied.” Kifner’s upbeat article mentioned a “downtown-slick restaurant, 55 Main,”⁴⁷ a pricey business that clearly aimed at attracting tourists. Less than two years later, 55 Main had closed, and in 2001, Mayor Barrett faced a popular, youthful challenger in his reelection battle. Barrett’s opponent, Paul Babeu, stood in front of the shuttered restaurant and blamed MoCA for inserting restaurants on its own site, thus taking business away from the city’s downtown:

When you allow restaurants and shops and all kinds of public businesses in MASS MoCA, how are we ever going to get these people to come to our downtown? . . . He [55 Main owner Ray Arsenault] is saying his business was dramatically impacted because of restaurants being allowed into MASS MoCA and an influx of multiple restaurants in the city.

Babeu went on to say that, if he had the power of the mayoralty and of the MoCA Commission head, “I would have never allowed that to take place. We have created a city unto itself in MASS MoCA.”⁴⁸

Several other startups also failed after 55 Main, but later The Hub seemed successful. Less focused on the tourist trade, and with historical photos of North Adams on its walls, this restaurant seemed closer to the tradition of the previous longtime tenant, the Capitol Restaurant, a destination that always had been jammed with lunchtime patrons during the Sprague years.

Five years after MoCA’s opening, a study by the museum claimed that the storefront occupancy rate had hit 75 percent, and that annual visitors to the museum had reached 120,000. But as of 2018, the Mohawk Theater remains still waiting to be refurbished and reopened. Diagonally across the street, also in 2018, the Berkshire Food Project, housed in the Congregational Church, stands as a reminder of the other North Adams, part of the “parallel universe” that the church’s pastor, Reverend Jill Graham, often spoke of.⁴⁹

Unlike Paul Babeu, Mayor John Barrett didn’t chastise MoCA for bringing retail outlets that competed with Main Street onto its campus. Instead, the

mayor blamed downtown property owners for failing to invest in their own locations. He claimed that, because they had not believed in MoCA, “They weren’t ready for it. They didn’t fix up their properties . . . They had no faith.” Barrett went on to state that all of the Main Street property owners resided in Williamstown, with one owner controlling “ninety-percent” of Main Street’s north side. Barrett saw the property owners as being from outside of the North Adams community, and therefore uninterested in improving the city itself.⁵⁰

THE PORCHES INN AND RENTAL HOUSING

One area that MoCA, the mayor, and a wealthy benefactor of MoCA wanted “cleaned up” was a block of River Street directly across from the museum. Old Victorian houses, many in need of repair, had apartments that offered low rent to poor and working-class families; not far from these homes stood a bar, a liquor store, the Harvest Soup Kitchen, and the Salvation Army. In the fall of 1999, Williams College alumnus John S. Wadsworth Jr. complained to Joe Thompson about the River Street view. According to Thompson:

We were standing in the Mezzanine of Building 5 overlooking the Rauschenberg [painting], and you could look out those windows to the south and see our courtyard, and look to the north and see River Street . . . He said something like “Oh, it’s a shame. North Adams is looking so good, and yet when you look out these windows there’s a mess out there.” And I said something like “Well, someone like you could affect a transformation overnight if you wanted to.”⁵¹

Wadsworth, then chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia Ltd., took on the challenge. He met with Nancy Fitzpatrick, whose family owned the iconic Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge as well as the retail business Country Curtains. She agreed to manage an inn that could replace the old housing; he agreed to contribute \$5 million to the project. Less than two years later, The Porches Inn at MASS MoCA opened. Housed in six renovated row houses on River Street, it had fifty-two rooms, each with a television, high-speed internet access, a mini-bar, and antique furniture. The inn also sported a backyard lap pool and Jacuzzi area, several meeting rooms, and fourteen suites. When Porches opened in 2001, its prices ranged from \$150 per night for a guest room to \$430 a night for a two-bedroom suite.⁵²

Just as MoCA replaced the Sprague manufacturing complex across the street, Porches stood as the successor to worker housing in those six buildings, undoubtedly occupied at some point by Sprague employees. Given the prices of the rooms at Porches, no former Sprague worker could have afforded to stay for a night. Ironically, according to a featured travel story in the *Boston Globe*, “the more affluent guests who stay at the inn can enjoy morning breakfast, delivered in bed, carried in galvanized metal lunch boxes workers used to carry . . . adorned with a small vase of flowers on the side.”⁵³

While it appeared that most neighborhood residents approved of the Porches project, it was not without controversy.⁵⁴ One lengthy article by Marjorie Ransom and G. M. Heller in an online newspaper detailed heavy pressure from the mayor’s office to landlords to sell the buildings at low prices and to give the twenty-three tenants just thirty days to vacate their apartments. According to one resident, the new owners didn’t offer her any help in getting a new rental: “Asked how she feels about having to move so quickly, she said, ‘I’ve spent years buying paint and wallpaper to fix up my place. I don’t know where I’m going to go.’”⁵⁵

At the time of the sale, Tina (Bushika) Holland, a single mom of two, had lived at 241 River Street for a few years, and “[d]espite the deterioration of the area, she enjoyed the comforts of a large apartment and some friendly neighbors.” While there could be trouble in the neighborhood, for those living there “everybody looked out for everybody.” Working for the landlord, Tina was in charge of “all the kids they hired” to make repairs. “The outsides looked like crap, but the insides were okay. Granted, [there was] wear and tear on the floor and paint chips and stuff. But most people kept [their apartments] up. They had carpets. Some of the apartments weren’t too cool, but a lot of ’em were in good shape.”

