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CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, P.H.D., 1979

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BOSSISM IN JERSEY CITY: THE KENNY YEARS, 1949-1972

by

William Lemmey

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1978

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 25 1979
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FOREWORD

Over twenty years have passed since Edwin O'Connor wrote his captivating novel, The Last Hurrah. O'Connor's work became a classic in explaining the demise of the boss. Bossism has had many historians since O'Connor's book appeared, and the consensus supports the "last hurrah theory"--the New Deal "put the skids" under the boss.[1] Some recent studies, however, have challenged this thesis. Lyle Dorsett's, The Pendergast Machine first suggested the New Deal did not cause the collapse of the machine in Kansas City. Further support for Dorsett's view came from an interdisciplinary study made by Bruce Stave. In the New Deal and The Last Hurrah, Stave argued the Pittsburgh machine operated by David Lawrence was built because of New Deal patronage and Roosevelt's popularity. It is in the midst of this debate that I offer an interpretation of boss politics through a study of John V. Kenny's political

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[1]Edwin O'Connor, The Last Hurrah (Boston: Little and Brown, 1956), p. 374; Lyle Dorsett, The Pendergast Machine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Bruce Stave, The New Deal and the Last Hurrah (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970). See also The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLIII (May, 1964). This issue gives an obituary on the boss. Lyle Dorsett's most recent study, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the City Bosses (New York: Kennikat Press, 1977), extends his earlier view by arguing that the New Deal did not destroy the bosses and their machines.

career in Jersey City. Whether the boss is dead may always remain an open question, but Kenny's reign seems to show the machine has undergone a transformation and only a faint echo of the boss's early hurrah can be heard.

Rising to power in a dramatic fashion, John V. Kenny was to meet defeat in an equally sensational manner. Kenny served as a committeeman and ward leader in the model machine of Frank Hague. Moving from his downtown base as a classical ward boss, Kenny eventually toppled Hague and gained control of the city and county. Although he ran a modest organization compared to Hague's, Kenny did survive for over two decades and wielded influence in state and national circles.

Initially appearing as a successor of Hague, Kenny (the "little guy") proved to be more a broker/boss than the authoritarian type of an earlier era. His leadership reflected the changed conditions in city politics. Preferring to dispense patronage through his personal hand, Kenny never built a hierarchical and efficient machine. With a loyal following that numbered in the thousands, he retained power by having every appointee and recipient of a favor indebted to him.[2] His ability to hold the delicate balance of power in a depressed urban environment enabled him to transcend some of the New Deal changes.

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[2]William V. Shannon used a similar expression to characterize James Michael Curley in The American Irish: A Political and Social Portrait (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1963), p. 211.

In researching this dissertation, I have become indebted to many people. I wish to thank all those politicians who gave of their time and knowledge. Librarians also deserve much recognition. In particular, I would like to thank William Kreeger,a gracious and knowledgeable Jersey City librarian, and Charles Cummings, another dedicated librarian who eagerly assisted me by making available much material in the Newark Public Library. I wish also to thank J. Owen Grundy, the Jersey City historian, for his gracious assistance and Professor Richard J. Connors of Seton Hall University for his valuable criticism. A special note of thanks to Mrs. Bianca Murray for allowing me to examine the papers of her late husband, James F. Murray, Jr. A participant and perspicacious observer of Jersey City politics, John R. Longo, deserves exceptional praise for his service above and beyond the call of duty. He assisted me on numerous occasions and helped put many of the pieces together. Lastly, I wish to thank Professor Richard C. Wade for his support and perceptive analysis--and my wife, Catherine DiCicco Lemmey, for her encouragement.

W.L.
Astoria, N.Y.

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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

Political City

Jersey City has an unusual political reputation. Often looked upon as "a bastion of corruption and reaction," the city has been stigmatized as a breeding ground for bossism.[1] Standing in the shadow of Manhattan, Jersey City--along with Hudson County--has been the "black sheep" of New Jersey. As Senator Clifford Case once remarked, "I get a sick feeling whenever I come to Hudson County."[2] Rarely has the city been boosted by its sons and daughters. People often feel ashamed, even apologetic, about being from there. Politics has been the main reason for the sullied reputation. Ruled by some type of boss for almost a century, Jersey City might well be called "Machine City."

Politics has more than a passing interest for its citizens. Being "on the pad," working as a committeeman, or possibly reaching the heights of ward leader has been the goal of many an aspiring youth. To have a link with city hall has always been a symbol of prestige. William V. Shannon

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[1]Editorial, The New York Times, May 10, 1973, p. 44.

[2]Jersey Journal, November 2, 1961. p.1.

best expressed it as the "vicarious pleasure of the masses."[3] A campaign in the city usually takes the form of a burlesque comedy with roving trucks carrying loud speakers and crusading spirits hurling epithets at opponents. Slanderous name calling has been standard behavior. The whole spirit of the city had been embodied in Frank Hague, who was the archetype of the Boss and made the town Hagueville from 1913 to 1949. Preceding Hague were less impressive but more traditional immigrant leaders. Robert (Little Bob) Davis ruled intermittently from the late 1880s until his death in 1911. Hague's successor, John V. Kenny, functioned as broker/boss from 1949 to 1972. Except for brief periods of reform, the Boss has been king.

Physical Setting

Geography determined much of the city's development. Jersey City contains almost sixteen square miles of land, varying from 1.5 miles to 3.5 miles in width, and stretching about 7 miles in length. It is bordered on the south by Kill-Van Kull and the city of Bayonne; on the north by the municipalities of North Bergen, Union City, and Hoboken; on the west by the Hackensack River and Newark Bay; and by the Hudson River and Upper New York Bay on the east. Manhattan sits only about 2,000 yards off the city's east coast.

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[3] William V. Shannon, The American Irish (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1963), p. 218.

The shape of the city is similar to a "very stubby T" with its base in the lowland flats of the Hudson and the cross section formed by the Palisades.[4] The Palisades are a massive diabese rock formation that stretch throughout Hudson County and reach into Jersey City until they drop at the southern end of the city. They form the spine of the municipality and cause a natural dichotomy between the uptown and downtown wards. (See ward maps 1-3) As one observer noted in 1895:

> The city is divided into east, west, and hill sections by Bergen Hill, a trap formation, which extends in a generally north and south direction longitudially through the city. This hill is about eighty feet high and almost a mile wide. Natural grades give access on the west slope to the meadowland along the Hackensack River and Newark Bay. The elevation decreases south and is scarcely noticeable at the southern end of the city. In the upper half of the city, the hill shows quite an abrupt bluff and on the east affords fine views of New York and the harbor. This elevated plateau is about a mile in width and is rapidly becoming the favored residence section.[5]

Downtown was the economic center. Inhabited by immigrant groups, it contained the railroad yards, factory districts, banks and corporate offices. Small ethnic colonies revolved around churches and saloons. A form of

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[4]This analysis has been drawn from Professor Richard J. Connors whose comments and writings provided many insights into the city. See his study, A Cycle of Power: The Local Career of Jersey City Mayor Frank Hague (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1971).

[5]Alexander McLean, History of Jersey City, New Jersey (Jersey City, Jersey City Printing Company, 1894), pp. 307-308.

urban suicide was committed in this area when "the practice of constructing four and five story flats during the early part of the 1900s piled up three and four families where one had lived before and at the same time did away with the front and back yards."[6]

Uptown wards have been influenced by the meadowlands on the western edge of the city. Lying just west of the ridges on the Palisades, the meadows expel fetid odors and are often subject to flooding. These low marshes constricted urban development and created a social homogenization of the city that shaped its political character. In his book, The Boss, Dayton McKean aptly described the city and county as a "flat expanse of marshland between the Hudson and Hackensack. This peninsula, surrounded on three sides by rivers and swamps is Hudson County: and its central area across the river from downtown New York, is Jersey City."[7]

When suburbanization came, Jersey City's upper and upper-middle classes moved north to Bergen County, south to Middlesex and Monmouth Counties, and west to Essex leaving both city and county behind. Thus, a city of lower-middle class residents emerged. No typical pattern of middle-class

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[6]Jersey City, Report to the Planning Board by Churchill-Fulmer Associates, Master Plan Report (2 Vols; New York, 1949), I, pp. V-8.

[7]Dayton McKean, The Boss: The Hague Machine in Action, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1940), p. 16.

periphery versus lower class "downtown" developed. The river wards, both the Hudson and Hackensack, hemmed in the bourgeois heights and gave the city as a whole a social tone predisposed to machine rule. The natural enemy of the Boss, upper-middle class Wasps were not in the city periphery. They left early for the suburbs.[8]

Because of its peculiar geography, Jersey City acquired a unique image. Natives and visitors alike have described it as "formless." In a study done by Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City, residents called it "a place on the edge of something."[9] New York to the east and Newark to the west have strong identities. Jersey City was considered "not a place to go to, but only as a place to pass through when going somewhere else."[10] The construction of the Holland Tunnel in 1927 contributed to this image. Motorists rarely stayed in the city, but viewed it as "dirty, drab, and old" while escaping by highways and later by turnpike. This sense of formlessness has also been emphasized by uncoordinated streets with main arteries failing to join at intersections. Travellers are often confused by the labyrinth of streets

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[8]Richard J. Connors, "The Local Political Career of Mayor Frank Hague" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1966), pp. 145-146.

[9]Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City (Cambridge: The Technology Press and Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 26.

[10]Tunnel Day, Jersey City (Jersey City: The Free Public Library, 1909), p. 4.

that make neighborhoods landlocked islands.

Adding to this image is the city's lack of a strong center. Between 1869 and 1873, when Jersey City consolidated with three separate towns, Bergen, Hudson City, and Greenville, the four areas splintered the traditional downtown center. Each town had its own commercial center and pulled the focus off any dominant area. Journal Square has often been referred to as the center, but a railroad cut at its edge prevented complete development. Hague constructed a massive medical center on the ridge, but this giant structure provided only a cement image without the necessary population movement. Lacking any critical point for civic or cultural life, the city has served as "a backyard warehouse for New York City."[11]

Historic and Economic Developments

From its beginning Jersey City depended on New York for sustenance. Always in Manhattan's shadow, it has been a social and economic satellite of Gotham. With the first regular ferry service to New York in 1764, the city began its specialized role as a transportation center tied to Manhattan's future. Not until 1804, when Alexander Hamilton and a group of New York businessmen showed interest in developing the city's real estate did any major economic

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[11]City of Jersey City, Economic Conditions, Comprehensive Planning Program, Report No. 5, Office of the Mayor (Jersey City: Division of Planning, 1964), p. 2.

activity occur. Even when it incorporated in 1820, Jersey City still held only 1,300 people and had to wait until 1834 when New York gave up its claim on the west Hudson before prosperity and growth came.[12]

The 1830s became a decisive decade in the city's early history. A night ferry service to New York in 1835 stimulated interest by increasing land values and attracting wealthier citizens. New York merchants found it convenient to live in Jersey City because of the growing distance between Manhattan's residential and business district. Completion of the Morris Canal in 1836 caused further development. The canal connected Jersey City with Newark and Northern New Jersey. Barges carried coal from Pennsylvania to factories and homes in New York. As a connector to New York, the city became "a corridor by which people and goods could be moved to and from the metropolis."[13] Contributing to this pattern was the construction of the New Jersey Railroad in the 1830s. This line connected Bergen Hill with New Brunswick and played a vital role in the economic and political life of the city.

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[12]Two histories of Jersey City, neither complete, are Alexander McLean, History of Jersey City, New Jersey (Jersey City: The Jersey City Printing Co., 1894), and Daniel Van Winkle, ed., History of Municipalities of Hudson County, New Jersey 1630-1923, 3 Vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1924).

[13]Tercentary Committee, Jersey City, Jersey City Tercentary Celebration 1660-1960 (Jersey City: Tercentary Committee, 1960), p. 51.

The granting of a new charter in 1838 led to political independence with the municipality governed by an elected Mayor and Common Council. By 1840 Jersey City had completed its first phase of growth and increased in population to 3,072.[14]

Following its slow development before 1850, the city experienced an urban transformation between 1850 and 1880. Railroads changed it from a residential surburb of New York to an urban center of transportation and industry. Finding the city an ideal location, the railroads brought their lines to the Jersey waterfront. Coming from the west, they refused to span the Hudson with a bridge, but carried passengers and freight by barges or ferries to New York. By 1875 Jersey City became "the gateway to the west" and was the eastern terminus for nine railroads.

Industrial growth also came from rail facilities. Glass, pottery, soap, meat packing, and iron industries expanded their plants. In 1865 the United States Watch Company set up a large factory, and in 1876 Lorillard Tobacco Company moved its entire plant to Jersey City and employed 3,000 people. With industry came population growth and between 1860 and 1870 the city's population leaped from 29,226 to 82,546. The effects of immigration and industrialization could be seen as early as the 1850s.

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[14]Herman K. Platt, "Jersey City and the United Railroad Companies, 1868: A Case Study in Municipal Weakness," New Jersey History, XCI No. 4, (Winter, 1973), 249-265.

Residential patterns changed. The city's well-to-do English, Scotch, and Dutch natives abandoned the river wards. Fearing industrial and commercial expansion, they moved to the heights along the "ramparts of the Palisades" and left the downtown for the Irish, Germans, and other immigrant groups."[15]

By the late nineteenth century, Jersey City assumed its permanent character as an "immigrant, working class city with a sizable population that knew only black, smoky machine shops, tumble-down houses, foundries, dirty streets, mud, filth, marsh, swarms of unwashed children, crowds of whooping carters."[16] Railroads changed both the physical and social character of the city. Cutting through residential neighborhoods and moving the shore line further and further away the railroads monopolized the waterfront and choice lands. Bergen Hill had to be tunnelled out and mud flats along the Hudson's west shore filled in to provide deep water docking facilities. The city's social character also changed by 1860. The Irish and Germans became the dominant groups challenging the old-Wasp Dutch political elites. Between 1869 and 1873 consolidation increased the city's physical area to sixteen square miles.

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[15]Eugene Tobin, "Mark Fagan and the Politics of Reform" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1972)., pp. 7-9.

[16]New York Times, August 21, 1870. See Douglas Shaw's Making of An Immigrant City: Ethnic and Cultural Conflict in Jersey City, New Jersey, 1850-1870 (New York: Arno Press, 1976).

Jersey City emerged as a modern city between 1880 and 1910. Immigration, industrialization, and urbanization caused a dramatic transformation. The impact of immigration could be seen in 1890 when 73.1 percent of the city was of foreign or mixed parentage. Industrial growth was evident from the 27,000 workers employed in the trade and transportation sector and the over 700 manufacturing firms employing 24,000 wage earners. The effects of intensified industrialization and immigration caused major alterations in land use patterns. Downtown became absorbed by the industrial and transportation sphere. In 1895 the city historian commented on the changes:

> The area of the city is now 12,238 acres, but nearly one-half marshland. Almost one third of the area has been absorbed by railroads and canals. . .[17]

A new form of urban transportation also affected the city. In the early 1890s horse-drawn street cars became replaced by electric cars. However, no drastic rearrangement of the city's residential pattern occurred. Instead, ethnic, class, and neighborhood divisions created previously by consolidation and immigration became more defined, and city life more decentralized. The street railways contributed to the growth of specialized retail centers by carrying purchasing power of an expanding population to enterprising merchants who located their shops along the lines of traffic.

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[17]McLean, History of Jersey City, p. 308.

Other ingredients contributed to decentralization and the uptown-downtown polarization. The absences of mass transit in the Heights and Hudson City left residents isolated from Bergen and lower Jersey City. Adding to this bifurcation was the inability of many river ward residents to pay for street railway fares. As one scholar commented, "despite the introduction of mass transit, Jersey City remained (in 1890) for a great many of its inhabitants as much of a 'walking' city as it had been in the 1850's."[18]

One final element exacerbated the dichotomy. Between 1891 and 1894, the city revised its charter and expanded the six aldermanic districts into twelve wards. Ward compositions showed clearly the city's political, social, and economic divisions. Downtown included the Hudson River wards one through five and represented the immigrant sector. No large ghettoes existed, but only small ethnic enclaves with no one foreign born group dominant overall. Before 1910, the Irish held control in the second ward. Italians occupied the fifth ward in large numbers; however, by 1910 Russians (mostly Ukranians and Poles) began to migrate into the river wards. It was easy to understand why downtown became the base for Democratic politicians and provided human fuel for a machine.

Uptown wards, on the heights of the Palisades, contained the "bon-ton" parts of the city with the eighth and

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[18]Tobin, "Mark Fagan," p. 10.

ninth wards providing gracious residences for the wealthier citizens. A Negro slum, however, could be found on the fringe of the eighth and ninth wards. In the tenth ward an Italian ghetto existed; the area called Marion was located in the western part of the city where the Palisades gave way to the Meadowlands. Hence, geography prevented uptown from embracing only the middle class.[19]

The rapid physical and industrial developments from 1880-1910 moved Jersey City to rank nineteenth in the nation by 1910 with a population of 267,770. The intense growth, however, left deep urban scars. Consolidation of formerly autonomous villages failed to centralize the city. Mass transit, though contributing to growth in retail and residential districts, was so haphazard as to add to divisions along class and ethnic lines. Economic dependency on the railroads also proved to be extremely damaging. In explaining the effects of the railroads on all cities, a later-day economist succintly described Jersey City's problem:

> . . . the railroads grew without plan in an atmosphere of intense competition. Under these circumstances, objectionable conditions arose in the cities and towns where competing railroads developed rival terminal facilities, each seeking as favorable a location as possible, hence striving to locate facilities well in the heart of the commercial section. This caused much waste of urban land, interfered with street traffic and development,

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[19]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 13.

and cast a blight upon adjacent property.[20]

By 1910, Jersey City had completed its physical development and only limited growth would occur in the Greenville and Marion sections. With its usuable land almost entirely occupied with buildings, its street pattern largely determined, and railroads and industry at their peak, population began to level off. From 1910 to 1920, it grew by only 12 percent and from 1920 to 1930 by a mere 6 percent. This was far lower than the booming increases of 30 percent per decade in the period between 1890 and 1910. Early signs of decline emerged in the downtown area. The relocation of Pennsylvania Station from downtown Jersey City to Manhattan and the commencement of Railroad service from Newark to New York via Journal Square in 1911, caused movement to uptown. Another sign of this shift came in 1912 when the city's major newspaper, The Jersey Journal, relocated its headquarters from downtown at Exchange Place to Journal Square. The city's commercial focus moved uptown.

Throughout the commercial shift a real estate lottery increased the value of uptown land values. The completion of the downtown decline came in 1927 when the Holland Tunnel bisected the old Horseshoe and intensified migration uptown.

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[20]Ernest W. Williams, Jr., The Outlook for the Railroad Industry (Washington, D.C.: The National Planning Association, 1943), p. 19. As found in S.J. Raciti's "An Analysis of the Decline of the Jersey City Economy" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1968), p. 31.

Downtown residents were forced out by encroachments from industry, commerce, and transportation. Between 1910 and 1930, wards 1-6 decreased by 42 percent in the number of foreign born while a 27 percent increase occurred in wards 7-12. In 1930, when the city reached its peak population of 316,715, close observers could see that decline had already set in.[21]

Lack of land suitable for residential development condemned Jersey City to face the twentieth century with a hollow future. Railroads stunted the city's growth. In 1900, they owned 98 percent of the city's eastern waterfront and over 30 percent of the total land. No attractive real estate remained for middle class residents. From 1925-1940 land in the New York Metropolitan Region underwent an urban explosion with "closely developed land increasing from 357 to 556 square miles while a gain of only 1/5 of one square mile occurred in the part of Hudson County within five miles of New York City."[22]

Transportation changes also contributed to Jersey City's plight. After 1900, urban expansion in the New York region "took place in those vacant areas north and west of Manhattan that were accessible by new subways, express highways, and electrified suburban railroad." Rapid rates of

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[21]Ralph G. Saxe, "Demographic Trends in Jersey City Since 1900" (unpublished Master's dissertation, New York University, 1927), pp. 21-23.

[22]Churchill-Fullmer Report I, pp. II-7.

gain occurred in the open areas of Essex, Bergen, and New York. Westchester County's population doubled, Bergen County's tripled, and Nassau and Queens Counties increased over four-and-a-half times from 1900 to 1940. Hudson County's population increased by only 21 percent in this period. New transportation siphoned the population increases of the New York Metropolitan Region away from central areas "where buildings were getting older and falling into disrepair." As one city planner commented, "Jersey City was left in the wake of this outflowing tide of population."[23]

Other external changes led to stagnation and decline. The rapid growth of the residential areas north and east of Manhattan pulled the retail business center northward towards Radio City and caused a rapid expansion of the midtown office center at the expense of the Wall Street financial district. In turn, executives favored residences in Westchester, Queens and Nassau Counties, which were accessible by the midtown Grand Central and Pennsylvania Terminal. Unfortunately for Jersey City, its rail and ferry lines had their terminals near Wall Street. Thus, the city not only had no new areas that could attract the higher income groups working in the nearby financial districts of New York; but it even lost some of the higher income earners working in Jersey City. They moved to outlying communities. Jersey City became the home for the relatively low-paid factory or railroad worker as well as the

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[23] Ibid., I, pp. II-23.

low-paid workers in Manhattan. The blue collar worker and grey collar employee found Jersey City hospitable.

Lack of an integrated transportation system also cost the city its middle class. No second stage of urbanization occurred--that is the replacement of single family housing by high density, high value apartments. Brooklyn, Queens, and upper Manhattan had the rapid transit facilities to attract large numbers of residents and developers. Only in the 1920s did apartment construction begin on Jersey City's ridge, but it was too late because New York had an insurmountable lead.

New York kept Jersey City in a second-class status in other ways. The development of the "One Port" concept caused the city on the west Hudson to lose an economic opportunity. Under this agreement, the Interstate Commerce Commission set uniform rates on products shipped to and from the Port of New York. This district included both sides of the Hudson, so that goods destined for Jersey City or Brooklyn, paid the same rate. This was in spite of the fact that from points South and West it cost the railroads more to deliver goods to Brooklyn. With no rate discrimination, industries found it beneficial to move east of the Hudson.[24]

It was no historical coincidence that the city's decline came at the time when a shift from rail to motor

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[24]City of Jersey City, Land Use, Comprehensive Planning Program Report No. I, Office of the Mayor (Jersey City: Division of Planning, 1964), pp. 3-4.

transportation occurred. Railroads had absorbed property far in excess of their immediate needs in order to exclude their competitors from strategic locations. When rail service began to slack off in the 1920s, Jersey City began to pay for the haphazard land grab. Jersey City did not have the land after World War II to take advantage of the decentralization of warehousing and wholesaling from Manhattan. Hence, it went to Secaucus, Kearny, Moonachie and other areas. In addition, the railroads' dependency on port development directly affected the city because by the 1920s the Port of New York had lost many of its trade advantages. Thus, when the Port began to decline the railroads suffered and the city bore the brunt of the burden.

The waterfront became a prime example of the waste caused by the railroads. Failure to consolidate marine and lighterage facilities in the Port of New York caused duplication of rail facilities and fragmentation of Jersey City's waterfront. An urban economist clearly summarized the economic bind the railroads had tied Jersey City into:

> . . . The inefficiency of the railroad operation encouraged other forms of transportation which contributed to decentralization of manufacturing from the region's core area. As manufacturing leaves, local freight declines and both the railroad and related communities suffer further losses. Railroads are often compelled to sell or abandon property in order to cut costs and lower tax burdens. The loss of revenues adds to the strain imposed upon the city by previous declines in manufacturing and railroad activity.[25]

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[25]Raciti, "Jersey City Economy," p. 143.

The warnings of an early mayor became a reality for the city. In 1868, Mayor James Gospill declared that with the loss of its waterfront "Jersey City might just as well be an inland city." Indeed, this is what did occur with the railroads pre-empting the Hudson waterfront. New York could have provided a lesson in urban regulation. Although the Manhattan waterfront bordered on the Hudson and was at first subject to similar intensive use by the railroads, New York took steps to amend and prevent takeover. In 1870 it created a Docks Department, and the agency spent over $100 million to regain waterfront property from 42nd Street to the Battery. Valuable land became available for other harbor facilities and steamship operations. No such planning or economic development occurred on the Jersey side. Railroads divided New Jersey municipalities and absorbed prime land.

Dependency on the railroads and its side effects began to show after 1930. From 1940 to 1970, a steady urban slide occurred with the city losing over 13 percent of its population. A drop of 5 percent came between 1930 and 1940, when the total declined from 316,715 to 301,173. World War II delayed suburban development and prevented further losses, but in the 1950s the city felt the full weight of the white flights. (See section on social changes.) This decade proved to be a new watershed in urban history. From 1950 to 1960 population plummeted from 299,017 to 276,101 with an out migration of almost 100,000 residents.

Demographic changes came from several sources, but economics proved to be a critical determinant. Railroads, as expected, led the way by abandoning chunks of real estate. In the 1940s they released unutilized waterfront property; unloading the bulk of their holdings in the 1950s, and the city lost over $12 million in tax assessments. By 1960, the railroads owned only 42 percent of the city's waterfront compared to 96 percent in 1940. In addition, the railroads cut their ratables from 33 cents of every tax dollar to only 18 cents. Waterfront property became vacated and taxes pressed on the homeowner. From 1935 to 1965, Jersey City's tax rate jumped from $35 per $1,000 to $137 per $1,000.[26]

Middle class residents fled the city leaving high taxes, blight, and decay behind them. Although not having the large scale industry that Newark contained, Jersey City still was susceptible to some fluctuations in her industrial plant. American Can Company, Continental Can Company, Colgate-Palmolive Soap, Joseph Dixon Curcible, Armor, Swift, and Cudahy meat packers, P. Lorillard Cigarette Company were some of the large employers. Some plants employed more than a thousand employees. By 1970, many of these had left. From 1954 to 1964, the city lost 22 percent of its

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[26]City of Jersey City. Waterfront Development. Comprehensive Planning Program, Office of the Mayor (Jersey City: Division of Planning, 1965).

manufacturing. During this period, the number of manufacturing workers declined 30 percent and the number of employees per establishment decreased from 72.6 to 56.3. A total of fifty-four firms employing an average of 143.2 workers left the city, while seventy-one new firms arrived which employed an average of 43.8 workers. Companies attracted to the city were smaller and less valuable industries dealing in electrical goods, machinery, apparel, finished goods, printing, publishing, and storage or distribution. Most were low-employment enterprises and small operations.[27]

The decline of Jersey City after 1930 can be partly explained by its former success. As a transportation center, the city attracted railroads but failed to diversify its waterfront. By the 1950s, it inherited the debts of its early growth--an empty rail terminal and a rotted-out waterfront.

Social, Ethnic, and Racial Changes

Throughout the cycle of growth and decline, various ethnic and racial groups passed through and shaped the city's history. The Irish and Germans were the first to arrive. From 1860-1920, these immigrants constituted the largest foreign stock. In 1910, both reached their peaks and

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[27]Jersey City, An Analysis of the Economic Structure of Jersey City, (Jersey City: Division of Planning, 1975). New Jersey, Bureau of Statistics, The Industrial Directory of New Jersey (Triennially).

composed 20 percent of the total population. The Irish played a unique role in the city's political history.

From 1850 to 1870, when their numbers rose quickly, the Irish began to challenge natives for political leadership. During the 1860s, they gained political office "first as agents of native-born politicians and then in more independent ways." In the 1860s anti-immigrant groups used a familiar tool to control the foreign element--Jersey City's police commission became state appointed and dominated by old stock natives from 1866-1868.[28]

By the 1870s, however, the Irish could no longer be denied power. Consolidation had increased the city's immigrant population and in the elections of 1870 newcomers gained control of the government. Nativists rushed to prevent a takeover by the "lower elements." The state legislature provided a solution--the ending of local government. On March 29, 1871, a new city charter passed through the legislature over the governor's veto. Natives assumed control of the city through three five-men commissions appointed by the legislature. To further suppress the Irish, the charter redistricted the city and replaced the previous sixteen wards with six aldermanic districts. The redistricting concentrated as many Irish as possible into one "horseshoe shaped district." This gerrymandered district became known as

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[28]Douglas V. Shaw, "Making of an Immigrant City: Ethnic and Cultural Conflict in Jersey City, 1850-1877" (Published Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Rochester, 1973), p. 208.

the "Horseshoe," located along the Hudson River docks containing tenement districts and the swampland shanties at the base of Bergen Hill. Supposedly removing the city "out of control of ward politicians, office seekers, and gin mill politicians", the new charter eventually added to Irish political consciousness. The Horseshoe became the training ground for several Irish bosses who ruled the city for over a century.[29]

Nevertheless, from 1871-1877, natives did control the government and blocked immigrants from exercising power. Wasp resistance to the Irish had lasted for a quarter of a century. The new charter represented more than a political conflict. It stood for an ethnic and religious cleavage. The fight between the immigrants and natives was a clash between opposing cultures with obvious Protestant and Catholic divisions. The natives staged a holding action in the 1870s, but the Irish proved insuperable. Presiding over the transition of political power from Yankees to Irish was Robert (Little Bob) Davis, a Horseshoe politician.

Davis was born in Ireland in 1848, came to Jersey City in 1860 and by 1885 became the most influential leader in the city. Representing the classical era in boss politics, Davis typified the late nineteenth-century politician with his high-button shoes, brown bowler, and charitable ways. The jovial Irishman had worked his way up from teamster to

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[29]Shaw, "Immigrant City," pp. 201-205.

gas meter reader and finally to inspector before he successfully ran for Alderman in 1869. Short, corpulent, and shrewd, Davis gained political power from a downtown Democratic organization. A famous Irishman, Joseph Tumulty, later secretary to Woodrow Wilson, recalled seeing one of Davis's club members tabulating figures before an election and when asked what he was doing he replied, "I am writing the returns."[30]

From 1887, until his death in 1911, Davis symbolized the Irish's earliest period of command. Exchanging floaters and repeaters with the Brooklyn and Tammany machines across the river, Davis cultivated his own electorate with hand-outs, summer picnics, and the hospitality of the Robert Davis Association. To expand his power, he subsidized and befriended parish priests, rabbis, ministers, and protected Jersey City's saloon keepers. He financed these activities with funds supplied by the business boss, E.F.C. Young, the local utilities magnate, whose quid pro quo was freedom from interference by Davis's candidates. Davis solidified control over the Democratic Party by 1887, when he was elected Sheriff. From this position, Davis had immense power in his duty to select grand juries. With this tool, he punished enemies and protected friends. Crime, saloons, gambling

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[30]The best accounts of Davis can be found in: John Blum, Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era (Boston: Hough-Mifflin, 1951), pp. 5-7, and George C. Rapport, The Statesman and the Boss (New York: Vintage Press, 1961), pp. 30-33.

houses, and red-light districts flourished. To retain power, he sponsored German or Anglo-Saxon candidates to carry the heights. With Davis, the Irish captivity of the city began.

An important social institution that helped give the Irish a political monopoly, has been the Catholic Church. Although possessing no formal power, the Church has been a potent political force. Mere numbers explain its significance. In 1910, the Church claimed 38 percent of the city's population. The last Church census in 1954 listed 60.2 percent as Roman Catholic. Hudson County was even more predominantly Catholic with a 1950 Church census reporting that out of a church membership totalling 445,486, Roman Catholics composed 395,208 or 83.1 percent of total membership.[31] The large Catholic population enabled Irish politicians to use the Church. Balkanized into autonomous parishes, the Church has been permeated by bosses who offered heavy contributions and services.

Frank Hague represented a classic example of how the Church benefitted politicians. An early benefactor, Monsignor John Sheppard, was partly responsible for Hague's

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[31]Figures on Church population can be found in: Bureau of Census U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Religious Bodies: 1916 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), Pt. I, p. 104; National Catholic Almanac (New York, 1954), p. 197; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Churches and Church Membership in the United States 1956-1958, (New York: Office of Publication, 1957), Series C, No. 5.

political success. "When the tall, skinny redhead (Hague) first ran for public office, the boss (Monsignor Sheppard) published a few favorable words about him in the parish bulletin." With Church backing Hague went on to win and never forgot the "value and friendship of the Monsignor." Working with Sheppard, Hague made Catholicism the city's quasi-official religion and never separated matters of Church and State.[32]

Hague used the Church in an attempt to neutralize its potential power and provided a "service for goodwill approach."[33] The effects the Church had on an urban Democratic organization run by a Hague have best been described in Edward M. Levine's The Irish and Irish Politicians:

> The Church and the party organization had common attributes. Each confronted the Irish with sharply defined power structures and authority relationships, and provided them with services they could obtain nowhere else. So long as the Church and party fulfilled these responsibilities the people had no occasion to question the legitimacy of their authority.[34]

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[32]Jim Bishop and Leroy McWilliams, Parish Priest (New York: McGraw Hill, 1953), pp. 75-76. This analysis was also drawn from a series of interviews with John R. Longo, an active foe of Hague and long time participant in the city's politics.

[33]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 151.

[34]Edward M. Levine, The Irish and Irish Politicians (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 129.

Hague's service for goodwill was often shown in his dealings with Monsignor Sheppard. Placing persons on the public payroll and consummating property deals with city and Church that were advantageous to the later, bound politics with religion.

To penetrate parishes, Hague demanded that his ward leaders and precinct captains take an active role in Church activities. Mass on Sunday, involvement in the Holy Name Society, Knights of Columbus, and Communion Breakfasts were mandatory. Ward and precinct leaders cultivated goodwill by securing jobs, hiring parish halls for political meetings, rallies, and other parish activities. To tie the clergy closer, Hague placed religious leaders on the payroll by appointing police, fire, hospital, and even county garage chaplains. The Boss, himself, demonstrated his largess by donating a $50,000 altar to St. Aedan's Church. Another direct service to the Church was Hague's neglect of public schools. Since Jersey City had 40 percent of its school enrollment in parochial schools, Hague cared little about public school buildings, while parochial schools launched large building programs. Thus, in Jersey City ward and parish have almost been one.

Two immigrant groups that failed to dominate the clergy and the city's politics have been the Italians and Poles. Coming after the Irish and Germans the southern and eastern European immigrants began to rise in numbers after 1910. By

1920, the Italians formed the largest group of foreign born and mixed parentage. However, their political power was meager compared to their numbers. Hague kept them fragmented and weak. He recognized only one political leader, Michael Scatourchio, and awarded him the city's garbage-ash-contract. Scatourchio became the sole city, county, and state Italian leader. The only recognition accorded Italians was a place on the state assembly ticket; no key positions such as commissioner, or corporation counselor could be theirs.[35]

The Poles did little better. They were also large in numbers and composed the third largest immigrant group in 1930. Hague controlled them by appointing Henry Sieminski as leader in the 1920s and following him, John Saturniewiczj (called Saturday Night) a popular figure in the 1930s and 1940s. Nevertheless, the Poles received scarcely better treatment than the Italians. Their only recognition also came in the Assembly with a rotating Polish office holder being nominated. Not until Hague's downfall in 1949 did the Italians and Poles gain any major recognition. In that year, an Italian and a Pole were elected to the city commission, but the city still remained under Irish rule.

The latest newcomers have been blacks and Puerto Ricans. In 1940, blacks represented only 4 percent of the population and Puerto Ricans less than 1 percent. By 1970, blacks

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[35]The Hudson County Legislative delegation was quite large and voted as a bloc with Judge Louis N. Paladeau receiving orders from Hague. See McKean, Boss, p. 58.

increased to 21 percent and Puerto Ricans to 6.2 percent (see Tables 1 and 2). The decline in old-line white population and the arrival of the latest groups, have caused marked changes in the city. Economically, socially, and demographically Jersey City has undergone a transformation with whites fleeing, blacks migrating in, and the city faced with increased social responsibilities but declining resources.

Blacks began to migrate in large numbers after World War II. From 1950-1960, the largest in-migration occurred as blacks almost doubled their numbers from 20,966 to 36,692. This decade also contained the greatest out migration of whites. The Jersey City Planning Board estimates almost 100,000 whites left the city. This figure comes from the normal increases in population from births over deaths and the large influx of blacks; however, population declined by 23,029. White flight explains the loss.[36]

Blacks have not been evenly distributed throughout the city, but limited to the core. Only .3 percent of the city's blacks lived in the Hudson City area in 1970, while 51 percent lived in Lafayette and over 40 percent in Bergen. If one looks at the migration pattern, a clear black belt has emerged. In 1970, the belt extended from the tip of Greenville into Bergen and Lafayette, and Downtown. A brown

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[36]Jersey City, An Analysis of the Economic Structure of Jersey City (Jersey City: Division of Planning, 1975), p. 26.

belt has been formed Downtown with Spanish-speaking groups moving into former black neighborhoods.[37]

An indication of the social problems resulting from the new immigrants can be seen in the black community. In 1969, among poor families with male heads 26.1 percent were black and among poor families with female heads 44.7 percent were black. Black families also made up 35 percent of all poor families. Since blacks represented only 18.5 percent of city families, they have been heavily over-represented. The extent of family disorganization among blacks and Puerto Ricans can be gleaned from the large numbers of children not living with both parents. In 1970, black children under 18 and not living with both parents totalled 44 percent and Hispanics were 32 percent compared to 18 percent for whites. Labor characteristics for blacks are also revealing. In 1960, 53 percent of white employed males were in professional and skilled occupations, but only 21 percent of non-whites were similarly employed.[38]

Jersey City's ethnic and racial changes from 1950 to 1970 show how the city has become a home for the poor, black, and elderly. In 1950, the city was 93 percent white compared to the national figure of 89 percent. By 1970, Jersey City was 78 percent white and the nation 87 percent. The age of

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[37]City of Jersey City, Social Conditions (Comprehensive Planning Program, Report No. 4, 1965), pp. 10-11.

[38]City of Jersey City, Economic Conditions, pp. 8-10.

its citizens also changed. Much of the out-migration came from citizens in the age catagories between 30 and 44 and 5 and 14. The over-65 group has increased heavily. (See Chart 1.) Income levels have also changed. The median income for all Jersey City families dropped from 89.5 percent of the New York Standard Consolidated Area in 1950 to only 83.4 percent in 1970. A critical cause has been the shift in occupational structure. From 1950 to 1970 the city became over-represented by clerical workers, operatives, and non-farm laborers. All these are relatively low-paying or have relatively low status. On the other hand, Jersey City was under-represented in such high paying or high prestige occupations as professionals, technicians, non-farm managers, and administrators. Another sign of economic decline has be been the city's deminishing role as a place of work. In 1960, 56.4 percent of its employed residents worked in the city, but this figure declined to 50 percent in 1970.[39]

Housing has contributed to the social decay. In 1960, 78.9 percent of all city structures were built before 1939; moreover, many of these units did not meet the needs of modern housing. Only 75 percent were classified as sound with all plumbing facilities. Out of 91,925 units in 1960, the city had only built 19,000 after 1939. Overcrowding, high density, and high site coverage have left the city with a deteriorated and dilapidated housing stock. With a net

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[39]Jersey City, Office of the Mayor, Land Use, Report No. I, (Division of Planning, 1963), p. 12.

residential area of 2,200 acres and an average density of 41.8 dwelling units of 125 persons per net residential acre, the middle class found little to keep them in the city. (See Figure 3)

Educational levels give one more indication of the lower class nature of the city. In 1960, Jersey City had a median of 9.3 for school years completed compared to the New York and New Jersey consolidated area with 10.6 median. In every educational category, Jersey City was lower than the state average; and it s percentage of high school graduates was only 28.4 percent compared to New Jersey's 41.2 percent.[40]

Perhaps one critical figure demonstrates how the city has changed so extensively. In 1960, income varied widely for whites, blacks and Puerto Ricans. The median family income for whites was $6,733 compared to $4,456 for blacks and $3,999 for Puerto Ricans. Nine years later, 8.1 percent of the city's families received some form of public assistance and 10.2 percent were below the poverty line.[41]

Jersey City like many other cities lost much of its magnetism after 1950. No longer the dynamic and expanding metropolis of an earlier era, the city faced a new challenge with its populace demanding more than the city could offer. Social, ethnic, and racial changes have led many to believe

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[40]Raciti, "Jersey City Economy," p. 175.

[41]Jersey City, Economic Conditions, p. 5.

the city is dying, but the historical cycle shows changes do not always bring growth and temporary lapses may appear as permanent situations.

Hudson County

Jersey City's decline has been closely paralleled by that of Hudson County. Hemmed in by meadowlands and rivers, the county experienced little suburbanization. Jersey City is the county seat and the largest of twelve municipalities with over 40 percent of the total population. The most densely populated county in New Jersey with only 44.1 square miles of land, Hudson contained 12,933 people per square mile in 1970. But, suburban counties have cut into its population and eclipsed its role as an industrial center. By 1910, 20 percent of New Jersey's population resided there, but by 1970 it had dropped to less than 10 percent. Postwar changes in transportation and technology erased its locational advantage. By 1970, Hudson County stood as a "classic example of an aging urban area, losing population, economic importance, and actual income primarily because its plant and equipment are out of date, shabby, and worn."[42]

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[42]Hudson County, Reconnaisance Survey, Hudson County Planning Board (Hudson County: Division of Planning, 1969), p. 64.

Governmental Structures

The decline in population and economic importance of Hudson County and Jersey City have made them less of a political power than they once were. But, this has not drastically affected their local politics. Populated by a large lower class, the county and city have always been susceptible to machine politics. Contributing to this has been the forms of government used by both.

Occasionally, changed by reformers, Jersey City's government has helped to keep bosses in power. An early attempt to end boss rule in Jersey City and other New Jersey urban areas came during Woodrow Wilson's tenure as New Jersey's governor. In 1911, Wilson gained passage of the Walsh Act, a piece of legislation authorizing the adoption by referendum of commission government in the state's municipalities. Although not aimed directly at Jersey City, this law was part of the movement to curtail corrupt and boss-dominated city machines. Reformers with great expectations anticipated efficient and nonpartisan rule. Jersey City proved structural reform does not always bring political or social reform. From 1913-1961, bosses used commission government as a tool for their machines.

