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Article Summary: Before the announcement of the development of the bomber plant at Fort Crook in 1940 [to be leased to the Glenn L Martin Company of Baltimore], Bellevue was a village with only 1,184 inhabitants. Knowing that it was soon to experience rapid population growth, public leaders moved quickly to change its status to a city, developed a comprehensive zoning plan, and prepared for the changes that the plant would bring.

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Photographs / Images: Nester's Supermarket built by E C Westcott in 1944; Bellevue headquarters of the Chinese Mission Society, operated by the Columban Fathers

Public Leadership in a World War II Boom Town: Bellevue, Nebraska

By Jerold Simmons

World War II boom towns have attracted surprisingly little historical attention. Only a handful of the over 200 communities which recorded sudden population growth during the war, have been studied in detail. Consequently, knowledge of how these often small communities adapted to rapid, war-related growth is sketchy. In particular, we know little about how local public officials sought to meet the challenges and difficulties which accompanied this growth. Most of the existent studies deal with communities in which large-scale federal housing projects were constructed and where, as a result, federal agencies played a key role in the process of adaptation.² But in many communities the housing needs of the workers were left to the private sector, and the primary burden of planning and providing essential services fell on the shoulders of city government. Such communities have not been examined. As a result, we know little of the procedures local leaders used to provide these services, the degree to which they were successful, or how their efforts were perceived by their constituents. This paper is designed to offer a few tentative suggestions to help fill this void based on the experience of Bellevue, Nebraska.

In 1940 Bellevue was a quiet, relatively isolated village situated 12 miles south of Omaha. Its 1,184 residents occupied 306 habitable dwellings scattered widely over the tree-graced heights above the Missouri River.³ The setting was lovely, but beyond its claim to eminence as the state's first settled community, Bellevue had little to distinguish it from dozens of other small towns in eastern Nebraska. Just beyond the village limits, however, were two regionally significant institutions. Immediately to the west stood the American headquarters of the Columban Fathers, a society of priests which recruited,

trained, and supported missionaries for activities in China. To the southwest was Fort Crook, a regional Army post which housed the Seventh Infantry.⁴ But neither of these facilities had more than an indirect impact on the leisurely pace of activities in Bellevue. The Columbans drew most of their employees from the Catholic parishes of Omaha, and the soldiers of Fort Crook largely avoided the small liquor-free community to the east in favor of the saloons near the fort's entrance or the more varied pleasures of the metropolis to the north, Omaha.

As in most small Nebraska towns of the 1930s, the tempo of life was slow in Bellevue, and village government reflected this leisurely pace. The village board, most of whose members were employed in Omaha, conducted the community's affairs informally and provided few services. There were no paved streets, no street lights or signs, and in most areas of the village, no sanitary or storm sewers. The water system was inadequate and police and fire protection distant. Yet most residents seemed to find Bellevue a pleasant place to live. Its lovely setting, relative isolation, and low taxes more than offset the lack of community services. From their perspective, Bellevue was a fine place to raise a family, free from the hustle and bustle of urban living. But that was soon to change.

On December 6, 1940, a decision was announced in Washington which would quickly transform this sleepy village into a bustling boom town. As part of Franklin Roosevelt's recently announced program of military preparation, the War Department disclosed its plans to construct a major bomber assembly plant on the Fort Crook military reservation. The plant, which after construction would be leased to the Glenn L. Martin Company of Baltimore, was slated to include nine buildings, the largest of which would encompass an area of slightly over one-half million square feet. Employment projections were initially vague, with early estimates ranging from 10,000 to 27,000, but whatever the final count would be, none could doubt that the new facility would precipitate a dramatic transformation in eastern Nebraska in general and Bellevue in particular.⁵

The War Department's selection of Fort Crook as site of the assembly plant had little to do with Bellevue. It was an