Ms. Holland heard rumors that the house would be sold, but her landlord assured her that it wouldn’t happen. Two days later, she read in the paper that the house, indeed, had been sold. “It ended up the landlord locked me out. He allowed me just enough time to grab enough stuff to get me by for a few days.” She didn’t have time to empty her coolers and freezer, and by the time she found someone who would let her in, she “had to throw out everything . . . Then I found this place on Union Street. I went from six really good-size rooms and an attic to four small rooms and no storage . . . If I could, I’d go back to River Street in a heartbeat.”⁵⁶

Amidst the general rosy outlook on the neighborhood renaissance, neither the *Transcript* nor the *Berkshire Eagle* reported on the hardships faced by the evicted tenants.⁵⁷ In an interview before all the rehabilitation had been completed, Nancy Fitzpatrick, the Porches manager, stood in a messed-up

apartment with broken fixtures on the floor and commented on the previous tenant:

I think this does show something real about this community and the difficulty that some people in it are having with change. You know there's a certain amount of hostility in the way this was left by the people who left here . . . And the so-called gentrification issues. You know, we're not going to avoid them. That's for sure."⁵⁸

Extensive study of MoCA over its first seven years—and its varied effects on North Adams and North Berkshire—pointed out some improvements in housing stock, better self-images of the city, and greater integration of civic and community organizations in the area.⁵⁹ However, economically, by 2006, MoCA's contribution to both direct and indirect job creation totaled only 230, including some seventy-seven museum employees, a far cry from the 600 full-time jobs that Thomas Krens and Joe Thompson had promised at the onset. Even eleven years later, in 2017, job creation had only reached 385, according to economist Stephen Sheppard, a bit under two-thirds of the founders' original goal.⁶⁰

Despite the fact that the museum had not become the “engine of economic development” that it had promised, an introductory film on the museum's website begins with a smiling employee stating that MoCA was the “savior” of North Adams:

When MASS MoCA came here, of course, it provided jobs. And it provided some place for the people to go, because until they came here, [between] the time that manufacturing ended and the time MASS MoCA began, there was really nothing—there was nothing. MASS MoCA is like, well, like the savior of the community.⁶¹

Historically, family incomes in North Adams lagged behind state and national averages. Toward the end of the Sprague years, in 1979, North Adams median family incomes had topped out at just 76 percent of the state median. Ten years later, after the Sprague closing and accelerating deindustrialization, that figure stood at 60 percent. In 1999, when MoCA opened, the percentage stood even lower, 54 percent. Ten years into MoCA, and admittedly with the economic crisis of 2007–2008 in play, the percentage hadn't wavered (55 %). Turning to the comparative unemployment rate between North Adams and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (a measure which historically saw the

city's rate as higher than the state's), in 1999, the local rate was 19 percent higher than the state, a figure that had increased to 23 percent in 2009, ten years after MoCA's opening. By 2014, the difference had reached 32 percent.⁶²

In a 2011 interview with the author, museum director Joseph Thompson made the point that North Adams had become more diverse since MoCA's opening, and that, while the downtown lacked the vibrancy of the 1960s and mid-1970s, more was happening there now than any time since Sprague had left, despite an occupancy rate of just 60–70 percent. When Thompson and Krens had written their business plan for the museum, they'd assumed that only about 5 percent of the visitors would be local (no more than 40 miles away), but that figure turned out to be 20 to 25 percent, reflecting more day trips and fewer tourists who needed to stay overnight, thus hindering the region's economy.

While he saw the museum doing “pretty well,” not only artistically but also financially, Thompson told the author that MoCA's socio-economic impact had been “very slow.” Some of that he blamed on the “market [being] remarkably slow to respond,” due in part to the small number of local landlords on Main Street who did not rise to the occasion. In that sense, he stood in agreement with former Mayor Barrett, who had blamed the downtown landlords for their failure to invest in the new North Adams.