County Government has also helped ease the way for the boss. As one scholar has noted:

> At the county level, it is probably more accurate to discuss offices and institutions as having the county as an area of jurisdiction than to refer to the

'government' of Hudson County.[43]

Little centralization existed on the county level. The county board (Board of Freeholders) composed of elected members was usually under the control of the local politicians. The freeholders through a "maze of committees" supervised the administration of county welfare, bridges, penal institutions, and a hospital for the insane.[44] Numerous other officials were usually selected by the voters, the governor, or the court. When reform came to the county, it also played into the hands of Jersey City bosses. In 1912, during the Woodrow Wilson's term of governor, new laws were enacted and changed the freeholders from an unwieldy board of thirty-one members elected from each of Jersey City's wards and from Hudson's eleven other municipalities, into a nine-member board, elected at large for staggered terms of three years each. This made Jersey City the dominant force on the new board.[45]

Why the boss survived in Jersey City and Hudson County can thus be seen from the environment. Geographically separated from the suburbs and middle class citizens, bosses played upon the voter's passion for contact with power,

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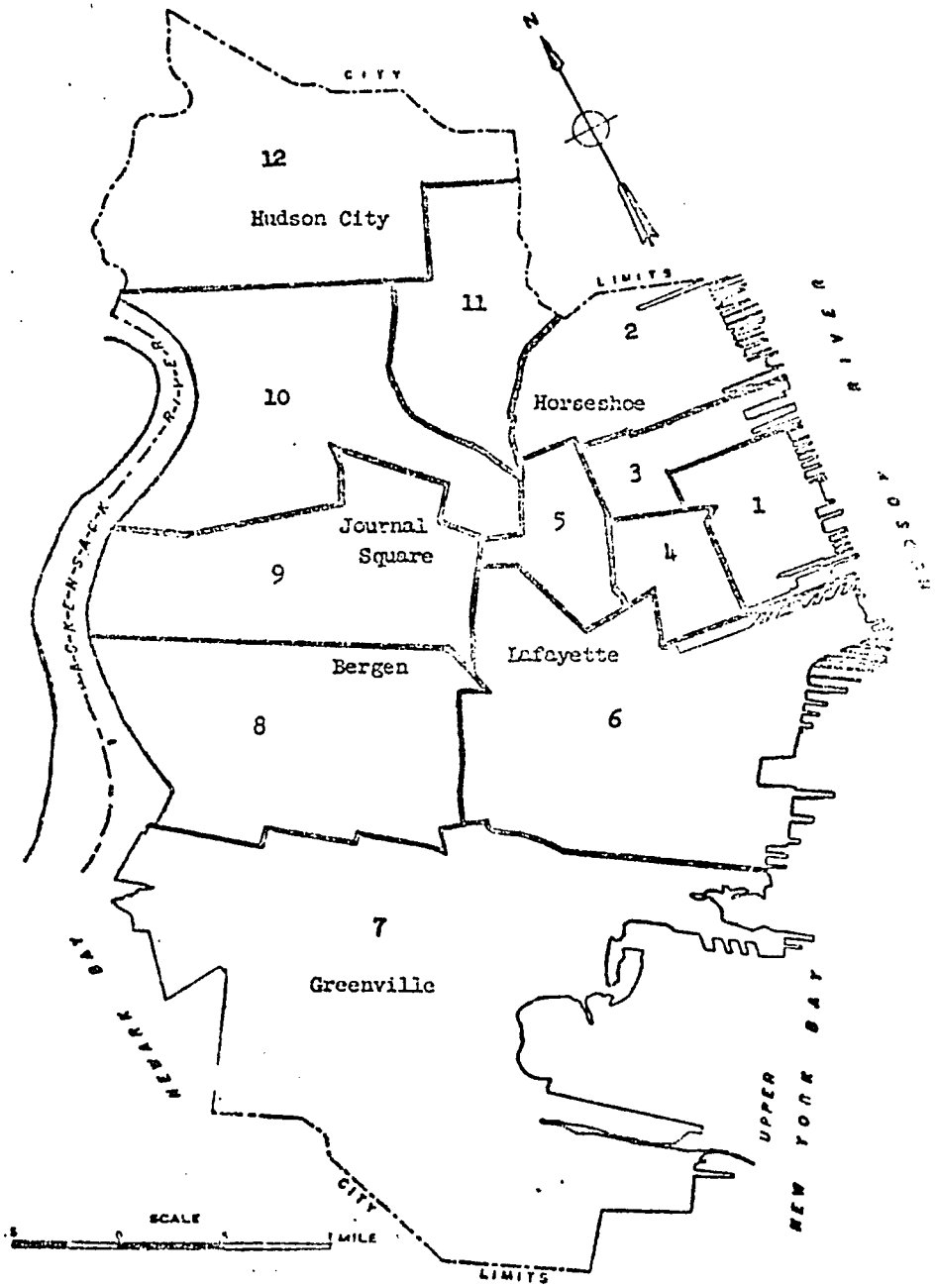
[43]Connors, Cycle of Power, pp. 17-18.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Connors, Cycle of Power, pp. 17-18; Harris I. Efross, County Governing Bodies in New Jersey: Reorganization and Reform of Boards of Chosen Freeholders, 1798-1974 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1975).

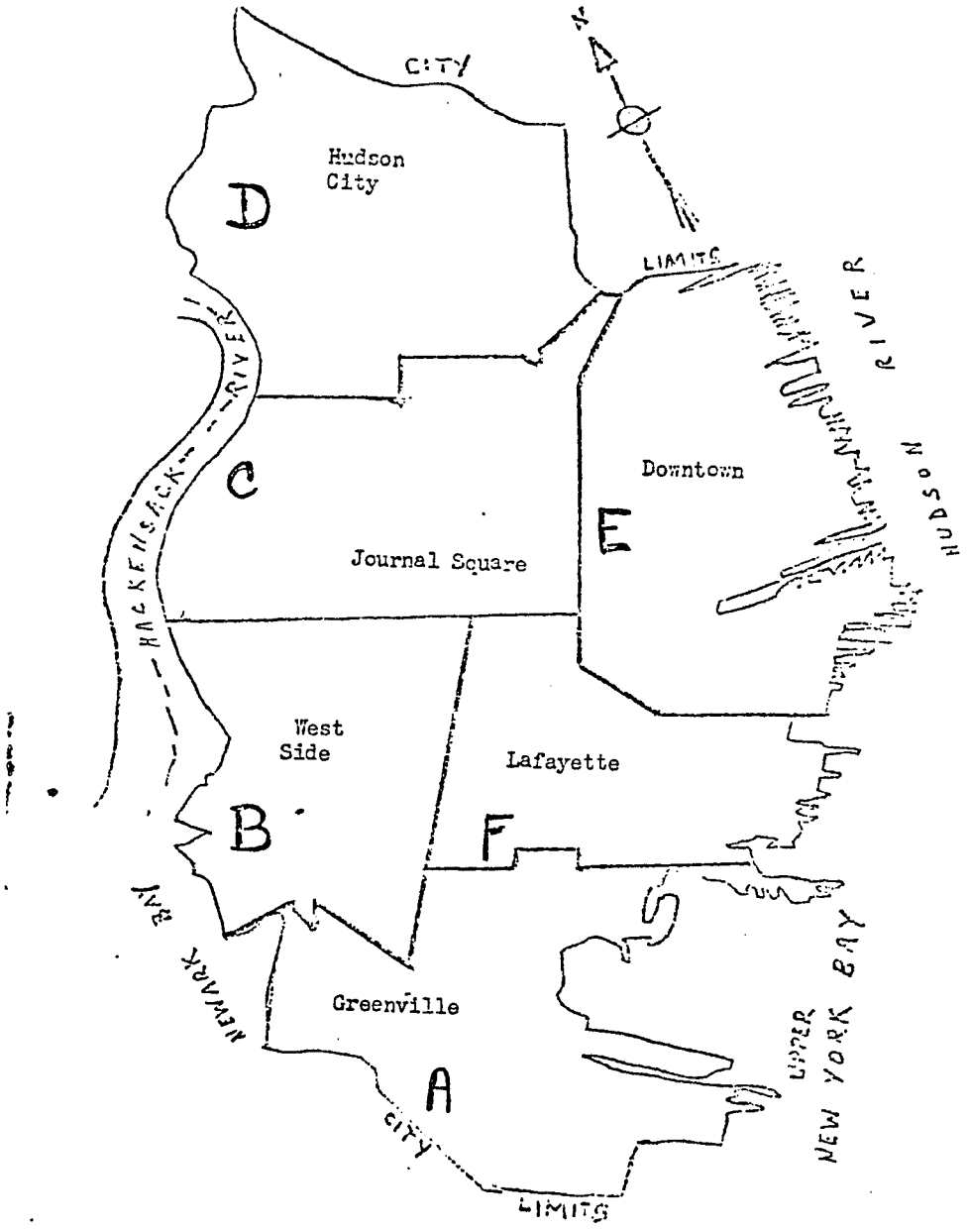
personal favoritism, and visible loyalty. Deep combustible elements existed in a core area to sustain a machine. It is not surprising that this urban environment was the setting for the building of a model organization under Frank Hague.

MAP 1



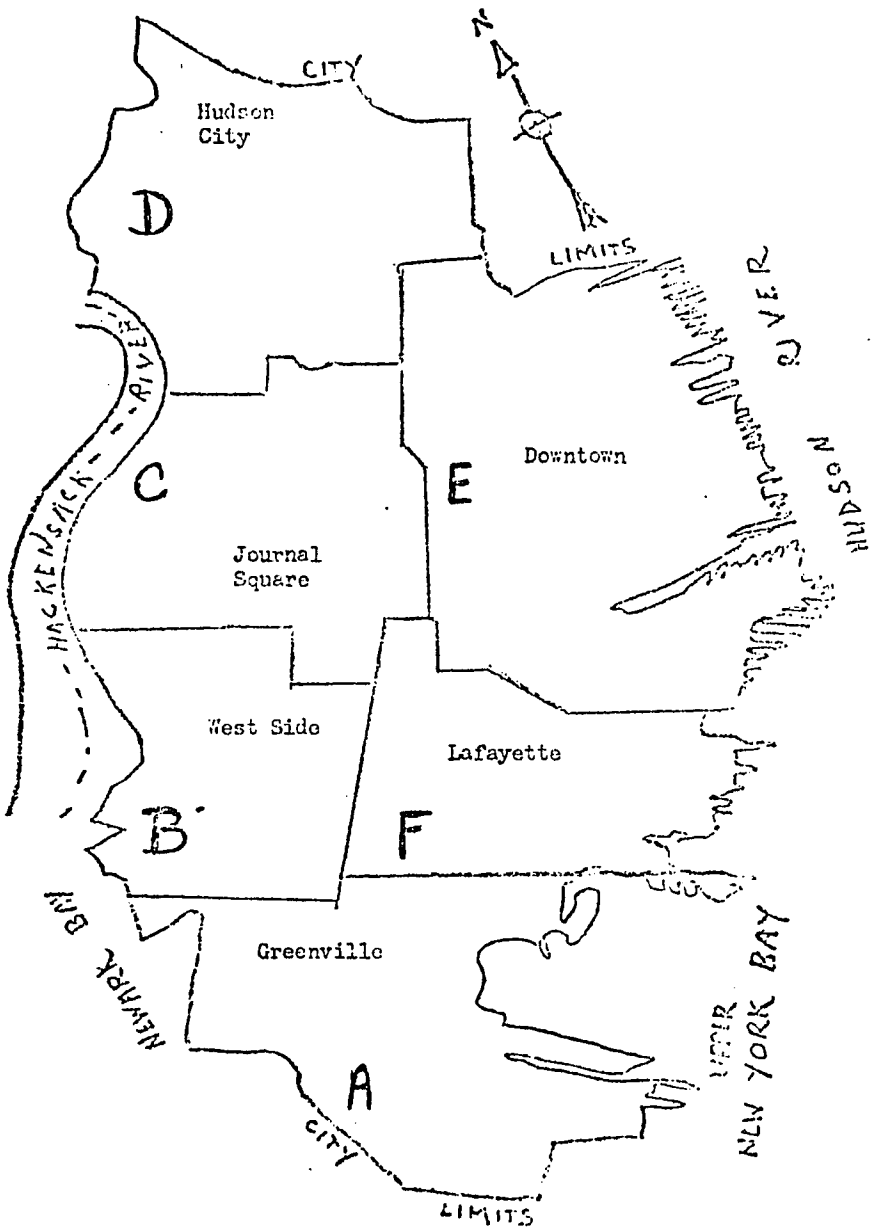
THE WARDS AND SECTIONS OF JERSEY CITY, 1913 - 1960

MAP 2



THE WARDS OF JERSEY CITY.
1961

MAP 3

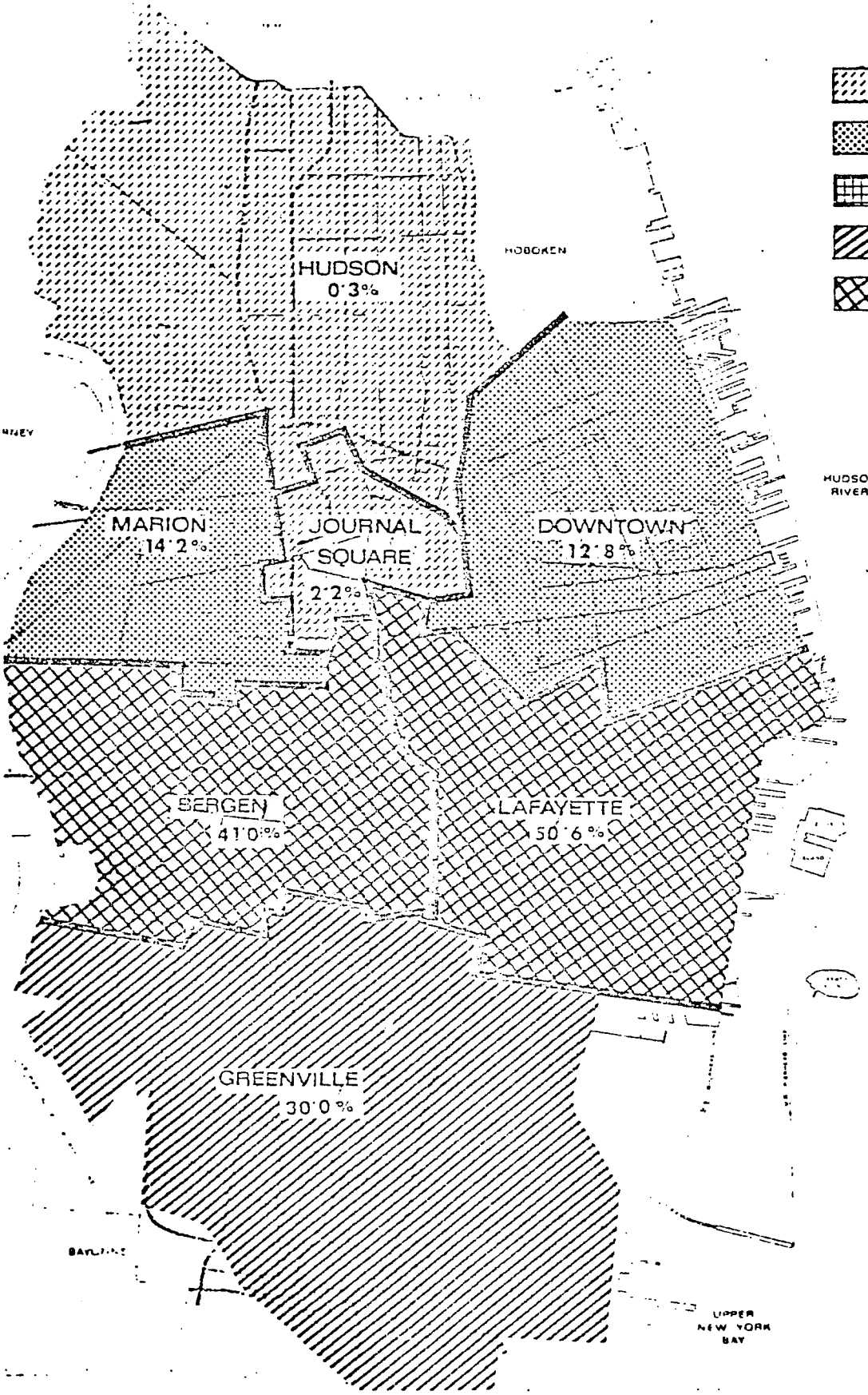


THE WARDS OF JERSEY CITY.
1971

DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO POPULATION IN JERSEY CITY 1960

MAP 4A

Source: Jersey City Division of Planning

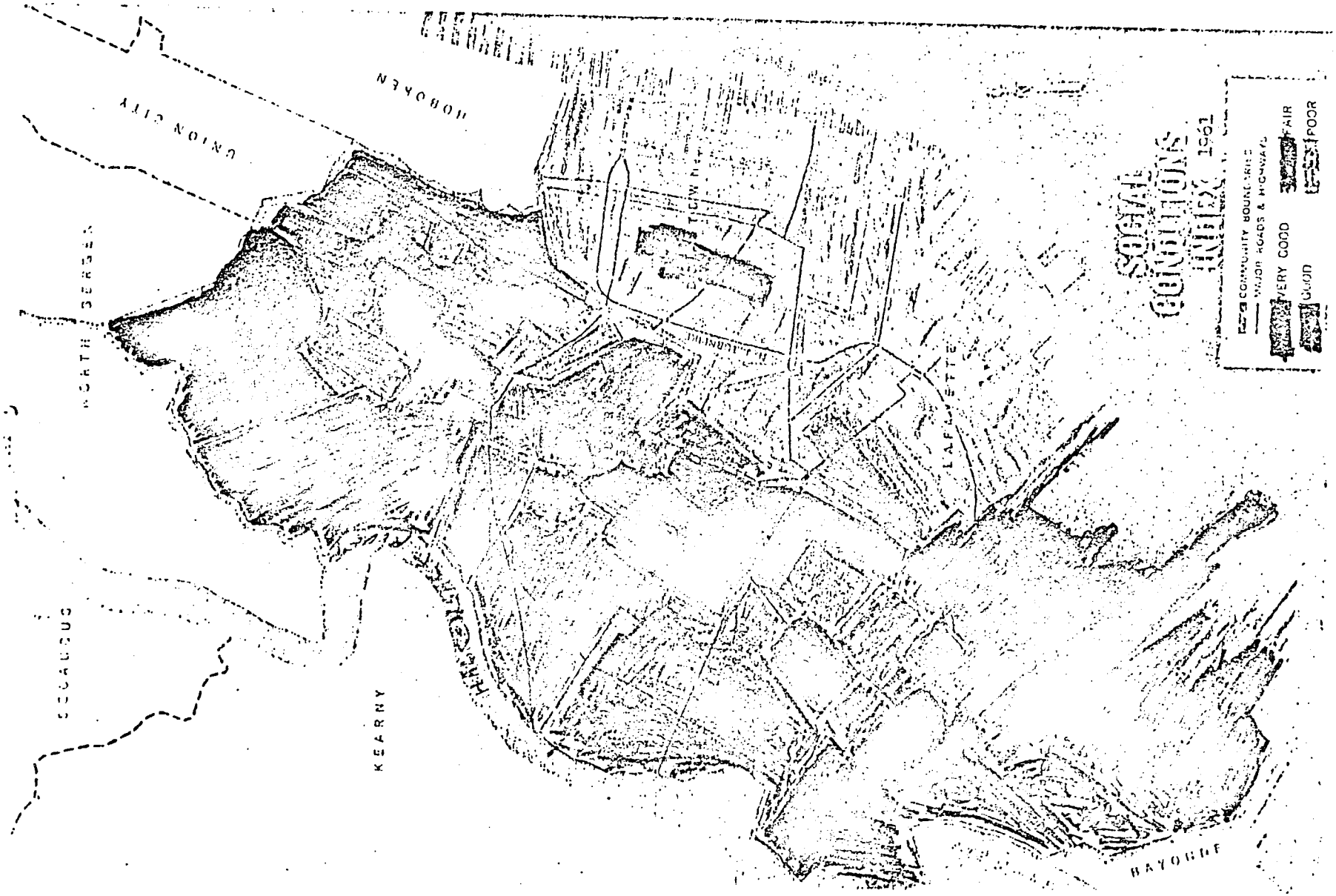


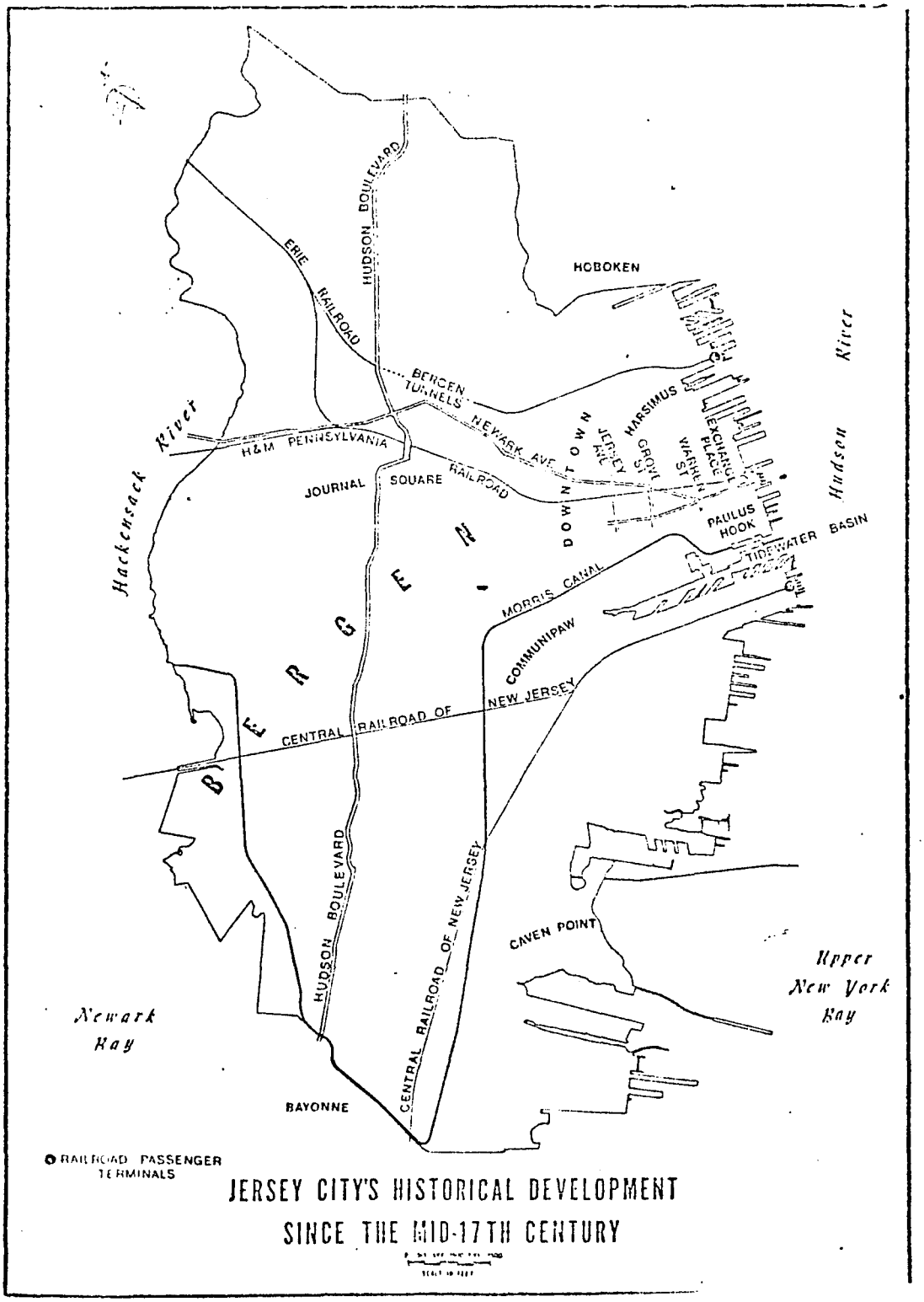
DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO POPULATION IN JERSEY CITY 1970

Source: Jersey City Division of Planning

MAP 4B

Source: Jersey City Planning Commission Basic Planning Data Comprehesive Planning Program (1963), p. 14.





JERSEY CITY'S HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT
SINCE THE MID-17TH CENTURY

Source: Jersey City Planning Division

TABLE 1

JERSEY CITY'S RACIAL DISTRIBUTION

PROPORTION OF TOTAL BLACK POPULATION IN VARIOUS NEIGHBORHOODS: 1960 AND 1970

Neighborhood	1960	1970
Hudson City	0.1	0.3
Marion	8.3	14.2
Journal Square	1.7	2.2
Downtown	15.9	12.8
Bergen	27.8	41.0
Lafayette	40.5	50.6
Greenville	8.0	30.0

Source: Jersey City, An Analysis of the Economic Structure of Jersey City, (Jersey City: Division of Planning, 1975), 1975), p. 30.

TABLE 2

JERSEY CITY's RACIAL DISTRIBUTION

Year	Whites	Blacks	Puerto Ricans
1940	95%	4.3%	-
1950	93	7	-
1960	86	13.5	2.7%
1970	72	21	6.2

TABLE 3

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

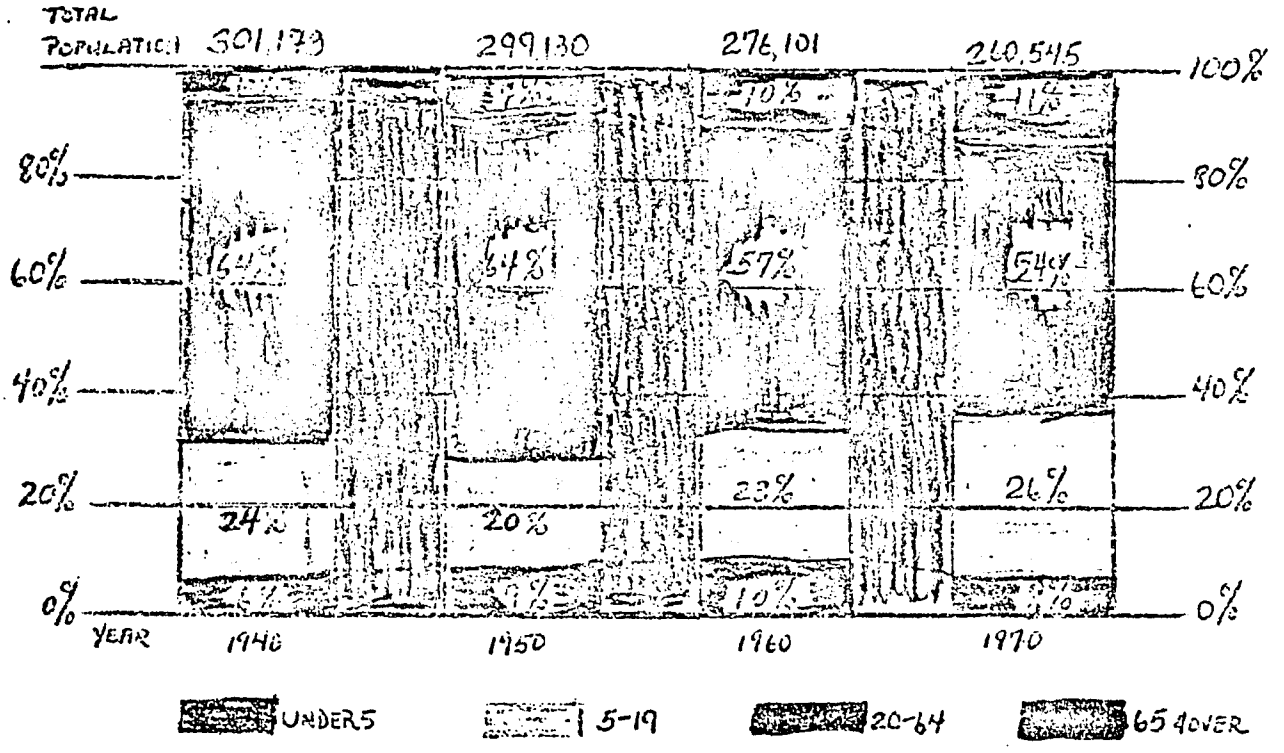
JERSEY CITY, 1950-1960

Births	64,000
Deaths	-34,000
In-Migration	46,564[e]
Out-Migration	-99,493[e]
Net Change	-23,029

Source: City of Jersey City, Social Conditions, Comprehensive Planning Program Report No. 4, Office of the Mayor (Jersey City: Division of Planning, 1964), p. 9.

e - Estimated

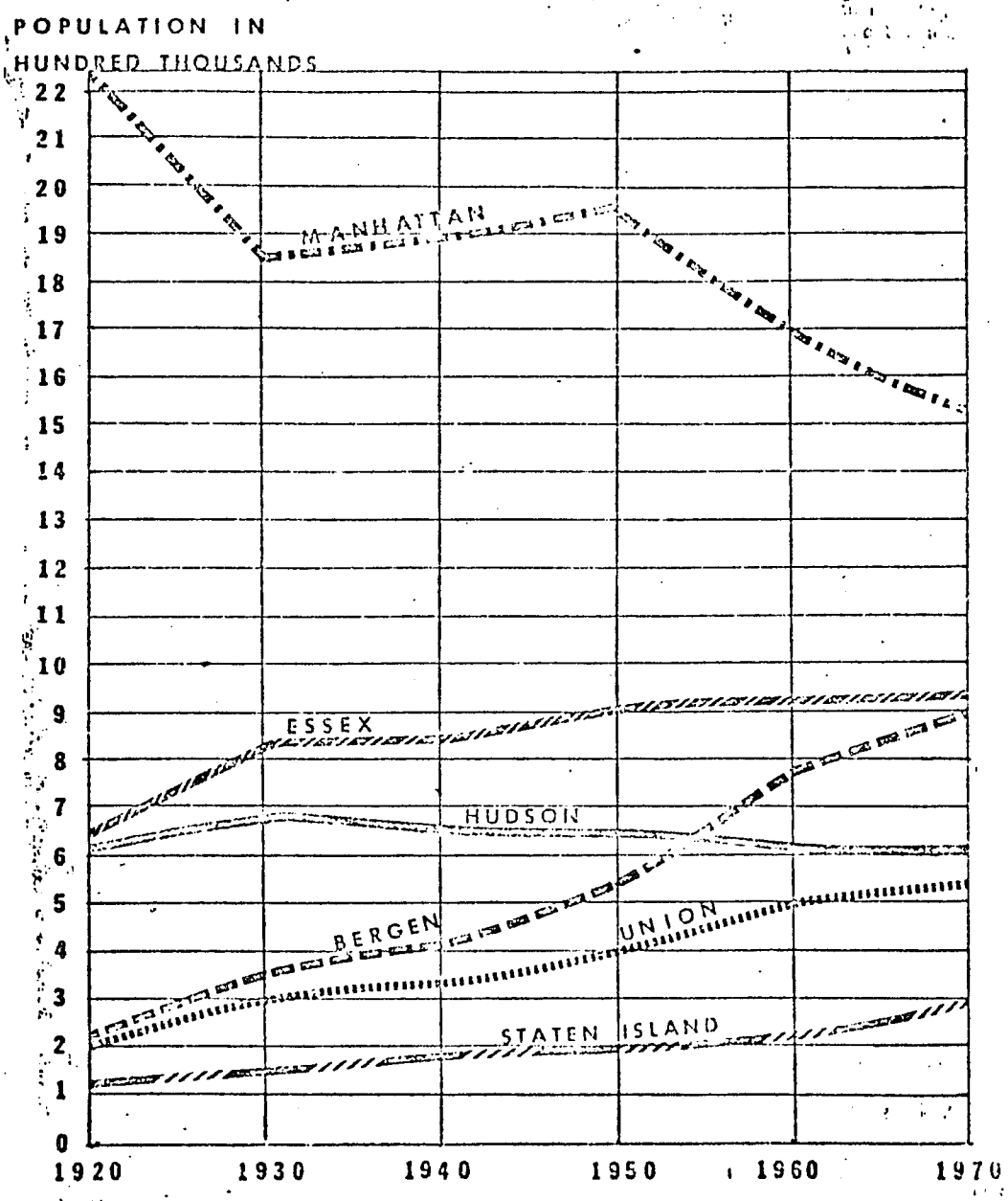
Chart I CHANGING AGE DISTRIBUTION JERSEY CITY, 1940-1950-1960-1970



Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970; Jersey City Planning Commission., Basic Planning Data Comprehensive Planning Program(1963), p.15.

CHART 2

POPULATION OF HUDSON AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES 1920–1970

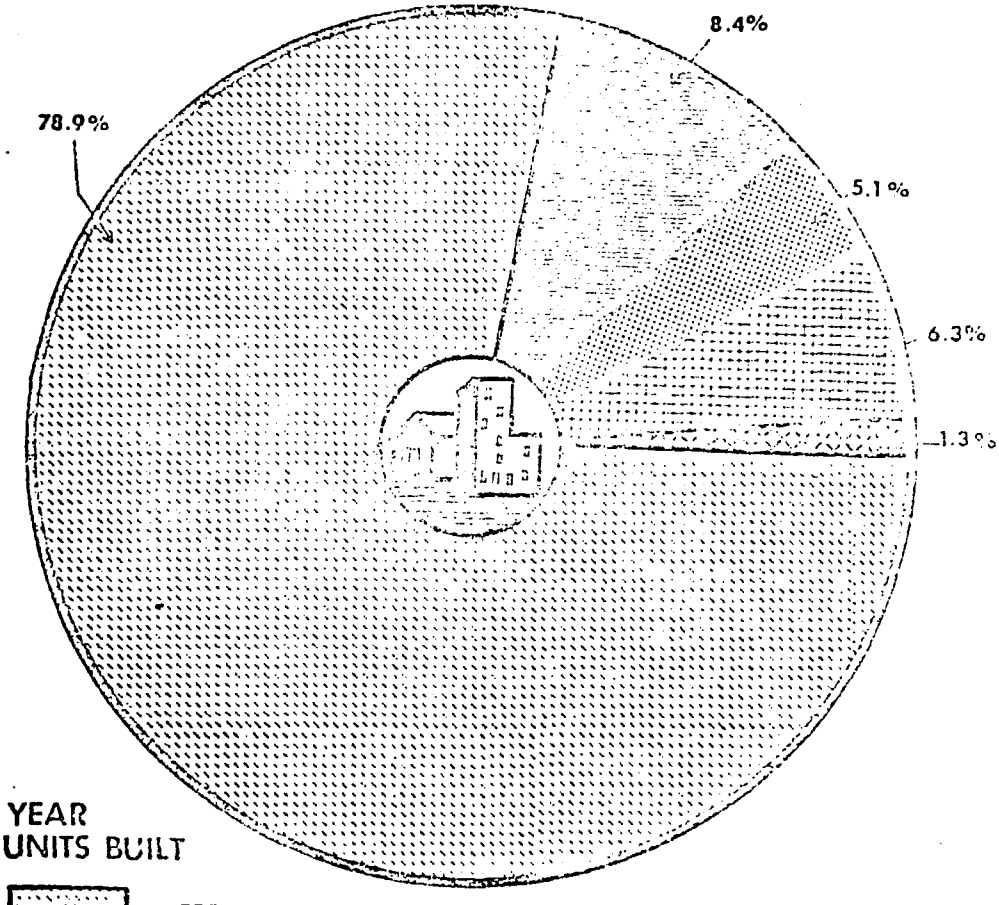


Source: Hudson County Planning Division

Figure 3

AGE OF HOUSING STOCK IN JERSEY CITY

TOTAL UNITS 91,925



Source: Jerse City Division of Planning.

CHAPTER II

THE HAGUE MACHINE

To know Jersey City is to know Frank Hague. In no other American city did one man wield so much power. Hague's career has no analogy in urban bossism. Mayor for over thirty years, he made the city "Hagueville," and as one observer commented:

> Many political machines flourish--and have flourished in America, but none has approached the perfection of the Hague organization in the completeness of its control over the society in which it exists. Even Tammany Hall, the prototype of all machine politics, never dominated New York as Hague and his political associates have dominated Jersey City and Hudson County. While no political institution can be entirely complete and successful, the one under examination here so nearly approaches the most finished machine that can be expected that any others may be measured against it.[1]

Indeed, Hague more than flourished. He vanquished the city and rightly deserved the title, "Absolute Boss." How Hague accumulated and exercised so much power has been explained by Richard J. Connors in A Cycle of Power. Arguing as a political scientist, Connors sees Hague practicing "integrative politics" to subjugate the city. The Jersey City Mayor's success came from his ability to "penetrate the social, religious, and economic institutions of the city,

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[1]McKean, The Boss, p. xvii.

reducing them to satellite status or keeping them as depoliticized fragments." "The Mayor endeavored to make his machine the only autonomous political organization in Jersey City." To do this, Hague "tied his political fortune to broader units and especially in the state political arena."[2] In this way, Jersey City became Hagueville.

The high tide of Hagueism came in the 1930's when Hague probably exercised more power than any American politician--excluding the President. Even Huey Long in his heyday as Governor of Louisana did not control men and penetrate institutions to the extent Hague did. Using governors, judges, prosecutors, and an array of other weapons to discredit and destroy his opponents, the Boss enclosed Jersey City with an iron curtain and prevented the exercise of free speech. A form of domestic fascism gripped the city. The causes for Hague's rise and unusual accumulation of power can only be understood within the social context in which he worked. Becoming a symbol for the Irish, Hague was in some ways like James Michael Curley of Boston with his ability to define, dramatize, and play upon the discriminations, resentments, and frustrations suffered by the Irish community in its long passage from a despised immigrant minority "to a politically irresistible but economically blocked majority."[3] When

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[2]Richard J. Connors, "The Local Political Career of Mayor Frank Hague" (Ph.D dissertation, Columbia University, 1966), pp. 6-8. Later published as Cycle of Power (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1971).

[3]Shannon, The American Irish, p. 228.

Hague came to power, the Irish still remembered how they were looked upon and denied economic opportunities. One of the city's largest manufacturers, the Colgate Soap Company, had made it a policy not to hire Irish Catholics.[4] Thus, when Hague came to power, he stood for more than Irish political recognition; he was a symbol of superiority.

The Horseshoe

On January 17, 1876, Frank Hague was born in the Horseshoe, the spawning ground for Irish politicians where he learned about life and politics from the street and backroom saloons. During the time of his early youth, the local press described the misery ridden area:

> The Second District of Jersey City, better known as the "horseshoe" contains a population of 27,169 very largely composed of the Irish element. From its crescent sweep it takes in the slums of the city on all sides. . .
>
> Above Brunswick street the condition of some of the streets in the Horseshoe is equal to anything in the most neglected suburbs in any city. There is no direct connection with the public sewers and each dwelling has an open trench in the yard, or a small wooden house with a sewer running to the gutter. . .
>
> The houses are all three-story frames, flat-roof tenements, and the owners generally live on the premise. The roads are littered with piles of decomposing vegetables, interspersed with mountains of ashes and heaps of muck. . . (On one street) there is a row of the usual flat-roofed tenements, and it is safe to say that every man, woman, and child lying there with goats and dogs would vote for Hancock.[5]

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[4]Interview with John X. Irving, former Dean of Seton Hall Law School.

[5]Jersey City Evening Journal, September 7, 1880, p. 5.

Within the Horseshoe was a neighborhood called "Cork Row"--named after its mother county in Ireland. Located at the present site of the Holland Tunnel, Cork Row was the birthplace of Hague and his later-day opponent, John V. Kenny. The Mayor of this Irish demesne was Edward (Ned) Kenny, father of John V. Kenny and political mentor of Hague. Edward Kenny ran the Greenwood Social Club, one of the forty saloons in the Horseshoe. This saloon provided a popular watering hole for the downtrodden Irish and a political education for Hague and young Kenny.

In 1896, Frank Hague with the backing of Edward Kenny, ran for constable. To finance the young politician, Kenny reached into his cash register and supplied Hague with $75.[6] In the primary, Kenny's saloon was used as one of the election polling places. Hague soon learned a political axiom: "it's not how the ballots go in the box, but how they are counted." During the primary one witness swore there were "only 178 voters in Kenny's polling place yet 308 ballots came out of the box."[7]

From the Horseshoe, Hague learned not just about machine politics, but also about the Irish attitude toward power. Family friendships and neighborhood loyalties were the basis of power. City politics was viewed not as a "conflict over how to obtain the best government at the

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[6]McKean, The Boss, p. 29.

[7]Jersey City Evening Journal, March 28, 1896, p. 4.

lowest cost, but a struggle among competing groups."[8] So it was--the Horseshoe left an indelible mark on Hague's character. Although in later life he attempted to escape some of the lower class aspects of his early upbringing (he wore expensive clothes and lived with millionaires), Hague never transcended the mentality of the street-fighter politician. The willingness to use raw physical force and extra-legal methods always remained with him. An early newspaper story in 1910 gave a portent of Hague's political future. The article explained how "men with blood streaming down their heads" had to leave a political meeting after opposing Hague and his followers.[9] Hague's political style always retained this "aura of agression." As Mayor, he brutalized policemen by kneeing them in the groin and even punched a doctor in the face for arriving late to an accident.[10]

The other traits gained from the Horseshoe appeared early in Hague's career. Building an organization from the block and neighborhood proved his greatest political strength. As constable, deputy sheriff, and city custodian, he used patronage to cultivate a large following in the second ward. He even risked imprisonment when he perjured himself for a

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[8]Shannon, American Irish, p. 63.