Omaha triumph, the product of an intensive lobbying campaign by the Omaha Chamber of Commerce which sought to attract new defense industry to the metropolitan area. Yet the Fort Crook location also conformed with War Department policy during the immediate pre-war years. For both strategic and political reasons, War Department planners wanted to locate plants in the Midwest. They thought it wise to place new plants, where possible, at least 200 miles from the nation's borders to insure against enemy attack. But this strategic reasoning seems to have been less important than the desire of the Roosevelt administration to pacify midwestern business and political interests who demanded that defense contracts be distributed throughout the country. Midwesterners felt they had been cheated during World War I because the bulk of military contracts had been awarded to East Coast firms, and those firms in turn had drained much of the skilled labor force away from the region. Midwesterners were determined that this would not happen again, and the Roosevelt Administration complied with their demands.⁶

Once the decision to locate new bomber plants in the Midwest had been made, Fort Crook emerged as a logical site. Its location near a large urban area promised to minimize the problems of providing housing and other facilities for the thousands of plant workers. Planners accurately assumed that most of the labor force required for the plant could be drawn from the immediate Omaha area and that housing for any additional workers could be provided by local builders, without the need for costly public housing.⁷ The Fort Crook site also had the advantage of being within the confines of a military reserve, so that the plant could be easily secured from prying eyes.⁸

The announcement of the plant's location ushered in a period of intense excitement and activity in nearby Bellevue. Its leaders confidently predicted an almost immediate three-fold increase in population and a building boom which would transform their sleepy village into Nebraska's fastest growing community. At the same time, they recognized that such rapid growth would severely strain the town's ability to respond. The sudden influx of 3,000 new residents was bound to overburden the already fragile system of village services and would

necessitate the building of new schools, streets, water and sewer lines, and the adoption of new ordinances governing home and business construction. In short, Bellevue would be forced to abandon its quiet, almost casual system of local government or be left in utter chaos.

Bellevue's leaders were determined that the anticipated boom not "become a thing of discord and confusion."⁹ Consequently, shortly after the bomber plant announcement, the village board took a series of steps designed to insure that local government would be able to meet these new demands. To expand its authority, the board took advantage of the recently released 1940 census figures to proclaim that Bellevue was no longer a village and would henceforth operate under the laws governing Nebraska cities—a power granted to communities of over 1,000 population.¹⁰

Changing the form of government was only a first step. The primary task was to insure that local government would be able to supervise the community's expansion so as to limit that growth to acceptable forms and patterns. That meant the adoption of a comprehensive zoning plan. To that end, in February, 1941, the village board appointed a planning and zoning commission and hired a professional engineer to help the commission assess community needs and an attorney to assist in drafting the necessary codes and ordinances.¹¹ The commission's task, however, was not limited to providing a design for the community's future growth. Its zoning plan would also need to meet two much more immediate requirements. First, it had to satisfy the Federal Housing Administration so that Bellevue builders would qualify for federally insured loans. FHA area representative, Holger Holm, had previously warned local officials that Bellevue would not qualify for loan guarantees until the community had adopted an acceptable zoning ordinance and construction codes. Without the loans, major home construction could not begin.¹²

Equally important, the zoning plan had to provide some means of controlling the growing number of trailer homes which began appearing on Bellevue's vacant lots shortly after the bomber plant announcement. Given the shortage of housing, the arrival of trailer homes was probably inevitable, but