Looking at the big picture, Thompson argued that it would take thirty or forty years to move from the industrial death of the city to a viable post-industrial mode. Thus, one couldn't effectively judge the museum and its economic development success until at least 2025.⁶³ In 2015, in another interview, Thompson remarked that the museum had just marked its fifteenth year of what he termed a thirty-year project—so now one would conceivably need to wait until 2030 to evaluate its economic effectiveness.⁶⁴

MOCA EXPANDS WHILE THE HOSPITAL CLOSES

In March 2014, two dramatically different events illustrated the diverse directions that the museum and the city had taken. On March 5, the state House of Representatives passed a bill granting \$25.4 million to MoCA to improve its facilities, including the addition of 120,000 square feet of gallery space. The addition meant the museum could double its space to 260,000 square feet, which would move it beyond its nearest competitor, in Beacon, New York, DIA: Beacon, and enable it to close in on the total space of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Senate approved the bill as well, and, that August, Governor Deval Patrick signed the legislation, making the

grant official.⁶⁵ Twenty days after the House announced that multi-million-dollar gift to MoCA, the North Adams Regional Hospital (NARH)—the city's largest employer—announced that it would close in just three days.⁶⁶

On a national basis, a hospital closing doesn't often merit big news. After all, about one-third of hospital emergency rooms in the country had been closed over the previous twenty years, and, within the twelve months prior, eighteen hospitals had been shuttered. The closings tended to be in rural, poorer areas where hospitals relied on relatively low Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates. In Massachusetts itself, during the fifty-year period from the mid-1960s until 2014, the number of hospitals declined from about 140 to around 70.⁶⁷ Even so, the circumstances that surrounded the closing of NARH made it extremely unusual. First, despite a law requiring a 90-day notice of closure, the CEO of NARH, Timothy Jones, gave its employees and patients just three days.⁶⁸ Second, while the NARH Board claimed that its bankruptcy emanated from hospital operating losses, the reality indicated that its parent company had incurred huge losses due to trying to run a retirement community and an assisted living facility in neighboring Williamstown.

With the North Adams official unemployment rate already at 8.7 percent, the hospital's closing meant that 530 more employees would be out of work, and a local economist estimated that an additional 194 jobs would be lost in related businesses. In financial terms, the area's economy would suffer a hit of some \$96 million.⁶⁹ That would make the closing the most devastating blow to the local region since the end of Sprague and the subsequent loss of 581 jobs in 1985. Former Mayor John Barrett III, who had been in office in 1984 when Sprague announced it would move its headquarters out of North Adams, called the hospital's precipitous closing worse, since, unlike the Sprague case, the three-day notice allowed no time to plan a response. Barrett warned, "It could be catastrophic; that's why the governor has to come in immediately."⁷⁰

But the loss of hospital services, including the emergency room, a facility which had seen 20,000 visits the previous year, proved even more threatening to the local community. The nearest hospital, Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, lay twenty miles to the south over crowded hilly roads, which were dangerous in the winter, and the distance proved even greater for residents in southern Vermont and in the mountainous area around Florida, Massachusetts, who used NARH.

On Tuesday, March 25, 2014, NARH CEO Timothy Jones announced that the hospital would close on Friday, March 28.⁷¹ While local residents knew that the hospital faced financial obstacles and had recently closed its

psychiatric wing, Jones's devastating message sent the region into shock, especially with only days to prepare a response. Robin Simonetti, a short-stay unit nurse, remembers receiving a call from her daughter who worked in medical records and said, "I heard we're closing." Robin replied, "No. I bet it's an announcement that we're either merging or being bought. They're not going to close a hospital. They just can't."⁷²

At the hospital itself, Cindy Bird, SEIU chapter secretary and a twenty-six-year veteran at NARH, described a chaotic scene:

There was an email saying [there would be a] mandatory meeting in the cafeteria . . . Everybody was screaming and saying what's going on . . . We made our way down to the cafeteria, it was too crowded. It was shoulder-to-shoulder—people were crying, people in the hallway couldn't hear anything and were asking, people in the room were shushing us.

Then CEO Jones made the announcement. Two days later, on the final morning of work at the hospital, Bird described an angry Jones, upset that "the unions weren't going quietly":

We said, "Why didn't you tell us sooner?" He became very defensive and started screaming at us, so bad that in the adjacent cafeteria there was an employee assistance person . . . She was going to call the police, she thought it was a maintenance person upset and devastated about losing their job.

In an interview over a year later, Jones denied acting angrily and described his efforts to keep the hospital open. He claimed that as late as two days before the announcement, he tried to get a deal with NARH's bondholders. "We thought we were going to get that done, and it just didn't play out that way, unfortunately."⁷³ Mike Wilber, former union president at X-Tyal, immediately called for an occupation of the hospital to keep it from closing. "The only way we can fight this outrage is to show up," Wilber stated. He went on to say, "If you want [to] do anything, you have to fight. If you don't get hundreds of people, it means they really don't care If people want it to be open, they've got to be willing to fight to keep it open." Mayor Richard Alcombright phoned the governor, who "pledge[d] to do whatever he can to try to bring a positive outcome to this." Keeping hope alive, the mayor continued, "Until I hear that nothing can be done, it's not closed."⁷⁴



Veronica Turner, Executive Vice President of 1199 SEIU state-wide, was part of a union contingent from Boston to offer support to hospital employees. Source: Jack Guerino, *iBerkshires*.