[9]Jersey Journal, September 14, 1910, p. 5.

[10]McKean, The Boss, p. 8; Interviews with Dr. Maurice O'Sullivan former Assistant Superintendent of Jersey City Schools and John Foley, a former Hague committeeman.

boyhood friend. The incident caused no political harm, and the people in the Horseshoe applauded Hague for doing the criminal's mother a "favor". In 1911 Hague's career began to boom. He rose to citywide office when he attached himself to the then Mayor, H. Otto Wittpenn, and gained election as Street and Water Commissioner. The same year the old boss, Robert Davis, died and left the city and county in a political vacuum. Wittpenn seemed the apparent successor. Hague, however, capitalized on the situation and attempted to make a move against his former mentor.[11]

In 1912 while Wittpenn supported Woodrow Wilson for the presidency, Hague joined a stop-Wilson movement and backed Wittpenn's opponents. The decision proved unwise. Both Wilson and Wittpenn were victorious. Wilson won the presidency, and Wittpenn won control of county government. By the following year, Hague was stripped of his patronage and appeared to be a beaten man.

Hague as Reformer

In 1913 Frank Hague seemed an unlikely figure to be a power in city politics, but by the end of the year he more than proved his importance. Hague's first opportunity came when Wittpenn overextended himself by running for governor and leaving his city base unprotected. In that year, the

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[11]George Rapport, The Statesman and the Boss (New York: Vantage Press, 1961), Chapter 5. See also Mark S. Foster's "Frank Hague of Jersey City: The Boss as Reformer," New Jersey History LXXXVI (Summer 1968), pp. 107-117.

city's progressive republican newspaper, the Jersey Journal renewed a crusade to alter the city's charter and adopt commission-type government. Wittpenn and other politicos resisted, but not Hague. Reversing a former position, the second ward leader energetically supported this reform. Acting much like Boss Edward Crump of Memphis, Hague used progressivism to gain power.[12]

Hague donned the garb of the reformer and actively sought signatures to petition for a new charter. The Street and Water Commissioner's efforts on behalf of Progressive reform gave him considerable press coverage. Posing as a "goo goo" against the bosses, Hague became all things to all people. In his home second ward, he was the practical politician, but in the uptown newspaper wards, he was the enterprising reformer. When commission government was finally approved on April 15, 1913, Hague was ready to play his role to the hilt.

Running for one of the commission seats, Hague opposed Wittpenn and criticized his opponent for being a machine politician. During the campaign Hague asked, "Shall Jersey City have commission government or machine government?"[13] The campaign for commissioner became a prototype for Hague's political style. The question of his opponent's personal

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[12]Jersey Journal, March 14, 1913, p. 1.

[13]Ibid., June 3, 1913; As found in Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 43.

loyalty would always be present. Wittpenn was called an enemy of the people who sold out to big business and utility interests, but Hague claimed he stood "by the people and against the corporations."[14] When the election was finally decided, Hague's strategy proved effective; he was elected commissioner and assumed the post of Director of Public Safety. The boy from the Horseshoe was on his way to being boss, thanks to commission government and progressive reform.

Hague's role as Public Safety Director from 1913 to 1917 also proves instructive in providing further insights into his strategy and behavior as boss. His desire for the dramatic and visible emerged quickly. Upon assuming his duties, Hague attracted public support by announcing an end to sinecure positions in the police department. He quickly held a conference with the police chief and demanded reform and strict discipline. "What I want is results. . . The man who does his duty will have nothing to fear from me, but the one who shirks his duty will have to suffer the consequences."[15] The local press began calling the new commissioner, "a man of action." To further develop this image, the former ward boss launched a series of crusades against police intoxication, saloon abuses, "firetrap" movie houses, and corner stores allegedly selling poisoned candy to the city's children. In addition to gaining press support,

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[14]Ibid., June 21, 1913, pp. 1-2.

[15]Jersey Journal, June 21, 1913, pp. 1-2.

Hague's attack on "vice and corruption" put him in the good graces of the clergy.[16]

An ironic example of how Hague gained a reputation as a law enforcer and man "who does things", came from the Kenny family. Frank Kenny, son of the late Edward Kenny and brother of John V. Kenny, was murdered on Union Street in Jersey City on April 21, 1916. The murder caused a public sensation, and the press called for quick justice. Kenny's family was highly popular in the Horseshoe and when the murderer was identified as an Italian, ethnic tensions rose. Details of the murder made the case more volatile. Frank Kenny had been protecting his wife against some casual and salacious remarks made by the Italian. Kenny's friends formed a lynching party. A quick response was needed from City Hall to quell passions. Hague and his fellow commissioners reacted by offering a $500 reward for the capture of Kenny's slayer. Realizing the importance of the case, the Public Safety Director commented: "The murder of Mr. Kenny was one of the most cruel murders in the city's history. We are working night and day to run down the slayer, we are not sparing any effort."[17]

Within the week Hague capitalized on the public's fury. The Public Safety Director and his men tracked down the murderer. In a reported hand-to-hand battle, with guns

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[16]Rapport, Statesman and Boss, p. 189.

[17]Jersey Journal, April 24, 1916, p. 1.

drawn, Hague and Michael Rombollo (the fugitive) fought it out in a public park in Newark. The headlines read, "FACING DRAWN REVOLVER, HAGUE OVERPOWERS AND ARRESTS KENNY'S SLAYER." With Rombollo's arrest, the Police Commissioner reinforced his image. Further credence was given to this image after Kenny's murderer was eventually tried and sentenced to the electric chair. When he gained a reprieve and was ordered deported to Italy, Hague personally went on board ship and saw that Rombollo left.[18]

From 1913 to 1917, Hague's popularity increased, and his agressive behavior boosted his political appeal. Through his sensitive position as Public Safety Director he made the police department an arm of his political organization and prepared to rule the city. The 1917 commission election offered him the opportunity. As the strong man of the city, the Commissioner showed a talent to "organize and motivate the city-wide mass of political workers." Working with two allied commissioners, he controlled three city departments and was able to use an "estimated 2,000 workers to cover the city on election day."[19] When the election returns were in, he once again proved his ability as an organizer and began his first term as mayor. Jersey City

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[18] Ibid., March 8, 1916, p. 1; April 25, 1916, p. 1; April 26, 1916, p. 1; April 27, 1916, p. 1; Interviews with William Flanagan, former Jersey City Deputy Mayor, and John R. Longo, Public Relations Director of Hudson County under John V. Kenny.

[19] Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 51.

knew no other mayor for over thirty years.

Shield Politics

Frank Hague became mayor because Otto Wittpenn had not controlled Hudson County and failed to protect his city base. Hague would not make the same mistake. In 1917 the second ward leader began to build the first layer of a city shield. A tooth and claw battle was fought for county power; Hague again showed his penchant for physical violence. During a meeting of anti-Hague party workers, the Boss used his police force to crack skulls and brutalize dissidents. By September of 1917, he had wrestled control of county government and became the County Boss. The next move was to "take Trenton."

The building of the first state shield came in 1918, when the Jersey City mayor groomed the first of his many gubernatorial candidates, Edward I. Edwards, a Jersey City banker. First, he engineered Edwards' candidacy for State Senator, and then his selection for the gubernatorial primary. The 1919 gubernatorial primary would be the next test. Hague showed the importance of the numerical and political power of Hudson County when he pushed Edwards through despite oppositon from the Essex County Boss, James Nugent. When Edwards went on to win the general election in November, 1919 (thanks to Hudson's plurality of 36,113 votes), Hague extended his power statewide and became a "State Boss."[20]

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[20]Jersey Journal, October 14, 1913, p. 1; Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 52.

But to insure continued protection, the new state boss had to keep electing governors. So he did. In 1922 George Silzer won for Hague. But, A. Harry Moore was his crowning achievement. Moore, New Jersey's only three-term governor (1925, 1931, and 1937), provided Hague with his most secure shield since the governor was a former Jersey City commissioner and loyal follower. Undoubtedly, he was the "Mayor's boy" in Trenton. Moore served Hague well in state politics and, up to a point, well enough in national politics until he made a classic blunder when he opposed Social Security legislation "because it might take the romance out of old age."[21]

The outer plate in Hague's shield came from his role in the Democratic Party. In 1922 he appointed his own state chairman and had himself elected the state's national committeeman. Two years later, he led the New Jersey delegation to the Democratic convention and was elected vice-chairman of the national committee. Hague's parlaying of political power had a "feedback effect on his local position." On a national level, he could always have a voice in federal patronage from a Democratic president. On a state level, gubernatorial appointments helped consolidate his control over Hudson County and influence the judicial system. To defeat Hague, one had to more than beat him on the local

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[21]Alfred Steinberg, The Bosses (New York: MacMillan Co., 1972), p. 59.

level; the external shield had to be pierced.[22]

Political Resources

Acquiring power was only half of the key to Hague's success. The ability to retain it for over thirty years and never be personally defeated in an election was the second half. To preserve power, he had numerous political resources, but only one basic formula--organization and good government. In a 1936 interview, the Boss explained his method of retaining power:

> A leader with a fair organization can get away with bad government for awhile, but sooner or later the people boot him out. . . Twenty-five years ago I had the gumption to see the difference between what was temporary and what was perm'nent, and I went for perm'nency. And you'll notice I'm still here. Mayor for twenty-five years! And why? Organization and good government. . .[23]

Thus, organization and good government were the foundations of Hague's political strategy. And where did he gain the political wisdom to conceptualize this framework? Richard Connors provides a tentative answer:

> . . . Mayor Hague's local style was a mixture of the art of politics he had learned as a young man in the Horseshoe section of Jersey City, and an approach that had been used successfully by his two predecessors as Mayor, Mark Fagan and H. Otto Wittpenn. From the Horseshoe, Hague took his faith in a service-type, grass roots organization as the key to holding the allegiance of the downtown or "river" wards

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[22]Connors, "Frank Hague," pp. 72-74.

[23]George Creel, "The Complete Boss," Colliers, XCVIII (October 10, 1936), pp. 57-60.

> of the city. From Fagan and Wittpenn, Hague took his faith in "good government" reputation rooted in solid accomplishment and maintained with press support, as a major asset for a downtown politician seeking votes in the uptown or "newspaper" wards of Jersey City.[24]

Hague's machine did not mistakenly appeal only to one group and divide the city the way Curley did in Boston. Instead, a unified appeal emerged, based on service and good government. Furthermore, his decision not to divide "the river wards" from "the newspaper wards" was a wise strategy in retrospect. During the course of Mayor Hague's terms, the downtown experienced a decline in population and loss in political power. Thus, Hague had discerningly courted all parts of the city. Again, like Boss Crump of Memphis, the Jersey City Boss stabilized his position by emphasizing services rather than splintering his voter support by appealing to groups. As Crump used to say, "Memphis should be conducted as a great business enterprise, in which there are two hundred thousand stockholders and not a place to be exploited by politicians."[25] Although Hague and the Red-snapper both showed a "good government" approach, a critical difference emerged. The Jersey City Boss always ran the show from the Mayor's chair while Crump eventually went backstage.

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[24]Connors, "Frank Hague, " pp. 290-291.

[25]William Miller, Memphis During the Progressive Era, 1900-1917 (Memphis: Memphis State University, 1957), p. 161.

The Organization

Hague's ability to retain power for so long was a feat achieved by few city bosses. Built upon a geographic and hierarchic structure, the Hague machine was a model of efficiency and ruthlessness. In 1936 the Boss explained the inner workings to Joseph Alsop:

> . . . He (Hague) was talking in the dining room of one of the local hotels. He took the squares on the tablecloth to illustrate precincts and wards, tracing them out with his finger, and he explained the feudal system of American politics, whereby the precinct captain is governed by ward lieutenant, the lieutenant by a ward leader, and each ward leader, and each ward leader by the boss.[26]

Alsop's recounting was entirely accurate, and Hague's machine made Tammany look like an amateur organization. For as Dayton McKean once said, "the Hague machine touches every corner, reaches to the very bottom of the community. Let the citizen turn where he will, work or play where he will, or join what he will, he meets the organization at every point."[27]

Delegating limited authority to his Deputy Mayor, John Malone, the Boss established a tight chain of command down to ward leader and precinct captain. Patronage flowed through a narrow channel. Job seekers had to go to their committeemen before any assistance could be offered. Hague

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[26] New York Hearld Tribune, June 6, 1926. See McKean's, The Boss, p. 132.

[27] McKean, The Boss, p. 121; Connors, "Frank Hague," pp. 86-89.

disliked breaking this pattern and gave his workers a clear sense of organizational structure. He also disliked and would not allow any personal ward clubs or local political leaders to exist. Every club had to be an organization club rather than a personal association. The ward club was staffed by job-holders dependent on the Boss. To keep an even tighter grasp on his machine and prevent any semifeudal baron from arising, the Boss shuffled ward leaders from different levels of government and prevented any personal followings or "payroll armies" from being built. With only one exception, John V. Kenny, Hague's ward leaders remained devoutly loyal and dependent upon their leader.

To insure his absolute dominace over the organization, Hague relied on the "carrot and stick method." The carrot was a raise, promotion, job, or possible legal protection. Ironically, John V. Kenny tasted the carrot when Hague used his influence in Washington and had one of the organization's Congressmen squelch an audit of Kenny's income tax return.[28] The stick was Hague's ruthlessness. When one opposed Hague, he risked political and personal injury. The loss of one's job would be compounded by the stripping of one's relatives and friends from the payroll. Civil service offered no protection; Hague's personal appointee was the president of the commission.

The Boss was also a master of social psychology and

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[28]Interviews with former Governor, Robert E. Meyner, May, 1973.

used it to prevent any internal rebellion. Grass roots workers "had to be on the job 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."[29] A true martinet, Hague saw the need for constant discipline. Committeemen were prevented from getting lax by the use of competitive vote getting. With his deputy mayor, the Boss would meticulously compare voting returns from each district and note the differences from year to year. In a pithy interview with William R. Clark of Newark Evening News, Hague explained the vigilance he gave to his command post:

> You see that district, (the boss said as he pointed to a huge chart in his office). Notice that the vote by ten o'clock last year was twice what it was this year. The chart shows there's a church right across the street from the polling place. Last year election day fell on a holy day of obligation, and we got them just as they came out of church.[30]

The chart showed every election district, the committeemen and women, the vote in each district in previous years, and not only the total vote cast hour by hour, but any external influence on the vote such as fire, funeral, or the weather.

The careful attention given to details enabled Hague to maintain a dynamic organization. His committeemen felt a sense of importance. To turn out a large vote was an accomplishment and immediately rewarded. The neighborhood also provided psychic rewards. Looked up to and importuned for

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[29]Connors, "Frank Hague," pp. 102-107.

[30]McKean, The Boss, p. 12.

favors, jobs, and other forms of assistance, committeemen felt they were more than just party workers, they were community leaders. They also had durability; the dean of Hague's committeemen, Thomas Maloney, remained in his district over forty years.[31]

The basis, then, for Hague's organizational success was: "dictatorial control at the top, structural simplicity, and tight precinct units."[32]

Good Government Image

Besides using an efficient and ruthless organization to retain power, Hague continued to develop his reform image. To be an urban tyrant might damage the visage, but the Boss made up for this by providing services that quelled potential criticism. The obvious services were always conspicuous. Hospital care led the list. Hague had a mania about his health and built a massive Medical Center to provide free health care for the citizens of Jersey City. When citizens walked the streets, a large and highly visible police force provided safety. Jersey City had the largest police force for any American city with a 300,000 to 400,000 population.[33] To assure moral purity, Hague enforced his pledge, "No Vice, No Crime, No Racketeering." Gambling was strictly

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[31]Interview with John Soltis, former Hague and Kenny committeeman; Jersey Journal, July 23, 1947, pp. 1, 12.

[32]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 100.

[33]McKean, The Boss, p. 202.

controlled by the Mayor. The mafia never could penetrate Hague's iron curtain, and the Boss centralized gambling activities by supervising numbers runners and bookies on the ward and precinct level.[34] An Irish Puritan when it came to matters of sexual behavior, the Boss tolerated no prostitution, pornography, dance halls, or even women in bars. His puritanical standards also applied to his political workers. Drink, gamble, or brawl, but don't commit an indiscreet act with a woman.

Moral government became Hague's trademark. Crusades were launched against vice merchants and racketeers. It was during one of these crusades that the Boss made his most presumptuous statement, "I am the law." Ironically, Hague was at his most benevolent when this statement made headlines. In trying to help wayward boys, the Mayor refused to follow the regulations on the need for working papers for juveniles. When told by an official it was the law, Hague replied with a highly revealing utterance, "Listen, here is the law! These boys go to work!"[35]

To keep a moral city, Hague often took the role of a vigilant guardian. An inveterate walker, he combed the streets and corridors of his city to check on job holders and evaluate their performance. Hague's midnight raids on

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[34]Thomas Fleming, "There Is No Mafia In Jersey City," Scanlan's Monthly I (April, 1970), pp. 62-69.

[35]New York Times, December 26, 1937, Sec. IV, p. 6; December 10, 1937, p. 10; November 7, 1937, Sec. IV, p. 7.

the Medical Center kept workers constantly on guard. His personal life also complemented his reform image and gave him added support with the clergy. He did not drink or smoke, and was a hypochondriac. A family man, devoted husband, and loving father, the Boss liked to say, "I have lived up to every obligation and there never was a breath of scandal on my actions."[36]

To insure his civic reputation was protected, Hague prevented the distribution of vital information. As Dayton McKean remarked, "it is almost as difficult to find the elements of Jersey City's costs as it is to discover those of Nazi Germany."[37] Even the press was silenced or bought off. In 1929 when the Jersey Journal opposed Hague's commission ticket, a bitter fight ensued. The Mayor broke the paper by forcing businessmen to withdraw advertisements and preventing distribution of the paper downtown. In helping him to discourage any attacks on his performance in office, the Mayor relied on intelligent and efficient administrators. A coterie of Irish lawyers (given directions by Hague's special counsel, Charles Hershenstein) always provided the answers to technical problems and furnished a defense when necessary. If the Boss was ever in deep legal trouble (as he was in 1929 with a state legislative committee), he could turn to

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[36]Hudson Dispatch, June 18, 1947, p. 1.

[37]Dayton McKean, "The Worst American City," American Mercury, LII (February, 1941), p. 211.

his state shield in the form of a friendly judiciary.[38]

To be "Absolute Boss," Frank Hague had to reach into the social and economic fiber of his community. This he did. The family first had to be influenced. To affect family life required services "364 days a year in return for a vote on the 365." When a family moved into a neighborhood, the committeeman was there to greet it. Free medical care was available and fringe benefits, picnics and boat rides for the kids. Women became a prime target for the building of Hague's good government reputation. The theme "Jersey City is absolutely morally clean" was always emphasized; however, Hague went further than this. He placed women in office and used them to full effectiveness. Mary T. Norton was Hague's Congresswoman from the thirteenth congressional district for more than twenty-five years, 1925-1951.

If a family was unfriendly to the machine and its brand of politics, the Boss had a solution to his problem. Using tactics precursing the Nixon days, Hague developed an "enemies list." John Malone, the Deputy Mayor, kept a three volume survey of the city's property owners. In one volume, names of unfriendly homeowners were kept. Families unfriendly to the organization had notations made next to their names, such as, "thinks city hall is a den of thieves." If an opponent became too vocal in criticizing the

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[38]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 132.

administration, tax assessments could always be conveniently reevaluated. For the hard core foes, far stiffer penalties were dispensed. Blackballing individuals from jobs in private industries helped keep critics silenced. Phones were tapped and the mail was subject to search by Hague's minions. A spy system enveloped the whole city, and one risked reprisals if overheard criticizing the city government.[39]

In the 1930s when the depression hit the hardest, Jersey City familes depended heavily on the Hague organization. The New Deal provided new sources of patronage and financing. Through the PWA, CWA, and WPA, Hague gained vital economic support. When the unemployed sought a job in these federal programs, they had to go to the organization. Tying the family closer to his political system, the depression and New Deal provided additional protection against an uprising. The Works Progress Administration helped bring a building boon to the city and greased the machine's wheels. Dayton McKean estimates that $47,003,759 of WPA funds were spent in Hudson County from July, 1934 to December, 1949. Hague built a new stadium, aptly named Roosevelt Stadium, and greatly expanded the Medical Center. The New Deal thus strengthened Hague's grip. Despite Roosevelt's embarrassment

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[39]Newark Evening News, January 17, 1950, pp. 1, 10. This section was also developed from interviews with James A. Farley, Postmaster General under Franklin D. Roosevelt, Leo Rosenblum, former member of Hudson County Tax Board, and John R. Longo.

from the repressive methods used by Hague, the President never acted against the Boss. The President played the role of the wily fox whenever the question of "Hagueism" came up. Even when he was pressed to do something about Hague, Roosevelt responded to a group of reformers by urging them to "go back and educate the people to get rid of him."[40] It was little wonder Hague was at his strongest and unchallenged in the 1930s.

Geographic conditions complemented this development. The city's lack of a strong cultural and civic center often left potential enemies of the Boss isolated and blocked from mobilizing. The mentality of voters in the river and newspaper wards was almost synonomous. The palisades and rivers had made Jersey City ideal terrain for bossism. To overthrow Hague, one had not only to defeat the local boss but a whole way of life. The press, labor groups, educational institutions, legal and medical societies, and even religious denominations were aligned with the machine. Indeed, Jersey City was Haguеville.

Hague and the Opposition

One would think with all the resources available to Hague there would be little need to prevent election challenges. But the Boss left nothing to chance. Every active or potential opponent had to be controlled or crushed.

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[40]Frank Kingdon, Architects of the Republic (New York: Alliance Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 224-25; McKean, The Boss, p. 104. Thomas H. Greer, What Roosevelt Tought (New York,1962).

Hague's approach to his political foes seems to disprove Edward M. Levine's statement about the Irish attitude toward the exercise of power. "You don't crack a whip because you may be the horse again some day. There have been all sorts of Irish bosses, but an Irish tyrant is unheard of."[41] Hague showed no restraint or mercy in dealing with critics or political foes. As one former Hague opponent recalled, "To fight Hague, one had to be part of the lunatic fringe in Jersey City."[42] If one looks at the effects of opposing Hague on individual lives, the record is a list of brutal vengeance. Beatings, imprisonments, defiled reputations, and personal humiliation were some of the treatments dealt out to his adversaries.

An early victim of the Boss's vindictiveness was James (Jefferson) Burkitt, a "self-styled Jeffersonian-Democrat." In the 1920's, Burkitt constantly criticized Hague for plundering the city and mismanaging the government. Burkitt paid heavily for his vociferous soap box speeches. Hague's thugs beat him up on numerous occasions and, after one, Burkitt could hardly stand up. In court, he was sentenced to "ninety days in jail for using abusive language to a policeman."[43]

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[42]Interview with Leo Rosenblum.

[43]McKean, The Boss, p. 215.

Another critic who felt the wrath of the Boss for attacking injustices in the city was John R. Longo. As one of the most vocal and active opponents of the machine, Longo was sentenced to prison terms on two separate occasions. In 1937 Longo attempted to file a primary slate to challenge the organization from within. As a young political idealist and the son of immigrant parents, he assumed political challenges were part of a democratic government. Hague would tolerate no such actions. In May, 1938, the young politician was indicted for (of all things) election fraud. Charged with falsifying signatures on the petition, Longo was convicted and given nine months in the Hudson County penitentiary. The use of Vito Marcantonio as his defense lawyer caused Longo to have an extra three months attached to his sentence.[44] Marcantonio charged Longo was the "victim of a frameup because he dared oppose Hague." During the trial the Prosecutor showed the public mentality of of the city when he explained, "Here in Hudson County, we believe that Communism is a greater evil than either Fascism or Nazism."[45] Longo's crime was considered so heinous that the judge refused to allow bail when the conviction was appealed. This was Jersey City Justice.

The outrageous treatment given Longo soon caused a

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[44] Interview with John R. Longo.

[45] Newark Evening News, May 7, 1938; Jersey Journal, August 28, 1937, p. 1; Ibid., June 2, 1938, p. 1.

national reaction against the Hague machine. In October of 1939, FBI agents from the civil liberties section of the Department of Justice conducted an investigation of the Hudson County grand jury. The cause for the investigation came from Marcantonio's charge that members of the grand jury had committed perjury in denying political and family links with the Hague organization. The United States Attorney General, Frank Murphy, also became incensed over the treatment given Longo and made a general attack on Hague's style of justice:

> In another community . . . a young man actively opposed the boss of a local political machine and was indicted on a false charge. He was tried and convicted by a jury consisting entirely of persons connected politically with the leader of the machine. He was denied bail on appeal. After several postponements, the case came to the Appellate Court, but not until after the defendant had served his term.[46]

Longo became an example for potential Hague critics to reflect upon. When the young politician finished his prison sentence and his supporters attempted to hold a dinner for him, the Boss put pressure on restaurant, hotel, and club-owners. No dinner was held in Jersey City.

The second confrontation between Longo and Hague also involved election irregularities. In April of 1943, Longo was indicted on charges of "altering his voting record." The case rested on testimony given by Republican workers

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[46] Newark Evening News, October 8, 1939; Francis Gabriel, "The Case of John Longo," Commonweal XXXIX (January 7, 1944), pp. 294-297.

at the Elections Bureau, where Longo had been employed. The workers claimed they saw Longo change his registration from Republican to Democratic. The alleged purpose in changing the record was so Longo could qualify for an appointment from a Democratic anti-Hague governor.[47] At the trial Longo refused to testify, since he assumed Hague's hand-picked jury would convict him. On November 14, 1943, he was sentenced to eighteen months to three years to the state penitentiary. The judge, Thomas Brown, gave a pompous lecture on the "sanctity" of voting systems in Hudson County. Brown further commented: "Election frauds will not be dealt with lightly or tolerated in this county." After his conviction Longo was again denied bail even though the judge "released an Army private, arrested for murder, in bail of $1,000."[48]

The Longo case refocused national attention on Jersey City's judicial system. The New Republic attacked the repressive measures used by Hague and asked Roosevelt how he could combat fascism abroad and tolerate it in Hagueville.[49] An editorial in the Newark Evening News summed up the judicial farce:

> . . . Longo is not accused of burning those Jersey City poll books that went up in smoke after a challenged election (in 1937), he is not accused of faking election returns, nor even being a switch voter in Hudson's primary

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[47]Newark Evening News, November 16, 1943, p. 1.

[48]Ibid., February 25, 1944, p. 20.

[49]Willard Wiener, "Hague is the Law," The New Republic, January 11, 1944, pp. 144-146.

> elections of whom there are said by the Attorney General to be 20,000 or so. But of 74 persons accused of election violations in Hudson in the last seven years, it is noteworthy that Longo alone drew a prison sentence.[50]

Confirming the suspicions of the press were the views of the New Jersey Governor, Charles Edison. The Governor revealed that evidence had been suppressed at the trial. A handwriting expert, August Hartkorn, had examined the election bureau record and advised the prosecutor the evidence used against Longo was not borne out by an examination of the signatures.[51]

The federal government was also forced to take a closer look at justice in Jersey City. However, it was an election year with Roosevelt facing a tough opponent, Thomas Dewey, and Hague's support would be needed. The Attorney General, Francis Biddle, conducted a perfunctory investigation and strangely enough found no substance to the charges Longo or other defendants in Hudson County had their civil rights violated.[52] Events would show Biddle's findings were incorrect and Longo, indeed, had been a victim of a corrupt judicial system and the only offense he had committed was to oppose Hague. Through the efforts of his lawyer, Ray Chasan, and Governor Walter Edge, Longo gained a new trial and an

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[50] Newark Evening News, November 7, 1943, p. 21.

[51] Ibid., November 22, 1943.

[52] Ibid., June 19, 1944.

acquittal. (Twenty years later Longo, as Public Relations Director of Hudson County, showed where a phone in Judge Brown's chambers had been connected with a direct line to city hall and Deputy Mayor John Malone's office) [53]

Even after his acquittal, Longo faced reprisals when he was assaulted in Hoboken. His personal life marred, Longo would be forever stigmatized as a "man with a record." The fruit peddler's son, Longo, spent his life fighting the bane of Hagueism and salvaged his reputation only by becoming politically active and gaining an audience to state his case. Hague was no fun-loving Irishman; he was ruthless and humorless and carried his political vendettas to extremes.

Another example of the Boss's vindictiveness involved the use of the methods of a later-day Irishman, Joseph McCarthy. In 1941 a woman Republican, Mrs. Grace Bilotti-Spinelli, opposed the machine in a commission election. She was quickly labelled a communist. The Hagueites attacked her through her husband, an author and intellectual. The Commissioner of Public Safety, Daniel Casey, investigated Mr. Spinelli and found him to be "one of the leaders of the Communist movement in this country."[54] Mrs. Spinelli was also accused of being a tool of those two "notorious radicals," Vito Marcantonio and John Longo. In the Spinelli case, Hague used a favorite tactic to destroy his opponent--

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[53]Interview with John R. Longo.

[54]Jersey Journal, May 2, 1941, p. 1.

friends of the enemy would do the dirty work.

An Italian judge first launched the attack against the Italian candidate by asking her husband, "Why was he once denied citizenship by the United States government?" Republicans and anti-Hague Democrats also disassociated themselves from the Spinelli's, and one former Hague foe criticized Mr. Spinelli's book for revealing "pagan ideas and a radical political philosophy." Needless to say, Mrs. Spinelli lost the election and much of her reputation.[55]

One of the most vicious political reprisals dealt to a rival occurred in the case of Leo Rosenblum, Chairman of the Hudson County Tax Board. Appointed by an anti-machine governor in 1942, Rosenblum was accused by Hague and his henchmen of being a "draft dodger." Since he was a bachelor, how did he avoid the draft? Arrested for alleged draft evasion, Rosenblum was subjected to persecution by the press and villification from the Hague appointed United States Attorney for New Jersey, Thorn Lord. It took a detailed medical examination and a bitter legal battle for Rosenblum to prove high blood pressure was the legitimate cause for his deferment. Although he received a public apology from a newspaper and Thorn Lord, Rosenblum became marked as the "draft dodger."[56]

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[55]Ibid., May 7, 1941, p. 1; May 12, 1941, p. 4.

[56]Rosenblum's case is covered in the Newark Evening News, April-November, 1943; The author also had an interview with Rosenblum in August, 1973.

Even the Irish and former allies of Hague were subject to political persecution. When a former Hague Freeholder, James J. Donovan, broke with the Boss and became Mayor of Bayonne by campaigning on a "Home Rule, Not Hague Rule" pledge, he was subjected to a purge. Hague used the office of the county prosecutor to launch a series of vice raids on the bars of Bayonne. Innocent women were arrested as prostitutes and Mayor Donovan was indicted for misconduct in office. Donovan spent the rest of his life and fortune fighting the charges in and out of court.[57] To Hague, the moral righteousness of his cause justified any means.

One may ask what about the Republican Party in Jersey City as a legitimate opponent to Hague? New Jersey had a Republican dominated legislature throughout the Boss's tenure, and some assistance did come to the Hudson County Republicans, but it proved insignificant. As Richard Connors stated, "the G.O.P. could not fight Hague, it was a patronage pigmy."[58] Controlling the Hudson County Election Bureau and Commission of Registration, it had little power to fight the heavyweight, Democratic machine. Republicans were also fragmented and faction ridden and could be bought off with patronage or favors. The epitome of Republican hopelessness came in the 1941 commission election when the

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[57]Donovan's case can be found in the Newark Evening News, September, 1941-December, 1946.

[58]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 188.

Republican leader explained why his ticket was entered, "only because we do not believe the election should go by default. . . ."[59]

With the destruction of the opposition, Hague was still not completely satisfied. He needed to have his juggernaut fully oiled and ready to roll over any nominal challenge. When a city election approached, the general readied his patronage army and provided plenty of ammunition. A monster petition gathering effort tuned up the machine. To provide grease, contributions from party workers were collected. On "rice pudding day" a 3 percent bite of city, county, and other employees salaries was levied. With a heavy war chest, the organization was ready to meet the enemy.[60]

The coup de grâce came in the last weeks of the election. Rallies were held, speeches delivered, and the Mayor would denigrate his enemies by saying, "We have nothing to fear from the rantings and ravings of small groups of men" who are interested only in "personal gain and not the good of the city."[61] Endorsements came by the dozens and a final canvass was completed--no detail was overlooked.

As a demagogue, Hague had to have devils to attack. Through each stage of his career, he brought forth the spectre of a new demon. In the 1920s, the KKK offered Hague

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[59]Jersey Journal, April 9, 1941, p. 2.

[60]Fleming, "No Mafia," p. 63.

[61]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 192.

an easy target, as did New Jersey's utility giant, the Public Service Corporation. When this died down, communism and the CIO became the issue. In 1937, he warned that "Communist conspirators were making inroads into the local labor movement." A reappearing evil force was the black devil, the railroads. Always reluctant to pay their full taxes, the railroads became a constant target for the demagogue. Urging voters not to "sell out to the railroads," the Boss would charge his opponents with being "pawns of the railroad crowd."[62] If all the standbys were used up, Hague would turn to one of his favorites, crime. Acting as the city's savior, he would warn, "the issue, as the campaign advances is between the gangsters, the racketeers, and hoodlum element, and the decent people of Jersey City. The gangsters and the labor guerillas are attempting to gain control of your government."[63] When defending the city against reformers, he would turn to the institution most dear to his heart, the Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital. "Will we turn over these buildings and desert motherhood?"[64] Red, white, and black devils fell before his rhetoric. It was no accident that many of Hague's devils were out of favor with the Church. The Mayor knew the political value of making his

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[62]Jersey Journal, May 3, 1943, p. 1.

[63]Ibid., May 3, 1933, p. 1.

[64]Ralph Martin, The Bosses (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1964), p. 207.

campaign a crusade with the Knights of Columbus, American Legion, and numerous other civic groups coming to his defense. The crusader made his election not a political battle but a religious war between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

The peak of Hague's election strength came in 1937 when his ticket rolled into office with over 100,000 votes, and his opponents had less than 10,000. It would take an unusual set of conditions to finally stop the machine; only in the late 1940's did such conditions exist.

Loss of the State Shield

Although Franklin D. Roosevelt never directly interfered or damaged the Hague machine, it was through his political decision that the "skids" were put under the Boss. In 1940 Charles Edison was Roosevelt's Acting Secretary of the Navy. Edison came from a famous and wealthy family bearing the name of his father, Thomas A. Edison. Despite this prestigious background, the Secretary was something of a handicap to Roosevelt. The President wanted to gain unity for the allied cause and intended to appoint a Republican, Frank Knox, to the naval post. Edison had become hard of hearing and seemed a bit too independent for the New Dealers. Roosevelt devised a plan to shuffle Edison from Washington to New Jersey with Frank Hague's help.

James A. Farley talked to Hague and the New Jersey leader reluctantly agreed to run Edison for governor. Hague did not care for Edison's aristocratic mannerism, but the

Boss assumed he could control the half-deaf and politically displaced cabinet member. No greater political error could have been made. During Edison's campaign for governor, he criticized boss-run governments and declared, "I wear no man's collar."[65] He proved to be the bête noire of Hague and tossed the first body blow at the machine.

The break between the Mayor and the Governor came over court appointments--specifically a vacancy in the New Jersey Supreme Court. When Edison told Hague he was appointing a "judge and not a political stooge," Hague became furious and retorted, "I'm gonna break you, Charley, if it's the last thing I do, because you're a damned ingrate."[66] This first confrontation swelled into a brutal power struggle. The Governor denied the Boss patronage and Hague interfered with Edison's choices for judicial nominees by influencing the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Governor's furor reached a peak when Hague blocked his proposal for a constitutional reform referendum. Through friendly state senators, Hague refused to allow the question on the ballot.

The first assault on the machine came when the Governor cut off state patronage and appointed anti-Hague officials. In 1942 Edison selected new presidents to the State Board of

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[65] Newark Evening News, October 4, 1940, p. 1; Interview with James A. Farley.

[66] Ralph G. Martin, The Bosses (New York: G.P. Putnam & Son, 1964), p. 203; James A. Farley, Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years (New York: Wittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1948), pp. 211-214.

Tax Appeals and the Civil Service Commission. On the county level, the Governor appointed a new tax board. Staffed by anti-Hague leaders, these commissions and boards began to wear down the machine. The loss of Hudson County's Tax Board meant Hague could no longer arbitrarily fix assessments and reward friends or punish enemies. Local property owners became less fearful.[67]

The loss of the Civil Service Commission caused even greater damage. Failure to control this commission was most heavily felt by a Hague ally in Hoboken, Bernard McFeeley. The Hoboken Boss ran a machine, much like Hague, laced with nepotism, ethnocentricity, and repression. Italians resented McFeeley and his family-run City Hall. In 1946 the police demanded a referendum on the adoption of civil service classification. McFeeley opposed the proposal but was forced to hold an election. The policemen won. Hague's lack of control of the Civil Service Commission ignitied a series of employee revolts and by 1947 four other Hudson County cities adopted civil service. The revolt of city employees led to political challenges.[68] In 1947 Italians staged an insurrection against the Hoboken Boss in the Hoboken municipal elections and also won. McFeeley's defeat reflected the demands by the Italians for recognition. As

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[67]Interview with Leo Rosenblum, Chairman of Hudson County Tax Board.

[68]The Shield, (New Jersey's Civil Service Newspaper) October 19, 1946-December 21, 1946; November 29, 1958; Interview with Leo Steiner, Editor of The Shield.

Samuel Lubell noted in The Future of American Politics:

> . . . The plight of the Irish Democratic bosses, who managed most of the big city machines has become not unlike that of the wearied rulers of the British Empire, everywhere on the defensive before the rising "nationality" elements they once ruled.[69]

The blows struck by Edison shook Hague. Court appointments ceased and although the Governor was limited to one non-consecutive term under the New Jersey constitution, his successor would offer the Boss no relief. Succeeding Edison was Republican Walter Edge. As a United States Senator in the 1920s, Edge cooperated with Hague and the Democrats. But in the 1940s, things changed. Republicans had grown in strength, and Edge resented the vicious campaign waged by Hague in 1943. The Governor vowed to continue Edison's policies and break the machine. Delivering heavier blows than his predecessor, Edge also turned to gubernatorial patronage to further strip the state shield. He appointed a new Attorney General, Walter Van Riper, and used him as acting Prosecutor in Hudson County. Staging gambling raids the Attorney General hurt Hague in the pocketbook. To retaliate, Hague used his outer shield and, through his influence with the United States Attorney General, he had Van Riper indicted on charges of using black marketed gasoline rationing coupons. The indictment cut into Van Riper's effectiveness, but the Governor had other means to erode

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[69]Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1951), p. 76.

Hague's power.

Anti-Hague judges were appointed in Hudson County and throughout New Jersey. This cost Hague valuable patronage mobility plus judicial protection. Another heavy blow was Edge's passage of a law authorizing new jury commissioners to be appointed not by the sheriff but by the governor.[70] The next blast hit directly at the machine's internal mechanism. Voting machines were installed in 1945. Hague had fought this reform for several years, but Edge would not relent and enforced the election law. The Governor also purged the State Tax Board of Hague lackeys who obstructed the work of the City Affairs Committee, a reform group who ran the county tax board.[71]

The actions of the two anti-Hague governors began to have an effect. Jersey City was in a state of siege and the machine shaken and battered. The impact of voting machines was shown in the 1945 city election. Hague's opponents ran on a "Liberation Platform" and doubled the vote of the 1941 opposition. With the governor's use of state police to aid the superintendent of elections, Jersey City became penetrable by anti-Hague forces. To stave off further attacks, the Boss needed desperately to elect an

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[70] Newark Evening News, January 30, 1944, p. 12; Jersey Journal, March 28, 1944, pp. 1, 12.

[71] Walter Edge, A Jerseyman's Journal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp. 280-284; New Jersey Law (1944), Chapter 7, pp. 20-22; Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 232.

organization governor. But Hague could no longer produce the massive pluralities of the 1930s and his home county, the "Gibraltar of Democracy," had lost its numerical superiority. (See Table 5) Hague had elected a governor in 1940, but he proved unmanageable. In 1943, he lost the governor's race and in 1940, 1942, 1946, and 1948 he lost United Senate seats.

The problem was one of population. Hudson County's percentage of the state's total had steadily declined. A 100 percent urban county is an asset for a local boss but a liability for a state boss. Essex County, an urban and suburban county, began to replace Hudson's once dominant role in the Democratic Party. The growth of the Republican Party in the suburban towns of Essex and Bergen Counties in the 1940s also became a contributing problem. Hudson's Democratic plurality in statewide elections could be cancelled out, and Republican strength in the rural and southern New Jersey Counties enabled them to win easily on the state level.[72]

Hague also became a victim of his own megalomania. Throughout his career as State Boss, he never worked to build up a twenty-one county part. Strong in Hudson but weak through the state, the Democratic Party became

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[72]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 229. John T. Cunningham, New Jersey, America's Main Travelled Road (Doubleday & Co., N.Y., 1966), pp. 296-306; John E. Bebout and Ronald J. Grele, Where Cities Meet: The Urbanization of New Jersey (Princeton: D. VanNostrand, 1964).

handicapped because it lacked needed voting power in the growing suburbs. Only in Mercer, Middlesex, and Camden counties were there any effective organizations.[73]

The practice of running a one-man county party came back to haunt Hague in the 1946 gubernatorial election. In a one-sided contest, the Republican candidate, Alfred E. Driscoll, overwhelmed the Hague candidate, Lewis Hansen, by over 200,000 votes. Driscoll's victory proved Hague's role as State Boss had become more damaging than beneficial for the party.