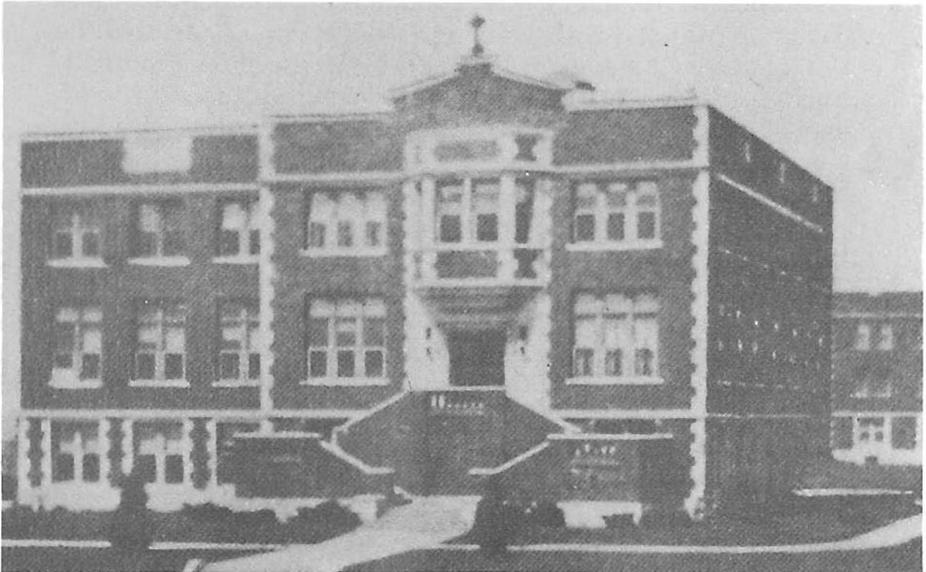
local residents, like village board chairman F. Hoyt Freeman, were fearful that these transient dwellings would soon overwhelm the community, creating unmanageable health problems, diminishing property values, and destroying its attractiveness "as a home for families." They were determined that Bellevue not become "a hangout for campfollowers."¹³

The fear of unregulated trailer homes gave an urgency to the work of the planning and zoning commission. Its members labored feverishly during the remainder of February and by the end of the month had prepared an ordinance for the control of trailer homes and a 20-page zoning plan which restricted such dwellings to a small area in the south-central section of town, near enough for ready access to Fort Crook, but well apart from the community's "better" homes.¹⁴ In spite of the hasty drafting, the zoning ordinance and the subsequent building codes adopted by the board during March and April, 1941, were quite successful. They defined the areas of future growth, established acceptable building standards, resolved the problem of trailer homes, and most importantly met the requirements of the FHA. With FHA loans assured, the way was opened for the major building boom which village leaders anticipated.

Bellevue's housing boom was also facilitated by a series of county tax auctions conducted throughout 1941 which enabled prospective builders to acquire large parcels of Bellevue property at low prices. For decades, Bellevue had been a community characterized by its vacant lots. Its original founders had counted on the community's becoming the territorial capital and thus had platted a city with over 4,000 lots, the vast majority of which had never been occupied.¹⁵ By the 1930s many were tax delinquent. Consequently, in 1938 the Sarpy County commissioners ordered the tax sale of 1,300 Bellevue lots. Legal problems delayed the sale until January 11, 1941, when an initial block of 200 was offered at auction in the county courthouse.¹⁶ The recent bomber plant announcement generated interest in the lots, but surprisingly the bids were much lower than county officials anticipated. In fact, many lots sold for as little as \$3 and the average price paid was less than \$15.¹⁷ Several factors combined to hold prices down at this January sale. First, the sale was not well advertised so



Nester's Supermarket built by E. C. Westcott in 1944, was the first commercial building in the new Bellevue business district . . . (Below) Bellevue headquarters of the Chinese Mission Society, operated by the Columban Fathers.



the number of bidders was restricted. More importantly, the primary bidders, most of whom lived in Bellevue, seemed to have reached an understanding whereby each was allowed to bid on the property he wanted without more than token competition from the others.¹⁸ When an outsider entered the auction, he adopted other tactics. R. M. McLaughlin, a Bellevuete who was not a party to the understanding, arrived at the auction late. When he joined the bidding and thus forced prices up, the larger buyers induced the auctioneer to begin offering whole blocks rather than individual lots, thereby forcing McLaughlin and other small buyers out of the auction.¹⁹