March 28, 2014 hospital closing. Karen Malloy, dietary worker and member of 1199 Service Employees International Union (SEIU) hugs Mike O'Brien, retired chapter union chair. Source: Jack Guerino, *iBerkshires*.



More protesters at the hospital's last day. Source: Jack Guerino, *Berkshires*.



As the hospital closes, the man and the sign say it all! Source: Jack Guerino, *Berkshires*.



About ninety hospital workers and supporters head to Boston with 12,000 signatures on petitions calling on Governor Deval Patrick and other state leaders to reopen the full-service hospital. Source: Gillian Jones, *Berkshire Eagle*.



Mike O'Brien, former chapter chair 1199 SEIU, and his daughter, Cindy Bird, chapter secretary, next to him at a community vigil, First Congregational Church, North Adams, March 30. Source: Gillian Jones, *Berkshire Eagle*.



At the first anniversary of the hospital's closing, March 28, 2015, a caravan of protesters traveled from North Adams to Pittsfield to demand a full-service hospital. Here the protesters gather at North Adams City Hall prior to the drive to Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield.



First anniversary of the hospital's closing. At the protest in Pittsfield, North County Cares Coalition co-chair Dick Dassatti spoke out. To his left, co-chair Jim Lipa holds an "I CARE" message. Dassatti stated: "[I]f the government can bail out the banks because they're too big to fail, we have to let our government officials know that hospitals are too big to fail." Source: Peter Dassatti, *Shutting NARH*.

The day after the announcement, two public health scholars from Boston University released a three-page document arguing that Governor Deval Patrick had the power to declare a public health emergency and keep the hospital open. Alan Sager and Deborah Socolar, co-directors of B.U.'s Health Reform Program, cited the justifications and precedent for such an action and included the long distances and travel times that North Berkshire residents would have to endure to reach another hospital. Furthermore, they made the point that, since residents in the service area were older and poorer than the state average, they more likely needed hospital care but were less likely to be able to travel longer distances to access medical attention. Finally, the state had a Distressed Hospitals Trust Fund that could be used to keep the hospital going. Toward the end of their document, they stated: "Now is the time for action, not words." But the governor chose not to act.⁷⁵

For City Councilor Jennifer Breen, the news "feels like a death or worse." Brian O'Grady, the director of Williamstown's Council of Aging, added some specifics to the consequences of the closing: "It's a total disaster. It's not just affecting seniors. It's affecting the 530 people who lost their jobs. What happens to them? . . . Every week we bring whole bunches of people up there for blood tests, the Wound Clinic, the eye doctor, whatever."

Without a hospital, let alone an emergency room, the local ambulance service faced a huge time burden. John Meany Jr., North Adams Ambulance Service general manager, noted that with NARH, turnaround time for local trips amounted to just fifteen to twenty minutes, but with the closure, the time increased to one-and-a-half to two hours to get to the hospital in Pittsfield or Bennington, Vermont.⁷⁶

A day after the Tuesday closing announcement, more than 1,000 residents had signed an anti-closing petition and a Facebook anti-closure group had amassed 4,513 likes. On Wednesday evening, after a community meeting, sixty protesters showed up at the hospital's lobby to demonstrate their anger. Two NARH employee unions—1199 Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA)—as well as the April 4th Coalition—a community-union group that rallied locally in support of collective bargaining in Wisconsin in 2011—issued a call for an occupation of the hospital on the day of its closing.⁷⁷

On that afternoon, a crowd of former employees and supporters congregated at the hospital and refused to leave. Sensing they would need help, the North Adams Police Department put out a call for mutual aid from around the county. When the help arrived, the protesters left the hospital to meet at the American Legion to plan a strategy.⁷⁸

Regional government and state officials voiced their concerns over the closing, but, in the final analysis, they did nothing to stop it. No legislator or government official offered an explanation as to the ease by which the same state could find over \$25 million to finance the museum's expansion, but at the same time could not figure out a way to save the region's most vital institution. The failure of a Democratic governor, a heavily Democratic legislature, and a fully Democratic Berkshire delegation to keep the hospital going, while at the same time finding millions for MoCA to expand, symbolized the shift in Democratic Party policies over the previous thirty-five years. Neo-liberalism had hit home.

Starting with deregulation under President Jimmy Carter and continuing the right-leaning direction of President Ronald Reagan during President Clinton's two terms, the party had become Republican-lite. With President Obama taking office amidst a financial crisis, the big banks that had precipitated the crisis received billions to stay afloat while homeowners who could not pay their mortgages received foreclosure notices. Both political parties paid homage to big business and Wall Street. Giving \$25 million for MoCA to expand could only be seen as an example of conservative "supply side economics"—give money to big institutions in the hope that it would trickle down to ordinary citizens and to Main Street.