Driscoll did not launch an immediate attack on Hague. The Governor needed Hague to support his plans for a constitutional convention. However, Hague's détente with Driscoll would cost the Boss critical resources. The approval of a new constitution in 1947 reformed the judicial system and ended Hague's practice of tampering with the courts at will. The constitution also gave added power to the governor. Hague--or any other boss--would face a strong executive with direct control over state agencies and divisions. An independent governor could now overpower any county or city leader.[74] The Civil Service Commission

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[73]Interview with former Governor Robert B. Meyner and Archibald Alexander, U.S. Senatorial Candidate in 1948.

[74]For the changes in state politics resulting from the 1947 Constitution see: Richard N. Baisden, Charter for New Jersey: The New Jersey Constitutional Convention of 1947 (Trenton, N.J.: New Jersey Departmentof Education, Division of the State Library, Archives and History, 1952); Arthur T. Vanderbilt, "The First Five Years of the New Jersey Courts Under the Constitution of 1947," Rutgers Law Review VIII, No. 2 (Spring 1954), pp. 289-315.

exemplified this change. No longer run by a boss's agent, the commission came under the aegis of a strong executive. In 1948 the President, William Carpenter, made use of the new constitutional changes and enforced civil service regulations "to the letter of the law."[75]

By the late 1940s, when Hague faced a strong challenge from within his own party, he was not the Absolute Boss. The attacks from three governors reduced him to a traditional machine politician without the added armor of the judiciary, prosecutor's office, election board, tax board, and numerous other resources once at his command. Gone was the urban tyrant. To survive Hague would have to revert to his original formula, good government, but even here he no longer had a valid issue as the 1949 city election would show.

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[75]The Shield, August 21, 1948. Interview with Leo Steiner.

TABLE 4

Population: Hudson, Essex, and Bergen Counties
Expressed as Percentage of State Population 1910-1970

	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
Hudson (urban)	21.1	19.9	17.0	15.6	13.3	10.0	8.4
Essex (mixed)	20.2	20.6	20.6	20.1	18.7	15.2	13.0
Bergen (suburban)	5.4	6.6	9.0	9.8	12.8	12.8	12.9

Source: U. S. Census of Population

TABLE 5

STATE OF NEW JERSEY GENERAL ELECTIONS
ANALYSIS BY SELECTED COUNTIES

	Pres. 1940	Gov. 1943	Pres. 1944	Gov. 1946	Pres. 1948
Bergen Co.					
Reg'd. Vote	252,472	226,906	262,275	249,106	266,785
Vote Cast	212,854	116,701	204,563	159,111	221,601
%Voted	84.3	51.4	78.0	63.9	83.1
Dem. Poll	76,541	31,229	76,350	42,225	69,132
Rep. Poll	131,588	79,812	142,836	108,067	142,657
Plurality	55,047	48,583	66,486	65,812	73,525
Dem. % Poll	36.8	28.1	34.8	28.1	32.6
Essex Co.					
Reg'd Vote	388,104	335,182	382,049	378,643	414,640
Vote Cast	348,082	184,172	332,576	241,404	348,547
% Voted	89.7	54.9	87.1	63.8	84.1
Dem. Poll	154,363	66,899	174,320	80,490	155,468
Rep. Poll	182,124	112,488	178,989	145,670	166,936
Plurality	27,761	45,589	4,669	65,180	11,495
Dem. % Poll	45.9	37.3	49.3	35.6	48.2
Hudson Co.					
Reg'd Vote	376,469	305,515	315,953	339,367	355,405
Vote Cast	325,598	221,420	285,570	263,771	307,733
% Voted	86.5	72.5	90.4	77.7	86.6
Dem. Poll	208,429	159,044	191.354	161,421	182,979
Rep. Poll	107,552	61,662	117,087	91,692	111,113
Plurality	100,877	97,382	74,267	69,729	71,866
Dem. % Poll	66.0	72.1	62.0	63.8	62.2

Source: New Jersey Legislative Manual; Private Papers of James F. Murray, Jr.

TABLE 5 (continued)

	Gov. 1949	Pres. 1952	Gov. 1953	Pres. 1956	Gov. 1957
Bergen Co.					
Reg'd Vote	262,608	352,782	341,300	371,274	373,836
Vote Cast	197,592	312,131	238,893	334,250	286,630
% Voted	75.2	88.5	70.0	90.0	76.7
Dem. Poll	69,240	93,373	110,530	82,169	132,805
Rep. Poll	117,221	212,842	115,605	254,334	146,305
Plurality	47,981	119,469	5,075	172,165	13,500
Dem. % Poll	37.1	30.7	48.9	24.4	47.6
Essex Co.					
Reg'd Vote	397,121	458,040	430,812	450,984	431,641
Vote Cast	285,296	409,680	286,961	388,823	296,546
% Voted	71.8	89.4	66.6	86.2	68.7
Dem. Poll	109,640	180,501	141,996	146,313	160,887
Rep. Poll	161,982	219,864	127,782	234,682	127,436
Plurality	52,342	39,362	14,214	88,369	33,451
Dem. % Poll	40.4	45.1	52.6	38.4	55.8
Hudson Co.					
Reg'd Vote	347,802	365,860	350,612	334,198	322,737
Vote Cast	278,124	325,981	263,719	297,085	252,691
% Voted	80.0	89.1	75.2	88.9	78.3
Dem. Poll	137,392	161,469	160,425	107,098	144,388
Rep. Poll	133,994	153,583	89,501	183,919	101,489
Plurality	3,398	7,886	70,924	76,821	42,899
Dem % Poll	50.6	51.3	64.2	36.8	58.7

Source: New Jersey Legislative Manual; Private Papers of James F. Murray, Jr.

CHAPTER III

THE WILDEST ELECTION

The election year 1949 marked a revolution in Jersey City's politics. In May of that year, John V. Kenny completed what governors, state legislators, judges, and prosecutors had started--the end of Hagueism. Frank Hague's "Last Hurrah" came at a time when his machine had been worn down by environmental changes and his personal leadership began to show signs of old age. Nevertheless, the decisive cause for his defeat came from his own arrogant nepotism and vindictiveness. As one scholar has observed,."Hague's downfall was as much affected by weaknesses in personal leadership as it was by developments unfavorable to the continuance of machine politics."[1] Failure to adhere to the "maintenance demands" of his political strategy would cause the mighty boss to be overthrown by his own ward leader, John V. Kenny.

Kenny would defeat Hague by relying on a strong downtown base and capitalizing on the Boss's mistakes. Using a balanced ticket and depending on an anti-Hague administration in Trenton, "the little guy," Kenny, fought Hague on an equal footing and proved the old axiom, "you can't lick a ward boss."

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[1]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 303.

Changed Environment

By the late 1940s, Hague's organization began to suffer from impotent leadership. Only death and retirements caused any change in ward leaders and committeemen. In 1949 John V. Kenny was the youngest ward leader, and he was fifty-five years old. Intramachine mobility became stifled by the depression and a declining local economy. The end of the New Deal and the loss of state patronage caused a job drought.[2] Only the city and county payrolls remained. After World War II other problems began to surface.

Returning veterans found few opportunities in a closed organization. No recruiting program existed. A tight party and governmental structure prevented any rising politician from showing talent. Relatives of party workers, war heroes, and trouble makers were the "chosen few." A classic example of how difficult it was to enter the higher ranks was the case of T. James Tumulty, nephew of Joseph Tumulty.[3] T. James played the role of a token Republican and tried to gain recognition through his wit and rhetorical abilities. When this failed he turned to theatrics. At city meetings the rotund Tumulty (he weighed three hundred pounds) made himself visible by lambasting the budget. When asked by

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[2]Reinhard Luthin, "Frank Hague: The Boss of Jersey City," in his American Demagogues (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), p. 147.

[3]Joseph Tumulty was a Progressive Democrat from Jersey City who served in the state assembly and later went on to be Woodrow Wilson's private secretary. See John Blum's Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951).

Hague: "What's wrong with the budget," Tumulty responded, "I'm not in it."[4] But Tumulty was an exception and most ambitious politicians found themselves closed out.

Defects in Hague's personal leadership also became apparent. The Mayor could no longer be found in the city. After his sixth election as mayor, Hague became aloof and inattentive to his fiefdom. Assuming he had an infinite reservoir of good will, he preferred to visit the race tracks in Florida, take cruises to Europe, or spend his summers at his seaside mansion in Deal, New Jersey. Even when in the city, he remained confined to his penthouse at the Medical Center or his luxurious apartment on Duncan Avenue.

The absentee mayor weakened his good government image and left his once shielded reputation open to criticism. Young residents expressed doubts about the fatherly speeches on a "moral city" when gambling and graft were so obvious.[5] Veterans also showed reluctance in accepting the Hague system. They questioned why they fought for democracy when Hudson County had its own form of fascism. When in the service, they heard themselves and their city ridiculed. Civil rights was a dirty word in Jersey City, but Americans

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[4]Jersey Journal, February 26, 1943, p. 1; Jersey City, Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Annual Report, 1943; Interview with Maurice O'Sullivan.

[5]Thomas Fleming, "City in the Shadow," Saturday Evening Post, CCXXV (January 6, 1962), 82; Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 224. Interview with J. Owen Grundy, Jersey City Historian.

outside the Hague domain had more tolerant views.[6]

Inefficient city services also began to show how much of a sham Hague's good government image had been. Not only had Hague failed to construct a new school in over twenty years, but one of his old ones had an outhouse instead of a lavatory.[7] The city streets also reflected a dual image. Although morally clean, the streets were filthy--ridden with waste, dead cats, and trash spilled by Hague's specially picked municipal collector and ward leader, Michael Scatuorchio. The contract had been awarded to Scatuorchio as part of Italian recognition, but the ward leader used horse drawn carts and his men often "spilled more than they collected." The Jersey Journal criticized the system's failure to have modern equipment because "men vote but trucks don't."[8] Even the Medical Center came under scrutiny. Why did the twenty-third largest city need the third largest hospital system in the nation. In his publication, Jersey Justice, John R. Longo charged the city needed the Pollak Hospital for Chest Diseases because of the "filth-ridden conditions of the streets." Sewers were never repaired. Wooden sewers rotted and downtown was often flooded. Bus

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[6]Interviews with Hal Kierce, Former Deputy Mayor of Jersey City, and Frank Beirne, City Tax Collector.

[7]Interview with Maurice O'Sullivan, former Assistant Superintendent of Jersey City Schools. Jersey City, Sixty-Eighth Report of Board of Education of Jersey City, (1941-1942).

[8]Jersey Journal, November 30, 1946, p. 14.

service was inefficient. Mass transit in Jersey City was dominated by independent bus companies licensed by the city's Bureau of Transportation. But these "jitney lines" offered poor services due to inferior equipment.[9] Federal funds had been used to build Hague's monument at the Medical Center, but the less visible urban infrastructure had been ignored. As one critic surmized in 1948, "Jersey City might be the 'most moralest' city, but it certainly is not the cleanest or healthiest."[10]

Taxes also became a constant source of complaint. When Hague took office in 1917, the tax rate was $21 per $1,000, but by 1947 the rate climbed to $77.24 per $1,000. The rising costs did not go unchallenged. In the late forties, irate taxpayers and political enemies stormed the budget hearings and questioned why the government cost so much, yet services were so inadequate.[11]

Even when Hague attempted to correct some of his weaknesses, he found himself working in a new social environment. He appealed to veterans by providing an evening high school and some temporary housing. However, this was unsatisfactory. They wanted jobs and quality housing. When Hague tried to give veterans additional recognition in the police department,

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[9] Jersey Justice, September 28, 1946.

[10] Ibid., April 36, 1948. Interview with John Longo.

[11] Interview with Murray Greiman, head of Jersey City Fact Finding Committee; Jersey Journal, February 27, 1946, p. 1; February 19, 1947, p. 1.

without following civil service procedures, he faced an angry and intractable President of the Civil Service Commission, William Carpenter. Lacking a sufficient local response, veterans began to turn to the federal government. The Veteran's Administration provided a broad range of services and had a city-wide appeal.[12]

Failing to develop an urban program or to absorb rising dissidents, Hague's reputation for good government was irreparably damaged. Even the Jersey Journal, his lackey press, reprimanded him for his uneven record in providing city services.[13] With his empire crumbling, the Boss continued to play the horses at Hialeah. No longer the ubiquitous and unannounced inspector, the absentee mayor became the telephone boss.

Transfer of Power

Perhaps Hague realized his regime was at its end, or he merely grew tired of the attacks on his municipal monarchy, because on June 4, 1947, he retired as mayor and passed the throne to his nephew, Frank Hague Eggers. However, Hague's retirement was only from office and not from politics. At his departure, he told a reporter, "Don't worry, I'll be around for a long time."[14] By vacating public office

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[12]New Jersey Civil Service Commission, Annual Reports, (Trenton, New Jersey, 1947-1949); Interview with Frank Beirne.

[13]Jersey Journal, February 2, 1946, p. 14.

[14]Newark Evening News, June 4, 1947, p. 5.

and becoming a back-room boss, Hague violated one of the cardinal rules for his success--always boss the city from the mayor's chair. To emphasize his continued control of the party, however, Hague demanded an expression of loyalty from his second ward leader, John V. Kenny. The "little guy" had been mysteriously absent from Hague's retirement.[15] At Eggers's enthronement, Kenny was forced to sit on stage and watch Hague crown the new mayor. Kenny could not bear the coronation and walked out in a fit of anger. Always hoping to be Public Safety Director someday, the ward leader realized Hague would never let him rise above his present status. Even Kenny's peers doubted he would ever be top dog, and the eighth ward leader, Patrick "Doc" Donnelly, commented: "Kenny is the last man in the world to be leader."[16] In June, 1947, it certainly appeared Kenny would always be a spear carrier.

Nevertheless, the arrogant display of nepotism shown by Hague angered not just his second ward leader. Italians and Poles resented the Boss's continued ethnocentricity, and grew angrier when Irishmen filled Eggers's commission seat and the city clerk's position. Eggers could receive the office, but he would not retain the power and support of Hague's followers. Deep resentments would eventually surface and the

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[15] Ibid., June 23, 1948, p. 15; Jersey Journal, June 6, 1947, p. 12; June 18, 1947, p. 1; Interview with James Creegan, Kenny ward leader.

[16] Jersey Journal, June 6, 1947, p. 1.

Boss and his nephew would become victims of what Samuel Lubell called "the coming of age of old underdog elements."[17]

Although Eggers was called the "clown prince" by his critics, he exercised administrative ability and attempted a repair job on his uncle's machine. He began motorized garbage collection, improved bus service, reduced taxes, and to stimulate the organization he expanded the city and county payrolls by 15 percent. This increased the number of Jersey City employees (excluding educational personnel) from 4,359 to 5,027 and Hudson County's payroll jumped from 2,689 to 3,085.[18] Yet these efforts of the new mayor did not disguise whose diadem he was wearing. Therefore, though a direct challenge of Hague would have required unusual political courage, a challenge of Eggers would be less demanding.

Purge of John V. Kenny

Ironically, Hague provided the opening gambit to his challenger. Overreaching himself, he attempted to destroy his second ward leader and forced a confrontation that probably could have been avoided. For, as Kenny always maintained, "If he (Hague) had not thrown me out, I probably still would be a member of the machine."[19] But, Hague did

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[17]Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 76.

[18]New Jersey Civil Service Commission, Annual Reports (1946-1948); Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 257.

[19]"Spring House Cleaning," The New Republic, CXX (May 23, 1949), 7.

throw him out and caused all the latent resentment against his rule to surface and rally around a political martyr.

As a member of Hague's organization, Kenny seemed an unlikely challenger. The Boss's best ward leader, he had grown and prospered with the machine. Kenny learned about politics much the same way Hague did. Born April 6, 1893, he came out of the Horseshoe and was forever stamped by this Irish slum. Recalling how his father once slugged a sheriff over a political dispute, Kenny early in life knew the second ward was "a grimy and tough place."[20] As a boy, Kenny would be the one "to hold a coat" when any violence or turmoil erupted. In later life, this approach would dominate his political style. Standing only five feet five inches tall, compared to Hague who was well over six, the "little guy" never operated with the "aura of agression" that surrounded his predecessor. Kenny always maintained a mild mannered demeanor. He had been tempered by his family's financial security and a reasonable amount of education--compared to Hague, who reached only the sixth grade.[21]

Kenny attended St. Michael's Parochial School and then graduated from St. Peter's Preparatory School in 1911. While at St. Peter's he had an inclination to be a writer or a reporter. Though he did write an essay on the opening of the

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[20]Jersey Journal, January 23, 1958, p. 1.

[21]Interview with John Foley, former committeeman and associate of John V. Kenny.

Hudson and Manhattan Railroad tunnel, he never pursued his incipient writing career. For a year, he attended New Jersey Law School but decided upon a career in politics and business. After leaving law school, he worked as a bookkeeper in the dining car department of the Erie Railroad. Being the son of a popular Irish saloon keeper, Kenny would move through the Irish feudal system. A devout communicant of St. Michael's Church, he relied on the Church and machine to improve his career. In 1913 his father died and three years later his brother, Frank Kenny, was murdered. To continue his family's political tradition, Kenny assumed his deceased brother's post as committeeman. From that time on, he became part of Hague's army and shared in the booty of the machine's success. Hague appointed him secretary to the Hudson County Treasurer in 1924, and later he held the sinecure post of Jersey City Tax Commissioner. In 1931, he expanded his political base when he was named the second ward leader. The following year he gained full recognition by becoming a Hudson County Freeholder.[22]

Kenny rose in the organization because he produced votes. Providing the largest pluralities, Kenny once boasted, "There are 5,000 registered voters in the second ward" and "Walter Edge (a Republican) only got 31 votes when

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[22]Freedom Campaign Headquarters, "Freedom Ticket," Jersey City, New Jersey. (Mimeographed) Found in private papers of former State Senator, James F. Murray, Jr.; Jersey Journal, June 4, 1949, p. 1. Interview with John R. Longo.

he ran for governor in 1943."[23] The key to Kenny's success was his following, and the nucleus of his following came from the jobs and favors he dispensed over thirty years. Holding court on Pavonia Avenue and Erie Street, he would jingle some coins and exchange courtesies and conversation with his constituents. Always available, the "little guy" became the man to see when no help could be found at City Hall. The expression went: "Go see Johnny, maybe he could be of help."[24]

An anomaly in Hague's tightly structured organization, Kenny had unusual power. The only ward leader to develop a citywide following, he was able to have people attach themselves to him rather than the organization. Part of his success came from the mystique of the second ward. Home of numerous Irish families, the ward became a reminder of their humbler beginnings. When second ward families moved uptown, they still retained an identity with the old neighborhood and the local leader, John V. Kenny. The "little guy" cultivated this following by extending his services beyond the Horseshoe to a citywide level. He sought them out, shook hands, and complimented them. Close friends with Deputy Mayor, John Malone, Kenny could obtain jobs outside his ward, and he would often steal lucrative positions from

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[23] Newark Evening News, June 23, 1948, p. 12.

[24] Interview with Frank Beirne, Kenny's sixth ward leader. Martin Gately, "'49--The Wildest Election," Jersey Journal, April 14 - May 12, 1969. This is an excellent study of the 1949 election. Interviews with many committeemen also confirmed this analysis.

competing leaders. However, Kenny's personal following was based on more than the old neighborhood, family friends, or personality and charm, for he combined all these elements and coupled them with machine services.[25]

Some of the resources used by Kenny in building his following were the local industries in his ward. The depression afforded him the opportunity to act as a broker-politician. He became friendly with the personnel directors in the meat packing plants of Armor and Swift as well as the Kraft Cheese Factory. When jobs became available, Kenny often received an opportunity to fill them. He told employers that people who lived close to the plants could walk to work, thus enabling the factory to operate when snowstorms or inclement weather occurred. Kenny proved the value of this approach in 1936 when the Kraft Cheese Company had a rush order, and he secured two hundred jobs for the unemployed.[26]

Links with labor also allowed Kenny to play the broker-politician. Being the leader of the waterfront ward, he worked closely with the International Longshoremen's Local,

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[25]This analysis was developed with the help of John R. Longo, Public Relations Director of Hudson County and Frank Beirne. See V. O. Key's Southern Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 46-48 for an explanation of the concept of a personal following in politics. Key believes that a following can be expanded beyond a limited area, much the way Kenny was able to do.

[26]Jersey Journal, February 4, 1949, p. 1; Hudson Dispatch, December 9, 1969, p. 1.

1247. Cooperating with the I.L.A. delegate, Jack (Shagger) Crimmins, and the representative of the stevedore company, boss loader James (Happy) Keane, Kenny developed another patronage resource. In return, the boss loader gained police protection and the union delegate secured his position in the local. The waterfront was the scene of a violent and brutal life style, but Kenny adapted to it. He survived by making friends with one of the local mob leaders, Charlie "the Jew" Yanowsky. Through Yanowsky, Kenny gained information and protection and expanded his contacts with loan sharkers, gamblers, and union leaders. Yanowsky would be ice picked to death in 1948, but Kenny continued to work with a mob element. Besides these connections with the waterfront unions, he also had ties with the building trades.[27] When the New Deal came and Hague built Roosevelt Stadium, it was Kenny and his followers who provided the jobs.[28]

The final ingredient in Kenny's uniqueness was his wealth. No other ward leader had similar financial resources. Left a substantial amount of money from his father's saloon and tenement houses, Kenny also made a fortune in his private businesses. Hague allowed him to obtain a

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[27]Allen Raymond, Waterfront Priest (New York: Henry Holt, 1955), pp. 128-130. New Jersey Law Enforcement Council Report (1953); First Annual Report of the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor (1954); Newark Evening News, December 12, 1952, p. 12. Interview with Robert Greene.

[28]Interview with Joseph Soriero, seventh ward leader.

contract with the Pennsylvania Railroad for the cleaning, maintenance, and renovation of railroad cars. In 1931, he joined his partner, Joseph A. Sheridan, in forming the Industrial Utilities Company.[29] During the war years, his income totaled over $80,000 a year. This contract proved so lucrative that he helped form two other companies, the Transit Trucking Company and William Colgan Company. It is not surprising that a labor leader once accused Kenny of being the only "millionaire ward leader" in the United States.[30] Money would always have a high priority in this business-man-politician's value system, and his ability to make it became an endearing trait.

Kenny's unusual strength as a ward leader and his potential as a challenger never went unnoticed by Hague. In the mid 1930s, rumors circulated of a possible alliance between Kenny and an anti-Hague politician, James F. Murray, Sr. Kenny had been built up in the sixth and eighth wards by two young mavericks, James and George Creegan. After forming the Council of Clubs in 1935, the Creegan brothers expected Kenny to be the new city leader and urged the "little guy" to test his city following. But, Kenny knew

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[29]Hudson Dispatch, May 12, 1949, p. 12. Information on Kenny's financial background can be found in the transcripts of his trial. United States vs. Kenny et.al 462 F.2d (1972); cert. denied 499 U.S. 914(1972) Docket Numbers 569-70;570-70.

[30]Jersey Journal, April 13, 1951, p. 3.

Hague's strength and obsequiously expressed his loyalty:

> The friends I have made in politics, to whom I owe my success, never would urge me to become a candidate against the organization ticket, sponsored by my friend, Mr. Hague. I most emphatically deny that I have recently conferred with James F. Murray. The fact is, I never at any time had conferences with him of a political nature or otherwise.
>
> Whatever I am in the affairs of our city and county I owe to Mayor Hague, and I would be an ingrate if I ever exhibited toward him anything but a spirit of friendship and loyalty.[31]

In 1941, Kenny again seemed a threat. He resigned as county freeholder and had his deputy ward leader, Thomas Boyle, take his place on the ticket. The only ward leader not dependent on the machine for income, Kenny appeared ready to mount a challenge. But, again he denied having any ambitions and gave poor health and his business interests as reasons for resigning.[32]

The following Kenny developed and his independent means of income had made him a potential threat to the machine. It would be difficult to discipline him because his strength was based on more than inducements and favors offered by the machine. It would be logical for him to come into conflict with Hague because as Banfield and Wilson have explained in City Politics: "the politician with a following eventually depends upon creating a conspicuous contrast between himself

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[31]Jersey Journal, July 15, 1936, p. 1.

[32]Ibid., August 1, 1941, p. 1.

and the organization."[33] Kenny, however, never let his personality become so prominent that he would be willing to take on the machine in a direct confrontation. Hague made him turn to personality politics.

The break came in the spring of 1948. The incident that probably brought the imbroglio to a head was an election in the longshoremen's union. Kenny and his family had been dominant in the second ward for over fifty years. With a large portion of the Jersey City docks in the ward and a high percentage of longshoremen living there, Kenny continued to keep in close contact with the union activities through Jack (Shagger) Crimmins, who after suffering from an illness, established Eddie Polo as delegate. Polo represented the Italian dissidents and was opposed by Hague's Director of Public Safety Daniel Casey, and the old Irish guard. Kenny backed Polo and an entire slate of officers who opposed Casey and his ally, James (Happy) Keane. When the election results were tabulated, Kenny's followers won by a four to one margin. The election on the waterfront was a political test

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[33]Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (New York Vintage Books, 1963), pp. 129-131. The concept of a personal following in city politics can be traced to V. O. Key, and his explanation of how southern leaders built up personal organizations and extended them beyond their original area. See his Southern Politics (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 397-399. Kenny's survival in the post-New Deal city would be closely tied to his ability to maintain personal relationships without depending strictly on patronage and machine inducements.

of strength with wider ramifications than a local election. It showed Kenny had the guns to buck the Hague organization in the second ward.[34]

Another cause for the break came from Kenny's alleged connection with the indictment of Joseph Buckley, warden of the county penitentary. In June of 1948, Buckley was charged with "private use of public funds" in repairing his home.[35] Hague's followers claimed Kenny leaked information to the Republican Attorney General, Walter Van Riper. Adding to this suspicion was the failure of Deputy Warden Paul Hanly, son-in-law of Kenny, to be indicted. Buckley accused Kenny of being a traitor and responsible for the arrest of the city's leading numbers runner, Joseph "Newsboy" Moriarity.[36] Moriarity lived next door to Kenny and had been allowed by Hague to run his operation without police interference. The arrest of Moriarity and the Buckley indictment became the cause célèbre for a showdown. All the power Kenny had accrued over the years had made him an obvious target. Accused of "going to the law," he would receive a typical Irish punishment, excommunication.

Reprisals against the alleged informer were swift. Kenny's son-in-law had his job abolished by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Kenny himself was read out of the

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[34]Newark Evening News, June 13, 1948, p. 1.

[35]Ibid., June 11, 1948, p. 1.

[36]Jersey Journal, June 11, 1948, p. 1.

organization with a resolution signed by all ward leaders:

> . . . We want to emphatically state here and now that we have or never will lend any aid or encouragement to John V. Kenny or anyone else in his company because we believe that his traitorous actions have placed him beyond the pale of all persons who value honor, integrity, and loyalty.[37]

Hague personally villified the traitor and declared "the Attorney General's denial of Kenny's informing constituted the kiss of death."[38] Shaken by the public humiliation, Kenny refused to collapse and commented, "I can take it." Many doubted this, however, and the local press considered Kenny a man without a party or a prayer.[39]

With his purging, Kenny seemed much like Frank Hague had been in 1913, when H. Otto Wittpenn stripped him of his patronage. However, Kenny faced a vindictive man, and Hague would be sure to destroy him just as he had destroyed Burkitt, Longo, and Donovan. During the fall and winter of '48, the "little guy" spent a lonely waiting game. To endure, he turned for moral support to his old supporters, the Creegan brothers. They renewed their efforts to boost Kenny for public office. To retain a political profile, Kenny continued his traditional role as ward leader. He attended wakes, dinners, local meetings, and any other function that

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[37]Newark Evening News, June 15, 1948, p. 1.

[38]Ibid., August 30, 1948, pp. 1, 10.

[39]Jersey Journal, June 15, 1948, p. 1; June 25, 1948, p. 1.

gave him visibility. Some of his followers became more active and one saloon keeper dared to put up a sign, "Kenny in '49." An underground army waited in the ranks, if the "little guy" decided to run. But, the fear of Hague still remained. Friends of Kenny were fired when an "economy wave" struck the city and county payrolls.[40]

The Wildest Election

Kenny had to decide. An editorial in the Jersey Journal in mid-September stated, "it's now or never."[41] If Kenny did not run, he would be run out of town. Waiting until after the Presidential election, he staged his first rally on November 26, 1948. In December, Hague left for Florida, but before departing, he held a secret meeting with his ward leaders and warned "get Kenny or he'll get you."[42] Having already picked a gubernatorial candidate for the April primary, Hague assumed his organization could handle any challenge Kenny could offer. To kick off the New Year, Eggers held the perennial mayoralty reception at City Hall and greeted the faithful. Buses, cars, and trains loaded up with the devoted descended on City Hall. Hague's usual ticket of four Irishmen and one Wasp was introduced and all expected

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[40]Newark Evening News, December 4, 1948, p. 1; Interview with James Creegan.

[41]Jersey Journal, September 18, 1948, p. 23.

[42]Newark Evening News, August 30, 1949, pp. 1, 10.

victory in May.[43]

Kenny held a more modest reception in his second ward club. Attended by his most loyal followers, the meeting was spied on by Hague's men who placed a movie camera in the second floor of a school building across the street. Ignoring the threats, Kenny continued to gain courage and made a brief speech predicting "1949 will be recorded as the year in which the long throttled voice of the people was heard in Jersey City."[44]

To give substance to his words, Kenny would have to form a fusion ticket and unify the anti-Hague factions. His personal following, a rag tag army, had to be disciplined. To secure citywide support, he developed a strategy that always remained his political trademark. He would build an ad hoc organization and fill it with those for whom he had done favors and reach out to the politically alienated, such as, veterans, young voters, and ethnic leaders. This gave him the critical balance of power in an election. His counter organization would be structured on the ward and precinct basis, but always with his personal leadership providing the central focus.[45] To help staff his organization, Kenny

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[43] Jersey Journal, January 2, 1949, p. 1.

[44] Ibid., January 2, 1949, p. 1.

[45] This analysis of Kenny's political strategy was drawn from an interview with John R. Longo and many committeemen and ward leaders in the organization.

convinced a young reporter, William Flanagan, to be his publicity man. Colonel Edward Devlin became his campaign manager, and loyal Kennyites like the Creegans, William Johnston, and Joseph Kenny (a cousin) helped whip the undisciplined following into a trained army. Kenny also recruited young lawyers who developed a speaker's bureau to prepare party workers.[46]

Forming a ticket would be a critical element in Kenny's campaign strategy. He had to run himself to show a clear challenge to Hague. On February 4, 1949, he formally announced his candidacy. To secure uptown Republican strength, he needed a prestige candidate divorced from the Hague controlled Republican Bureau of Elections. Governor Alfred E. Driscoll and the City Republican Chairman, Jacob Levey, reached agreement on Donald Spence, a member of an old line respected Protestant family. For a fire eater and an anti-Hague fighter, Kenny chose James F. Murray, Sr., the fiery Murray had opposed Hague in the 1929 city election and became a victim of Hague's character assasination. Murray owned a shoe store and Hague accused him of selling shoddy merchandise to the city's indigent children. Labelled "Paper Shoes Murray," the little Irishman provided

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[46]Interview with Edward Zampella, former Jersey City Magistrate.

Kenny with a dynamic campaigner.[47] As a lawyer and businessman, Murray brought another form of support to Kenny. He headed a small but vocal organization called, "The Democratic Association of Jersey City." To complete his ticket, Kenny needed two ethnic candidates. Louis Messano, a boyhood friend of Kenny and former Hague worker, filled the Italian spot. Messano was a cigar puffing ward politician who had an Italian name. Out of a job and out of the Boss's favor, he joined the Kenny bandwagon. Filling the Polish position proved more difficult. Fears of reprisals caused several Poles to first reject Kenny's offer. Finally, a former football player and hungry lawyer, Charles Witkowski, was chosen. Lacking a job, money, and a new suit, Witkowski gladly accepted.[48] However, the Polish candidate did have some assets. He was a young man, a veteran, and an effective speaker. In March, Kenny completed his ticket and, to add the luck of the Irish, he announced it on St. Patrick's Day. Called the "Freedom Ticket," it would campaign on one issue, "Hagueism."

Unexpected aid came to Kenny during the spring of '49. While forming his ticket, leading anti-Hagueites began to present themselves at the city budget hearings and lambaste the Hague-Eggers administration. Murray Greiman, head of the

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[47] Jersey Journal, May 5, 1929, p. 1; May 5, 1949, p. 1; Private Papers of James F. Murray, Jr.

[48] Newark Evening News, June 26, 1949. Interviews with John Yengo, John Longo, and James Creegan.

Citizen's Alliance, led the attack by charging tax subsidies from a railroad tax victory and the water department saved the city from having a deficit. John Longo added life by bringing in pictures of littered streets. Another vocal critic, John Yengo, a commission candidate, caused bedlam when he attacked Eggers's war record, in addition to calling him a "phony mayor." The stormy and, at times, hilarious hearing lasted a record six hours and twenty-five minutes. Fear could not be transferred from Hague to Eggers nor could the issues in the campaign.[49]

Eggers attempted to focus attention on the question of city services, but his opponents attacked Hagueism. Forced to defend his uncle, he made a critical error. In a speech lauding thirty years of Hague rule, the Mayor played into Kenny's hands. Kenny's next move would be to draw the Boss back for a personal confrontation. Throughout the early spring, Hague refused to leave his Florida haunts. Eggers began to realize the full dangers of Kenny's strategy and attempted to convince Hague of the need to realign the ticket with more ethnic balance. But, Hague would not budge. The ticket remained unchanged and the only sop thrown to the minorities would be the shifting of an Italian to the county

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[49] Jersey Journal, February 26, 1949, p. 1. The Citizens Alliance was a good government group attempting to improve city services and reduce taxes.

ticket as a freeholder.[50] To change the city ticket would show weakness; so Hague decided to encourage an all G.O.P. slate to siphon Republican votes. Democratic ward leaders circulated nominating petitions to assist the "Republocrats." By the end of March, a total of twenty-one candidates contended for five commission spots.

The knock-down battle began to accelerate in late spring. Eggers opened his campaign at the fifth ward democratic club and reaffirmed his intentions to campaign on "the record of Mayor Hague for the past thirty years and my administration during the time I have had to serve you."[51] Labelling his opponents, "traitors interested only in political rapine," the nephew began to imitate his uncle's style. Kenny, the "traitor," opened his kick-off rally in the Horseshoe at the Tammanee Club--ironically the same club Hague had used when he was second ward leader.[52] Attacking Hagueism, Kenny appropriated an appealing phrase from the consummate politician, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Using the "Four Freedoms" as his symbol, Kenny called for "freedom from royal rule, freedom from fear, freedom from political slavery, and freedom of speech."[53] Complementing this

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Jersey Journal, March 23, 1949, p. 1.

[52] Ibid., March 21, 1949, p. 1.

[53] "Freedom Ticket." (Mimeographed Pamphlet.)

approach, was the use of Churchill's "V" for victory sign. Policemen, school teachers, and city workers, would wave the "V" to show their support. "It's in the air," became the expression. Hague could be beaten this year. Even after pandemonium broke out at the ballot selection ceremony with a glass counter top being smashed and Hague's ticket gaining the top spots, the Freedomites could not be deterred. Positions 7-11 became theirs, and bettors thought Kenny had a chance.[54]

Besides freedom from Hagueism, Kenny's camp developed the themes of the ethnic justice and the shame of Hagueism.[55] James F. Murray, Jr., the son of the candidate, spoke in the Italian fifth ward and reminded the minority that "Hagueism" was no better than Stalinism."[56] Murray proved exceptionally effective, since he could speak in Italian and showed flashes of brillance in defining an issue. Kenny picked up Murray's attack by describing the way in which his home and business phones had been wiretapped. Promising to "end payments of political tributes, such as the 3% or businessmen's shakedowns," the deposed ward leader's speeches began to have an effect on Hague.[57] The Boss, being an

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[54]Newark Evening News, May 10, 1964, p. 28. Interview with William Flanagan.

[55]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 273.

[56]Jersey Journal, March 29, 1949, p. 1.

[57]Ibid., April 8, 1949, p. 1; March 30, 1949, p. 1.

egotist, assumed he would always be a hero and had no equal. To destroy the meek ward leader, he would return to his beloved city and play to an audience of one.

On April 8, 1949, Hague returned and opened his attack on Kenny by calling him a "pawn of Edison, Van Riper, and the railroad crowd."[58] When this failed, he claimed the underworld had taken control of the "Freedom Train." "I am not going to permit the floodgates to be opened for the undesirable opponents that I drove out thirty-five years ago."[59] Getting more specific, Hague claimed that Essex County racketeer, Longie Zwillman, had financed Kenny's campaign with "a $50,000 contribution." Appealing to Jersey City residents not to abandon "his boy," Eggers, Hague called Kenny, an ingrate, and reminded the public how in 1916, he (Hague) captured the slayer of Kenny's brother, how in 1919 he gave Kenny a job as labor utility man for $5.50 a day, and how in 1931 he interceded with Joseph Sheridan to make Kenny his partner."[60]

As the campaign came down to its last days, Hague continued to live in a world of make-believe. Failing to

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Hudson Dispatch, April 28, 1949, p. 2.

[60] Lester Velie, "The Man to See in New Jersey," Colliers, CXXVIII (August 25, 1951) 71-72.

realize his past record could not appease the needs of a new generation, he staged an extravaganza--"Old Home Night." To encourage people to attend, he began a "Crusade for Decency." Ranting and raving, much as he had accused his opponents, Hague implored the public not to let "the Medical Center fall into enemy hands."[61]

On May 3, 1949, he returned to the Horseshoe. However, the years he had hob-nobbed with the rich at his seaside resorts and in his penthouses left him "a stranger in his native land." The Irish had been replaced by the Poles, Italians, and Czechs. When Hague and his followers arrived, the bald reality of a possible defeat began to confront them.[62]

Hundreds of vocal Kenny supporters booed Eggers and Hague on their return. Tomatoes, rotten eggs, and oranges were thrown at the foreigners. When Hague attempted to reexert his authority by the use of police interference, it proved futile. A sign holder forced his placard (reading "Down with Hague") in front of the Boss's face and almost knocked Hague down. Calling for the police "to arrest that man,"[63] Hague stood in a pathetic rage when no one responded. Jersey City was no longer Hagueville.

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[61] Jersey Journal, April 18, 1949, p. 9.

[62] Martin Gately, "'49--The Wildest Election," Jersey Journal, April 15 - May 12, 1969. An excellent account.

[63] Interviews with J. Owen Grundy and John Longo. Thomas Fleming, "I Am the Law," American Heritage XX (June, 1969). 33-48.

Despite all the indications of defeat, Hague refused to admit or express any doubts. His confidence seemed somewhat warranted when not one ward leader or county committeeman broke from the ranks. Closing the campaign with his hackneyed rhetoric, the Boss gave the final self-adulatory speech at Dickinson High School and warned if Kenny were elected, "Jersey City will become a happy hunting grounds for gangsters and racketeers who are pouring a fortune of underworld funds into the Kenny campaign. . . I'll tell you who's on Kenny's side: every hoodlum and gangster in Jersey City."[64]

Kenny did not let Hague's charges go unanswered. Knowing many of the intimate details of the machine's workings, the ward leader replied in kind. Sharing a radio program with James F. Murray, Sr., Kenny charged the underworld had already taken over Jersey City. The Freedomites also contended Hague did business with two mobsters, Al Capone and Frank Erickson, and allowed widespread gambling in the city. Murray challenged Hague to deny that a racketeer, Waxey Gordon, ran a brewery on Columbia Avenue during the prohibition era and under police protection.[65] Kenny supported Murray's attack by calling one of Hague's police Commissioners,

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[64]Bayonne Times, May 9, 1949, p. 1.

[65]Jersey Journal, May 2, 1949, p. 1; Newark Evening News, May 2, 1949, p. 15; May 3, 1949, p. 9.

"a bagman for the boss."[66]

With both sides filing libel suits, the campaign degenerated into a vicious, mud-slinging affair. The Freedomites returned to the theme of Hagueism by making a motion picture. The film showed how blight-ridden and deteriorated the city had become. Open garbage dumps at the Medical Center and run down school buildings sent home a powerful message. Kenny had to turn to motion pictures, street corner rallies, and door bell ringing because Hague had a monopoly of press coverage. Despite this handicap, Kenny made up for whatever press support he lacked by utilizing the enthusiasm of his supporters to cover each election district.[67]

By the beginning of May, the Kenny campaign became a cascade of optimism. To insure voters that Hague could be defeated, an appeal to the whole city had to be made by way of a spectacular demonstration. Journal Square, the political rallying point where C.I.O. officials had been denied access in the 1930s, would be the setting for a mammoth labor rally. Staged on May 5, 1949, the gathering became the "clincher." Attended by some laborites--but mostly Kenny followers--the labor rally demonstrated Kenny's "Freedom Train" had arrived. Although failing to gain the endorsement of any major labor leader, the "little guy" had

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[66]Jersey Journal, May 2, 1949, p. 1; New York Times, May 5, 1949, p. 28.

[67]Interview with William Flanagan.

the support of the rank and file.[68] At the gathering, Kenny ripped into Hague's anti-labor record by calling the Boss "the greatest enemy of organized labor." Playing upon the recent Presidential election, Kenny reminded the audience of Hague's opposition to Truman before 1948 (Hague had backed a draft Eisenhower movement before the convention).[69]

Although Kenny seemed a sure winner, professional politicians knew that many of Hague's enemies "had delivered the body, but the Boss captured the wake." To secure the wake, Kenny's workers surveyed the election apparatus. Ward leaders trained district workers to act as challengers and check voter's signatures.[70] Here again, the loss of state power damaged Hague. Voting machines would give an honest count. In addition, the Prosecutor's Office and Bureau of Elections were in Republican hands. The Attorney General provided state troopers, and the recently passed Corrupt Practices Act prevented other frauds. Policemen also abandoned Hague's organization, and brutality at the polling booths ceased.