Yet even without this apparent collusion, it is unlikely that Bellevue lots would have attracted substantial prices in January, 1941. At that point, there were still rumors that the War Department might change its decision and locate the bomber plant elsewhere. Even if the War Department remained firm in its plans, there was still uncertainty about FHA loan guarantees without which the lots would have been valueless. Consequently, investors were reluctant to gamble heavily on Bellevue property. The second tax sale, held on March 13, 1941, attracted a larger crowd and considerably more spirited bidding. Construction on the bomber plant had begun on March 3 and the new zoning ordinance assured the availability of FHA loans, so Bellevue lots seemed a more attractive investment.²⁰ In the five succeeding auctions conducted between May and September, prices rose steadily, reaching a peak in the sale of September 11, 1941, when a block of 57 rather unattractive lots brought nearly \$5,000.²¹

The tax sales served a valuable purpose in preparing Bellevue to meet the housing needs of the new plant workers. These auctions enabled a few speculators to gain ownership of large tracts of Bellevue land at low prices. Once in possession these speculators could use the land as collateral for construction loans. Hence, for a minimal initial outlay, they could begin large-scale building. George F. Rushart was first to grasp this potential. A local landowner and beer distributor, Rushart leaped at the opportunity presented by the initial two tax auctions, acquiring a large tract of land near the east entrance of Fort Crook. Within the next two months, he had the entire tract replatted, secured the necessary financing and

FHA approval, and by mid-May was ready to open the site for the construction of 200 homes.²² Other local speculators quickly followed suit, albeit on a much smaller scale. Joe C. Larson, an Omaha hardware retailer who lived in Bellevue, announced his intention to build 10 homes, and Cozy Homes Incorporated, a real estate firm formed by Larson, Mayor Freeman, and three other prominent Bellevuites who had acquired land in the tax sales, announced plans to construct 50.²³

During the summer and fall, builders from Lincoln and Omaha entered the Bellevue market, and new homes began "springing up all over."²⁴ Most were modest three or four room frame cottages offering few amenities and only slightly more floor space than an apartment. Architecturally, they could hardly match the community's older, more substantial homes, and because they were built in such haste, workmanship often left much to be desired. Yet they were inexpensive, most selling for between \$3,000 and \$4,500, and that was of vital importance. Under new FHA provisions for defense areas, these homes could be acquired for as little as \$100 down and were thus within the reach of most bomber plant employees.²⁵

The rush of home building obviously dictated a major expansion of city services. New streets, schools, water and sewer lines, recreation facilities, and other basic services had to be provided for the areas under construction. As this entailed costs well beyond Bellevue's limited resources in 1941, local officials turned to Washington, devoting much of the spring and summer to the quest for federal grants. The target of their first application was the Works Projects Administration, a New Deal agency created in 1935 to provide work for the unemployed. With the employment crisis of the 1930s over, the WPA was seeking to justify its existence by providing labor for worthy projects in defense areas. Thus, it was an ideal target for Bellevue's requests. In April city officials submitted an application for \$130,000 to cover the costs of a major expansion of the sewer system, including a new sewage disposal plant and 13 miles of mains, sufficient to serve a population of over 4,000. The WPA responded quickly and favorably. Shortly thereafter Bellevue sought and received WPA assistance for a minor street improvement project.²⁶

In June the task of grantsmanship became even easier with the passage of the Community Facilities Act, which provided an initial \$150 million for the assistance of the nation's hard-pressed defense areas.²⁷ Early the next month, officials of the Public Works Administration, one of the federal agencies authorized to issue loans and grants under the act, visited Bellevue to explain how this new program could be used to meet local needs. Bellevue leaders were quick to seize this opportunity. Within a week the city submitted an initial request for \$360,000 to fund construction of a new water system complete with wells, pumps, iron removal plant, and nearly 12 miles of mains. By the end of the month, the city had also asked the PWA for a grant to build a health center and for a loan to cover its share of the cost of the WPA sewer project.²⁸ Local school officials also got in line for PWA money. The Bellevue school district, which anticipated doubling its enrollment, applied for \$375,000 to cover a new elementary school and an addition to the high school. School district No. 5, just north of Bellevue, requested \$200,000 to expand its facilities. In every case the application was approved.²⁹