Hospital employees and local residents who protested NARH's closing saw Berkshire Health Systems (BHS), parent of the sizable Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) in Pittsfield, buy the bankrupt hospital for the bargain price of \$4 million at the end of summer 2014. Subsequently BHS restarted the emergency room and instituted several outpatient units, but—despite the needs reflected in a state-mandated study and an analysis by the Massachusetts Nurses Association⁷⁹—refused to make the North Adams unit (now Berkshire North) a full-service hospital. Residents continued to demand a full-service hospital, like BHS offered in its South Berkshire facility, Fairview in Great Barrington, which provided services for a smaller, but more affluent, population, with fewer annual births than the North Berkshire population.

As for the more than 500 hospital employees who lost their jobs when the hospital closed, about half have been hired by BHS for work either in their North Berkshire campus or at the Pittsfield hospital. However, the typical hire became part of the country's growing contingent labor force, working on a per diem basis, with no benefits and putting in fewer hours than she or he would like.⁸⁰

Without a full-service hospital, North Berkshire residents had to travel more and more to BMC in Pittsfield, putting a greater strain on that hospital's resources. In particular, nurses there complained about understaffing and

increased levels of stress in handling a greater population. According to the nurses' union, while patient volume increased 20 percent after the NARH closure, the staffing level had not gone up. (BMC's chief operating officer countered that the increase had only been 10 percent.) Not finding an adequate response from the hospital management, the BMC nurses voted to picket over the staffing levels.⁸¹

At the picket line, on a snowy Berkshire day eight months after NARH's shutdown, with motorists beeping support for the nurses, Shannon Weloure, RN, described a situation in which "[a]ll of our units are horribly understaffed." Prior to the North Adams closing, patient support was already "at a dangerous level . . . It's getting unsafe by the day." A fellow nurse, Judy Sharpe, spoke of overcrowded conditions leading to patients being placed in hallways. "The hospital," she exclaimed, "has welcomed these patients [from North County], but they haven't provided us with the staffing resources to deal with them."⁸²

In North County, activists continued to pressure government officials and senior officials at BMC to make North Adams's hospital full-service. Calling themselves the North County Cares Coalition (NCCC), they met on a weekly basis, lobbied their elected representatives, participated on a local cable television show and, on a cold, snowy March day—the one-year anniversary of the hospital's closing—they picketed in front of BMC.⁸³ They also drove down from North Adams City Hall in a caravan of cars, illustrating the time it took to travel to BMC for health-related problems.

Dick Dassatti, one of NCCC's co-directors, spoke to the protesters and the crowd in front of Berkshire Medical Center. He placed the demands for a full-service hospital in the context of the North Berkshire struggles:

This is not about the closing of a factory or a business. It's not the loss of our local newspaper. It's not the loss of local ownership of our radio station. It's not that the state closed our employment office in North Berkshire, closed our welfare office in North Berkshire. We draw the line here. When we lose our full service hospital, you've hit the tipping point . . . [W]e cannot accept our elected officials' lack of leadership and commitment to serve our community . . . [I]f the government can bail out the banks because they're too big to fail, we have to let our government officials know that hospitals are too big to fail.⁸⁴

But government officials refused to intervene. State Senator Adam Hinds, who was elected in 2016 to represent North Adams and all of the Berkshires,

illustrated that conservative approach when he explained why he supported state investments in MoCA even while the hospital serving North Berkshire lacked a full-service component. Neither when he briefly led the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition nor when he campaigned and began to serve in the Senate did he advocate for a full-service hospital. He did agree that maintaining medical services in North Adams is “a very real concern . . . But [w]hen it comes to making the decision of what the state is going to invest in, we are going to invest in what seems to be demonstrating the most promise.” And, for Hinds, the promise seemed to be with MoCA and its supportive cultural attractions: “They have created the buzz—you see that in other new projects and new investments coming in from outside Massachusetts. Every project has a critical juncture and MASS MoCA has reached that juncture.”⁸⁵

This Editor’s Choice Award selection was reproduced with permission of the White River Press and is excerpted from Maynard Seider’s *The Gritty Berkshires: A People’s History from the Hoosac Tunnel to Mass MoCA* (2019). This excerpt includes the Introduction (pages 1–7) and Ch. 24 “The Region Gains a Museum and Loses a Hospital” (pages 458–499). Note that the lengthy, highly informative endnotes have been shortened for this excerpt.

HJM

Notes

1. Maynard Seider, *A Year in the Life of a Factory* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1993), originally published by Singlejack Books, San Pedro, California, 1984.
2. The mother town of Adams, incorporated in 1778, was named in honor of Samuel Adams, a Revolutionary War leader. W. F. Spear, *History of North Adams, Mass., 1749-1885* (North Adams: Hoosac Valley News Printing House, 1885).
3. By the time the Hoosic River flowed through Williamstown, its power had declined and the volume of the smaller Green River’s flow was too low for significant industry to develop. Robert R. R. Brooks, editor, *Williamstown: The First Two Hundred Years, 1753-1953 and Twenty Years Later, 1953-1973* (Williamstown Historical Commission, 1974, second edition), 103.
4. The focus on the Northern Berkshires, which I call the “Gritty Berkshires,” is not to suggest that the remainder of the county doesn’t share some of the same mill history, labor struggles, and contemporary economic problems.