On election day, Kenny indeed delivered the body and captured the wake. His ticket carried eleven out of twelve

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[68] Newark Evening News, May 9, 1949, p. 2.

[69] Jersey Journal, May 10, 1949, p. 1.

[70] Interview with Bernard Hartnett, Sr., Kenny's third ward leader.

wards. (See Table 6) In the downtown section, his supporters carried an empty coffin with a sign reading, "HERE LIES THE REMAINS OF THE HAGUE MACHINE, 36 YEARS OF AGE!" Hague's long absences from the Horseshoe had taken their toll. As one scholar has commented, "In the Horseshoe Hague had risen to power and there his local hegemony was ended."[71]

TABLE 6

1949 COMMISSION GOVERNMENT ELECTION BY WARDS

WARD	ADMINISTRATION					FREEDOM TICKET					IND.	GOP	ALL REPUB.				"CLEAN HOUSE"				
	Eggers	Patterson	Casey	McGovern	Prout	Kenny	Massano	Murray	Spence	Wilkowski	Yengo	Mueller	Riordan	Chapman	Hogan	Banach	Longo	Radwanski	Hassold	Drozdowski	Mastronardy
1st	1,055	1,044	1,037	1,055	1,013	2,574	2,501	2,486	2,528	2,539	40	12	10	11	8	15	136	117	94	112	82
2nd	907	882	852	887	852	4,193	4,067	4,060	4,110	4,101	38	15	13	11	10	8	139	96	64	84	62
3rd	1,853	1,757	1,794	1,851	1,802	3,715	3,611	3,470	3,569	3,569	144	31	27	23	34	31	471	278	250	257	283
4th	1,618	1,583	1,534	1,605	1,528	3,520	3,331	3,319	3,414	3,394	158	34	30	27	27	28	313	194	150	182	181
5th	1,760	1,726	1,604	1,703	1,641	2,760	2,735	2,237	2,567	2,515	524	38	21	18	21	22	806	351	344	309	429
6th	3,439	3,374	3,309	3,376	3,299	3,393	3,170	3,090	3,220	3,181	126	53	31	30	29	30	610	464	397	412	411
7th	12,630	12,681	12,262	12,752	12,579	15,892	14,494	14,127	15,101	14,112	519	244	180	191	176	158	1,653	724	637	642	699
8th	9,783	9,677	9,275	9,706	9,319	11,879	10,850	10,634	11,377	10,471	386	173	137	171	134	128	1,556	703	655	632	661
9th	9,054	8,947	8,584	9,241	8,588	10,652	9,683	9,319	10,106	9,322	436	126	126	201	147	130	1,424	548	524	505	602
10th	5,522	5,508	5,275	5,461	5,253	7,374	6,982	6,798	6,965	6,858	314	82	92	96	73	73	1,231	622	538	558	593
11th	5,641	5,741	5,648	5,745	5,572	7,542	7,254	7,069	7,219	7,059	219	91	78	91	80	60	708	386	354	336	363
12th	5,790	5,962	5,802	5,869	5,725	7,796	7,264	7,068	7,371	7,113	209	174	180	211	181	142	621	328	332	311	306
TOTALS	59,052	58,882	56,976	59,276	57,171	81,295	76,692	73,577	77,547	74,234	3,113	1,073	925	1,086	920	825	9,668	4,811	4,339	4,340	4,672

Source: Newark Evening News, May 11, 1949.

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[71]Connors, "Frank Hague," p. 303.

Kenny won because of his city-wide following, but more importantly his downtown base gave him the large pluralities. As a ward leader Kenny could hardly offer a reform image. Although 77 percent of the registered voters lived uptown in 1949, Kenny waged a campaign in Hague's own backyard and beat the Boss at his own game, machine politics.

In a sense the Hague machine never was defeated. It merely had its strongest tentacle turn against it and assume control. To run a machine without its main cogwheel proved an impossible task. Hague caused his own destruction by overreaching himself when he could least afford it. In May of 1949, the days of the Absolute Boss ended and the era of brokerage-politics returned to Jersey City. For despite Hague's defeat, the people of the city needed the services of a machine politician and the "important social function of humanizing and personalizing all manner of assistance to those in need."[72]

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[72]Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1957), pp. 71-81.

CHAPTER IV

A NEW MACHINE?

The Kenny Organization 1949-1953

On 17 May 1949, John V. Kenny and his Coxey's Army marched into City Hall. As the new general, Kenny faced a problem common to all revolutionary leaders--how to keep his following. Kenny's early problems came from the nature of his '49 victory. Elected on a freedom platform, he had pasted together a loose coalition of Republicans, anti-Hague Democrats, and his own followers. Everybody expected immediate rewards, and the Boss could not deliver fast enough. The years of repression and pent up emotions had given way to a time of exhilaration and expectation. No one could meet all these demands. Kenny had to deal with a city gone wild. He soon realized winning an election was easier than building an organization.

The continuing influence of the Hague machine, internal dissension, demands for recognition, and patronage, eventually forced him to abandon any hope of assembling a Hague-like, fully integrated machine. To survive in the post-New Deal environment, he relied on his personal popularity and ability to broker for power among competing

groups. Within four years his organization exhibited obvious defects, and the little general barely escaped defeat. With freedom had come political divisions.

Indications of the divisions came at the opening meeting of the city commission. The Hague appointed City Clerk, Francis X. Burke, swore in Kenny and his four commissioners. After the ceremony, Burke refused to step down and a verbal battle ensued with Kenny demanding his resignation. A Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Burke, argued he had tenure and challenged the dismissal. Kenny insisted and installed a new City Clerk, James A. Tumulty.[1] Burke became a symbol of how divided the city would become with Hagueites and Kennyites doing battle.

Symbols of freedom also appeared, however. No longer would city meetings be held behind closed doors with police guards stationed outside. Board of Education meetings reflected the openness. Under Hague, they had been held in private with the public and reporters barred. Now, Kenny and his administrators invited the press and provided seating facilities for the public. Signs of freedom were everywhere present. The newly appointed City Clerk gave some literary expression to the spirit when he had the following statement

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[1]Jersey City, Minutes of the Board of Commissioners, (May 17, 1949), pp. 3-4; Jersey Journal, May 18, 1949, p. 1.

inserted in the city minutes:

> Herewith is begun a new chapter in the recorded history of the City of Jersey City. The accomplishments of future days will, we confidently believe, illumine the fact that our city had entered upon a new era as of May 10, 1949. We choose to call that day "Freedom Day." It has become so titled by the majority of our citizens. On that day, Jersey City's people voted out of Office a quasi-monarchial regime which since the year 1917, held our people in its feudal-like maw.

Echoing these sentiments, Mayor Kenny remarked:

> . . . The results of last Tuesday's election are clear and convincing. No one can argue the votes which were cast do not adequately express the will of the majority of the people. The citizens most emphatically emphasized they wanted freedom of speech, freedom from fear, freedom from royal rule, and above all freedom from political slavery.[2]

Kenny then proceeded to thank his supporters and promised to run a pro-labor administration "opposed to the Taft-Hartley Act." Veterans, housewives, reporters, and the clergy also received the Mayor's gratitude. Finally, he thanked the "members of the forty clubs which organized in our behalf and to the thousands of workers even those who played the smallest part in Jersey City's greatest victory."[3] Here would be the Boss's first problem--how to weld those forty clubs into an effective organization.

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[2] Ibid., pp. 5, 8.

[3] Ibid., p. 9.

Organizational Problems

Building an efficient organization proved to be a problem Kenny never solved. The difficulties in controlling his Coxey's Army began to unfold on the night of his victory. Two of his earliest and most loyal supporters, George and James Creegan, felt a sense of betrayal when Kenny moved into a new political camp by having his photograph taken with a labor lawyer, Harold Krieger, and a surprise as the new Deputy Mayor, publicist William Flanagan. The Creegans, like many Kenny followers, expected great things--George wanted to be Deputy Mayor and James hoped to be a freeholder. These two freedom fighters had worked and struggled for years to have Kenny made mayor; they soon felt the rewards due them were not forthcoming.[4]

Other signs that the excitement of the freedom movement had ended came when Kenny chose his ward leaders. Fearful of making any appointment that would jeopardize his newly acquired power, he selected men of diverse but humble origins. Laborers, tavern owners, policemen, and iron workers helped make up the sixteen ward leaders. Only six had extensive political experience. The new Boss followed Hague's approach by carefully choosing individuals who depended on the Mayor's Office; however, Kenny differed

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[4]Interview with James Creegan, eighth ward leader; Jersey Journal, January 17, 1951, p. 1. The Creegans resented Flanagan because the Deputy Mayor had received a salary during the campaign while they worked without compensation.

from Hague by giving ethnic representation to non-Irish minorities. Italian and Polish ward heads were installed, but this created political friction.

The seventh ward, south end, was a prime example. Joseph Soriero, an Italian and loyal follower, had a club on the Boulevard and received recognition by being named one of the two leaders in the Greenville section. The ward was the largest in the city and state with over 30,000 registered votes. In Soriero's districts a large Irish stronghold remained and although disenchanted with Hague's policies they retained a strain of ethnic superiority. When Soriero became ward leader, a disgruntled element quickly emerged. "They would not pay homage to that Italian around the corner." Led by a vocal Irish committeewoman, Mrs. Margaret Boland, the Celts wanted the ward divided into several sections with each ethnic group having its own leader. Mrs. Boland expressed the Irish fury: "Don't think Russia isn't here, we've got it on the Boulevard."[5] Soriero had catered to his Italian following before the election, and his continuance of this policy exacerbated the situation.

Kenny tried to appease Mrs. Boland by inviting her down to City Hall and promising full recognition, but this proved only a temporary compromise. The seriousness of the seventh ward fight became apparent when James F. Murray, Sr., the

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[5] Jersey Journal, January 31, 1950, p. 1; Interview with Joseph Soriero. Interviews with seventh ward committeemen.

Commissioner of Parks and Public Property, aligned with the Irish dissidents and accused some ward leaders of being "too high-handed." Murray had always been an independent politician while fighting Hague, and he would be no stooge for Kenny. The Irish Commissioner renewed his criticism and labeled the ward leaders, "little caesars."

> . . . They forget that thousands of men and women voted for the five commissioners--but not one for any ward leader. It is my conviction that the people voted for a change for the better. They didn't vote just to put out Hague--they wanted Hagueism out.[6]

Kenny's problems in the seventh ward were never resolved. Mrs. Boland continued to complain she "wasn't getting the recognition from Soriero." Soriero demanded she join his club. Refusing to abandon his loyal follower, Kenny told the Irish "to go to Joe for favors." He reminded his workers of the need for unity:

> . . . We must have an organization and it must be led by someone, a boss if you want to call him that. Politics is a business and it must be run in a business-like way. I'm just as big tonight as I was on May 10 and no bigger.[7]

But, the Irish refused to recognize an Italian leader. Mrs. Boland and many of her followers eventually broke and set up a club supporting the opposition.

The divisions in the seventh ward were not just one malfunction in Kenny's "machine." Throughout the city similar

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[6]Jersey Journal, January 31, 1950, pp. 1, 31.

[7]Jersey Observer, March 28, 1950, pp. 1, 2.

problems arose. In the fifth ward, a strong Italian group demanded recognition. Kenny appointed Thomas DeMarco, a retired police sergeant, as ward leader. Realizing the Italians were the largest ethnic group in the city, DeMarco became defiant. Within a short time the entire ward became a hotbed for Italian rebels. Edward Zampella, a talented lawyer who worked for Kenny in 1949, broke with the organization. Zampella's break came because of a rivalry with Louis Messano, the Italian Commissioner. Zampella wanted to replace Messano, but Kenny refused to make a change. When Zampella's term as City Magistrate expired, Messano convinced Kenny not to reappoint him--instead naming Dominick Daniels (later a Congressman). Joe Vario, a gambler and strong '49 supporter, followed DeMarco and Zampella. Vario broke over a personal feud with City Hall. So many fifth ward supporters left the organization that the ward became known as the "Italian secession."[8]

Another Italian who parted ways with the Boss was Nicholas Introcaso. A flamboyant figure, Introcase headed the Yankee Doodle Dandy Club in the eighth ward. He gained notoriety by parading through the city with a flag covered goat. Kenny gave the colorful leader a position on the city

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[8]Jersey Journal, July 17, 1952, p. 1; March 8, 1951, p. 1. Interview with Edward Zampella. Another important leader in the fifth ward was Police Lieutenant Nick Berardi who also broke. Berardi had defied Hague in 1949 and was an important figure in the ward.

tax board. Introcaso was appeased for a time but also clashed with Messano. When Kenny told Introcaso he was "building an organization and not a circus," the Yankee Doodle Dandy leader bolted.[9] Faced with numerous requests for recognition, Kenny sighed with frustration, "I'm up to my elbows with political midgets."[10]

In the eighth ward the beleagured leader also faced intra-party wrangling. James Creegan had been appointed leader to the eastern half of the ward. Creegan had his strength in the sixth ward but accepted the post. The ward leader always expected Kenny to make him a freeholder. The Boss did not act quickly enough. The eighth ward became a reversal of the fight in the seventh ward. Creegan competed with his woman leader, Miss Gertrude Novick, but Kenny sided with Miss Novick. Creegan had enough and claimed he was "tired of trotting down to city hall."[11] He and his brother abandoned their little hero with these bitter words, "Kenny shows no leadership and only tears people down."[12]

Blacks in the eighth and sixth wards followed the pattern set by the Irish and Italians. Kenny gave blacks some status by appointing them to the Board of Education,

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[9]Interviews with J. Owen Grundy, Jersey City Historian, and Hal Kierce, former Deputy Parks Commissioner.

[10]Jersey Journal, March 11, 1951, p. 1.

[11]Ibid., June 28, 1950, p. 1.

[12]Ibid., January 18, 1951, pp. 1, 21.

Corporation Counsel's office, Police and Fire Departments. When the Mayor replaced James Creegan with John Brandle, a young and inexperienced ward leader, some black leaders felt they should have been recognized. Felix Isom, a black police sergeant, demanded more of his people be made committeemen. Kenny never fully realized the growing power of this minority and refused to heed Isom's request. Blacks soon divided with some supporting City Hall and others joining the Hague forces or reorganizing under Frank Hague Eggers.[13]

Even Kenny's relatives gave him trouble. His fourth ward leader, John "Happy" Ward, was his cousin. Ward and his brother expected to be left alone to run a gambling operation. Kenny curtailed their ambitions. The Wards, like so many others, grew embittered and left.[14] The "Coxey's Army" that Kenny led soon realized the capture of City Hall did not mean the fulfillment of their dreams.

Divisions in Kenny's organization became compounded by dissension in the City Commission. The ward leader's '49 victory depended on his bringing in independent figures like James F. Murray, Sr., and ethnic representatives, such as, Charles Witkowski; however, these individuals could not be controlled. Murray showed early signs of his maverick

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[13]Hudson Dispatch, June 29, 1949, pp. 1, 14; June 6, 1952, pp. 1, 8; Interview with Fred Martin, former City Councilman.

[14]Interviews with William Flanagan, John Longo, and Thomas F. X. Smith, City Clerk.

approach when he supported the Irish dissidents in the seventh ward. Other signs came when he delayed approving a stevedoring company's contract for a city pier and had militant waterfront workers storming City Hall. The Commissioner proved a further threat by his patronage power in the parks department. Controlling 600 jobs, Murray began to build a sub-machine and used it to propel his son, James F. Murray, Jr., into politics.[15] Witkowski presented a greater problem. Uncompromising and stubborn the Public Safety Director wanted to run his department without interference. In June of 1950, he established a Gambling and Waterfront Squad headed by detective Joseph "Buddy" Brooks, a former Hague supporter. Arrests on the docks caused longshoremen to complain. Ward leaders also became angered when the police started to make gambling arrests in their clubs.[16]

To discipline his contumacious commissioners, Kenny resorted to an extreme measure. In December of 1950, he had the city clerk read a resolution stripping Murray and Witkowski of their powers. Messano and Spence voted with the Mayor. Murray was reduced to running the city's lone public bath, and Witkowski was given charge of replacing light bulbs along the city streets. By a bold power play, Kenny made a

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[15] Jersey Journal, February 9, 1950, p. 1.

[16] Ibid., May 17, 1950, p. 1; June 11, 1950, pp. 1, 12; June 30, 1950, p. 1.

mockery of the Walsh Act--the progressive legislation which created commission government in 1913. Instead of having five commissioners to represent the city, the Mayor had reduced the board to three. Although he did increase his power, the brutal reprisal had serious ramifications.

Problems resulted when Murray refused to accept the loss of power without a fight. Fearing his office would be searched and his files rifled, Murray barricaded himself in City Hall and made a sensational stand. National attention focused on Jersey City when Murray had a cot and a Christmas tree sent in along with his food and clothes. Refusing to leave, the Commissioner demanded unhindered access to his office. After a four day siege, Kenny agreed to a compromise by allowing Murray the right to retain his office. Although Murray did eventually return to the organization, his followers became fiercely critical of the Boss's methods.[17]

Witkowski proved an even greater enemy. Infuriated at being stripped, the Polish leader denounced Kenny and asserted the "reason for the striping came from the mayor's interference with the operation of the police department by demanding the breaking up of special waterfront racket

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[17] New York Times, December 6, 1950, p. 1; December 9, 1950, p. 19; December 13, 1950, p. 42; Newark Evening News, December 13, 1950, p. 1; Jersey Journal, December 6, 1950, p. 1.

squads."[18] Witkowski would forever be Kenny's enemy and taunted the Mayor with attacks on the stripping and his links with the underworld. When policemen and firemen took notice of Witkowski's humiliation, they soon realized that to gain recognition political mobilization was required. During Kenny's reign, they became active in city elections and, when City Hall failed to meet their demands, they went elsewhere for support.[19]

Faced with a divided organization and City Commission, Kenny did little to encourage unity. His approach to patronage showed how loose wheeled his organization was. Under Hague, the second ward leader gained popularity by dispensing jobs and favors directly to the people. He refused to change his approach even though now he was the leader. Kenny did not want a ward leader doing to him what he did to Hague--lead a palace revolution. The new Boss also suffered from the problems any post-New Deal city leader faced, "The Silent Revolution in Patronage." As Frank Sorauf, a scholar on the subject, explains:

> Patronage may certainly be misused in ways that adversely affect the parties and political system. It may build up personal machines or following that parallel and compete with the regular formal party

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[18] Jersey Journal, December 6, 1950, p. 1.

[19] Newark Evening News, May 10, 1959, p. 22; Jersey Journal, July 27, 1957, p. 4.

> organization. Poorly administered, it causes resentment and hostilities, creates more friction within the party than it eases.[20]

Indeed, Kenny created friction within his organization by making patronage his personal tool. He often made appointments that created dissension. Typical of his individualistic approach was the naming of a committeeman to a $7,500 a year job while the ward leader had only a $5,000 a year position. Envy seethed throughout the organization.[21] But, the former ward leader did not "give a damn" about a rigid, hierarchical system of patronage distribution. He wanted "every recipient of a job or favor indebted to him." Kenny also liked people. Unlike his predecessor, Frank Hague, he was always accessible and responded to the smallest request for help whether it came from a "banker or a cleaning woman."[22]

Although Kenny was well liked, his organization was not well run. Ward leaders complained that city workers and

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[20]Frank J. Sorauf, "The Silent Revolution in Patronage," Public Administration Review, XX, No. 1 (Winter, 1960) 30.

[21]This section has been developed through interviews with Kenny's ward leaders and committeemen. Especially helpful were Barney Doyle, seventh-ward committeeman, William Albers, West Side ward leader, George Duva, Hudson City committman, and Samuel Pizzuto, Downtown ward leader.

[22]Interview with William Flanagan.

committmen did not listen to them. By making himself the chief dispenser of patronage, the new Boss left his organization in a disjointed state. Precinct workers often ignored the district leader and dealt directly with Kenny. Factional disputes erupted and continuous bickering caused Kenny to shift his troops and fill in with new people. But, in a sense, this was his strategy as a broker/boss. "Rule by confusion" and keep everybody off balance so no corporal will decide to lead a coup. The little general delighted in hearing stories of fights among his workers because he knew they needed him to keep the organization together. Kenny knew full well the Hague strategy of "rule or ruin" would not work so he adopted a policy of "divide and conquer."[23]

A divided organization allowed Kenny to stay on top, but it splintered his broad coalition. Republicans left early when they failed to receive sufficient patronage. Shortly after the '49 victory, the Republican County Chairman, Edmund Stevenson, quit the fusion movement and charged: "Republicans have gained only six jobs while the Democrats received 267."[24] Many forty-niners also became angered when the Mayor refused to "clean house". He kept close to such former Hague supporters as Freeholder William O'Driscoll, Congressman Edward Hart, and Assemblyman T. James Tumulty. Early supporters wondered if their efforts had been worth it

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[23]This analysis also came from interviews with ward leaders, Frank Beirne and Samuel Pizzuto.

[24]Jersey Journal, July 18, 1949; July 27, 1949, p. 3.

and commented, "Kenny rewards his enemies more than his friends."[25] Of course, he had little choice. The Hague workers proved themselves in elections and many were needed to strengthen his city base. He also did not show the vindictiveness Hague manifested in never forgiving his enemies.

Kenny's leniency toward former enemies carried over in his treatment of city employees. Although he had shown stern tendencies in dealing with upper echelon officials, he treated lower level personnel far more sparingly. During his second year in office, he allowed the Civil Service Director of Classification and Organization, Thomas Finn, to conduct an extensive survey of city personnel. Finn and his task force made a thorough reclassification of every title and salary rating. The personnel department provided employees with information on their promotional status and salary lines. However, what appeared to be a change damaging to the Boss had limited effects on Kenny. By giving city employees civil service titles by desk audits, rather than by civil service exams, he tied many of them to him. Many municipal employees became locked into their jobs but, if the Boss lost the city, which he did, he still had their enduring loyalty. Kenny also gained expert advise on how to manipulate the civil service regulations. He appointed Thomas Finn to a $7,500 a year

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[25] Ibid., February 2, 1950, p. 12. Interview with James Creegan.

position as Director of Pollak Hospital.[26] But, civil service regulations did present a problem for Kenny's organization. Party workers felt secure in their jobs and responded only to the Boss and not to the ward leaders or lower leveled officials. This created problems when Kenny was not around and expected his organization to produce. Laxness became more prevalent than discipline.

Heading a comparatively undisciplined organization, Kenny could ill afford to depend only on the downtown wards that elected him. Voter registrations in the uptown wards (7-12) heavily outweighed the downtown areas. To survive, Kenny (like Hague) needed support throughout the city. Although Jersey City had no sharp dichotomy between uptown and downtown residents, the Heights' voters did have a slightly more pbulic interest attitude toward the running of the city. Kenny revealed a critical weakness when he failed to address these voters with sufficient attention. Only after several setbacks did he attempt to reverse this shortcoming.

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[26]State of New Jersey, Civil Service Commission Annual Report (1949-1950); The Shield, March 11, 1950; Interview with Leo Steiner, Editor of The Shield; Jersey Journal, December 12, 1950, p. 1. Jersey City adopted civil service reform in 1911.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF REGISTRATION BY WARDS

WARD	1949	1953	1957
1	4,015	3,860	3,046
2	5,478	5,125	4,419
3	6,329	3,360	5,571
4	5,684	6,062	5,328
5	5,081	5,453	4,636
6	8,142	9,273	8,124
7	31,890	32,534	30,941
8	24,917	26,148	23,582
9	22,299	23,014	21,766
10	14,737	15,457	12,933
11	15,112	15,007	12,941
12	15,893	16,903	15,966

Source: Hudson County Board of Elections.

Voters in the newspaper wards became aware of Kenny's role as an embryonic boss when the Mayor failed to terminate many of Hague's practices. When elected, he promised to "say goodbye to corruption," but his words often rang hollow. The practice of collecting 3 percent of city employees' salaries continued.[27] The new Boss altered the method by having his ward leaders sell "dance tickets."

The running of ward club dances became so widespread and unregulated that businessmen and civic leaders protested the demands for contributions. In the sixth and eighth wards merchants charged that party workers made threats and shook down proprietors. Tavern owners echoed the protest and

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[27] Jersey Journal, June 2, 1949, p. 1; December 22, 1951, p. 1.

complained about the number of party workers seeking contributions.[28] Policemen and firemen defied the organization and denounced the "bite" at public meetings.[29] The ward dances even began to hurt Kenny financially when the local leaders kept a large percentage of the returns. The Mayor finally ended some of the abuses by running one city-wide function a year. To quell other critics, he posted at City Hall a notice telling employees that contributions were not compulsory. But, for many voters the form and not the content had changed.

A hostile press added to the Mayor's image of a machine politician. J. Albert Dear, the publisher and editor of the Jersey Journal, became a harsh critic. Unlike his father, Joseph Dear, who made peace with Hague, the son refused to do business with Kenny. From May, 1949, until October, 1951, (when Samuel I. Newhouse bought out the Dear interests), the editor followed every move made by the city leader and lambasted him with scathing editorials. The Journal once ran a front page editorial asking the Mayor to resign.[30]

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[28] Jersey Journal, January 13, 1950, p. 1; October 1, 1949, p. 1; October 11, 1949, p. 1.

[29] Ibid., October 16, 1950, p. 1; October 18, 1950, pp. 1, 12; For Kenny's denial see Ibid., October 11, 1950, p. 1; November 1, 1952, p. 1.

[30] Ibid., March 8, 1951, p. 1.

Kenny's problems with the press were not limited to Jersey City. The state's leading newspaper, the Newark Evening News, also took a critical view. In numerous editorials, the paper noted how Mr. Kenny had become a successor to "Boss Hague." When the Mayor faced an embarrassing scandal, the Newark News satirized him:

> Of the cast of characters who refused to testify for one reason or another on the waterfront investigation, add the name of John V. Kenny, the 'reform mayor' of Jersey City. Yesterday, Mr. Kenny wasn't talking either, at least he wasn't talking to the New Jersey Law Enforcement Council.[31]

Failing to gain a good government image, the Mayor often came under questioning in his roles as an administrator. A rising city payroll belied his promiseto run an "efficient city." In 1949 the city had 7,657 employees; within two years this number increased to 8,005. The Medical Center became loaded with "no shows." Run at a deficit of $7,500,000, the Hague monument consumed one-sixth of the city budget.[32] Kenny showed his fondness for people by placing the poor and handicapped at the Center. A black amputee, "Stubs," gained a job as a doorman and became a symbol of the Boss's largesse. But, with a swollen payroll came tax increases.

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[31]Editorial, Newark Evening News, December 30, 1952.

[32]Newark Evening News, August 12, 1951, p. 15. Many of the scandals in Kenny's administration were later revealed in a probe sponsored by forty-nine Jersey City taxpayers. See Superior Court of New Jersey, Final Report of Samuel Larner, as expert appointed by Hon. Hayden Proctor, Judge of Superior Court of New Jersey, L-3973-52. Hereafter cited as Larner Report.

During the first three years of his administration, the tax rates climbed from $7 per $100, to $7.65 per $100. The budget likewise increased from $45.5 million to $52.6 million.[33]

Rising taxes and uneven city services left the Heights voters unimpressed by the new administration's political fanfare about "freedom." Many uptown voters felt further aggrieved when the Mayor failed to improve the city's transportation system. Under Kenny, the trolley line terminated service, and this caused an inconvenience for commuters in the Hudson City sector. Bus service proved inadequate, and when strikes hampered the operation of some uptown lines, voters blamed City Hall. In addition, the subway fares on the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad increased from ten cents to twenty cents and although Kenny opposed the raises, many commuters held him responsible.[34] Another problem came from Kenny's appointment of George Bonnelli as the twelfth ward leader. This was the first time an Italian served in such a post and it caused resentment by the large bloc of German and Irish voters in the Hudson City section.

A far more serious cause for Kenny's unpopularity with the Heights' voters was his handling of the waterfront

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[33] New Jersey Division of Local Government Statement of the Financial Conditions of Counties and Municipalities (Annually, 1949-1952).

[34] Jersey Journal, June 7, 1950, p. 1; June 16, 1950, p. 1; See Eggers criticism of the subway increase in Ibid., March 24, 1953, p. 1.

problem. During his term as Mayor, the waterfront became a political nightmare. Difficulties emerged when Hague left and militant dock workers expected Kenny to grant them free reign. In the summer of 1949, he faced a month long pier strike when members of the Local 1247 demanded that pro-Hague boss loader, James "Happy" Keane, and union delegate, Eddie Polo, "get off the docks." Frank "Biffo" DeLorenzo, the new union leader, gained some support from City Hall, but labor wars broke out and DeLorenzo eventually lost control to the New York mob.[35] Kenny could not control the competing factions and the waterfront became a battleground. Bombings, killings, knifings, and other acts of violence spread throughout the city. A grenade was tossed into a union hall and a mobster's car exploded in an uptown neighborhood. Hague, like everything else, kept a tight lid on the waterfront, but Kenny feared challenging labor leaders and let chaos reign.

Daniel Bell in an article on the "Racket Ridden Longshoremen" accurately summarized the situation:

> . . . Across the Hudson River, in Jersey City, where life is more simple and direct, and politics more brutal and unadorned, the relationship of ILA to the political setup produced a clear mirror of the meaning of political accommodation. In Jersey City, the piers still form one of the chief sources of job patronage for those faithful to the machine, and the loading concessions are one

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[35]Kenny's problems on the waterfront have been explained by Robert Greene in Allen Raymond's, Waterfront Priest (New York: Henry Holt, 1955), pp. 130-134; see also Greene's articles in the Jersey Journal, January 1, 1950, pp. 1, 12.

> of the plums of political victory. In turn, the kickbacks from jobs, and assessment from these prizes, finance the political machine.
>
> A period of change is always an excellent sociological laboratory, and the period following the downfall of the Hague machine in Jersey City provides a good look at the intricate and corrupt ties of a racket-ridden union and a corrupt city machine. In 1949 the rotting Hague machine was overthrown by an insurgent chieftian, John V. Kenny. Naturally, followers of newly-elected Mayor Kenny wanted the spoils. The "old guard" was backed by Joe Ryan, who had maintained excellent relations with Hague. After a month-long strike, a compromise was effected, whereby the Kenny people took over Pier D, while the Hague-Ryan leaders kept control of nearby Pier F.
>
> But, tranquility was hard to achieve. A new mob from New York led by an old associate of Lucky Luciano named Tony Strollo, alias Bender, assumed control. . .[36]

In Summary: A myriad of problems prevented Kenny from assembling an efficient, monolithic machine. He brought freedom to the city but with it came politcal division. Unable to control numerous factions competing for recognition, the broker/boss let them battle among themselves. His strategy worked by keeping petty internal challengers weak, but it presented difficulties when he faced a major opponent.

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[36]Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (New York: The Free Press, 1960), p. 196.

Strong Opposition

Kenny's opposition came from Frank Hague and Frank Hague Eggers. Hague refused to hear the "last hurrah" after his 1949 city defeat. He had lost, but his machine had not been destroyed. His candidate had garnered almost 60,000 votes. The old Boss was also a political animal and when asked if he would retire, replied, "I stay in politics." "It is in my blood."[37] Indeed, bloody battles ensued with Hague and his former ward leader re-enacting the 1949 election many times. Hague's nephew, Frank Hague Eggers, also refused to quit and promised to act as the city's "watchdog." Hague and Eggers provided Kenny with his toughest political challenges.

Hague remained powerful because he had many resources. As Vice Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, he continued to receive federal patronage. He dominated the New Jersey Democratic Party, but most of all he still controlled the county Board of Freeholders. In New Jersey politics, county power is the key to municipal and state power. As one scholar has observed:

> . . . There is one proposition about New Jersey that all analysts of state politics would accept, and which we must therefore explain. It is the proposition that New Jersey's state government is the creature of strong county political organizations.

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[37] New York Times, May 13, 1949, p. 46. Jersey Journal, May 10, 1949, p. 1.

> In pursuit of powers these organizations are said to control the state legislature and through their county delegation, the governor through concessions made by candidates seeking the county's support in a primary or general election, and the courts through a patronage system.[38]

To strengthen his grip on the county, Hague had eight freeholders pledge their loyalty; the sole dissenter, Joseph Kenny, was the cousin of John V. Kenny. With the county in firm control, the former mayor set up his political headquarters at Journal Square and began to rebuild. He shifted city employees to the county payroll and placed new workers in the districts where he had been weak.[39] Hague planned to come right back at Kenny in November by electing a governor.

In January of 1948, Hague had chosen Elmer Wene, a folksy speaking chicken farmer from South Jersey, to be the Democratic candidate for governor. No small time farmer, Wene owned and operated the Wene Chicken and Farms Hatchery, one of the world's largest, and the Wene Poultry Laboratories.[40] Wene's candidacy took on an extra value to Hague when Kenny upset the later in the city election. Under the New Jersey Constitution of 1947, the governor's authority

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[38]Alan Rosenthal and John Blydenburg, eds., Politics in New Jersey, (New Jersey: Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, 1975), p. 272.

[39]Newark Evening News, November 9, 1949, p. 9.

[40]Newark Star Ledger, January 27, 1957, p. 1; State of New Jersey, Manual of the Legislature of New Jersey, (1949), pp. 282-283.

became greatly expanded and a patronage arsenal lay at his door. The next governor would have from 1,000 to 6,000 jobs at his disposal. Included in the arsenal would be control of county prosecutors, county judges, jury commissioners, board of elections and numerous other posts. With these weapons, Hague could retake City Hall.[41]

Kenny knew Hague would never rest until he put his ungrateful ward leader in jail. The Mayor immediately put Hague on the defensive by appointing a City Auditor, William Sternkopf, to scrutinize the city's financial records. To embarass Hague further, Kenny had Sternkopf and his legal staff initiate a law suit against the Hague machine to recover the millions of dollars collected from city employees. John Malone, the former Deputy Mayor, and other Hague underlings were indicted. City employees signed affidavits stating they contributed 3 percent of their salaries to the Hague organization. Sternkopf estimated Hague collected up to $500,000 a year and over $10 million during his thirty year reign.[42]

Knowing that Hague would use the governor's office to wage a counterattack, Kenny took action. As Kenny later

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[41] Newark Evening News, October 29, 1949, p. 1; Rosenthal and Blydenburg, Politics in New Jersey, pp. 154-155.

[42] Newark Evening News, June 23, 1950, p. 1; New York Times, June 1, 1949, p. 37. Sternkopf issued a full report indicating how extensive the Hague system of collecting had been.

said, "If Wene had been elected, we would all have wound up in jail."[43] Wene, himself, helped prepare the execution by remaining too close to Hague. After the former mayor's defeat, in May, several New Jersey county leaders demanded that Hague stay out of the gubernatorial election. For Wene to gain their support, they asked for the right to name the new Attorney General. The Democratic candidate refused. Throughout his campaign, Wene failed to make a compromise and found himself with a divided party.[44]

Kenny would not come out openly against Wene, but his ward leaders began opening "Democrats for Driscoll" clubs. The incumbent, Alfred E. Driscoll, took advantage of the divided Democrats and the new state constitution--which allowed a governor to succeed himself once. Kenny believed it would be easier to do business with an anti-Hague Republican than with Wene. Nevertheless, as the election approached, the Jersey City Mayor promised Wene his support and stated, "I'm still a Democrat." He even staged a rally in October, but this was mocking support and at the affair Kenny's supporters roared for the "little guy" and gave the candidate weak applause. When a hearse appeared outside with Elmer's coffin in it, everyone knew Kenny would not

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[43] Jersey Journal, September 15, 1958, p. 1.

[44] Saul Orkin, "New Jersey Democratic Party Politics, 1949-1952" (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Columbia University, 1970), pp. 50-62. Interview with Archibald Alexander, member of the National Democratic Club, an anti-Hague group.

allow Wene to become the next governor.[45]

Hague's actions helped turn Jersey City into a Republican town. At the concluding rally in Jersey City's Dickinson High School, the Boss could not restrain himself and, grabbing Wene, yelled "We are going to take over next January, my friends."[46] The photograph of Wene and Hague confirmed Kenny's fears. Deputy Mayor William Flanagan passed the word to the organization to vote "for the man who would make the best governor."[47] The poultry king was not the man. Jersey City went Republican for the first time in over twenty years when Driscoll carried eleven out of the city's twelve wards and defeated Wene by 17,042 votes. The Democrat carried the county by only 3,298 votes. The importance of Hudson County became known when the returns showed Wene had carried twelve of the state's twenty-one counties, capturing many Republican strongholds. Despite his impressive showing, the Vineland farmer lost the election by 75,860 votes because the "Gibraltar of Democracy", Hudson County, failed to support him.[48]

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[45] Jersey Journal, October 7, 1949, p. 1.

[46] New York Times, November 7, 1949, p. 11.

[47] Ibid., November 7, 1949, p. 4; Interview with William Flanagan.

[48] Jersey Journal, November 9, 1949, p. 1; In the two preceding gubernatorial elections of 1943, and 1949, Democratic candidates carried Hudson County by 97,382 votes and 69,729 votes respectively.

After his second straight defeat, Hague abdicated as county and state party leader. Kenny gladly accepted the endorsements of Hudson County's eleven other mayors and moved into control of the court house. In January of 1950, the "little leader" appeared to be the boss with his patronage power expanded and his army waiting for the spoils of another victory.[49]

But, dividing the spoils proved no easy task. In April of 1950, a primary would be held and Kenny's followers expected the leader finally to recognize their efforts. Three county freeholder posts and two congressional seats were available, but Kenny's options were limited. To gain strength outside Jersey City, he selected Wilbur McGowan, the Mayor of West New York, to run for freeholder. A labor leader, Joseph Connelly, and the incumbent, Joseph Kenny, were also picked. For one of the Congressional seats, the Mayor permitted a Hague congressman, Edward Hart, to remain in office. Hart was needed because he was State Chairman and gave the anti-Hague Democrats critical patronage. In the thirteenth congressional district Kenny faced a more difficult choice. The Hague representative, Mary Norton, had been in Congress for twenty-five years and held the powerful post of Chairwoman of the House Labor Committee. The first Democratic woman elected to Congress, "Battling Mary," remained a loyal follower of Hague and called Kenny

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[49]Jersey Journal, November 7, 1949, p. 1; Interview with William Musto, State Senator from Hudson County.

an "ingrate."[50] To fill Mrs. Norton's seat Kenny decided to run a Polish war veteran, Alfred Sieminski. Coming from a wealthy Jersey City family, the owners of the Brunswick Laundry, Sieminski would be able to finance his own campaign.

Numerous Kenny followers showed disappointment when they found they were not on the ticket. One discontented figure, James F. Murray, Sr., wanted his son to be the candidate for the thirteenth congressional district. The younger Murray decided to challenge Sieminski. James F. Murray, Jr., was a brillant lawyer with broad experience as a naval and intelligence officer in the Second World War. He spoke five languages.[51]

Beside the Murrays, Kenny faced challenges from other candidates. Candidly admitting, "the woods are full of freeholders" the Boss allowed his supporters to run and if they could win the primary he would endorse them.[52] Run they did. Thirty-four candidates filed for the three freeholder positions and ten contended for the thirteenth congressional district seat. The fight for Mrs. Norton's position proved the critical contest with a fierce power struggle waged by the Murray and Kenny organizations.

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[50] Jersey Journal, March 9, 1950, p. 1; Papers of Mary Norton, Rutgers University, Box 6. See also Mrs. Norton's unpublished autobiography for some comments on Kenny and Hague.

[51] James F. Murray, Jr., papers held by his widow, Mrs. Bianca Murray.

[52] Jersey Journal, November 8, 1949, p. 1; January 24, 1950.

Sieminski caused unexpected problems.The candidate had money, but also had a serious handicap--he was a Protestant. To run in a Catholic city would be difficult enough but to run against a strong figure like Murray would be even more demanding. The district included seven Jersey City wards and all of Bayonne. Murray had strong support in the seventh and eighth wards and with a good organization he could reach into the other areas. To block the aspiring Irishman, Kenny's supporters resorted to trickery and confusion. First, they entered another candidate, a James Murray with no middle initial. Although only twenty-three years old, the second Murray claimed to be a legitimate contender. The "real" James F. Murray countered by entering his two-and-a-half year old son on an "anti-spanking platform." Further confusion resulted when in the balloting, Kenny's forces had the County Clerk, William Gilfert, bury James F. Murray, Jr. on line C with six other candidates.[53]

The battle between Murray and Sieminski tore Kenny's organization apart. Charges of racism, ethnic bias, religious bigotry, and questionable loyalty marred the campaign.[54] The fight for the freeholders' positions proved just as divisive. Candidates claimed Kenny had reneged on his promise to run an open primary. The confused ballot

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[53] Ibid., March 17, 1950, p. 1.

[54] Ibid., March 30, 1950, pp. 1, 20; April 3, 1950, p. 1; April 5, 1950, p. 1; April 12, 1950, p. 1.

gave credence to this charge. The ballot jumbled all of Kenny's opponents together while the organization candidates were on Row A. On election day, voters went through a "Chinese puzzle" to make their selection.