These early successes appear to have bred a sense of overconfidence among local leaders. Federal funds seemed there for the asking. This attitude led them to submit a somewhat unrealistic request in the fall of 1941. At its November 18 meeting, the council approved an application to the PWA for the funds sufficient to provide a new city hall, a police station-jail, library, city auditorium, and recreation center—an amazing request for a city of slightly over 1,000 residents.³⁰ The application was not approved, but it illustrates the confidence with which officials approached the task of grantsmanship during the latter half of 1941.

That setback did little to dampen the billowing sense of optimism in Bellevue as the community awaited the arrival of bomber plant workers. Initial fears concerning trailer homes and "camp followers" had been overcome, and the prompt approval of all but the last grant request seemed to promise that the federal government would underwrite much of the cost of the community's expansion. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor heightened that anticipation even further. The rush of

new war contracts that followed promised that the bomber plant would grow faster than initial predictions, and Bellevue seemed bound to grow with it. City officials no longer spoke of a two or three fold increase in population but confidently predicted a population of 10,000 within two years.³¹

Throughout the spring and summer of 1942, that optimism appeared to be justified. Progress at the bomber plant, which began operations with a few hundred workers in January, was initially slower than anticipated due to difficulties in locating and installing essential machinery. By April these problems had been overcome and the Martin Company began hiring workers by the thousands.³² Bellevue's population mushroomed, and the city took on the appearance of a 19th century boom town. Construction seemed to be in progress everywhere. By mid-summer work on the new water and sewer systems was nearing completion, a new and much expanded street improvement project approved by the WPA in June, was just getting underway, and plans for an extensive system of storm sewers were being drawn up. Home construction was in full swing with 208 new houses already completed, another 325 in progress, and several hundred more on the drawing boards.³³ Clearly, Bellevue was on the move.

The boom, however, did not last through the remaining war years. Home construction, the basis for all other growth, tapered off dramatically late in 1942 when the FHA cut back its loan program for the community. While the FHA decision was never publicly explained, it appears to have been prompted by the growing shortage of construction materials. Beginning in September, 1941, access to building materials had been placed on a priority basis with the FHA acting as the local allocating agency. Its field offices "analyzed all private projects; made a detailed check on the quantities of steel, copper, and lumber the plans called for," and issued loan approvals only when those materials were available within the agency's allocation.³⁴ In October, 1942, as the shortages reached crisis proportions, the FHA was forced to adopt a much more rigid set of guidelines. By that time most of the bomber plant workers had found housing in Omaha, Council Bluffs, or one of the other surrounding communities, so Bellevue's allocation was curtailed.³⁵ Bellevue officials peti-

tioned the FHA to review the new policy and compiled a detailed study showing that many workers would move to Bellevue if housing were available, but the FHA remained firm. The building boom was over.³⁶

Yet, Bellevue did not stagnate through the remainder of the war. Efforts to expand housing through the conversion of older structures into apartments and the development of a city-run trailer park were successful enough to allow continued, but much more modest, growth.³⁷ City officials continued to press Washington for funds with which to improve community facilities, in most cases successfully. The long-planned storm sewer project won federal approval in 1943, and funding for a new recreation center, another school addition, and a combined fire and police building was secured the following year.³⁸ So, while the hectic boom town atmosphere of 1942 was gone, the community continued to adapt with reasonable success.