5. Sometimes the mountain range is spelled Hoosic and the river Hoosac, but Hoosac and Hoosic are most commonly used for the mountain and the river, respectively. Historian John H. Lockwood writes that the southern part of Adams possessed richer soil, but the northern part had “the greater water power [which] gave factory sites a wonderful opportunity to carry forward their numerous enterprises.” John H. Lockwood, *Western Massachusetts: A History, 1636–1925*, Vol. 2 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1926), 491.)
6. Richard D. Birdsall, *Berkshire County: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959); Judith A. McGaw, *Most Wonderful Machine: Mechanization and Social Change in Berkshire Paper Making, 1801-1885* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1887), 23.
7. Terrence E. Coyne, “The Hoosac Tunnel: Massachusetts’ Western Gateway,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, 23: 1 (Winter 1995), on the building of the tunnel. For an early article on the Chinese in North Adams, see Frederick Rudolph, “Chinamen in Yankeedom: Anti-Unionism in Massachusetts in 1870,” *American Historical Review* 53 (October 1947). For a more recent analysis of the Chinese experience, see Anthony W. Lee, *A Shoemaker’s Story: Being Chiefly about French Canadian Immigrants, Enterprising Photographers, Rascal Yankees, and Chinese Cobblers in a Nineteenth-Century Town* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
8. The North Berkshire sense of regional identity exists to this day with the largest human services organization, the North Berkshire Community Coalition, still going strong after more than twenty-five years. In the 1980s, two regional coalitions used “North Berkshire” as part of their identification: The North Berkshire Welfare Coalition and North Berkshire Labor Coalition, both of which played roles in combating the consequences of welfare cutbacks and deindustrialization.
9. Federal Writers’ Project of the Works Progress Administration for Massachusetts, *The Berkshire Hills* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1939), 10.
10. Jay Louis Nierenberg, *North Adams: A New England Mill Town: A Political, Economic, and Psychological Study* (Williamstown, MA: Williams College, 1942), 122.
11. *Berkshire Eagle*, Oct. 8, 1983.
12. While Adams Print Works ended in bankruptcy, Waverly Fabrics, its largest customer and operator of an Adams warehouse, continued to operate. *Berkshire Eagle*, Nov. 19, 1984; *Transcript*, Sept. 9, 1986; *Transcript*, Oct. 11, 1989.
13. The coalition later changed its name to the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and focused on neighborhood organizing, teen issues, transportation, homelessness, and food sustainability. “Celebrating Twenty Years,” Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, 2006, brochure.
14. Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 6. For GE and Pittsfield, see June C. Nash, *From Tank Town to High Tech: The Clash of Community and Industrial Cycles* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) and Max H. Kirsch, *In the Wake of the Giant: Multinational*

Restructuring in a New England Community (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998). For Chicago and Nabisco, see Marc Doussard, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore, “After Deindustrialization: Uneven Growth and Economic Inequality in ‘Postindustrial’ Chicago,” *Economic Geography*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (Apr. 2009), 183–207. For Monticello, Indiana, see Earl Wysong, Robert Perrucci, and David Wright, *The New Class Society: Goodbye American Dream?* 4th ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

15. David Brady and Michael Wallace, “Deindustrialization and Poverty: Manufacturing Decline and AFDC Reciprocity in Lake County, Indiana 1964–93,” *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 2001), 321–358, 323, referring to a 1987 U.S. Senate study.

16. Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2016), 24.

17. James Feyrer, Bruce Sacerdote, et al., “Did the Rust Belt Become Shiny? A Study of Cities and Counties That Lost Steel and Auto Jobs in the 1980s [with Comments],” *Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs* (2007), 41–102, 45. Also see Robert Forrant, *Metal Fatigue: American Bosch and the Demise of Metalworking in the Connecticut River Valley* (Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Co., 2009) for a study of the greater Springfield, Massachusetts area.

18. Kathryn Marie Dudley, *The End of the Line: Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 33.

19. Forrant, 170.

20. *Berkshire Eagle*, Oct. 9, 1984.

21. Despite the great need for work, dissatisfaction at X-Tyal grew so great that the yearly turnover rate reached a high of 25 to 30 percent. Compare this to the Sprague turnover rate of about 3 percent in 1982 and 1983. “The Work Force,” I.U.E. Local 200, Nov. 27, 1984.

22. *Boston Globe*, March 2, 1992, in Kay Oehler, Stephen C. Sheppard, et al., *Shifting Sands in Changing Communities: The Neighborhoods of North Adams, Massachusetts* (Williamstown, MA: Center for Creative Community Development, 2006). Also see, Alan Bashevkin, “Social Costs of Economic Decline: Northern Berkshire Region 1980–1990,” Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition, Jan. 23, 1991.