Kenny won the primary, but it was a pyrrhic victory. Murray came within 17,000 votes of upsetting Sieminski. Backed by an industrious businessman and avid campaigner, John Howe, Murray had shown great strength throughout the city. The Hague-Eggers forces realized if Murray and the independents could present a strong challenge in the primary, they could do even better. Furthermore, many Murray supporters resented Kenny's "dirty politics" and aligned themselves with the Hague-Eggers opposition.[55]

In November, Kenny's organization continued to show weakness. When the Korean War started, Sieminski re-enlisted and failed to campaign. The election results showed the organization unable to produce for the war hero. The Republicans came within 372 votes of carrying the divided seventh ward. Overall, Sieminski defeated his Republican opponent, Edward Binkowski, by less than 12,000 votes. This was unheard of in Hague's day. In 1948 Mrs. Norton had carried the district by over 40,000 votes.[56]

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[55]Ibid., April 6, 1950, p. 12; December 13, 1950, p. 30.

[56]Ibid., November 7, 1950, p. 1; November 8, 1950, p. 2.

By the end of 1950, Kenny's organization was in deep trouble. Split from the Murray fight, weakened by scores of defections, and divided further by the stripping of Witkowski and Murray,[57] the fusion movement had come apart. As a result of this division, Frank Hague and his nephew, Frank Hague Eggers, planned a comeback. In December, 1950, a new organization, the Regular Democrats for Clean Government, emerged. Taking its name from a reform group in Essex County, the R.D.C.G. was made up of die-hard Hagueites, Murray followers, and other small dissident groups. Prominent among the organizers of the group were Assemblywoman, Maria Urbanski-Courtney, Ezra Nolan, Chairman of the Hudson County Boulevard Commission, and Ralph Faugno, a labor leader. All of these people were close to Frank Hague. The president of the R.D.C.G., John Howe, was a local business man who served as campaign manager for James F. Murray, Jr., when the latter ran for Congress. The makeup of the new group was rather paradoxical, since Murray had fought Hague for twenty years, but now Kenny was the enemy.[58]

Although Eggers' uncle funded the R.D.C.G., the day-to-day work was now carried on by Eggers, who compromised more than his mentor. Complementing the R.D.C.G. was another

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[57] Newark Evening News, December 7, 1950, p. 59.

[58] Ibid., December 17, 1950, p. 79; Jersey Journal, December 6, 1950, p. 1; December 15, 1950, p. 1.

anti-Kenny group, the Women's League for Good Government. Under the leadership of Mrs. Julia Tiene, the pro-Eggers women organized throughout the city and attacked Mayor Kenny for allowing "gangsterism" to appear in their city.[59]

Eggers and his uncle started their formal comeback on 12 December 1950 when Sheriff Thomas Fleming, a former sixth ward leader fired several Kenny workers. In January, 1951, a full assault on the county began. Kenny had only four firmly committed freeholders and depended on five former Hagueites for control. Hague began winning his five back; he even kidnapped one freeholder, Joseph Colford, to make sure he voted correctly. County leader Kenny had hoped to appoint his own man as freeholder director and county auditor, but Hague proved too persuasive. As the New Year began, Kenny found himself again confined to the city payroll.[60]

Hague attempted to obscure his own role in the anti-Kenny movement by letting Eggers do the heavy fighting. Eggers and the R.D.C.G. opened up on the Mayor by advocating a charter change. They supported a Mayor-Councilmanic form that would require at-large instead of ward elections. They assumed Kenny's organization could not win another citywide

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[59] Ibid., December 15, 1950, p. 1; See also Mrs. Tiene's comments in the Hudson Dispatch, October 15, 1957, p. 1.

[60] Newark Evening News, December 12, 1950, p. 22; January 3, 1951, p. 8; Interview with John R. Longo.

election. Kenny countered by having the city commission pass a resolution calling for a public study, the slowest method of charter change under the state's home rule status, the Faulkner Act of 1950. But, the charter battle was only a preliminary to the critical April primary.[61]

At stake were the offices of three freeholders, a county supervisor, a sheriff, nine assemblymen, state legislators, and two coroners. To shore up his organization, Eggers began reaching out for new supporters. He found them among labor and ethnic leaders, as well as, disappointed Kenny followers. New manpower came from the entry for the Democratic sheriff's nomination, Joseph Madden. The head of the Heavy Construction and Laborers Union Local 472 of New Jersey's A.F.L., Madden provided jobs for men to build bridges, tunnels, highways, sewers, and other types of construction projects. Madden's large supply of jobs enabled Eggers to organize throughout the city. He developed a particularly strong following in the Marion section of the tenth ward, an Italian enclave.[62]

The appeal to the Italians was enhanced by Eggers's selection of Frank Contey to run for county supervisor. Contey's grandparents were among the first Italians to come

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[61] Newark Evening News, January 23, 1951, p. 26; November 15, 1951, p. 63; November 18, 1951, p. 24; December 12, 1951 p. 8.

[62] Jersey Journal, February 1, 1951; Interview with John R. Longo.

to Jersey City, and he was president of the Dante Aligheri Society. The choosing of an Italian to run for an important county office showed that Eggers was no ethnocentric like his uncle. Blacks were also offered an opportunity when Fred Martin, a black businessman in the eighth ward, was placed on the slate as a candidate for Assemblyman.[63]

Eggers rebuilt his uncle's organization. Giving directions to the workers was John Howe's Regular Democrats for Clean Government. Howe set up a political school to train potential Democratic committeemen in public speaking, public relations, and voter canvassing. Subsequently, a new type of committeeman appeared in the district-working day and night to swing voters to Eggers.

With Hague bankrolling the R.D.C.G., Eggers made the primary a life and death struggle for his opponent. Many of Kenny's supporters doubted the Mayor could survive and joined the enemy's camp. Typical of the comments made by the deserters were those of Thomas DeMarco, a seventh-ward committeeman:

> As an elected committeeman, I am duty bound to represent the views of the people in my own district. By phone calls, petitions, and letters to me, they have indicated they are through with the Kenny machine and want no more part of it.

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[63] Ibid.; Interview with Fred Martin.

> My advice to other committeemen and workers is to get on the bandwagon and go places with the Regular Democrats for Clean Government. The Kenny ship is sinking.[64]

While Eggers turned to the Italians for new support, Kenny rushed back to the Irish. To win back the Celts, he entered a "Corn Beef and Cabbage" ticket, headed by William Kelly and Bernard Hartnett, the candidates for sheriff and county supervisor respectively. The ticket attempted to appease the Irish followers of the Murrays and Mrs. Boland. With a Donovan, Fitzpatrick, and an O'Driscoll running, the former Cork Row inhabitant, Kenny, wanted to show the R.D.C.G. what the fighting Irish could do.

The 1951 primary became another re-enactment of the '49 fight. Eggers and Kenny attacked each other with vitriolic and savage language. Hague's nephew opened the campaign by lacing into Kenny's connections with the underworld. Charging the "mob had taken over," Eggers demanded the administration explain why the waterfront became a "haven for hoodlums."[65] James F. Murray, Sr., supported Eggers and called Kenny a "failure." In a fiery speech, Murray claimed only one issue existed in the campaign, "Kennyism."

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[64]Jersey Journal, January 20, 1951, p. 1.

[65]Newark Evening News, April 13, 1951, p. 14.

> I know and the people know it was John Kenny who planned and approved of the "march" on my office in City Hall by a gang of 400 men led by Biffo DeLorenzo and other hoodlums in a brazen attempt to foist on me his designs for that part of the waterfront which came under the jurisdiction of my Department.[66]

Eggers relied on other former Kenny followers to supply criticism. Witkowski proved a good source. The Commissioner challenged the Mayor to say "anything about my record as police commissioner." Recalling the day he was stripped, Witkowski commented, "a big mob of bookies, numbers runners, and ex-convicts stood outside of city hall leering at me."[67] Other former allies kept up the attack. The Creegan brothers appeared at a Regular Democrats for Clean Government rally and charged Kenny had "betrayed the freedom movement."[68]

Eggers capitalized on the Kefauver Crime Hearing, then in progress, to remind voters of his 1949 warning, "If Kenny were elected the underworld would take over."[69] The crime issue proved effective for Eggers because on 3 March 1951 a bomb went off in a union hall. Two days later a political dispute resulted in the killing of Kenny's second ward deputy leader, Thomas "Buddy" Boyle. A supporter of the

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[66] Jersey Observer, April 10, 1951, p. 1.

[67] Jersey Journal, April 11, 1951, pp. 1, 8.

[68] Ibid., March 3, 1951, p. 1; February 17, 1951, p. 1.

[69] Ibid., March 8, 1951; April 13, 1951, p. 1.

R.D.C.G. argued with Boyle in a tavern and the altercation ended with Boyle being shot to death. The Jersey Journal vehemently criticized the Mayor for allowing a climate of violence to exist in the city.[70]

Another issue used by the Regular Democrats for Clean Government was Kenny's labor record. Joseph Madden criticized the former ward leader's hiring practices while president of the Industrial Utilities Corporation. Charging that from "1940 to 1943, Mr. Kenny paid slave wages at $4.00 per day for a 12 hour day," Madden claimed the Mayor had "imported peon labor from Mexico to the detriment of the American workers." The candidate continued his attack by stating Kenny's self-styled" labor leader, Harold Krieger, "cares no more for the workingmen and women than he does for the man in the moon." The labor leader played upon one of Murray's metaphors and said, "Let little caesar tell of his interest in the diner at 14th Street and Grove, the headquarters of the loan business that oppressed working men downtown. Will he tell us about his magnificent palace at Allenhurst and the cost of its upkeep and how he obtained this grand structure?"[71]

Besieged with criticism, Kenny returned to his old strategy--attack Hague. He accused Eggers of "exhuming Hague"

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[70]Jersey Journal, March 6, 1951.

[71]Jersey Journal, April 13, 1951, p. 1; Hudson Dispatch, April 13, 1951, p. 1.

for the campaign. In a summary statement he remarked, "the sole issue is Hagueism and all it has stood for in the past 35 years." Kenny's tenth ward leader, John Deegan, kept up the attack by charging Eggers's uncle had financed the R.D.C.G. "to the tune of $250,000."[72]

Crime also became an issue Kenny found useful. The former ward leader gave lurid details of how the old Boss had accumulated his wealth. Focusing on some names before the Kefauver Crime Commission, Kenny reminded Eggers his uncle also had friends in the underworld. Frank Erickson, a big-time bookmaker, gained Hague's approval to run an "operation and office at the Five Corners" in Jersey City. Giving further details on the mob's influence, Kenny stated "Pat Burns, a mobster from Chicago, made the proper connections with Hague to use a racing information wire in Jersey City known as the General News Bureau." The news burearu had its headquarters at the first floor of the Chamber of Commerce building on Newark Avenue. All bookmakers were told to use the "G.N.B." at a cost of $75.00 per week. Hague also received $750 per month from a lottery game operated at 497 Grove Street.[73]

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[72]Jersey Journal, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

[73]Ibid., April 14, 1951, p. 1.

Kenny gave further accounts of how Hague with an $8,000 a year salary was able to own "an estate in Miami, a summer home in Deal, and a leased suite in the Plaza Hotel." Hague's old ally pointed to a brewery operated in Greenville. He gave a full account of how the illegal business functioned:

> . . . During the period of its operation, beer trucks owned by the company passed freely over the streets of Jersey City with police protection on orders from on high. On occasion, the driver would have a police lieutenant riding with him. Nothing like rank.[74]

The bootleg operation received tax exempt status and free water services. The total bill owed the city came to $43,388.79. Mocking the "I Am the Law" boss, Kenny wondered what other sources of wealth Hague had used to pay for "$65 handmade socks and $90 shirts from hoity-toity Paris haberdasheries."[75]

The labor issue became another weapon with which to berate Hague. Kenny reminded the workingmen how the enemy of the C.I.O., Frank Hague, used political tactics to "swing labor unions into line." In one specific case "Hague sat through a meeting of Local 164 of the Electrical Union with a force of plainclothesmen scattered through the union hall and uniformed cops massed outside the building." Kenny

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[74] Jersey Journal, April 14, 1951, p. 1; Hudson Dispatch, April 11, 1951, pp. 1, 20.

[75] Ibid.

accused the former chief executive of "throwing unions into receivership" and having his house lawyers and auditors divert "funds from widows and children."[76]

By the final week of the campaign, both Eggers and Kenny had taken every opportunity to remind voters of each other's incompetence and corruptness. Eggers ended his attack by denouncing the Mayor as a "tool of the mob." The Mayor replied by calling Eggers "his uncle's stooge."[77] Voter turnout showed how critical the election was to the city. Out of 162,287 registered voters in Jersey City 108,147 cast ballots. The results of the voting seemed to show politics in the "Gibraltar of Democracy" had come full circle. Kenny recaptured his county base, but by a narrow margin. Eggers came within 5,300 votes of winning the city. The Regular Democrats for Clean Government carried the sixth and seventh wards and ran close on the heights. In the district races they elected 189 committeemen out of a total of 622. They had given Eggers a new organization.[78]

Kenny survived because he was strong outside Jersey City. Except for the loss of Secaucus, Weehawken, and

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[76]Hudson Dispatch, April 11, 1951, pp. 1, 20.

[77]Hudson Dispatch, April 17, 1951, p. 1.

[78]Ibid., April 18, 1951, pp. 1, 14.

Hoboken, the "Corn Beef and Cabbage" boys carried the eight other cities by safe margins. Kenny always showed his dependence on the other mayors by providing them with county patronage. This was demonstrated when he appointed Frank Rodgers, Mayor of Harrison, Clerk to the Board of Freeholders; Joseph Healey, Mayor of Kearney, County Purchasing Agent; and Harry Thourout, Mayor of Union City, County Engineer.[79] The county total showed the Irish ticket won by almost 16,000 votes.

"Bloodied but unbowed," Kenny now seemed secure in his role as county leader. Events following the primary confirmed this impression. The old warrior, Frank Hague, again announced his retirement and went on a European cruise. Eggers removed himself from the R.D.C.G. to give the group an independent image. The new Hudson County leader was even boosted for state boss when his organization filled the state Democratic party's war chest by purchasing 40 percent of the tickets for a state affair.[80]

The results of the November election convinced many skeptics that Kenny's organization had finally "arrived." The Hudson County Democrats walked into office with the 81,200 vote plurality. Kenny's strong showing made him a

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[79] Jersey Journal, May 19, 1953, p. 1; Newark Evening News, July 3, 1960, p. 20.

[80] Ibid., May 17, 1951, p. 1; August 10, 1951, p. 4; October 6, 1951, p. 1.

standout compared to other New Jersey Democratic leaders. The Republicans retained control of the State Senate by an increased majority of sixteen to five seats and the Assembly by a forty-three to seventeen margin. Only Mercer and Hudson Counties showed any Democratic muscle and Hudson had nine of the seventeen State Assembly seats. Kenny commented on his victory, "Truth and justice had won again."[81] The "little leader" had something else to rejoice about. No longer would the Jersey Journal run carping editorials on his administration; J. Albert Dear sold out to the Samuel I. Newhouse syndicate and Eugene Farrell became managing editor. Kenny could live with Newhouse and not have to worry about any embarrassing exposes.[82]

Riding a wave of success the Kenny organization beat back yet another challenge in December, 1951. The Regular Democrats for Clean Government had forced through the courts a referendum calling for a vote on charter change. Citizens went to the polls during the Christmas season and showed an apathetic attitude. Only 40 percent of the registered voters participated. The organization defeated the proposal and no change of government came about. But, the R.D.C.G. did not give up. John Howe wistfully commented on the charter vote: "The results of the balloting were a most severe blow to the

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[81] Jersey Journal, November 7, 1951, p. 1.

[82] Ibid., November 16, 1951, p. 1.

Kenny regime, in that the 45,000 ballots were 35,000 less than the Freedom Ticket received in 1949."[83]

With Howe continuing to show optimism and Eggers working and proselytizing to gain support for the 1953 city election, Kenny began to exhibit concern about his organization. In retooling his machine, Kenny revealed a strategy that would be a key reason for his political durability. He became a master of brokerage politics by being able to detect the weaknesses in his opponents and bring them over to his side. James F. Murray, Sr., became the first example of how Kenny would "beat off, buy off, and bury off the opposition." Murray had been county registrar in 1942 under Governor Edison. Kenny realized the stripped commissioner desired the post. The Mayor also knew Murray had a strong following and with a city election scheduled in less than two years, Murray's supporters could brace up his tattered organization. Kenny convinced Murray to rejoin him. For his support, Murray was placed on the county ticket for the April 1952 primary. His son received a position on the city tax commission as well as the nomination for State Senator. Besides the Murrays, Kenny accepted back former Hague committeemen who realized the "little leader" had amazing survival ability.

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[83] Ibid., December 12, 1951, p. 1.

The recapture of lost souls prepared Kenny for the next primary. His organization for the first time, faced no strong opposition. To keep his workers on their feet the "little general" began wielding a verbal whip. He warned, "I will scrutinize the returns and read out workers who do not turn out the vote."[84] But, many workers knew Kenny was no martinet like Hague. The voter turnout showed the organization was also no Hague machine. Only 82,000 voters participated compared to over 160,000 in the 1951 battle. In the city out of a total registration of 159,756 votes only 68,317 cast ballots. But, Kenny returned to his lenient attitude and urged his committeemen "to gird themselves for the main event in November."[85]

Boss Kenny gave his organization a chance to "gird" itself for the Presidential election by predicting "1952 would be a Democratic year."[86] The Mayor favored Truman, but after the Missourian withdrew, Kenny showed no burning ambition to support a presidential candidate. In any case, politics became a secondary issue when he became seriously ill during the summer. He developed a severe case of pneumonia complicated by phlebitis.[87] The Boss temporarily

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[84]Jersey Journal, March 20, 1952, p. 1.

[85]Ibid., April 17, 1952, p. 1; Hudson Dispatch, April 16, 1952, p. 1.

[86]Jersey Journal, April 17, 1952, p. 1.

[87]Ibid., June 25, 1952, p. 1; July 10, 1952, p. 1.

turned his organization over to Deputy-Mayor William Flanagan. Shrewd, perceptive, cautious, and tough, Flanagan proved an excellent choice. In picking Flanagan, Kenny revealed another part of his strategy. To conserve his energy and let critics cast off their resentment against someone else, the Boss had an administrator run the organization while he went to the track, visited Florida, or vacationed at his summer residence. Kenny made the critical decisions, but his political managers did the day-to-day administrative work.[88]

Flanagan kept the organization together while Kenny recuperated. During his convalescense, the Mayor received several calls from national leaders. Averell Harriman made the trek to the Boss's retreat in South Jersey and asked for support at the convention. Even Adlai Stevenson, after receiving the nomination, paid a visit.[89]

By the fall, the general had recovered and, feeling his own importance, he again used his verbal whip to inspire the troops. Warning, "I will throw out the big shots who do not produce in the wards and rip out the phonies," Kenny demanded: "The shirkers and rebels get out of the party along

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[88]This analysis was drawn from interviews with ward leaders and the assistance of John Longo, an astute observer of city and county politics.

[89]Jersey Journal, July 15, 1952, p. 1; August 28, 1952, p. 1.

with any other lazy worker."[90] While giving some job holders a tongue lashing, the party chieftian showed a more benevolent attitude toward his committeewomen. Kenny always loved the women and realized their ability to cover a district with efficiency and productivity. When talking about his organization, he frequently lauded his female workers by noting, "I'll take one good woman for ten male workers anytime."[91] Many members of the fair sex joined the popular Irishman, and the often repeated expression "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world" became their rallying cry.

Believing he had revived his organization, Kenny expected Hudson County to "go Democratic by over 80,000 votes."[92] When Adlai Stevenson came to Jersey City, the Mayor had him dedicate the Montgomery Gardens Housing Project to show what Democrats had accomplished. But Hudson County had little liking for intellectuals and a strong feeling of McCarthyism permeated the county. Even Kenny's Secretary, T. James Tumulty, refused to endorse Stevenson and called the Illinois Governor "soft on the Reds."[93] On election day

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[90]Jersey Journal, October 21, 1952, p. 1.

[91]Ibid., October 29, 1952, p. 1; April 20, 1952, pp. 1, 12.

[92]Ibid., November 3, 1952, p. 1.

[93]Hudson Dispatch, September 26, 1952, p. 1.

Kenny's workers realized Stevenson's cause was hopeless. To salvage the county ticket, they asked voters to split their ballots. The strategy worked. Although Eisenhower came within 7,027 votes of carrying Jersey City and 7,543 votes of winning Hudson County, the local ticket came in with a 30,000 vote plurality. Kenny had again survived, but the Eisenhower bandwagon rolled over the rest of New Jersey. The Republican candidate carried the state by more than 350,000 votes. With Hudson barely staying Democratic and Middlesex, a former stronghold, collapsing into the Republican column, the New Jersey Democrats were badly beaten.[94]

The disastrous results convinced many Democrats that a multi-county organization was needed. Through the National Democratic Club, an anti-Hague wing of the party set up in 1950, the county leaders began to rebuild for the 1953 gubernatorial election. The Hudson County Boss agreed and supported a plural party leadership. He had enough headaches in his own county without trying to nominate the state party single-handedly. Kenny neither had the drive nor personality to "take Trenton" the way Hague did. Preferring to be a local baron, he expected the Democrats to set up regional leaders and keep the party strong throughout the state.[95]

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[94] Newark Evening News, November 9, 1952, pp. 1, 20; New York Times, November 9, 1952, p. 79.

[95] Jersey Journal, March 17, 1953, p. 1. See also remarks on November 28, 1950, p. 1.

Even after his big win in the 1951 general election, the mild-mannered boss denied having state ambitions and commented, "the New Jersey Democratic party had enough of Hague's dominance."[96]

Not being a state boss, Kenny still realized the need for a friendly governor to control the important posts of Attorney General and County Prosecutor. When Elmer Wene decided to make another run for the governorship in 1953, Kenny joined with the National Democratic Club leaders to form a Stop-Wene Movement. At a meeting in Princeton on 9 March 1953, the anti-Hague Democrats debated on a possible candidate. Kenny arrived late but helped select Robert B. Meyner. The Warren County State Senator, Meyner, had recently lost his home seat and appeared a desperation choice. Nevertheless, he saw the "chance of a lifetime" and accepted. So the accidents of politics began to unfold for a Hudson County Boss and a future "good government" state leader.[97]

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[96] Jersey Journal, November 29, 1951, p. 1.

[97] Kenny later claimed he picked Meyner to be the candidate; See the Jersey Journal, September 15, 1958, p. 1. Meyner claims no one picked him, but the county leaders did ask him to run. Archibald Alexander, Morris County Democrat, contends he, not Kenny, asked Meyner to run. (Interviews with Robert B. Meyner and Archibald Alexander.)

Kenny planned to work vigorously for Meyner. If he could turn out a big vote in the primary, he might discourage his opponents in the city election. Meanwhile, neither Eggers nor the Regular Democrats for Clean Government, who under John Howe continued to organize in the city districts, had been convinced the Kenny organization had "arrived." The Eggers' forces planned to back Wene, but they cared primarily about the city election. They had good reason to put all their energy into the May election, for Kenny's reputation had been severely blemished by new revelations about his dealings with the underworld.

Marred Reputation

Indications of the Boss's problems came in the summer of 1951 when Estes Kefauver's Special Crime Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce began to focus on New Jersey. At the Washington hearings Kenny's name was mentioned when Harold Krieger, his Assistant Corporation Counsel, and Mrs. Harold Krieger, the latter's divorced wife, gave testimony on their knowledge of crime in New Jersey. Mrs. Krieger told of her husband's close relationship with Abner (Longie) Zwillman, one of the state's leading racketeers. She claimed her former husband called Zwillman, the "Big Fellow," and Kenny, the "Little Fellow." Mrs. Krieger stated her husband depended on Zwillman, and "he would consult with him and ask his opinion, and if Zwillman said anything, I believe it was done."

Other testimony revealed Krieger had received a gold-plated typewriter from Zwillman in June, 1949. Harold Krieger denied much of his wife's testimony and claimed his relationship with Zwillman was only "casual and social."[98]

Another witness who gave some startling testimony on Zwillman and Kenny was James Bishop, the famous author. Bishop explained, while working as a consultant for Wene in the 1949 gubernatorial election, an offer of financial assistance had been made. An Essex County lawyer acted as intermediary and told Bishop the racketeer would contribute $300,000 to the campaign if Wene would not hurt Zwillman. Bishop went on to say that he understood this to mean Zwillman desired to name the State Attorney General. He also brought in Kenny's name when he stated the intermediary remarked, "you can tell the Senator that Zwillman will do more for Wene than he did for Johnny Kenny."[99]

Further damaging testimony came from former Public Safety Director, Charles Witkowski. The Commissioner reiterated his charges about Kenny's interference on the waterfront and testified the Mayor told him,"Between the

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[98]U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Senate Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Sen. Res. 202, 81st Congress; 2nd Session, 202, 81st Congress; Sen. Res. 60 and 129, 82nd Congress, 1951, pp. 788-843; See also Newark Evening News, August 17, 1951, p. 1.

[99]Ibid., pp. 813-815; U.S. Congress, Senate, Final Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, Sen. Res. 202, 81st Congress and Sen. Res. 60 and 129, 82nd Congress, August 31, 1951, pp. 70-73.

gambling squad and the waterfront squad, you are hurting our friends."[100] Kenny became angered over the charges and made an appearance. He denied knowing Zwillman and refuted Witkowski's statement by claiming he "attempted to keep organized crime off the waterfront."[101]

Despite the Mayor's denials, the commission seemed to doubt his testimony, as one observer of the waterfront concluded:

> . . . In New Jersey, Mayor John V. Kenny of Jersey City attempted to vitiate the effectiveness of a waterfront squad which in 1949 and 1950 had made a vigorous effort to eradicate usury and gambling and generally to maintain peace along the notorious Jersey City waterfront.[102]

The Kefauver hearing blemished Kenny's reputation; the next crime investigation marred it. On the 19th of April, 1952, the New York County District Attorney, Frank Hogan, released a report on a Grand Jury hearing. The report showed John V. Kenny had met secretly in New York City with a gangster, Anthony Strollo (alias Tony Bender). Hogan further revealed Kenny had at first lied to the Grand Jury by denying knowledge of the meeting, but when the Mayor realized he committed perjury, he asked for an opportunity to reappear and correct his testimony. Kenny defended his

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[100] Senate Hearings on Organized Crime, p. 835.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Donald Axelrod, "Government Covers the Waterfront" (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1967), p. 455; U.S. Congress, Sen., Final Report, 82nd Congress, p. 70.

conference with Strollo by claiming he sought to bring peace to the waterfront. The District Attorney had a different interpretation and considered the meeting "an appalling example of cringing dependence on the underworld by duly constituted civil authority for the maintenance of waterfront peace."[103]

Kenny's willingness to allow "freedom" on the waterfront forced him to deal with mobsters like Strollo. Problems at one waterfront location, the Claremont Terminal, led to the Kenny-Strollo meeting. The Mayor had used this terminal to supplement his patronage. He, his deputy mayor, and ward leaders, often referred job seekers there. The terminal was used to ship Army cargo to North Africa. During the Korean War, the Army had allowed the stevedoring company, the Dade Brothers, to hire numerous crews with substantial overtime payment. The dock proved so lucrative that the New York mob, led by the Strollo brothers, took control. Anthony Strollo's brother, Dominick, gained the upper hand and forced many Jersey City workers off the pier. Strikes, fights, and disorder ensued. To bring peace and regain his patronage source, Kenny agreed to see Strollo. A singer and former policeman, Phil Regan, arranged the meeting but peace came too late. The Army decided to close the

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[103] New York Times, April 19, 1952, p. 1; April 20, 1952, p. 37; County of New York, Office of District Attorney, Report of District Attorney, 1949-54, pp. 311-313.

terminal and with it went jobs, much plunder, and part of Kenny's reputation.[104]

Other indications of how Kenny allowed crime and politics to mix came from testimony given at the New York State Crime Commission hearings. When the United States Crime Commission under Estes Kefauver revealed that extensive gambling existed in Upstate New York (especially in Sycracuse), Governor Thomas E. Dewey heeded the public's demand for an investigation and established his own crime commission.[105] In 1951 he set up the New York Crime Commission to investigate New York's crime problem. After probing the gambling issue, the Commission turned to crime on the waterfront. Mr. Kenny became a target when Hogan exposed his association with Strollo.[106]

In May of 1952, the New York investigators asked the Mayor to give public testimony about his knowledge of the waterfront. Kenny did give private testimony but was reluctant to face a public hearing. For the next eight months, he tergiversated. First, he stated "his health was

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[104]Jack Turcott, "Waterfront Sore Spot," New York Daily News, July 31, 1952, p. 34; August 1, 1952, p. 26; Jersey Journal, September 16, 1952, p. 1; See also Drew Pearson's comments on Lyndon B. Johnson's reluctance to investigate the Claremont Terminal situation, Jersey Journal, January 26, 1953, p. 14.

[105]Axelrod, "Waterfront," p. 455.

[106]Jersey Journal, May 28, 1952, p. 1; New York Times, May 28, 1952, p. 1.

bad."[107] Next, he claimed an indictment by the Hudson County Grand Jury of a political enemy prevented him from giving testimony.

The indictment referred to dealt with a young investigative reporter, Robert Greene (later winner of the Pulitzer Prize while working for Newsday). Greene had been employed by the Jersey Journal and did detailed investigations of the Jersey City waterfront and Kenny's ties with the underworld. At the time of the indictment, he worked for the New York City Anti-Crime Commission, an independent citizen's group working in conjunction with the New York State Commission. On 6 December 1952, the Hudson County Grand Jury accused Greene and two of his associates of conspiring to defame Jersey City's Mayor Kenny. The indictment specifically charged Greene paid Frank "Biffo" DeLorenzo $1,000 to swear falsely before the Crime Commission that Kenny associated with gangster Charles Yanowsky.[108] The former Jersey Journal reporter denied the charges and claimed Kenny used the indictment to avoid appearing before the Commission.[109]

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[107] New York Times, December 12, 1952, p. 1.

[108] Yanowsky's name came up several times. A waterfront hoodlum, who was found murdered in July, 1948, Charles "The Jew" Yanowsky at one time ruled part of the Jersey City docks. See Allen Raymond's Waterfront Priest (N.Y.: Henry Holt, 1955), pp. 11, 131-133.

[109] New York Times, December 6, 1952, p. 20; December 11, 1952, p. 41; December 12, 1952, p. 1. Interview with Robert Greene, former Jersey Journal reporter.

Kenny never did appear at the public hearing, but other witnesses did and gave accounts of the "racket-ridden" waterfront and the Mayor's dealings with questionable characters. The Vice-President of the American Export Lines, a company with a waterfront interest in Jersey City, testified his firm lost half-a-million dollars during the pier strike of 1949. The witness, Leland S. Andrews, had discussed his problems with Frank Hague. In a surprisingly candid conversation, the former mayor made the following observations about Kenny:

> . . . I made him (Kenny). He likes his cabbage. He wants to get in four years what it took me 32 years to get.[110]

Obviously, the waterfront was one source of the Boss's booty.

Riordan Roett, a former lawyer, gave another lurid account of Kenny's activities while ward leader. He mentioned how the second ward leader killed a federal case in the United States Attorney's office in Newark, how Kenny helped a close friend run a gambling operation, how the "little leader" did business with Charles Yanowsky, and how the ward leader provided checker's books for the waterfront at the cost of $250 to $500.[111]

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[110]New York State Crime Commission, Public Hearings, New York Waterfront, Fourth Report Leg. Doc. No. 70, (1953), pp. 1643-1644; Newark Evening News, December 10, 1952, p. 4.

[111]New York State Crime Commission, Fourth Report, pp. 1646-1648; Jersey Journal, December 12, 1952, p. 1.

A former chauffeur of the Mayor, Al Jordan, gave more embarrassing testimony. Stating he drove Kenny to Yanowsky's home several times, the chauffeur depicted the Mayor as a man in a frantic state when Frank Hogan began to pessure him on his perjured testimony. Jordan claimed Kenny wept on his shoulder and moaned, "They got me dead to right--they must have had a bug in the room."[112]

The Mayor's problems with the Claremont Terminal also received attention. Charles Strang, a former longshoreman, explained how Kenny allowed Walter (Wally the Shark) Marchinski to operate at the Army pier. Strang said Wally and other longshoremen stole cases of tools from Army tanks. "They stole so much Army equipment that every longshoreman looked more like the Army than the Army itself."[113]

Kenny did not let the damaging allegations go unchallenged. He noted Roett was a disbarred lawyer and that many other witnesses were rabid supporters of Frank Hague. In a rebuttal he stated:

> . . . I feel it is possible that the commission is being hoodwinked by sources anxious to develop sensational and unfounded information--all designed to defame me four months before a local municipal election.[114]

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[112] Ibid., p. 1649; "Ordeal of a Reformer," Time, December 29, 1952, p. 16.

[113] New York Times, December 17, 1952, pp. 1, 40.

[114] Ibid., December 17, 1952, p. 40.

On a CBS T.V. news broadcast, he sharpened his reply and claimed, "I have been fighting racketeers and hoodlums all my life." Calling Greene a political enemy aligned with the Hague-Eggers camp, he explained the waterfront problem as one inherited from his predecessor. To divert some criticism, he attacked Hague:

> . . . I broke the back of Frank Hague, a man who never earned more than $8,000 per year in the 32 years he had a job, yet admitted under oath, to being worth at least $2,000,000.[115]

But Kenny's refusal to defend himself at the public hearings undercut his defense.

Many New Jersey officials suspected he had something to hide. Spruille Braden, Chairman of the New York City Anti-Crime Committee, expressed the feelings of many New Jersey officials when he called Kenny's refusal to testify, "astonishing." " It is inconceivable that the mayor of Jersey City, which is such an integral part of the New York waterfront, should evade this public duty under subterfuge."[116] Governor Driscoll was under pressure to take a forceful stand. Driscoll had been criticized for being lax in his own law enforcement policies. To avoid embarrassment, the Governor urged all New Jersey public officials "to co-operate fully and completely" with the New York Commission and the New Jersey Law Enforcement Council in their investigations of

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[115] Jersey Journal, December 18, 1952.

[116] Newark Evening News, December 12, 1952, p. 5.

racketeering on the waterfront.[117]

In June, 1952, the legislature established the New Jersey Law Enforcement Council to launch a probe This Council had the power to subpoena officials and Mr. Kenny found himself forced to do what he refused to do in New York--make a public appearance. Ironically, Clarence Case chaired the Council's investigation. Twenty-four years earlier Case had helped probe Frank Hague and came close to exposing the Boss's sources of wealth. But, Hague had used legal trickery to evade the probe. Kenny likewise resorted to evasion as he turned to his court jester, T. James Tumulty. An Oxford debator and avowed opportunist, the three-hundred pound lawyer gladly agreed to provide a "wide shield" for Kenny at the Council hearings. At the public Council meeting,the witty Irishman obfuscated some of Kenny's testimony by parading around the chamber and conferring with the Mayor on every question. When reprimanded, Tumulty jokingly called the hearing a "Chinese People's Court."[118]

Despite his lawyer's antics, Kenny did testify and admitted talking with Strollo and lying to the New York Grand Jury: however, he did not admit knowing Yanowsky and disputed

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[117] Ibid., December 11, 1952, p. 1; December 12, 1952, p. 1.

[118] State of New Jersey, Law Enforcement Council Report, June 19, 1953; Newark Evening News, June 22, 1953, p. 1; Jersey Journal, January 7, 1953, pp. 1-9.

other testimony given at the New York State Commission hearings. While making his denials, Kenny foolishly showed his fury over the New York hearing when he announced the cancellation of a pier lease to the J. W. McGrath Company. The cancellation was a reprisal against the corporation's Vice-President, Richard McGrath, for giving critical testimony about Kenny's son-in-law, Paul Hanly. McGrath stated he gave Hanly 50 percent of the profits on a Jersey City pier for aid in getting Kenny's help. The Mayor's arrogant retaliation caused the press to take notice. Typical of the responses was the editorial in the New York Times:

> . . . As for Mr. Kenny, his latest action is in line with his policy of obstructing disclosures of the factors that have cast a blight on the New York-New Jersey waterfront.[119]

With all the legal problems he faced and the damaging publicity brought against him, Kenny, the politician, refused to back down. At a New Year's Day rally in his home second ward, he fought back and stated, "I am not afraid of any probe." Explaining why he believed he was justified in his actions, the defendant remarked:

> In my lifetime, I have placed more Jersey City people in jobs on the waterfront and in local industries than all the other political leaders combined. And I shall continue to place Jersey

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[119]Editorial, New York Times, January 9, 1953.

> City people in those jobs whether the New York State Crime Commission and the New Jersey Law Enforcement Council like it or not.[120]

The fighting Irishman concluded the rally with a prediction his organization would win the April primary for Meyner, as well as the May city election.

Meyner needed all the help he could get. A political unknown, the struggling candidate travelled around the state to gain recognition. He became so desperate for finances he had to cash in some bonds.[121] His opponent, Elmer Wene, had less problems with finances but continued to be stigmatized as a "loser" and as "Hague's candidate." Hudson County also remained a political millstone around the chicken farmer's neck. On the day of the primary, Kenny proved his ability to produce in the clutch. Meyner defeated Wene by 1,683 votes out of over 200,000 cast in New Jersey. Winning only four out of twenty-one counties, the Warren County Senator owed his victory to the 30,000 vote plurality Mr. Kenny provided. The Newark Evening News commented on the strange political marriage:

> . . . It is one of the ironies of politics that Robert B. Meyner, who based his campaign on Republican corruption owes his Democratic nomination for Governor in yesterday's primary to Hudson County.[122]

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[120] Jersey Observer, January 2, 1953, p. 1.

[121] Interview with former Governor Meyner.

[122] Editorial, Newark Evening News, April 22, 1953.

Another irony occurred on primary day when Egger's organization had its attention diverted by the ballot drawing at City Hall for positions in the city commission race. The Eggers group was so certain of winning in May, 1953, that they practically ignored the Wene primary. Wene campaigned in Hudson County only with a local labor leader, Joseph Madden, while the Eggers people staged city election rallies. If Eggers had his men out in the districts, Meyner might not have been nominated, and Kenny would have had the added problem of facing Wene. But, luck and the accidents of politics played into the little Irishman's hands, and he frequently admitted this.[123]

The 1953 City Election

Although Kenny saved the day for Meyner, his own problems remained immense. Kenny's organization was at its nadir. Since 1949, his coalition had fragmented and by 1953, it seemed about to crumble. Excessive expectations, disillusionment, strippings, laxity, illness, and damaging probes, all contributed to the Boss's problems. Kenny had survived several tough battles with the Eggers' forces, but he still could not weld a solid organization. In June, 1952, illness forced him to let Flanagan run the organization, and although the Deputy Mayor was competent and forceful, he still did not have the loyalty of Kenny's followers. The

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[123]Interview with John Longo.

Boss's laxity in running the organization also made things difficult. Without Kenny's personal attention, the organization was in a state of confusion, particularly in the area of ward leadership.

Of the sixteen ward leaders Kenny appointed in 1949, four had broken with him and some of the others were of questionable ability. In the fifth ward, Kenny faced problems since Thomas DeMarco left and joined the R.D.C.G. The sixth ward had no leader after John Cummings left the organization. The eighthward was in a state of disarray after James Creegan left. The west side eighth ward leader, William Connelly, was unsuited for his position. The fourth ward also had problems because of the dissatisfaction of John (Happy) Ward. In other wards Kenny faced similar problems. Soriero still could not unify the seventh ward south end, and Larry Kelly, the seventh ward north leader, faced serious difficulties. By 1953, Kenny's organization still had not "arrived," and compared to Hague's ward leaders his were on-the-job trainees.[124]

Adding to the "little guy's" problems, were the ever-present waterfront probes and his marred reputation. The Mayor's questionable dealings caused him to lose more of his own followers. Colonel Edward Devlin, a campaign coordinator

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[124]This analysis came from interviews with ward leaders and committeemen. See also Newark Evening News, May 13, 1951, p. 21.

in 1949, dropped out of the freedom movement. Arthur Kelly, a popular policeman and anti-Hague fighter, became disgusted with Kenny and joined the Eggers movement. Another policeman, Robert Dougherty, who served as an aide to the Mayor, broke after denouncing the "thugs and union leaders with criminal records" who visited City Hall.[125] In the districts, Kenny also continued to face problems. Charles Gallagher, an active worker in the third ward, joined the Eggers's group, and Pep Sinoetti in the eighth ward also left. In 1953, it looked as though Kenny would be a short term boss.[126]

The defections and embarrassments in Kenny's organization not only weakened him but also gave an incentive to the Eggers's forces. Indications of Kenny's problems came as early as December of 1952, when Eggers began to taunt the Mayor about the waterfront probes. Not letting one fragment of evidence go unnoticed, Eggers sarcastically remarked, "Kenny is Yellow from Greene." Charging Hague was right about "gangsterism and Kennyism," Eggers early indicated what kind of campaign Kenny faced.[127]

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[125] New York Times, December 17, 1952, pp. 1, 40.

[126] Hudson Dispatch, May 1, 1953, p. 1.

[127] Jersey Journal, December 29, 1952, p. 1; December 30, 1952, pp. 1, 3.

But, the Mayor did not intend to quit. Kenny wasted no time in preparing his troops for the city election. At a Christmas rally he outlined his strategy:

> This time we're the organization and this time we've got a good record of solid constructive accomplishment to place before the voters of the city. This administration has done what Hague and Eggers kept promising to do while they were in office but never got around to doing.[128]

In developing his strategy, the "little leader" sometimes sounded like the old boss. Warning against "laxity," Kenny shouted: "Don't be complacent. Unite all efforts in the districts and wards. Organize block by block. Beware of the things that licked Hague's organization--like failing to meet the people in your wards."[129]

But, the new boss resembled Hague only rhetorically. He did not want the public to forget how oppressive his predecessor had been.