From the perspective of the present, it would seem that local leaders responded well to Bellevue's wartime crisis. Their feverish activity in the wake of the bomber plant announcement solved several initial problems and laid a framework for rapid but orderly growth. The hurriedly drafted zoning and building ordinances alleviated public fears concerning trailer homes and allowed for the rapid development of housing. The housing constructed in Bellevue was small by 1940 standards but was much superior to the lean-tos and shacks which appeared in Willow Run and other defense communities, a testament to the effectiveness of the zoning ordinance, codes and other local controls.³⁹ Local officials were also successful in winning federal grants. Only the one rather injudicious request for public buildings failed to win federal approval. Moreover, on each occasion when a grant required a bond issue to provide local matching funds, Bellevue leaders were able to win the support of community voters for those proposals.

As impressive as this record may seem, it left a number of serious problems unresolved and many local residents dissatisfied. One characteristic of boom towns is that "human needs exceed the community's capacity to meet them."⁴⁰ This was certainly the case in Bellevue. In spite of the successful

grantsmanship of the city fathers, Bellevue still lacked adequate police and fire protection, recreational facilities, and other human services. Worst of all were its streets. With no paving, few curbs and gutters, and near constant construction of new sewer and water lines, Bellevue's street system simply proved unable to handle the increased traffic brought by its growth. The problem was an irritant city-wide, but for residents of new housing areas it was doubly troublesome. Streets there were hastily and inadequately laid. As a result they created dust problems in the summer, became seriously rutted during the winter, and virtually impassable in the spring rains. During the unusually wet springs of both 1943 and 1944, residents of the new housing areas were forced to abandon their vehicles and walk to work, and without sidewalks or street lights, even that could be dangerous.⁴¹

As is so often the case in local politics, dissatisfaction with the condition of city streets ultimately gave rise to a powerful political reaction. In the Bellevue elections of April, 1944, Mayor Freeman and both of the council members running for reelection were upset by write-in candidates. Because the election occurred in the midst of the second consecutive wet spring when the streets were at their worst, the ouster of Bellevue's pre-war leaders is hardly surprising. What is surprising is that in each case, the write-in victor was a new resident employed at the bomber plant.⁴²

This dramatic transfer of power from the older Bellevuities to the newcomers requires further comment. On the surface it would seem to imply a significant confrontation between the two. The World War II boom towns studied to date have evidenced powerful internal tensions between the old and the new. The ill-feelings which accompany competition for scarce resources, the resentment of outsiders who challenge traditional standards and patterns of community behavior, and the parallel suspicion of insiders who seem bent on freezing the newcomers out can split a community into hostile camps.⁴³ Bellevue should have been ripe for this kind of conflict. It lacked social facilities necessary to bridge the inevitable barriers between newcomer and oldtimer. It had few clubs or community organizations which could be expanded to integrate the two groups and generate cooperation. Its two pre-

war churches made only modest efforts to include newcomers in their activities.

Nevertheless, Bellevue seems to have been spared the kind of internal conflict which plagued other defense communities. Recent interviews with former bomber plant employees revealed no recollection of hostility directed toward them. In fact the opposite was true. Several remembered welcoming visits from older residents and retained a positive image of their reception in the community. Perhaps because the number of immigrants was smaller than in other communities or, more likely, because many of them purchased homes and quickly set down roots, they were more readily accepted by the older families. Apparently they were not seen and did not see themselves as temporary residents. In this respect, Bellevue was unlike the defense communities studied to date. In those areas massive federal housing projects were constructed, which tended to isolate the new war workers from the rest of the community. They rented their lodgings from the federal government, took their grievances to federal administrators, and had little reason to enter into the broader political and social life of the community. Bellevue's war workers had no such option. To live close to the bomber plant, they were virtually forced to purchase homes and thereby acquire a permanent stake in the community's future. When dissatisfied with neighborhood developments, they could not turn to federal officials but were forced to operate through the local political process. In the spring of 1944, with the streets in their neighborhoods choked in mire, they did so, organizing a write-in campaign which won strong support throughout the community and swept them into office. Consequently, it is difficult to view the local election of 1944 as a product of general hostility between old and new Bellevuities. It was the result of specific grievances, directed at inadequate community facilities. War workers led the campaign simply because they lived in the areas most severely affected, but they won support throughout the city.