23. Nelson Lichenstein, *The State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 235.

24. See the documentary film *Downside Up* by Nancy Kelly.

25. Pushing the “prestige” value of the museum might remind some cynics of the buttons that blue-collar Harvard workers wore during a contract campaign with the administration: “You Can’t Eat Prestige.”

26. Interview by Alison Pincus on Oct. 10, 2011, in “*The Mark of Reliability*”: *From Sprague Electric to MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA* (Williamstown, MA: Williams College, 2012), 97.

27. Interview with author, 2011.

28. *Transcript*, Oct. 19, 1988, 1; *Berkshire Eagle*, March 8, 1989, B6; *Transcript*, April 6, 1989, 1; *ibid.*, April 15, 1988, Oct. 14, 1988, 1, Dec. 9, 1988.
29. Cathy Stanton, "Ron Kuivila's 'Visitations': Social history as art at MASS MoCA," unpublished paper for FAH 160/Museum History and Theory, Tufts University, Dec. 21, 1999, 7, and interviews by author.
30. Maynard Seider, "Is this what we want?" *Berkshire Eagle*, Feb. 17, 1989, A9.
31. Grace Glueck, "A New Museum's Bright Future Grows Dim," *New York Times*, April 11, 1990.
32. Grace Glueck, "Massachusetts Says New Art Museum Must Help Pay Costs," *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 1991; Joseph Thompson, "Director's Statement," *Mass MoCA: From Mill to Museum*, ed. Jennifer Trainer (North Adams: MASS MoCA Publications, 2000). For a description and analysis of where the project stood in 1995, including the lack of local input, see Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), Ch. 3, "A Museum in the Berkshires," with Philip Kasinitz.
33. Daniel Weinberger, "The Causes of Homelessness in America," *Democracy Now*, June 11, 2004; Peter Dreier, "Reagan's Real Legacy," *Nation*, Feb. 4, 2011.
34. Much of the material and references in this paragraph and the six succeeding ones come from a paper by Enid Shields, *How the Other Half Lived in the Late 1980s: The North Adams Tenants Organization and the Struggle for Decent, Affordable Housing in a Former Massachusetts Mill Town* (North Adams, MA: Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, 2010).
35. *Transcript*, Feb. 22, 1988; earlier quote in paragraph from Shields, 26.
36. Linda Burchard, "Housing tour dramatizes low-income tenants' plight," *Berkshire Eagle*, Aug. 14, 1988; and Paul Moriarty, "Councilors 'awakened' to housing stock conditions in city," *Transcript*, Aug. 15, 1988. Quotations are from the *Transcript*.
37. *Transcript*, Sept. 9, 1988 and in Shields.
38. Eileen Gloster and Bill Densmore, "Landlords react to code cleanup: 'Tenants' fault'," *Advocate*, July 20, 1988; Shields, 30.
39. Bashevkin's co-authors for the August 1988 paper were Kelton Burbank and Andrew Schames from the UMass Medical School.
40. More in-depth findings and discussion can be found in the document by Alan Bashevkin, Kelton Burbank, and Andrew Shames, "The Need for Comprehensive Shelter Services in the Northern Berkshires Area," Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition, Aug., 1988.
41. A case could be made that neo-liberal policies began with President Jimmy Carter, who introduced the deregulation policies, specifically of trucking, airlines, and finance. Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 243–4.
42. For a description of that shift, covering the years from Bill Clinton's presidency up to and including Barack Obama's two terms in office, see Thomas Frank, *Listen Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People?* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2016).