> And talk to the young voters, some of whom don't remember too well the indignities suffered under the Hague reign. Tell them this city should never under any circumstances go back to the days of the palace guard, the gestapo.[130]

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[128] Ibid., December 22, 1952, p. 1.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

With Eggers and Kenny mapping out their strategies, Jersey City prepared for its quadrennial civil war. All the divisions and bitterness of the previous four years came to a climax in the 1953 city election. Families and friends divided. In the ninth ward two freedom fighters, Thomas Deevey and Edward Deevey, went into separate camps. Thomas Deevey remained with the Kenny organization, and his brother joined the opposition. Disillusionment and expediency caused further switching. Typical of this behavior were the actions of Frank Reynolds and Harold Ruvoldt. Reynolds had gained a reputation as a courageous policeman fighting Hague and refusing to pay the 3 percent. In 1949 he supported Kenny, but in 1953 came out for Eggers. Reynolds became a symbol for the Eggers camp to show how Kenny had been repudiated by his own followers. Harold Ruvoldt represented the other side of an alienated army. A strong Eggers backer in the 1951 primary, the Greenville lawyer had once accused Kenny of "treachery" for stripping Murray and Witkowski. In 1953 "hippity, hoppity, Ruvoldt" found less to criticize and supported the Mayor. The many switches and demonstrations of perfidiousness led one seventh ward savant to remark, "The patron Saint of Jersey City is Judas Iscariot."[131]

Eggers opened his campaign by making crime the central issue. Provided plenty of ammunition by the New York County

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[131] Jersey Journal, December 13, 1950, p. 1; Interviews with Barney Doyle, and John Longo.

Grand Jury, New York State Crime Commission, and New Jersey Law Enforcement Council, he had his campaign manager, State Senator Edward O'Mara, fire the opening shot. O'Mara described Kenny's administration as one "characterized by misrule, lawlessness, and violence." The Senator warned the "campaign is not going to be an easy one." Indeed, it proved to be the most scurrilous and rowdy in the city's political history. Over $19 million in libel suits were filed and every form of invective hurled.[132]

In choosing their tickets both Kenny and Eggers turned to some new and old faces. The Mayor made use of the television medium to introduce his slate. Promising to "run on his record," he kept his loyal commissioners, Louis Messano and Donald Spence. To replace Witkowski he entered Matthew Czachorowski, a Polish lawyer. Murray's seat had been filled by Bernard Berry when the stripped commissioner died in September of 1952--after he won the nomination for registrar. Berry proved the key candidate for the Boss. By selecting him, Kenny began to fill in a critical weakness-the need for a "good government" image. A former railroad employee, leader in the Knights of Columbus, and the head of the Board of Education, Berry gave the organization some

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[132] Jersey Journal, April 18, 1953, pp. 1, 3; Newark Evening News, May 10, 1953, p. 22.

appeal with the heights voters.[133]

A new face on the Eggers ticket was Thomas Gangemi. Eggers realized Kenny had problems with his Italian followers. The rebellion in the fifth ward had spread to the city and the Mayor found himself opposed by Edward Zampella, Nicholas Introcaso, John Longo, Frank Contey, John Yengo, Sam Colacurcio (of baseball fame), and William Guarini. A produce dealer, who at first went by the name "Tom Reilly," Gangemi had built a small but vocal following in the downtown wards and became known as the "Watermelon King." Gangemi presented an attractive image and helped keep the Italians in Eggers's camp. Gangemi's only handicap was his cumbersome use of the English language; a definite obstacle to becoming a complete politician.

Another new face was Joshua Ringle. A Republican, Ringle had fought Eggers's uncle for over twenty years and was a member of the 1929 fusion slate. Ringle gave Eggers's ticket a tone of independence. Coming from an old line Protestant family, he made the fight against Kenny a crusade to rid the city of an evil equal to Hagueism. For some old faces, the Regular Democrats for Clean Government chose Ezra Nolan and Mrs. Eugenia Urbanowski Courtney, a former Assemblywoman. Nolan was active in veteran groups and had

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[133] Jersey Journal, April 18, 1953, pp. 1, 10; Newark Evening News, May 10, 1953, p. 22. Berry also was on strong personal terms with Bernard Gannon and Joe Madden, two important cogs in the Eggers organization.

served on the Hudson County Boulevard Commission under Hague. Mrs. Courtney helped attract the Polish and distaff voters. Eggers himself ran to dramatize his opposition to Kenny. In making up his ticket, however, Eggers made two serious errors. Because of his uncle's opposition to Joseph Madden, the labor leader, had been denied a position, and Charles Witkowski had been ignored. These two candidates would have made the Eggers's ticket unbeatable; Hague's interference again cost his nephew City Hall.[134]

The announcement of the opposition ticket gave Kenny a chance to put the Hague issue in the campaign. Asking where the labor leader was, Kenny wondered: "Why did Joe Madden get it in the neck? Why did Hague read him off the Eggers's ticket, as he read me out of the Democratic Party? He got it for the same reason I did-Madden would not be a rubber stamp."[135]

The spectre of Hagueism became the theme of another Kenny speech. At a Jewish Community Center gathering, the Mayor spoke of the Rosenblum case.[136] He reminded the audience of Hague's acts of terror. Specifically accusing

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[134] Newark Evening News, March 31, 1953, p. 1; Hudson Dispatch, March 31, 1953, pp. 1, 5.

[135] Jersey Journal, May 5, 1953, p. 1.

[136] Rosenblum had been active in the City Affairs Committee during Governor Edison's administration. For opposing Hague, Rosenblum became stigmatized as a "draft dodger."

Hague and Eggers of having schemed to "defame Rosenblum," Kenny explained how the former Mayor's machinations "sounded like something out of a movie thriller." Waving an envelope in his hand, he described a secret vault in City Hall where Hague kept a file on Rosenblum. In the file were "letters prepared and written in the Mayor's office, letters which were later sent by members of the draft board and by heads of veteran's organizations." All engineered "by Hague and Eggers and their puppets." Concluding his diatribe, he remarked, "Here are memoranda of instructions by Hague brutally detailing the steps to ruin Rosenblum, to disgrace him, to imprison him, because he dared to oppose Hague."[137]

The Rosenblum case became Kenny's reminder of the new freedom in the city. The defamed victim, Leo Rosenblum, expressed his thanks:

> . . . Actually what this amounts to is the important issue of freedom. Without the freedom this administration had given Jersey City all other aspects of government are not important.[138]

While Kenny talked about freedom, Eggers continued to discuss crime. Charging the "real mayor of Jersey City is Longie Zwillman" he launched a multi-pronged attack against "Kennyism, Zwillmanism, and gangsterism."[139] The former

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[137] Jersey Journal, May 4, 1953, p. 1.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Jersey Journal, April 8, 1953, pp. 1, 8; Newark Evening News, April 8, 1953, p. 51.

mayor read a litany of corrupt deals which included: "a car scandal, and a crooked garbage contract." In several speeches Eggers accused Kenny of "selling out the city to Zwillman by permitting the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad to raise fares from ten cents to twenty cents. This charge became the cause of several libel suits between the Kenny supporters and the former mayor.[140] But, Eggers never relented in his attack. He described Jersey City "as a town where a woman can't walk the streets at night." At rallies he dramatized his fight with words like these: "We are fighting an organized mob, the strongest most ruthless gangland mob in the United States."[141] To ridicule Kenny's association with the underworld, Eggers turned to his female candidate, Mrs. Urbanowski Courtney. She facetiously quipped, "You'll never see me take a nocturnal stroll with Strollo."[142]

Although the campaign had its light moments, bitterness enveloped the city. The divisions and hostilities showed most clearly at the ballot selection ceremonies. Always a time of confrontation, the tenseness at the ballot drawing in 1953 became unprecedented. It took four separate drawings

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[140] Newark Evening News, March 24, 1953, p. 63; April 11, 1953, p. 6; April 21, 1953, p. 21; April 29, 1953, p. 47. Eggers also distributed a campaign flier repeating the charge. Found in papers of James F. Murray, Jr.

[141] Newark Evening News, May 6, 1953, p. 5.

[142] Ibid.

before the Regular Democrats for Clean Government gained the top position. At each drawing rancorous battles raged. At the second confrontation, Eggers grabbed the box from the city clerk and demanded it be "shaken." The clerk, James A. Tumulty, pulled the box back and demanded that Eggers "keep his hands off city property."[143]

With the candidates battling over crime, Hagueism, and ballot positions, the residents of the city were caught in a crossfire. Sound trucks blasted day and night, and shop windows shattered when opponents did physical battle. The city became Armageddon. Despite the viciousness of the campaign some topics besides crime and calumny were discussed. Eggers, thus raised the question of fiscal responsibility. In November of 1952, Donald Spence, the Finance and Revenue Commissioner, proposed a series of levies on business in order to stabilize real estate taxes. Eggers rallied the business community against the "outrageous proposal." The Women's League for Good Government and the Jersey City Merchants Council warned if the taxes were passed the city would become a "ghost town."[144] The business tax became another weapon for the R.D.C.G. to use with the Heights voters. Kenny, however, allowed Spence to pursue the idea even after

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[143] Newark Evening News, April 8, 1953, pp. 1, 28; April 22, 1953, p. 9; April 26, 1953, p. 26; Jersey Journal, April 22, 1953.

[144] Jersey Journal, November 11, 1952, p. 1; Newark Evening News, November 10, 1952.

the business community became intransigent. The tax also gave Eggers another opportunity to criticize the incumbent's fiscal policies and demand an explanation of the whereabouts of the "$21 million surplus" left in 1949.

Another political issue used by Eggers was Kenny's dealings with the Republicans in 1949. On 30 April 1953, John Dickerson, the State Chairman of the Republican Party, testified before a legislative committee on how he and Mr. Kenny exchanged support in 1949.

> . . . I would say, and I think the results show, that the Republican Party in Hudson County produced for Kenny in May and he produced for the Republican Party in November.[145]

Gangemi and Eggers used Dickerson's testimony to label Kenny a traitor and demand "he withdraw from the race." Kenny ignored the criticism and reminded his opponents that Hague really defeated Wene by boasting "We'll take over in January."[146]

To blunt some of this criticism, Kenny turned to his record as Mayor. At a rally he urged "every citizen to recognize the achievements of my administration and the sterling qualities of our commission candidates." In making his request he pointed to the gains made in "the last four years." In a campaign flier his organization listed a score of "achievements." Leading the list were the "erection of

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[145] Newark Evening News, April 30, 1953, p. 1.

[146] Jersey Journal, April 30, 1953, pp. 1, 9.

four new schools, construction of two new gigantic Federal Housing Projects--Montgomery Gardens and Duncan Gardens--setting up rent clinics, providing salary increases and reclassification programs for city employees, construction of public swimming pools, and disposing of a bullet-proof Cadillac formerly used by Hague."[147]

As Mayor, Kenny had concentrated on remedying some of the weaknesses of prior Hague administrations. Thus, the completion of four schools and two housing projects, gave Kenny the image of a "builder." In addition, the Executive Director of the Jersey City redevelopment Agency, Bernard Kenny, (no relative), made use of the 1949 Federal Housing Act to plan for two large middle-income projects--Gregory Apartments and St. John's Apartments. The Mayor used these tangible achievements in his campaign. He frequently used his "silver Shovel" to dedicate and rededicate city projects.[148]

During the battle, Kenny revealed another political tactic he would rely upon throughout his political career:

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[147] Jersey Journal, April 25, 1953, p. 1; Campaign flier found in papers of James F. Murray, Jr., also see Jersey Journal, May 11, 1953, pp. 7, 8.

[148] Information on Jersey City's Housing Authority and Redevelopment Agency can be found at the Federal Archives and Record Center in New York City, 641 Washington Street, U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency, Reports on Jersey City's Public Housing Projects, (New York City, N.Y.: Federal Archives and Record Center, 1949-1953). See also Jersey City, Jersey City Redevelopment Agency, Accomplishments in Community Development, (Jersey City, N.J. 1953).

wage a "short but spirited" campaign. He believed in saving his energy for the last weeks and then launching a hard-hitting attack. Working through his district leaders, the "little general" entered the trenches and did battle himself. He concentrated on certain districts and gave the committeeman or woman additional money to turn out a high vote. The Montgomery Housing Project became a heavily pro-Kenny district because the Boss provided his Committeewoman, Mrs. Helen Clancy, with added money and manpower. Kenny also had his own private payroll and at election time he made use of it to the full. He worked energetically at the conclusion of every campaign and toured the city to remind voters how he helped them, their families, and friends. This strategy of "a one man organization" gave the lenient Boss a critical balance of power in the voting. If an election was close, Kenny had a sufficient personal following to carry him. He, thus, supplemented his organization with his private army. This contrasted markedly with Hague who depended on a well disciplined organization marching under the leader and not with him.[149]

Kenny's personal politics became evident in the last week of the campaign. He staged six blitz rallies and ran a bingo party to show his defiance of a state ban on gambling.

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[149]This analysis has been drawn from interviews with ward leaders and extensive conversations with Frank Beirne and John Longo.

At a labor rally he recalled his promise to run"a pro-labor administration with no reprisals." He used this occasion to attack Hague again for purging Joe Madden.[150] The finale came at an old home night in the second ward where the Horseshoe hero rallied his supporters and urged them not to "let Hague return." Ironically, Kenny's theme got a last minute boost from Hague himself. Eggers had not mentioned his name once and hoped Hague would remain in his Florida haunts. But, on the day before the election, the former Mayor came back to his native city. Front page headlines read, "Hague Is Back." Kenny's strategy of attacking Hague proved on target.

The opposition concluded their campaign much the way they started it. Edward O'Mara continued his scathing attacks on the Kenny administration and called it, "the smelliest, most sordid, and most shameful in the history of American Politics." Mocking the Mayor's achievements, he commented, "Kenny should be the last man on earth who would want anybody to look at his record."[151] The waterfront did not escape O'Mara's barbs. He reminded voters of the violence on the docks and charged "Anthony 'Tony Bender' Strollo is the boss of Jersey City's waterfront." Pointing to the deserted

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[150]Madden became an important figure in the election. Eggers publically apologized for offending the labor leader and Kenny used his labor rally to focus on Madden's rejection by Hague. See Jersey Journal, May 5, 1953, p. 1.

[151]Jersey Journal, May 10, 1953, p. 1.

Claremont Terminal, O'Mara declared, "loss of the loading operation cost 2,300 jobs and a $7 million annual payroll." Eggers expanded O'Mara's charges with the sensational accusation that Abner "Longie" Zwillman was "dumping $300,000 in the Kenny campaign in an attempt to win re-election."[152] Appearing as a civic guardian, the candidate stated, "Gangster money, however, can't win this fight. Come Tuesday, I will shake the dirt out of city hall."[153]

Many of Eggers's charges began to hit home in the last weeks of the campaign. Kenny found himself attacked not only by his opponent but by citizens' groups and the county grand jury. On 1 May 1953, Judge Hayden Proctor appointed an "expert investigator" to probe allegations that city funds had been improperly used. Within a week, Kenny faced further embarrassment when two county grand juries censured Commissioner Messano and indicted the Boss's son-in-law, Paul Hanly, for falsely swearing he received $1,000 from a stevedoring company.[154] With the crime issue back on the

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[152] Ibid., May 8, 1953, pp. 1, 5.

[153] Ibid.

[154] New York Times, May 8, 1953, p. 1; Jersey Journal, May 6, 1953. The taxpayers' suit had begun in April, 1953, when a lawyer Murray Greiman, led forty-nine taxpayers in a court battle to examine city finances. Kenny's problems with the Hudson County Grand Jury came from his lack of control over the prosecutor's office. Governor Driscoll had become cool to Kenny's leadership and the executive had the Attorney General appoint two special prosecutors, Benjamin Van Tine and James Rosen, to investigate the Hudson County waterfront.

front page, Kenny's chances for survival seemed remote.

Not surprisingly, the voters could find no honorable solution to the confused state of the city's politics. In one of the "closest and weirdest" elections in Jersey City's history, the voters showed their disgust with a "curse on both your houses" as they elected both Kenny and Eggers.[155] The Newark News described the "chaos."

> Nowhere in yesterday's municipal elections was the outcome more bewildering and chaotic than in Jersey City. As though perpetrating a huge community jest, the voters threw in not only Mayor Kenny and two of his incumbents, but also his arch rival, Frank Hague Eggers and the latter's running mate, Joshua Ringle.
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> This contradictory result seems to attest to the indecision of Jersey City. But, perhaps it is more accurate to say that it reflects Jersey City's dilemma. Obviously, the voters found it hard to determine which was the best-or-worst alternative to restore the Hague machine to power or suffer with what they have.[156]

Kenny survived, but it was a moral repudiation. Compared to his '49 victory the '53 election showed his popularity had diminished and his organization still shaky. Ringle led all candidates with 63,913 votes followed by Eggers with 62,845 votes. Kenny did not even lead his own ticket. Berry came in third with 62,533 votes. Only 569 votes separated the '49 hero from defeat. (See Table 8)

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[155]Editorial, Newark Evening News, May 13, 1953.

[156]Ibid.

The election's peculiarities were quite apparent. For the first time in forty years, a divided commission had been installed. Voters had deftly manipulated the levers of the voting machine, but also had cancelled out each others ethnic vote, thus, undercutting their own people. The bullet vote split all the way down the middle. The Polish vote divided among three candidates, Mrs. Eugenia Urbanski Courtney, Matthew Czachorowski, and Charles Witkowski. Running on a "I stand alone plank,"Witkowski inadvertently helped Kenny by splintering the Polish vote. The bulk of voters for Witkowski were believed to have pulled levers for the Eggers's candidates. A similar situation occurred with the Italian vote. Thomas Gangemi, the Eggers's candidate, finished sixth losing to Donald Spence by only 226 votes. Gangemi missed winning because of the divided Italian vote. Messano gained 57,671 votes, and an independent candidate, Frank Polo Bellino, garnered 2,849 votes. Bellino hurt Gangemi because he came from the fifth ward--the same ward from where Gangemi hailed.

Gangemi's loss enabled Kenny to survive, but the Boss's bruised reputation prevented him from leading his ticket to a clean-cut victory. The waterfront scandal did have an impact with the voters in the Heights. Some 30,000 fewer votes were cast this time than in the 1949 municipal election when the Kenny ticket won over the Eggers combine by 81,000 to 59,000. Obviously, some independent voters were "fed up"

with both sides and stayed away from the polls.[157]

Kenny's weakness in the Heights could be seen from a comparison of ward totals. In 1949 he carried wards eight through twelve by reasonable margins, but in 1953, things had changed. Kenny carried only the eleventh ward. Eggers's ticket carried the twelfth ward while the vote in wards eight, nine, and ten was scrambled in a confusing manner.

Kenny's base remained in the downtown wards where he fared better but not as well as in 1949. In the first ward, where the Boss's crony, Joe Culloo, was the leader, Kenny beat Eggers, but not as decidely as in 1949. The second ward remained Kenny's banner ward, but the third ward showed some erosion as Kenny won by only 182 votes compared to over 2,000 in 1949. Defections by some district workers hurt Kenny here. The fourth ward also showed a declining vote. In the fifth ward, Kenny paid for the loss of the Italian vote as Eggers' forces expected to win big, but last minute switching and the lack of campaign money allowed Kenny to hold his own. In the seventh ward, Kenny's problems with the Irish, and his ward leaders manifested themselves as the Eggers slate won four commission spots.

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[157] Newark Evening News, May 13, 1953, p. 1.

The Boss's slim victory showed he had not won the confidence of the Heights voters, and his organization was still racked with problems. The accidents of politics and Eggers's mistakes kept Kenny in power. But any analysis of the '53 city election also leads to the conclusion that Frank Hague helped Kenny survive. The millionaire Boss returned to Jersey City and gave credence to Kenny's charges of the return of "Hagueism." Hague's unwillingness to accept Madden cost Eggers heavily, but even more damaging was the old Boss's overconfidence. On the eve of the election, he assumed Kenny was finished and refused to supply Eggers's committeemen with any more money. The critical balance shifted to Kenny. As one observer noted:

> There were two mistakes made in this campaign. . . One was Witkowski's independent candidacy and the other was that the Eggers people didn't spend any money on Election Day. If they had spent $30,000--or $100 a district--they would have won hands down.[158]

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[158] Newark Evening News, May 13, 1953, p. 1. According to reporter, Robert Greene, Eggers's campaign manager, Teddy Baer, was furious at Hague for his refusal to spend enough money.

TABLE 8

SELECTED VOTING STATISTICS
JERSEY CITY: 1949 and 1953

Citywide Totals - 1949		Citywide Totals - 1953	
Kenny	81,295	Kenny	61,780
Spence	77,547	Spence	61,437
Messano	76,792	Messano	57,671
Eggers	59,052	Eggers	62,845
Witkowski	74,234	Witkowski	37,392

Ward	Ward Totals - 1949		Ward Totals - 1953	
	Kenny	Eggers	Kenny	Eggers
1	2,574	1,055	1,571	1,150
2	4,193	907	3,056	1,084
3	3,715	1,853	2,597	2,415
4	3,520	1,618	2,323	2,107
5	2,760	1,760	2,134	2,413
6	3,398	3,439	3,499	3,506
7	15,892	12,630	11,523	13,085
8	11,879	9,783	9,574	9,968
9	10,652	9,054	7,949	9,331
10	7,374	5,522	5,658	5,923
11	7,542	5,641	6,100	5,327
12	7,796	5,790	5,754	6,496

Source: Jersey Journal, May 13, 1953.

Narrowly escaping defeat and having endured four years as Mayor, Kenny realized being an office holding boss was not for him. With Eggers winning the commission spot, the "watchdog" would be there every day. Kenny planned to resign. He was sixty years old in April and wanted to enjoy some of the amenities of old age. Before getting out, he had to do two things: help elect Meyner as governor, and convince Commissioner Ringle to vote for his own replacement.

Electing Meyner seemed no easy task. Despite his win in April, the Warren County Senator remained an underdog. The Republicans had controlled the governor's office for ten years and with the Eisenhower victory in 1952, they seemed certain of holding Trenton. But, the persistent Dutchman waged a strong campaign and gained recognition by attacking Republican corruption. There was a great deal to attack. Driscoll's administration became marred by revelations about criminal influence. A murdered mobster, Willie Moretti, admitted before his death that he gave $286,000 to one of the governor's aides for protection. The Republican State Chairman, John Dickerson, also admitted accepting a $25,000 loan from Joseph Bozzo, a friend of gambler Longie Zwillman. Dickerson further revealed Moretti and other mobsters visited him at his home and demanded action for their payoffs.[159]

Using the corruption issue, Meyner turned the campaign his way by taking full advantage of a blunder by his opponent. The Republican candidate, Paul Troast, a contractor and Chairman of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, became the focus of a newspaper story. The press revealed Troast had written a letter in 1950 to Governor Thomas E. Dewey asking for clemency for a convicted labor racketeer and extortionist, Joseph Fay. The "Fay letter" became the

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[159]"Grapefruit in the Garden State," Time, May 11, 1953, p. 15.

issue needed for his moral crusade. Even Kenny, who had visited Fay at Sing Sing Prison, urged the Democratic candidate to use the issue and ignore the fears of some county leaders that it would alienate the labor vote. Meyner agreed, and to quell any charges that he was a Boss's candidate, he announced, "I have made no deals, and I will make no deals. And Mayor Kenny fully agress with that."[160]

Meyner's strategy proved successful. In the election he defeated Troast by over 150,000 votes. Hudson County showed its mettle by giving the Democrat a 70,000 vote plurality--despite open opposition from the Eggers's faction.[161]

With Meyner elected Kenny achieved his first objective. Indications of the fulfillment of his second goal came in September 16, 1953, when Joshua Ringle agreed to support a sewerage ordinance. The Interstate Sanitation Commission required Jersey City to stop dumping raw sewerage into the Hudson and Hackensack Rivers. Kenny proposed a sewerage treatment plant to be constructed at the cost of $34 million. Eggers questioned the proposal and called it a "graft-ridden deal, concocted by Kenny and Zwillman." To secure passage of the bond issue, the votes of four commissioners were required by state law. Eggers assumed Ringle would work to

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[160] Newark Evening News, October 6, 1953, p. 1. Ironically Bob Greene helped Kenny by exposing the Fay letter.

[161] Jersey Journal, November 4, 1953, p. 1.

block the ordinance, for both anti-Kenny commissioners had been allocated scant powers after the May election. But, Ringle made a deal with Kenny and voted for the sewerage plan.[162]

Kenny's ability to win over Ringle again showed how his former enemies became his allies. With Ringle on his side, the Boss reversed his weak position. Now Eggers stood alone. On 15 December 1953, Kenny resigned from office and Ringle joined Berry and Spence in support of Kenny's choice, Lawrence Whipple, as Commissioner of Public Safety. Whipple, a respected lawyer, had a set of good credentials. Forty-three years of age, he had served as a special Assistant to the United States Attorney General and Secretary of the Jersey City Housing Authority. After Whipple's appointment, the commission elected Bernard Berry mayor. Kenny choose Berry because he knew the former railroad employee would not interfere with the organization. He also knew Berry was a good administrator. At his installation, Berry acknowledged his dependency: "I owe a debt of gratitude to my political sponsor, John V. Kenny. Without his efforts and sponsorship I would not be in the high

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[162] Jersey Journal, September 17, 1953, p. 1; Jersey City, Minutes of Board of Commissioners, September 16, 1953. Pamphlet issued by Frank Hague Eggers on sewerage proposal found in James F. Murray, Jr., papers. This interpretation of Ringle has also been drawn from interviews with former members of the Regular Democrats for Clean Government.

position I am today."[163]

At the transfer of power ceremony, Ringle received biting criticism from Eggers's supporters. Some used such epithets as "Judas" and tossed "coins at his feet." Kenny could sympathize with Ringle's position, for when the Mayor gave the reason for his resignation, he remarked, "It has nothing to do with my health. I've just had my fill of the rigors of office. I can't take it any more especially the antics of crackpots. Why should I take all that--for $8,000 a year."[164]

Kenny retired on a high note. He controlled City Hall, the courthouse, and had a friendly governor in the statehouse. The Newark Evening News viewed the resignation as an "inaugural gift" for Governor Meyner. The paper prematurely said goodbye to the Mayor with an editorial, "Exit Another Boss." But, Kenny was far from finished.[165]

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[163]Newark Evening News, December 15, 1953, p. 1; December 16, 1953, p. 16; December 18, 1953, p. 55.

[164]Ibid., December 4, 1953, p. 1; December 16, 1953, p. 16.

[165]Ibid., Editorial, December 6, 1953.

CHAPTER V

BROKER/BOSS KENNY AND THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL: 1953-1961

After his resignation in December, 1953, John V. Kenny became a non-office holding boss. His problems were to be no less complicated. Unlike Hague, Kenny attempted to remain backstage and let his subordinates run the formal government. By 1957, it appeared his rule would be a short one. Routed in a city election, the "little leader" became a repudiated boss with Hudson's county government remaining as his last bastion of power. But the former ward leader had remarkable durability and turned what appeared an overwhelming defeat into a means for survival and recovery. He was to be the only Jersey City boss who lost the city but retained leadership and successfully recaptured his lost prize.

Kenny's mayoral successor, Bernard Berry, took office in December, 1953. Berry proved valuable as a responsible administrator and politician. Very active in the Catholic Church, the Mayor used the politics of church and state to remove some of the tarnish from Kenny's machine. In 1954 he began negotiating with Seton Hall University for an agreement to establish a dental and medical school at the Jersey City Medical Center.[1] The Center had put a heavy drain on the city's budget, and Berry hoped an affiliation with the university would alleviate some of the costs. The agreement,

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[1] Newark Evening News, July 14, 1954, p. 21; December 11, 1954, p. 1.

however, met strong opposition from local citizens' groups. A Fact-Finding Committee nominally headed by John Gimenez, a sexton at the Lafayette Methodist Church, contended the lease was a device to "turn over valuable city property to a private group at the taxpayers' expense."[2] Another opponent, Reverend George G. Hollingshead of the Save the Medical Center Committee, argued Mayor Berry did not protect city property since the rent was "grossly inadequate" and the clinic was needed for public use. His group noted the lease provided for the "rental of a 16-floor clinic building for 50 years at an annual cost of only $275,000 to Seton Hall."[3]

Despite strong opposition, Seton Hall did take possession of the clinic and established a medical and dental school. It was to be a stormy occupation with the city and university constantly battling over the costs of operations and interpretations of the contract.[4] But, in Jersey City, with its large Catholic population, the politicians assumed it was better to err on the side of the church than the state. The Seton Hall agreement became one of the highlights of the Berry administration. It reflected his political and personal approach of making the Church his ally. During his four years as mayor, he maintained a

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[2] Ibid., December 17, 1954, p. 30.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Jersey Journal, May 2, 1958; December 8, 1960; April 5, 1961.

strong profile in the Church by being active in the Knights of Columbus and taking a pilgrimage to Rome for an audience with the Pope.[5]

Throughout Berry's term, Kenny refrained from excessively interfering in the administration. The Boss approved the Seton Hall contract and valued the Mayor's close ties with the Church. But, Berry's image could not hide the past misdeeds of his mentor. An Eggers's supporter, Mrs. Julia Tiene, and her Women's League for Good Government, dug up damaging information about the Kenny mayoralty years. They formed a group called the "forty-nine taxpayers" (the number inspired by the 1949 city election) and successfully gained a court probe of the city's finances and methods of operation. Superior Court Judge Hayden Proctor appointed a Newark attorney, Samuel A. Larner, to conduct the investigation.[6] Larner began his probe by examining city records, hiring an accounting firm to check the city's books, and appointing a counsel to aid the public hearings.

To offset the Larner inquiry, the Kenny forces attempted to launch a counter probe. At first, they promised to question Larner and his staff, but the fear of causing too great a disturbance in the courts forced them to reconsider. A less formidable opponent was chosen instead. Frank Hague Eggers, Kenny's "watchdog," had gained much publicity because

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[5] Ibid., September 25, 1955, p. 1.

[6] Newark Evening News, January 20, 1953, p. 1; Jersey Journal, May 1, 1953, p. 31.

of his support of the taxpayers' suit and his criticism of a $40 million sewerage contract. The outspoken commissioner challenged his colleagues' authority to launch an investigation, but the courts overruled him. Ironically, the decision, "In Re Hague," reversed an earlier ruling that had saved Eggers's uncle.[7] Hague had been able to avoid an unfriendly probe in 1929 and 1930 because the court curtailed the investigatory powers of the state legislature; however, in 1953 Eggers had to testify. He called the hearing a "kangaroo court." In replying to the Kenny inquisitors he said: "If you're making any charges against me go to the prosecutor's office. You're not going to drag me into any criminal court. Don't try to paint a picture that I sat in a room and rigged bids."[8] By testifying, Eggers put a severe strain on his already heavily taxed body. Suffering from high blood pressure and other ailments, he refused to listen to his doctors and reappeared to give testimony on what he called the "graft-ridden sewerage deal."[9] Shortly after, on July 7, 1954, he collapsed and died.

Eggers's death caused Frank Hague to return to his native city. In hiding because of civil suits brought against him by Jersey City to collect $15 million in salary kickbacks, the former Mayor flew back from Europe to bid

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[7] Editorial, Newark Evening News, March 30, 1954.

[8] Ibid., September 22, 1953, p. 56.

[9] Letter, Frank Hague Eggers to the people of Jersey City, October 20, 1953. Found in James F. Murray, Jr., papers.

good-bye. He bid good-bye to his last political hope. At the funeral he called Eggers "a casualty in a courageous fight against mortal influences which hounded him at every turn."[10] Those mortal influences continued to hound Hague because at the funeral a county official, Leo Gattone, handed the old Boss a subpoena. Upon being handed the subpoena, Hague showed he still had some life in him. Although seventy-eight years old, he grabbed the official and attempted to kick him. With the crowd yelling both for and against the old man, Eggers's funeral became a public spectacle, symbolizing how deep the hatred between Kenny and Hague ran. After the incident, Hague again expressed his anger. "Imagine, on an occasion like this, serving me with a subpoena. Imagine them pulling this."[11] The Kenny forces hoped Hague's reappearance would remind voters how oppressive things had been under his tutelage. But soon after it was no longer possible to raise the spectre of Hagueism because the mighty boss himself rested in Holy Name Cemetery. On 2 January, 1956, Hague died and Kenny lost his favorite campaign weapon.

With Eggers and Hague gone, the new Boss appeared to have the city to himself. He appointed his seventh-ward leader, Joseph Soriero, to the Department of Public Works--Eggers's vacated post. Now, there was no longer any "watchdog"

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[10] Newark Evening News, July 10, 1954, p. 11.

[11] New York Times, January 4, 1956, p. 27; Jersey Journal, January 4, 1956, p. 1.

on the commission. But, the political void was only temporary. Soon a new opposition arose deriving its strength both from within and outside the Kenny organization. A critical cause for the emergence of a new rival was the revelation coming out of the Larner probe. The investigator spent two-and-a-half years probing the city. Larner gradually accumulated enough information to expose the tarnished mechanism of Kenny's machine. No abstract reformer criticizing the organization of city government, he gave concrete examples of waste, corruption, and collusion. In a multi-volumed report the prober detailed numerous abuses that hit home with voters.

In December, 1955, Larner released the first section of his report. The hearings had already caused considerable embarrassment to the Kenny organization; the report added to their problems. Labelled "dignified dynamite," it soon became the focus of state and local press commentators. The Newark Evening News described it as the "Case History of a City."

> A story of misgovernment in a large American city is being spread on the record of New Jersey's Superior Court.
>
> This is a case history of a politically sick city--Jersey City.[12]

The paper had good reason to call Jersey City a "sick city." The Larner probe uncovered numerous examples of public plunder, such as, no-show jobholders, questionable

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[12]Editorial, Newark Evening News, December 12, 1955.

purchasing practices, favoritism for friendly contractors, rigged bids, and other "aberrations endemic to entrenched machines."[13]

In presenting his findings, Larner first focused on city personnel and the Board of Education. He called the Board's Recreation Department "a repository of political rewards for party workers."[14] The Recreation Department had become a dumping ground for followers of the Boss. Kenny continued the Hague practice of placing committeemen and the party faithful there. In exposing two sinecurists, the prober revealed flagrant examples of how political activists received healthy salaries but did no work. The Boss's twelfth-ward woman leader, Mrs. Carolyn Reidy, was paid more than $10,000 during a forty-four month period, but she rendered no services and never even reported for work. A school teacher, Max Roller, received $23,000 from 1950-1954 but did not teach. Kenny even had two iron workers appointed to positions on the Board of Education's maintenance staff, but they did no work and only "looked at fences."[15]

A comic and yet gross abuse of taxpayers' dollars was uncovered in the City Clerk's office. Pasquale Pipi, a

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[13] Ibid., July 23, 1970; September 11, 1955, p. 1.

[14] Superior Court of New Jersey, Final Report of Samuel A. Larner, As Expert Appointed by Hon. Hayden Proctor, Judge of Superior Court of N. J. L-3973-52, pp. 52-59; 61-64. Hereafter cited as Larner Probe.

[15] Larner Probe, pp. 76-77

lawyer and committeeman, was exiled by the authoritarian City Clerk, James A. Tumulty. Upon assuming office, Tumulty told Pipi, "this office is not big enough for both of us." Anxious for a position, Pipi went to the City Law Department and was told he was not wanted. He implored the head of the department, John Graf, to let him stay. The Corporation Counsel expressed his sympathy by telling Pipi, "We have a big library. If you want to go in there and make yourself comfortable, you are welcome." As Graf put it, "He was a man without a home, and I welcomed him in." The displaced committeeman was most appreciative because now he avoided making contact with his commander, Tumulty, and sat around the library gaining a legal education and collecting $5,000 annually.[16]

How so many no-shows came to exist was partly explained by the Director of the Board of Education's Recreation Department, Louis Lepis. He told Larner that no time cards were kept at the school to check on employees. Vacations and absenteeism were never questioned. A recreation supervisor and Damon-Runyon type character, Barney Doyle, gave further details on the program. Doyle said he kept no records of the employees under him or their work assignments; he did not worry about the accuracy of time sheets because he "more or less trusted people."[17] In fact, Doyle found it hard to talk to the prober about anything because he suffered

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[16] Ibid., pp. 68-70.

[17] Ibid., pp. 31-50.

from an acute case of "Larneritis." Many other Kenny followers came down with a similar ailment and wished the investigator could be silenced. But, Larner was not to be quieted despite attempts by organization leaders to obstruct his investigation by destroying payroll records and refusing to testify. In evaluating the Recreation Department, Larner criticized its failure to aid those most needy:

> A sad commentary on the waste of public funds in this department was demonstrated in the instance of the Booker T. Washington housing projects (a black development). Although several employees were supposedly assigned to perform recreational work at this project, a tenement and voluntary leader of recreational activities testified he never heard of any recreational activities at the project sponsored by the city, and never saw any city employees until a few weeks prior to the public hearing, which was during the period of our investigation. Because of the absence of any city recreation program, the tenants of the project throughout their association, contributed to a fund and hired recreational leaders at their own expense so that their children would be properly supervised.[18]

Larner further criticized the members of the Board of Education and especially the Kenny-appointed President, Nathan Arlook, for "misleading the public" by underappropriating for the recreation department at budget time and later each year transferring funds from other departments. A total of $860,000 in transferred funds was involved over a four year period.[19] When the abuse was brought to the attention of

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[18] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[19] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

Mayor Berry, he finally discontinued it. But, Larner charged the practice should have been eliminated by the Kenny appointed City Auditor, Willian Sternkopf. Sternkopf came under heavy criticism for failing to cite the irregularity in his annual audit. The Boss received criticism as well. Larner charged Kenny with interfering in the Board of Education's decision process. Kenny urged the Board, "to be guided" in policy matters by Board Secretary, Louis Messano.[20] As chairman of the Hudson County Democratic Party, Messano knew what political decisions Kenny wanted and had no qualms about transmitting messages to the Board. The Boss's word meant so much that one board member told Larner: "What Johnny wanted," he got.[21]

After scrutinizing improprieties in the Board of Education, which consumed over 15 percent of the city's total appropriations, Larner turned to the Medical Center with expenditures amounting to more than 20 percent of total city cost. In probing the Medical Center, the investigator found clear-cut instances of political favoritism and private gain from public office. He assailed the practice of killing medical bills as political favors. Other targets for his criticism were rigged bids on transfusion solutions, rubber stamp audits, renting of oxygen tanks that could have been bought cheaper, and unbusinesslike office procedures.

The hospital probe gave an inside view of the services

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[20] Ibid., pp. 22-27.

[21] Newark Evening News, June 15, 1954, p. 36.

provided by both the Hague and Kenny machines. From 1945 to 1954 a total of $3,684,695 in bills were cancelled or written off as political favors. The hospital accountant devised a code to record the names of political figures who ordered bills written off. The code was based on the addresses of politicians. John Malone, the former Deputy Mayor, had number 117, Hague 118, and Kenny 120.[22] During Hague's day, free hospital care was standard. Kenny continued the service but on a lesser scale. His office cancelled between twelve and twenty bills a week with other requests coming from ward leaders, city officials, and out-of-town politicians. The hospital even forwarded insurance refunds to patients who had not paid their bills. Most bill abatements had been for low-income ward patients, but even some private and semi-private patients received allowances and reductions. The Kenny appointed hospital administrator, Arthur Hoffman, defended the practice by claiming it was bipartisan with Republicans and Democrats benefiting. He further stated "the bills were still open" to collection--although no effort had been made to receive payment in years.[23]

Hoffman's role in other unsound business practices came in for condemnation by Larner. The lawyer noted the hospital

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[22] Larner Probe, pp. 156-160; Newark Evening News, September 16, 1954, p. 29.

[23] Ibid., pp. 171-174; Newark Evening News, January 1, 1956, 1 & 3. Ironically some of the names brought up at the Larner Probe would be mentioned at the end of Kenny's career. Hoffman managed a nursing home in Paramus, New Jersey where Kenny spent his last days. Sternkopf was among the Hudson County Eight who went on trial in 1971.

administrator had interests and connections with companies doing business with the Center and assisted his associates in gaining the oxygen rental and transfusion solutions contracts.[24] William Sternkopf, the independent city auditor, once again came in for chastisement:

> We also found Mr. Sternkopf utterly failed to apply other normal auditing procedures to the audit of the Medical Center. During all the years from 1949 to 1954, he did not attempt a verification of accounts receivable either on a complete or spot check basis.
>
> It is apparent the auditor accepted the practice, which had been indulged in for many years, and closed his eyes to improprieties involved. He failed to exercise the independent judgment, inquiry, comment and criticism, which is part and parcel of the functions of an independent auditor.[25]

Besides revealing faulty auditing and other improprieties, at the Medical Center, Larner found similar examples of suspicious practices in other city departments. Kenny's Finance and Revenue Commissioner, Donald Spence, and his administrative secretary and future wife, Mrs. Isabel Churlin, were reproached for their official behavior. In exposing Spence, Larner showed how the commissioner used his office as a brokerage place for favored contractors. Spence was accused of conspiring to avoid the bidding statutes in a $25,000 city park beautification program. Disclosures of the agreement came from testimony by Howard Zinn, co-owner of a nursery. Zinn testified that a Hudson County Park

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[24]Ibid., p. 160.

[25]Ibid., pp. 171-174; Newark Evening News, January 1, 1956, p. 3.