Does this mean that Bellevue's earlier leaders failed? Not unless success is defined solely in political terms. Obviously, they failed to solve all the problems generated by rapid population growth. Yet it is hard to see how total success could

have been possible, given the physical and economic facilities existent in Bellevue in 1941 and the speed with which the community grew. Community leaders did reasonably well. They modernized city government, laid the necessary basis for the building boom of 1941-1942, and took advantage of federal financing where it was available. This proved insufficient to meet the expectations of their constituents, but viewed from the present, it was not an unenviable record.

It is difficult to say exactly what Bellevue's experience can tell us about public leadership in other World War II boom towns. Until other communities are studied in detail, generalization will be difficult. It does seem likely, however, that Bellevue's experience was not unique. We might assume, therefore, that in most small towns experiencing rapid war-related growth, local public officials assumed the primary burden of preparing for and meeting the needs of a vastly expanded population, that they relied upon traditional civic powers like zoning to control the directions of growth, that they took advantage of federal programs to finance the necessary expansion of public services, and that because of the speed with which the growth took place, they failed to satisfy their constituents. Bellevue's surprising political turnover in June, 1944, may be unique not so much in the sense that local voters were distressed, but only because in Bellevue, the political reaction was led by the newly arrived war workers. In communities dominated by large-scale federal housing, it is likely that war workers were more apt to perceive themselves as temporary residents and remain politically inert. Where war workers bought homes and set down roots they may well have taken a much more active interest in community affairs. This seems to have been the case in Bellevue. But until other communities with like circumstances are studied, these suggestions will have to remain speculative.

NOTES

1. Much of the research for this study was made possible by a grant from the University Committee on Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha.
2. William E. Barrett, *The Red Lacquered Gate: The Story of Bishop Galvin, Co-Founder of the Columban Fathers* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p. 113-24; and James Feely and Nicholas Kill, "History of St. Columbans in Bellevue," in Jerold Simmons, ed., *La Belle Vue: Studies in the History of Bellevue, Nebraska* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth, 1976), p. 333-344.
3. Robert J. Havighurst and H. Gerthorn Morgan, *The Social History of a War-Boom Community* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951); Lowell J. Carr and James E. Stermer, *Willow Run: A Study of Industrialization and Cultural Inadequacy* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1952).
4. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Housing*, p. 914.
5. *Omaha World-Herald*, December 7, 1940; "History of Building 'D,'" Offutt Air Force Base Pamphlet 210-1, 1981, p. 2.
6. "The History of Fort Crook, 1888, Offutt Air Force Base, 1976," (Offutt Air Force Base: Department of the Air Force, 1976), pp. 85-86; *Omaha World-Herald*, December 7, 1940; January 8, 1941.
7. The Omaha Housing Authority initially considered requesting a federal defense housing project for the city, but the Chamber of Commerce and local real estate interests opposed the idea. They argued that Omaha could absorb up to five thousand new families without public housing. By early January, 1941, the OHA had been convinced and the plan was dropped. *Omaha World-Herald*, December 7 and 30, 1940; January 7, 1941.
8. *Omaha World-Herald*, March 8, 1941.
9. Statement by village board chairman, F. Hoyt Freeman, *Omaha World-Herald*, February 21, 1941.
10. Minute Record, Village of Bellevue, April 28, 1941.
11. Minute Record, February 7 and 14, 1941.
12. William Shallcross, *Romance of a Village* (privately printed, 1954), pp. 193-94. Shallcross was a member of the original planning and zoning commission.
13. *Omaha World-Herald*, February 21, 1941. Similar concerns prompted Omaha's mayor to seek authority to zone the unincorporated areas around the bomber plant. His effort generated a brief but intense conflict between Omaha and Sarpy County officials over zoning authority in the region. See Jacqueline McGlade, "The Zoning of Fort Crook: Urban Expansionism vs. County Home Rule," *Nebraska History*, 64 (Spring, 1983), p. 21-34.
14. Minute Record, February 25 and March 4, 1941; Ordinance Record, City of Bellevue, I, #176 and #177.
15. Shallcross, *Romance of a Village*, pp. 90, 194.
16. *The Bellevue Press*, September 8, 1950; *Papillion Times*, January 9, 1941.
17. *Papillion Times*, January 16, 1941, provided a complete list of all lot purchases and the amounts paid.
18. Shallcross, *Romance of a Village*, pp. 188-89.
19. Bev. Hrdy and William Turner, eds., Oral History Series, Bellevue, Nebraska (privately printed), II: Interview with R. M. McLaughlin, p. 12.
20. *Omaha World-Herald*, March 3, 1941.
21. *Papillion Times*, May 22, 29, June 19, September 11, 18, 1941.
22. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 21, 1941; *Papillion Times*, May 8, 1941.
23. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 21, July 8, 1941; Shallcross, *Romance of a Village*, pp. 190-91.