43. *Transcript*, Nov. 8, 9, and 19.
44. *Transcript*, April 21, 1995.
45. In an interview that same year, MoCA curator Laura Heon matter-of-factly emphasized the economic development goal of the museum: “To fulfill that mission we need to bring in lots of rich New Yorkers. We’re very upfront about that.” Cathy Stanton, “Outside the Frame: Assessing Partnerships between Arts and Historical Organizations,” *The Public Historian*, 27, 1 (Winter 2005), 19–37, 29.
46. Interview with Joe Thompson by Jennifer J. Card, “From Industrial to Postindustrial: The Rebirth of North Adams, Massachusetts” (Amherst, MA: Hampshire College Senior Thesis, 2002), Nov. 7, 2001, 69.
47. John Kifner, “Museum Brings Town Back to Life,” *New York Times*, May 30, 2000, A14.
48. Karen Gardner, “Babeu: MASS MoCA limits downtown opportunities,” *Transcript*, Nov. 3, 2001, A 1, 8.
49. *New York Times*, May 28, 2004, B 31; Graham interview in *Farewell to Factory Towns?*
50. Card, *From Industrial to Postindustrial*, 73–4, and very much the same perspective in *Downside Up*.
51. Mark Randall, *Transcript*, May 20, 2000.
52. Williamstown *Advocate*, March 6, 2002, in Card, 79. When discussing with my class the nightly costs for staying at Porches, one local student responded in disbelief, “Why would anyone spend \$300 a night to sleep on River Street!”
53. *Boston Globe*, Oct. 14, 2001, in Card, 79.
54. Card, 80.
55. Marjorie Ransom and G. M. Heller, “Details emerge about sleazy deals: Fitzpatrick’s Porches Inn Displaces 23 North Adams Families,” *Berkshire Record*, May 24, 2000, accessed at <http://berkshirerecord.com/porches.html>.
56. Not all tenants had such a favorable impression of their years at the River Street apartments. Joe Manning’s interviews of them, including Ms. Holland, can be found online at www.morningsonmaplestreet.com
57. Ransom and Heller.
58. *Downside Up*.
59. Stephen C. Sheppard et al., *Culture and Revitalization: The Economic Effects of MASS MoCA on its Community*, C3DK Report NA3. 2006; and Kay Oehler et al., *Network Analysis and the Social Impact of Cultural Arts Organizations*, C3D Report NA4. 2007.
60. Linda Enerson, “The Promise of MASS MoCA,” *CommonWealth Magazine*, 22, 3 (Summer 2017), 44–45.
61. Bob Canedy, Security, on MASS MoCA website, accessed at massmoca.org.
62. Adam Forrester, class paper, North Adams, MA: Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, 2010.
63. Interview by the author, Nov. 29, 2011.
64. Steve Barnes, *Times-Union*, Jan. 18, 2015.

65. Adam Shanks, *Berkshire Eagle*, March 6, 2014; Judith H. Dobrzynski, *New York Times*, Aug. 20, 2014.
66. Forty-one years earlier, another local hospital closed. The W.B. Plunkett Memorial Hospital in Adams, smaller than the NARH, was closed in 1973 after sixty years of operation (*Berkshire Eagle*, Nov. 1, 1982).
67. Alan Sager statement in Grant Walker, “LGH-Tufts union maintains local control, boosts power to face industry challenges,” *Lowell Sun*, April 20, 2014.
68. The three-day notice apparently became the new low bar for hospital administrators to announce closings. Sandy Eaton, “The Demise of Acute Health Care in Quincy, Massachusetts: Implications for Surviving Community Hospitals,” *Open Media Boston*, Jan. 6, 2015.
69. Stephen Sheppard, *The Economic Impact of Closure of the North Adams Regional Hospital*, March 30, 2014 (Williams College, Center for Creative Community Development).
70. Jim Therrien, *Berkshire Eagle*, March 26, 2014.
71. The hospital’s trustees wrote a letter to the staff, not commenting on the three-day notice, but stating: “Everyone in the organization, along with our state and federal legislators, has been working to avoid this outcome. In the end, as revenues declined precipitously it was simply impossible to continue operations. We had hoped for purchase by another party, but [as] our financial position quickly weakened it became clear that we could not complete a sale.” Tammy Daniels, *iBerkshires*, March 26, 2014 (from letter in possession of the *Berkshire Eagle*).
72. *Shutting NARH*, a documentary written and directed by Peter Dassatti, 2015.
73. Quotes from Bird and Jones from David Brooks, “Concord Hospital COO oversaw closure of Mass. Hospital in 2014,” *Monitor*, Nov. 8, 2015.
74. “Local Reactions Continue Over Hospital’s Closing,” Tammy Daniels, *iBerkshires*, March 26, 2014.
75. The document is headlined in all caps “Gov. Patrick Should Declare A Public Health Emergency To Prevent North Adams Regional Hospital From Closing,” March 26, 2014.
76. “Local Reactions Continue . . .” op cit.
77. Edward Damon, “Community expresses outrage, demonstrations planned through Friday,” *Berkshire Eagle*, March 27, 2014.
78. Pittsfield Police Department Sergeant James Roccabruna letter, March 29, 2014, RE: NARH Protest Detail.
79. The state’s Department of Public Health had hired Stroudwater Associates of Maine to evaluate NARH’s service region for its health care needs and led to what came to be called the Stroudwater Report (Stroudwater Associates, *Healthcare Market Assessment: Northern Berkshire County, Massachusetts*, September 17, 2014). The Massachusetts Nurses Association study is entitled “Berkshire Medical Center North (BMCN): The Case for Restoring a Full Service Hospital for Northern Berkshire County.”

80. Telephone interview with Julie Blanchard, phlebotomist, resident of Clarksburg, who worked thirty-five years at NARH and ended up commuting for work to Pittsfield (May 1, 2017).

81. Ibid.; “Berkshire Medical Center: Nurses to picket staffing levels; hospital disputes union’s statistics,” *Berkshire Eagle*, Dec. 4, 2014.

82. *Shutting NARH*.

83. Scott Stafford, “Advocates say Northern Berkshire full service hospital sustainable, deserved,” *Berkshire Eagle*, Mar. 28, 2015.

84. *Shutting NARH*.

85. Enerson, 47.