24. Hrdy and Turner, interview with R. M. McLaughlin, p. 12; *Omaha World-Herald*, January 30, 1942.
25. Shallcross, *Romance of a Village*, pp. 190-91. Ray Jungers, a bomber plant employee, purchased one of these FHA insured homes in June, 1942, for \$100 down and \$27.29 per month. Interview with Ray Jungers, May 19, 1983.
26. Minute Record, April 18, July 1, August 7, 1941; *Omaha World-Herald*, June 19, July 8, 1941.
27. Philip J. Funigiello, *The Challenge to Urban Liberalism: Federal-City Relations during World War II* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), pp. 44-45.
28. *Omaha World-Herald*, July 5, 8, 10, 14, 16, 1941.
29. *Papillion Times*, July 17, 1941.
30. Minute Record, November 18, 1941.
31. The first evidence of this prediction was in the public buildings request to the PWA.
32. "History of Building 'D'," pp. 4-5; *Omaha World-Herald*, April 30, 1942.
33. *Papillion Times*, July 2, 1942.
34. National Housing Agency, *War Housing in the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1945), pp. 11, 33.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 12. In a 1981 review article based on interviews with former Martin plant employees a *World Herald* reporter estimated that at least 75 per cent of the company's work force lived in Omaha or Council Bluffs. Most apparently participated in car pools, because a survey conducted in April, 1944, revealed that the average car entering the plant gates carried slightly over four workers. *Omaha World-Herald*, March 1, 1981; April 25, 1944.
36. Minute Record, October 26, 1943. The assessed value of Bellevue property more than doubled between 1941 and 1943, but because few new homes were constructed after 1942, the total property value remained virtually unchanged through the remainder of the war. *Bellevue Press*, March 19, 1948.
37. *Papillion Times*, December 23, 1943; *Omaha World-Herald*, January 8, 1944. The Martin Company contributed \$1,620 for the construction of the trailer park. Minute Record, November 18, 1943.
38. Minute Record, June 18, 1943; September 1, 8, 1944; *Omaha World-Herald*, September 9, November 15, 1943; January 8, 19, and February 8, 1944; *Papillion Times*, June 17, December 23, 1943; February 10, October 5, 1944.
39. See Carr and Stermer, *Willow Run*, pp. 65-87.
40. Havinghurst and Morgan, *Social History of a War Boom Community*, p. xiv.
41. The condition of the streets and the hazards of walking were described by former bomber plant employee Kenneth McKray in an article in the *Bellevue Leader*, May 10, 1978. It seemed to be his most vivid memory of Bellevue during the war years.
42. *Omaha World-Herald*, June 15, 1944.
43. See especially Havinghurst and Morgan, *Social History of a War Boom Community*, pp. 102-108.