Commissioner and friend of Spence, Henry J. Knoll, lined up the deal with three nurseries supplying shrubberies and trees. The suppliers agreed on a fixed price. Knoll supposedly received cash payments for "helping out" and arranging for the work and getting the jobs.[26] Larner clearly held Spence accountable for the irregularities:

> The one responsible city official, Commissioner Donald Spence, was knowingly part of this effort to evade laws pertaining to public bidding and there is evidence, in my opinion that he was guilty, not only of conspiracy but also of malfeasance.[27]

Information uncovered about Spence's secretary, Mrs. Isabel Churlin, was also damaging. She allegedly had work done on her parents' home at indirect expense to the city. In questioning an independent contractor, George O'Connor, Larner was told Mrs. Churlin requested the contractor lie at the hearing. O'Connor refused and claimed he did work on her parents' home and was paid in cash and credit a total of $9,229 from a lumber company. The firm, Baldwin Lumber Company, paid O'Connor because they received city business, thanks mostly to Mrs. Churlin. Larner charged that from 1949 to 1953, Baldwin Lumber acquired about $100,000 in city orders, much of them through requisitions on which Mrs. Churlin wrote "Baldwin Lumber." Mrs. Churlin was also charged with sending city employees to her parents' home to have minor repairs made.[28]

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[26]Larner Probe, pp. 100-101; Newark Evening News, September 14, 1953, p. 26.

[27]Ibid., p. 110.

[28]Ibid., pp. 124-132.

The testimony against Spence and his secretary resulted in their indictments. Both were accused of conspiring to cheat and defraud the city by means of allegedly false vouchers. A second indictment charged the Commissioner with conspiring to prevent bidding for the $25,000 contract for city parks.[29]

Another city official who faced criticism and later an indictment was the City Clerk, James A. Tumulty. Larner found Tumulty evading the bidding statutes by awarding a contract to a favored company. Charging "misconduct and malfeasance," Larner stated Tumulty permitted the John Bado Terminal Printing Company to collect $350,000 from the city in amounts of less than $1,000 from 1949-1954. The contract dealt with printing the city commission minutes--a responsibility delegated to the city clerk. In questioning the volatile Tumulty, Larner found him "arrogant with a dictatorial attitude."[30] The prober criticized the defendant for never soliciting prices from other printing companies or asking the aid of the city purchasing department. He noted Tumulty's method of operation "left the door open for fraud."[31] In criticizing the splitting of bids, however, Larner again put

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[29]Newark Evening News, October 17, 1953, p. 5.

[30]Larner Probe, pp. 112-116; Newark Evening News, December 22, 1956, p. 1.

[31]Ibid., p. 116. Tumulty was indicted on charges of neglect of official duty on January 18, 1957. He was acquitted in January, 1960. See Newark Evening News, January 18, 1957, p. 1; January 21, 1960.

part of the blame on City Auditor William Sternkopf for "dereliction in the performance of his duties."[32]

City officials did more than split bids, however. They found ways to avoid competitive bidding completely. In discussing this practice, Larner turned to the ordering of parking meters. The bidding statutes allowed city officials to avoid competitive bids because the parking meters were defined as "apparatus," instead of materials or supplies. Jersey City bought meters from an insolvent firm, Union Parking Meter Co., Inc., of Union City, without advertising or competitive bidding. When half the meters began to malfunction, the company could not repair them for it had gone out of business. The city was left with many broken and useless meters.[33] The prober cited other examples of corrupt practices such as order-splitting to avoid minimum bid laws, bypassing the city purchasing department, over billing and marking up, and receipts with forged signatures.

The scandals coming from the Larner probe even touched two of Kenny's heirs. His son-in-law, Paul Hanly, and his trusted Deputy Mayor, William Flanagan, were censured for having their homes painted by a local contractor with "no original intention" of securing payment of the work.[34] The scanning eyes of Mr. Larner also focused on how other friends of the organization were rewarded from lucrative land deals.

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[32]Ibid., p. 111; Newark Evening News, December 22, 1956, p. 1.

[33]Ibid., pp. 139-14.

[34]Ibid., pp. 134-136; Newark Evening News, December 28, 1955, p. 1.

Sale of the city's valuable "Bowl Property" at Journal Square for $25,000 to Structural Enterprises, Inc., was considered highly questionable. The Deputy Tax Collector, William Black, opened bidding to Structural Enterprises, Inc., before the usual ten o'clock time while a competitor waited in the corridor.[35] Another suspicious deal included sale and purchase of the city's Old Baseball Park. A prospective builder, Leslie Weber, borrowed money from the racketeer, Abner (Longie) Zwillman, and a businessman, Louis Saperstein. When Weber was unable to obtain a mortgage to construct a giant housing project, the city purchased the land back from him for $94,000 although it could have been foreclosed for delinquent taxes and breach of contract.[36]

Other examples were found in the awarding of garbage and sewerage contracts. The garbage scandal involved attempts by the Kenny forces to terminate the contract of a former Hague follower and his company, Michael A. Scatuorchio, Inc. To prevent the Scatuorchio firm from receiving the contract, a fictitious company, Municipal Contracting Company, Inc., was created on the very day the contract was to be advertised. When the counsel for Scatuorchio's firm challenged the other company's credibility, the Incinerator Authority stopped bidding on the contract. To evade the bidding laws and reward the favored company, the authority created an artificial emergency, but this too failed because the

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[35] Ibid., pp. 137-138.

[36] Ibid., pp. 185-187.

Scatuorchio Company challenged it in court. Delays and litigation caused the bid to be dropped. This fiasco caused Mr. Larner to agree with the State Supreme Court which found the emergencies "artificially created by the City and the Incinerator Authority in an attempt to avoid the duties, responsibilities, and limitations on the applicable bidding statutes."[37]

Construction of the city's $40 million sewerage system proved to be no less influenced by political corruption. Kenny's ally in Union City, Mayor Harry Thourot, held a $400,000 subcontract for engineering work and received $184,000 in payment. Larner asserted that political power was a key to the awarding of the prime engineering contract to the Clyde Potts Company via Thourot's influence. Furthermore, the prober alleged Thourot was overpaid since little evidence existed to show the mayor "did any work on the project."[38]

Mr. Larner proved so effective in flushing out corruption that he blocked another lucrative city contract--a car leasing scheme. In studying the city's proposal he found specifications tailored for Otto F. Ploetner, owner of Irvington Motors and a friend of the City Clerk, James. A. Tumulty. The specifications "fit like a glove." The advertised bid called for Fords only and limited them to a certain model. To avoid criticism from other automobile

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[37] Ibid., p. 269.

[38] Ibid., pp. 246-250.

dealers, a dummy company, Springfield Motor Leasing Company, was created. But, the inquiries made by the investigator and the clamor from competitors caused the lease to be cancelled.[39]

The clamor against corruption eventually led to an investigation of the city's highly lauded Redevelopment Agency. Bernard Kenny (no relative) was the Executive Director of this agency. He was found to have concealed his partnership in an architectural firm. Kenny received $12,000 from the firm Mascolo and Masumian while director of the federally-funded program. He interviewed employees for the firm and had a direct line from the agency office to the architectural company's office in the same building. His name even appeared on the income tax returns of Mascolo and Masumian. Larner characterized Kenny's actions as an attempt to serve "two masters."

> His (Kenny's) transparent efforts to cover up association and interest with the clumsy plan of cash distribution from Mascolo and Masumian serve only to emphasize the willfulness and guilty knowledge on his part.[40]

After directing his attention to Bernard Kenny, Larner returned to Boss Kenny. The city examiner touched on the close relationship between the church and state in Jersey City's politics. He scored Kenny for permitting "unauthorized donation of public funds" for a project that cost the city

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[39]Ibid., pp. 180-184; Newark Evening News, January 1, 1955, p. 1.

[40]Ibid., p. 214; pp. 205-213; Newark Evening News, December 26, 1954, p. 16.

$14,073. The case involved the former Mayor's authorization of free paving for five Catholic school playgrounds:

> . . .The lofty motives of Mayor Kenny might deserve acclaim if he were expending his personal funds, but his gratuitous gesture with public funds of which he is only a trustee was improper.[41]

Kenny dismissed the criticism by claiming the work benefitted neighborhood children of all denominations, and he would do the same thing again if mayor. The gratis shown by Kenny toward the Church was not just an isolated incident. Kenny, like Hague neutralized and, at times, made the Church his ally. Kenny feared it and attempted to appease it by contributing heavily and avoiding any confrontations. During the Christmas season, he demonstrated his fidelity by having an underling distribute envelopes with large contributions to many parishes in the city.[42] Kenny also sponsored Church activities, such as, the parish benefit for the St. Vincent de Paul Society in his home parish, St. Michael's. The practice of appointing city chaplains also continued under him.

After giving further disclosures about the Kenny organization's misdeed, Larner concluded his report. He told Jersey City's citizens:

> . . .if the recommendations contained herein are acted upon with a sincere intent to correct and improve existing conditions, the taxpayers. . .

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[41] Ibid., p. 214; pp. 205-213; Newark Evening News, December 26, 1954, p. 16.

[42] Interview with John R. Longo.

> can look forward to constructive improvement accompanied by very substantial and repeated annual savings.[43]

To enforce his recommendations, he urged the formation of a watchdog agency with powers to investigate irregularities in municipalities.[44] Despite Larner's warnings and recommendations, the report had diverse effects on the city's official political conduct. To the Kenny followers it merely showed how the opposition was able to dig up some dirt. They felt they did no wrong. This attitude reflected what Edward M. Levine has called the "Irish view of political morality." To the Irish "government was a source of power to be used for individual, rather than social ends."[45] As one committeeman said, "All Larner showed was how people in Jersey City made a living."[46] To the more scrupulous citizens, however, the report became a manual on the operations of the machine. The Newark Evening News expressed the feelings of many indignant citizens:

> . . .Mr. Larner offers an impressive exhibit of how public business should not be conducted.[47]

> . . .(he) shows how a political machine works--and how its favorites and sinecuists do not. But, whether they work or not the money rolls in; the machine is greased and oiled, and the

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[43] Larner Probe, pp. 272-273; Newark Evening News, February 16, 1956, p. 1.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Edward M. Levine, The Irish and Irish Politicians, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1966), p. 171.

[46] Interview with committeeman from Ward, A.

[47] Newark Evening News, January 1, 1956.

taxpayers foot the bill.[48]

In spite of the criticism directed against many city officials, little was done. Of the fifty-six persons indicted only one was convicted. The Hudson County judicial system could find no wrong doing. Only the Federal Government was able to find anybody guilty. Bernard Kenny, the energetic architect and Redevelopment Agency head, was convicted on a conflict-of-interest charge and sentenced to two years in prison. He served six months and rehabilitated himself by constructing a prison chapel. After leaving jail, he resumed his business activities and gained contracts with the county government.[49] The Larner probe seemed to have done nothing to change the city's methods of operation.

Although the investigation had little effect on political morality, it did have some impact on city politics. It cost Jersey City over $300,000 and left John V. Kenny stigmatized as a corrupt boss. As a conqueror of Hague, he had been given an opportunity to change the city's image. The Larner probe showed he only intended to succeed Hague.

Kenny's problems with the city investigation spilled over to the state and county levels. The abuses shown in Jersey City led some Republicans to call for an investigation of Hudson County. Ironically, encouragement for the probe

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[48]Editorial, Newark Evening News, December 21, 1955.

[49]Ibid., June 24, 1954, p. 33; September 29, 1955, p. 24; December 8, 1968, p. 8.

came from a former ally of Kenny, Bernard Hartnett. Elected county supervisor in 1951, Hartnett soon became uncontrollable.

A former telephone company executive, the County Supervisor, wanted to run his department in an efficient and businesslike fashion. He also showed signs of wanting to succeed Kenny as county leader. In his role as county supervisor he had substantial power to boost his image. Harnett began defying the Boss by vetoing measures approved by the Kenny-picked Board of Freeholders-and by refusing to grant promotions and pay raises to members of the organization. By 1954, the political maverick became persona non grata to Kenny and was stripped of his party post as Chairman of the Jersey City Democratic Party. But, Hartnett continued to create havoc by exposing the high cost of county government and demanding reform. In a formal report, he charged fraud, mismanagement, and other irregularities. Hartnett's break became a further embarrassment to the Boss when his findings were handed to the Republican county prosecutor, Fredrick Law. The report sounded much like Mr. Larner's. Included in it were charges concerning violations of state bidding statutes, lack of inventory records, padded payrolls, and overpricing of more than a million dollars on the new county administration building.

Bernard Kenny's architectural firm, Mascolo and Masumian, reappeared and Hartnett said they should not have been paid for new plans on the county administration building because a deceased architect had received $100,000 for his plans.

Hartnett's rebelliousness left Kenny surprised. The County Executive had been loyal. He had served as Third Ward Leader and while on the Board of Education approved Kenny's patronage requests by remarking, "Johnny wants it that way."[50] But, with the Larner probe and weaknesses in Kenny's leadership apparent, Hartnett, like many others, detected a crumbling organization. He also felt revulsion about the Larner disclosures and took seriously his own duties as a public official.

Hartnett's defection was followed by others. The County Registrar, William Johnston, saw the organization in trouble and also hoped to replace Kenny. The Registrar assumed the Boss was too old and weak to stay in power. Johnston believed Kenny's promise "to get out in 1957."[51] To hasten the Boss's exit, the county official used a domestic scandal as the basis for his coup. Donald Spence, the much troubled Kenny finance commissioner, had divorced his wife, and arranged to marry his equally troubled administrative secretary, Mrs. Isabel Churlin. Kenny attended the wedding which was held out of town. Johnston saw his chance. He tried to line up the freeholders to join him in an attempt to dump the Boss. But, Kenny was tipped off by his eighth-ward leader, John Brandle, and rushed back to his

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[50] Newark Evening News, May 1, 1955, pp. 1 & 18; January 3, 1955, p. 10; New York News, October 23, 1955; Interviews with Bernard Hartnett and John Longo.

[51] Jersey Journal, December 15, 1954, p. 1.

domicile. He put down the Johnston rebellion, but other insurgents arose.[52]

State Senator James F. Murray, Jr., was one. Murray had been a loose ally of Kenny. Although he rejoined the Boss in 1951, Murray never forgave Kenny for the political degradation heaped upon his father. When safely seated in Trenton, the Senator revealed his true feelings. Murray began criticizing the Boss and used his prerogative of senatorial courtesy to block some of Kenny's nominees for state office. The break between Murray and Kenny became an open fight. The Boss called his Senator an egotist and said, "This fellow has some peculiar ideas about what constitutes the right thing to do in an organization. It doesn't seem right for a man to turn his back on the people who put him in office."[53] When Murray failed to become Senate minority leader because of Kenny's opposition, he explained his view of the dispute, "Perhaps this is the penalty one suffers from refusing to be a rubber stamp."[54]

With rebellions breaking out and probers exposing his past misdeeds, Kenny became defensive. He compared Larner's methods to those of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Calling the probe a political attack instigated by his opponents, the former mayor tried to ease some of the pressure by shifting

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[52]Newark Evening News, October 14, 1956, p. 22; Hudson Dispatch, November 20, 1956; Interview with John Longo.

[53]Jersey Journal, January 8, 1957, p. 1.

[54]Ibid.

city personnel around. The controversial City Clerk, James A. Tumulty,moved into the post of Corporation Counselor. Donald Spence resigned from his city commission post and was appointed to a $15,000 a year position as Superintendent of the Margaret Hague Hospital, a county institution.[55] The Boss had a Polish undertaker, Joseph Michalski, replace Spence. Kenny then shifted the Public Safety Director, Lawrence Whipple, to the finance department and had Michalski moved into the public safety spot. With the departure of Spence, not one original commissioner from the much heralded 1949 election remained. To win the next city election, Kenny had to convince voters his replacements were honorable men.

In trying to keep the unrest in his domain to a minimum, Kenny often turned for help to the state party leader, Governor Robert B. Meyner. Although a scrupulous and honest official, Meyner cooperated with the Hudson County Boss when possible. After all, Kenny had produced over 30,000 votes in Meyner's 1953 primary and over 70,000 votes in his general election. The governor and the Hudson County legislative delegation helped block a Senate probe of the county by reminding Republicans of the equally venal Atlantic County and its Republican Boss, Frank (Hap) Farley.

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[55] Newark Evening News, April 15, 1956, p. 29; Jersey Journal, January 20, 1954; December 27, 1956, p. 1. Mayor Berry helped pressure Kenny into making changes at City Hall by bringing in more qualified administrators. Berry reluctantly accepted Soriero only after a strong show of force by Italians was made at the Hotel Plaza before the 1957 election.

The Governor helped divert some of the criticism coming from the Larner Probe by launching his own investigation into the county and giving close attention to the Republican controlled Hudson County Board of Elections. In April, 1955, Meyner ordered the state auditor and attorney general to probe irregularities in the elections superintendent's office. In October, 1955, a grand jury handed up fifty-six indictments resulting from the probe. Republicans were indicted on charges of diverting funds, taking $100 a day in excessive election fees, being paid too much overtime, padding the payroll, and other abuses.[56]

Besides frightening Republicans, Meyner repaid the Boss in other ways. Kenny gained some patronage. He had his men appointed to the Civil Service Commission, Turnpike Authority, Motor Vehicle Division, and sundry judgeships. The Governor did scrutinize every request and made certain no appointments "would embarrass him," but he consented to the Boss's wishes whenever feasible.[57]

Despite Meyner's willingness to give Hudson County its share of patronage, the state Republicans remained recalcitrant. Controlling the Senate they again demanded an investigation of the "Gibraltar of Democracy" and blocked Kenny's attempts to control two key county offices. After the 1953 gubernatorial election, Kenny expected to gain partial

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[56] Newark Evening News, May 1, 1955, p. 18; New York Times, May 17, 1955, p. 71; October 23, 1955, p. 88; October 29, 1955, p. 40; April 8, 1955, p. 22.

[57] Interview with former Governor Robert B. Meyner, August, 1973.

control of the patronage rich county office of Superintendent of Elections, but the Republicans refused to confirm a Democrat. A paper party in Hudson County, the Republicans' only stronghold under Hague had been the elections office, and the state leaders did not want Kenny making the county party a complete pawn of his organization. Another Republican fortress the Boss failed to control was the prosecutor's office. State Republicans were so opposed to Hudson County that they would not let a member of their own party, Fredrick Law, resign from the post to take a judgeship. Law remained in his office until his term expired.[58]

Having to worry about attacks from the state GOP was not Kenny's only problem. His organization lacked a firm hand at the wheel. Lax and unpredictable, Kenny often failed to give direction. He left ward leaders unaccountable and allowed committeemen to constantly lose their districts yet retain their jobs. Before every election he pulled out a warning speech and gave his workers a tongue lashing, but he never enforced his threats. Typical of this rhetoric were the words spoken before the 1956 election:

> We will not tolerate dissidence within our party ranks. In the Army shirkers are shot, but slackers in the party will only be shot out of their jobs.[59]

Kenny's laxness became compounded by his absenteeism. Although

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[58]Newark Evening News, November 16, 1957, p. 25, The Board of Elections was bi-partisan by statute, but Kenny hoped to appoint sympathetic Republicans .

[59]Jersey Journal, October 25, 1956, pp. 1 & 6.

not leaving for long sojourns like Hague did, he enjoyed going to the track, spending part of his winters in Florida, and taking the sun at his summer resort in Spring Lake, New Jersey. Since his organization was such a personal one, it depended on his constant attention and prodding. Indications of its weakness came in November, 1956. In this Presidential election year, Kenny promised his followers a big Democratic victory. Claiming "the Democrats are on the march," the little leader expected Adlai Stevenson to do much better than his 1952 majority of 8,000 votes in Jersey City. Kenny promised to provide the Democratic nominee with at least a 60,000 vote majority. He based his optimism on the fact that "Eisenhower would not be going to Korea" as in 1952. Despite the Boss's promising words, his organization could not prevent the city from being swept by the tide of national politics.[60]

In 1956, for the first time in thirty-six years, Republicans won county offices. The General beat the Democrats so badly that Kenny's county ticket lost eleven out of twelve city wards. Only his home second ward held. In the uptown wards he took a pummelling. Losing by three to one and two to one margins, his ward leaders showed they had no control over the independent vote. Despite the expenditure of much money in the districts and an 87 percent voter turnout, the Democrats could not dent the Eisenhower steamroller. The President carried Jersey City by a 31,527 vote majority and the county by

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[60] Ibid.

76,554. Republicans showed surprising strength by sweeping four freeholder seats and the Fourteenth Congressional District. They nearly elected a second congressman, but a mere two hundred votes kept the incumbent, Alfred Sieminski, in office. The large GOP vote showed something was wrong with Kenny's machine. The Boss tried to give an explanation:

> Our organization lost to the most popular man our country has ever known. Yes, that even includes Franklin D. Roosevelt. . .
>
> In all my years in political life, I have never seen the populace so attracted, so devoted to a single candidate.[61]

Kenny considered his loss only a temporary setback. His party workers blamed the large turnout on women voters. Only the organization's campaign manager, William Flanagan, touched upon the problem. He pointed out not one ward leader or committeeman encountered evidence of the fast approaching Republican landslide.[62] The troops had been too far removed from the voters and their leaders did nothing to rally them. They depended on Kenny's popularity to convince voters and by 1956, the Boss was low in political esteem. The effects of the Larner probe and earlier scandals began to take their toll.

Notwithstanding the trouncing, Kenny refused to take any action and only promised to look into some "soft spots." One reason he failed to do anything was the fear that if he removed anybody they would go into another camp. Besides,

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[61] Jersey Journal, November 8, 1956, p. 1.

[62] Ibid.

the loss was partly caused by his leadership. His refusal to abandon old friends had created added problems for the organization in trying to sell candidates. One old friend was his 1956 nominee for Congressman in the Fourteenth Congressional District, incumbent T. James Tumulty.

While serving in Congress during 1955 and 1956, Tumulty did little to help his cause. Although a freshman Congressman, he paraded around the House floor with his full three-hundred pounds and mouth unharnassed. Tumulty was probably the only first-year Congressman to be caught with his pants off in public. An embarrassing photograph in Time Magazine showed him with no trousers on because no tailor could be found to fit his sixty-inch waistline. Besides being caught with his pants down, Tumulty had questionable political credentials. A nominal Democrat, he had opposed Adlai Stevenson in 1952 and even endorsed Senator Joseph McCarthy. The state CIO found him no friend of labor and had refused to back him.[63] The Tumulty candidacy was an example of how Kenny backed himself into a corner through political debts. The Boss ran the portly candidate because the Congressman had defended him during the New Jersey Law Enforcement Council hearings and had been counsel for city employees during the Larner probe.

The humiliating rout in 1956 caused Kenny's opponents to

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[63] Newark Star Ledger, May 28, 1957, p. 1, George Dixon, "Washington Scene," New York Mirror, March 10, 1955; Newark Evening News, November 8, 1956, p. 22; "Tails of Jersey City," Time 65, January 24, 1955, p. 20.

view the Boss as vulnerable. They looked with confidence to the 1957 city election. With Eggers and Hague dead, the remnants of the old machine moved into a new organization headed by Thomas Gangemi. A produce merchant called the "Watermelon King," Gangemi planned to do what Eggers had almost done in 1953--recapture City Hall. Unifying enemies of Kenny and his own supporters, the Italian leader built a solid organization. Italians composed 11.5 percent of the city's population--the largest ethnic bloc. For decades the Irish had dominated City Hall and now Gangemi gave the underdogs their first opportunity to take over. But, to unseat the resourceful Irish, Gangemi also had to turn to other Celts for support. He gained help from a former Hague State Senator, Edward J. O'Mara. O'Mara, detesting Kenny for overthrowing Hague and denying him renomination as State Senator, served as a bridge between the Gangemi forces and the displaced Hague-Eggers followers. The Gangemi-O'Mara alliance showed what kind of problems Kenny had to face. The Boss had not ignored the Italian community, but he could not find enough positions to satisfy all of them. In addition, many Eggers's followers were never sought out and welded to the organization. By having an Italian and an Irishman opposing him, Kenny faced his strongest challenge.[64]

In forming a ticket Gangemi looked to prominent city

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[64] Newark Evening News, February 20, 1957, p. 1. Interview with John R. Longo; U. S. Department of Commerce, U. S. Census of Population and Housing, Jersey City, 1960, Population and Housing Statistics for Census Tracts, Jersey City (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961).

figures for additional strength. He found one in the Polish community. Charles Witkowski, the stripped commissioner, consented to run on Gangemi's ticket. Witkowski provided the Gangemi camp with a central figure for the unrepresented Polish voters and disappointed Kenny followers to rally around. For Irish support, James F. Murray, Jr., was chosen. A brilliant lawyer and outstanding speaker, Murray brought prestige to the ticket. Denied renomination as State Senator by Kenny, Murray gladly joined Gangemi. Another Kenny enemy who joined was Deputy Police Chief,William McLaughlin. Politically active, McLaughlin claimed he had been persecuted by Public Safety Director,Lawrence Whipple, by being forced to do a twelve-hour tour of duty.[65] McLaughlin symbolized a rebellious element in the city--the uniformed city employees. Unhappy over the defeat of a referendum, granting them a pay raise, the police and firemen had formed a Joint Police and Fire Council to buck the Kenny commissioners. By being the only officer who refused to purchase a dance ticket, McLaughlin became a hero to the police and firemen.[66] Thus,

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[65] New York Times, February 20, 1957, p. 8; Newark Evening News, February 20, 1957, p. 1.

[66] Editorial, Newark Evening News, November 14, 1954; September 30, 1956; March 28, 1957, p. 27; New York Times, September 29, 1956, p. 10. The militancy of the police could be seen in 1954 when they staged a revolt against Public Safety Director Whipple. Railing the commissioner for allegedly "Persecuting department members by transferring those who refused to purchase blocs of tickets for a pre-election dance," the police and firemen claimed the Kenny organization had continued Hague's practice of collecting part of employees' salaries. They even threatened to stage a fifty-cent dinner dance to dramatize their salary problems and protest the selling of $50 dance tickets.

through McLaughlin's candidacy, the Gangemi ticket became a "friend" of the uniformed city workers.

Another element Gangemi appealed to was the middle class Protestant voters. To gain their support, he selected an independent Republican, August Heckman. A lawyer active in fraternal and religious organizations, Heckman gave the anti-Kenny ticket needed appeal with the Wasps. By carefully choosing strong candidates and appealing to all sections of the city, Gangemi assembled a formidable slate. In March, 1957, he announced his candidates and called them the "Victory Ticket." With Murray providing the brains; Witkowski, the brawn; Gangemi, the money; McLaughlin, the symbolism; and Heckman, the name; the Victoryites began a campaign to rid the city of Kennyism. The Boss faced a difficult time. His opponents were now united. There would be no dividing the opposition as in 1953. Gangemi had suppressed his personal differences with Murray and Witkowski and had achieved harmony.

In the spring, Kenny announced his own ticket. Composed of loyal followers, it included Mayor Bernard Berry; a Republican, Commissioner Joshua Ringle; an Italian, Joseph Soriero; a Pole, Commissioner Joseph Michalski; and another Irishman, Commissioner Lawrence Whipple. The Kenny ticket showed how much things had changed since Hague's time. Republicans were now guaranteed a spot on the slate along with Italians and Poles. No longer could a boss just run four Irishmen and a Wasp. The bullet vote had become too important to ignore. Still, the Kenny ticket would be hard to

sell. Three of the commissioners were appointees and one an Eggers's defector. Only Berry had any legitimate strength. But, Kenny assumed he could win. The Boss had many resources at his command. Berry remained popular as city leader. By catering to the Catholic voters and correcting some of the abuses at City Hall, the Mayor had built an ardent following. Ringle also seemed to bring some strength because with his nomination came support from the Republican party. John Beier Theurer, the GOP county chairman, claimed Ringle's place on Kenny's ticket made it unnecessary for the Republicans to run their own line. Kenny had tied Theurer closer to his organization by giving him the county insurance contract. With Republicans controlling the elections office, the Kenny organization would have 1,890 poll watchers and election deputies to man ballot boxes and help turn out the vote.[67]

Besides help from the Republicans, Kenny gained the endorsement of his favorite newspaper, the Jersey Journal. The former Mayor had always believed in the power of the press and placed several Journal reporters on the payroll. During the campaign he added more, and the Victoryites charged "eight full-time propagandists" had taken publicity leaves to aid Kenny.[68]

But, Kenny could not hide his damaged reputation and the sputtering machine he ran. The Larner probe seemed to cause

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[67] Newark Evening News, May 12, 1957, pp. 1 & 14.

[68] Victory Journal, May 3, 1957, p. 7; "Upset And A Threat," Newsweek, May 27, 1957, p. 38; Time, January 6, 1958, p. 60; "New Boss in Town," Time, March 25, 1957, p. 30.

Kenny problems wherever he turned. Due to the investigator's disclosures, Mayor Berry began to tighten up the running of the city. The Mayor adopted the slogan "good government is good politics" and put it into action by ending some abuses at the Medical Center. He fired Arthur Hoffman, Kenny's hospital administrator, and curtailed the practice of writing off bills. He also ended the no-shows at the Board of Education's Recreation Department. Unfortunately, Berry's efficiency program caused a further weakening of the organization.[69] Committeemen had less time to spend in the districts and had to make an appearance at their jobs to prove they were doing some work. As one committeeman said, "If Berry kept going he was bound to reform the organization out of existence."[70]

The Victoryites tried to divert attention from Berry by making "Kennyism" their major issue. Calling the incumbents, "Kenny's puppets," James F. Murray, Jr., offered to debate any Kenny candidate on television. Pointing to an empty chair, Murray asked why no one wanted to defend the Boss. Perhaps, he remarked, "It was Kenny's questionable association with Tony Strollo" and other waterfront hoodlums.[71] Murray effectively used many of the issues raised by Eggers in the

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[69] Newark Evening News, March 21, 1954, p. 22; Interview with Dr. Maurice O'Sullivan, former Assistant Superintendent of Jersey City's Schools.

[70] Interview with committeeman from Ward D.

[71] Transcripts of television programs found in private papers of James F. Murray, Jr.

1953 campaign and linked them with the Larner probe to show how little things had changed in four years. Reproaching the former Mayor for lying to District Attorney Frank Hogan and turning the city into a "no-show circus," Murray and the Victoryites called for the restoration of honest and efficient government.

In attacking "Kennyism," the Victoryites often called upon respected Hague followers to echo their lament. Former Congresswoman Mary Norton was brought out of retirement. She reminded voters of Kenny's lack of gratitude and deplored the appearance of "gangster elements" in the city. Edward O'Mara picked up on Mrs. Norton's theme by noting the decline of the city's economy. He asked the Kennyites to explain why the waterfront decayed and with it the loss of valuable jobs and industry. O'Mara portrayed the Kenny era as an "eight year spending spree" with taxpayers paying for the joy ride. Senator Murray echoed his colleague and came down hard on the tax issue. He stated the tax rate rose by $17 from 1949 to 1957 with the rate increasing from $69 per $1,000 to $86.28 per $1,000. The budget increased by "more than $20,000,000 since Kenny came to power." In drawing a picture of the city's economic problems, Murray used a comparative chart. Charging Jersey City "has the highest taxes in the nation," he compared its operational cost with a comparative population, Fort Worth, Texas, a city of 279,000 persons, it has a "budget of $38,000,000 compared to Jersey City's $68,000,000." Another comparison was made with Houston, Texas, which had "over a half-million inhabitants but planned to spend only $59,000,000."

Murray added, "people of Fort Worth and Houston get something for their money; can this be said of Jersey City?"[72] To offer an alternative to the costly Kenny government, the Victoryites promised to "make every effort to reduce the tax rate by 10 percent the first year and to seek further reductions each year thereafter."[73] In a summary statement, they pledged to "exterminate the evils of Kennyism, its shameful policies of one-man-rule, waste, no-shows, sinecures and vicious use of governmental power for political reprisals."[74]

The charge of one man rule became the central issue used by Gangemi. The Italian leader tried to show the differences between himself and the Irish boss by attacking nepotism. Gangemi claimed "81 relatives of Boss Kenny were on the payroll at the cost of over $400,000 to the city."[75] In criticizing his opponent's "royal family," Gangemi had an effective issue, but his speeches proved a detriment to his own candidacy. Having difficulty with language, Gangemi mispronounced many words. In charging Kenny with nepotism, he mispronounced relatives as "re-la-tives" and made several other obvious oratorical blunders. His lack of polish in articulating the issues would be a factor in the campaign.[76]

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[72]"Message to the Voters of Jersey City," pamphlet found in Murray papers; Transcripts of Murray television broadcast. Hudson Dispatch, April 27, 1957, p. 1.

[73]Newark Evening News, April 23, 1957, pp. 9 & 24; Victory Journal, May 3, 1957, p. 1.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid., April 24, 1957, p. 9; Victory Journal, May 3, 1957, p. 1.

[76]Ibid., April 2, 1957, p. 1.

Kenny's candidates realized Gangemi was the weak link in the Victory chain and went to work on him. In launching their counter attack, they reminded voters of his former ties with the Hague machine. Joshua Ringle, an old Hague foe and former Gangemi ally, accused the Watermelon King of having held a laborer's position on Hague's payroll. Ringle stated Gangemi "drew $5,194.16 as an employee of the Shade Tree Bureau of the Department of Parks from 1938-1941 but at no time was he ever in the field."[77] The Commissioner wondered why Gangemi needed a "no-show job," if he was such a successful produce merchant. Gangemi denied the accusation, but then the Kenny forces showed a voucher with his alleged signature and began to chant, "It's a sin to tell a lie."[78]

To demonstrate they were campaigning on more than Gangemi's shortcomings, the Kenny candidates pointed to the accomplishments made under the aegis of "the Boss." They noted the construction of a new sewerage system, the completion of an incinerator plant, and the beginning of a new housing project called Curries Woods. The incumbents also claimed credit for lowering the operating deficit at the Medical Center, opening Seton Hall Medical and Dental College, and stabilizing the tax rate. Mayor Berry even took the offensive and criticized the Larner probe by calling it "a politically

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[77] Jersey Journal, April 1, 1957, p. 1; Hudson Dispatch, April 8, 1957, p. 1; Newark Evening News, April 2, 1957, p. 1; Transcripts in Murray papers.

[78] Ibid., Interview with former Jersey City Clerk, Thomas X. Smith.

inspired attempt to discredit the present administration."[79] The Mayor defended his closeness to Kenny by declaring, "I take no orders from anyone in administering the city's affairs, and that includes John V. Kenny. Kenny is the party leader in Hudson County. I am the mayor here. The two are separate and distinct things."[80]

Although Berry talked like an independent, and his colleagues lauded the boss for past accomplishments, the Kenny candidates had many liabilities. The sewerage plant cost $40 million and with the bonded indebtedness it would increase to twice that amount. The Larner probe had exposed some of the corruption and political favoritism in the rewarding of the sewerage contract. The Newark Evening News exposed another example of favoritism. The insurance brokerage commissions on the performance bond went to a firm headed by Hugh J. Strong, a personal friend of Kenny, as well as a Morris County Republican and member of the State Racing Commission. As the Newark Evening News noted, "it paid to be friends of the boss."[81] The incinerator authority showed similar examples of questionable practices. It was a rich patronage source with over 200 jobs, and as Larner had shown, had been scandal-ridden from its inception. The housing project proved even more of a problem. Opposed by many residents in Greenville, Curries Woods became something of an

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[79] Neward Evening News, May 7, 1957, p. 15.

[80] Ibid., May 2, 1957, p. 10.

[81] Ibid., October 2, 1955, pp. 14 & 24; March 6, 1960, p. 14.

unwanted child. Kenny insisted on its construction which added 712 units to the city's housing stock, but even before it was completed Greenville residents told federal and city officials they did not want high-rise housing in the neighborhood.[82] Kenny's candidates would feel the wrath of these voters.[83]

All the promise of Kenny's '49 election had dissipated by 1957. As one Victory candidate remarked, "Kenny only changed Hague's orchestra but kept playing the same music."[84] The Victoryites gave examples of how musical chairs and back-room politics were played. Donald Spence's appointment to the Margaret Hague Hospital became an issue. Kenny's opponents called Spence's appointment an example of how the Boss rewarded incompetent officials. The Victoryites accused Spence of "hitting the jackpot in the Larner probe by being associated with every questionable deal on which the city was exposed."[85] Another target was former City Magistrate

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[82]Interview with Francis X. Beirne, former sixth-ward leader; Jersey Journal, August 1, 1957, p. 1; August 15, 1957.

[83]Another example of urban frustration was the city's redevelopment program. After the Executive Director, Bernard Kenny, went to jail the two middle income developments, Gregory Gardens and St. John's Apartments, remained vacant land without any likelihood of being developed. As in so many other cities, low-income families had been removed but no new housing provided. It would take another decade before any families could move in; meanwhile, the two sites became parking lots for commuters. Jersey Journal, January 23, 1959, p. 1; January 5, 1960, p. 1; January 26, 1960; November 15, 1960. See also Mark Gelfand's A Nation of Cities (N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[84]Victory Journal, May 10, 1957, p. 3.

[85]Ibid., May 3, 1957, p. 1.

Michael Reilly, accused of being involved in attempts to rig the garbage collection contract, but nonetheless appointed to a $9,000-a-year job in the law department. Louis Messano, a cast-off from the 1953 election was another example of how Kenny took care of his own. Messano's appointment to a $10,000 a year job in the Board of Education was considered a political payment for his loyalty to the Boss. Finally, attacking Kenny's misuse of power, Murray placed part of the blame on the Jersey Journal. The State Senator criticized the newspaper's editor, Eugene Farrell, for his partisan coverage and called him Kenny's propaganda agent.[86]

But, Murray had little to worry about, for Kenny would not be able to manipulate the press. This campaign would be different. Many of the traditional methods of campaigning such as rallies, torch light parades, and street corner gatherings began to take a back seat to a new form of politicking. Jersey City's politics entered a new era with the candidates attending coffee klatches. The Victoryites were the first to appeal to the housecoat voter by holding house parties and discussing city problems in small civic groups. Kenny had also realized the importance of human contact with the voters and constantly urged his workers to be more intimate with their constituents. In making his point the Boss often talked about a much admired political leader in North Bergen, Joseph Kelly. Kelly ran his organization without clubs and relied on nothing more than his close

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[86]Ibid., p. 7.

relationship with voters. The North Bergen Boss gave out flowers to express his friendliness. Kenny liked this approach and hoped to eliminate ward clubs and rely more on his personal organization and their direct links with the voters. When talking to committeemen, he reminded them "to use the personal touch in making friends, and be sincere with people to whom you talk. Great speeches don't win elections and great orators are not always voted in. What we need is loyal workers to bring out the vote."[87] But, Jersey City was not like the residential area in North Bergen and Kenny's aspirations were never fulfilled. In Jersey City the downtrodden wanted ward clubs and someplace to go for a favor.

Although unable to do away with his formal organization, Kenny continued to be the chief practitioner of the personal touch in city politics. In the last weeks of the campaign, the little leader pushed his one-man organization to full throttle by taking to the stump and blitzing the city with speeches. At a ninth-ward rally at the Hotel Plaza, he opened fire on his former Public Safety Director, Charles Witkowski, charging he had "evidence that in 1950 racketeering influences found their way into the offices of the public safety director." Kenny tried to counter the Victoryites' charges that criminal elements were taking over the city. Following up the crime issue was Mayor Berry who foresaw a "rule of gambling and

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[87] Jersey Journal, October 25, 1956, p. 1. Hudson Dispatch, November 1, 1956; December 9, 1960. Interview with William Flanagan.

vice" if his opponents won. "This will be an open city if certain elements backing our opponents have their way," stated Berry.[88]

The Kenny organization also used traditional methods of electioneering. They had on "twenty-four hour duty a polished public relations machine led ably by William Flanagan and supplied with ample funds to keep it properly oiled."[89] Massive rallies and giveaway parties of all sorts were staged. Television sets, appliances, food, and even a diamond ring were used to bait hungry residents to the Kenny rallies. Sound trucks and fireworks incited crowds and helped the Kenny organization delude themselves into believing they were still popular. But, the election results would show Kenny's popularity had faded.

The effects of the Larner probe, attacks from the opposition, and the strength of Gangemi's organization sent Kenny down to a crushing defeat. The Victoryites nearly swept City Hall clean by winning four out of five commission seats. Only 137 votes kept Gangemi from gaining the fifth seat. Gangemi almost divided the city equally with Berry, but the absentee ballots at the Medical Center gave his opponent a narrow victory. Kenny's committeemen had shifted the hospital vote heavily for the organization.[90] By an ever

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[88] Newark Evening News, April 30, 1957, p. 38; May 11, 1957, p. 10.

[89] John Farmer, "Kenny Seen Top Issue in Jersey City Vote," Newark Evening News, May 12, 1957, pp. 1 & 14. Victory Journal, May 3, 1957.

[90] Jersey Journal, May 15, 1957, p. 1. Newark Evening News, June 25, 1957, p. 1; June 30, 1957; Bayonne Times, May 15, 1957.

so slender margin Gangemi had again been denied victory, but his followers and fellow candidates assumed they had destroyed Kenny and so did many outside observers. The Newark Evening News summed up the feeling:

> From the wreckage of his costly machine, the boss salvaged only Mayor Berry. He would wind up in fifth place with a margin so small over Thomas Gangemi (again the apparent victim of a near miss) that a recount may be necessary to determine the winner. (parenthesis theirs)
>
> This time the people were not fooled. The demolition of the Kenny machine begun in 1953 was completed.[91]

Indeed, the results of the election seemed to indicate it was Kenny's "last hurrah." The city that eight years earlier heralded the little man as its liberator rose up and tore down the defiled hero. Voters in the uptown wards showed the greatest antipathy to Kenny's candidates. Even in the downtown wards, where the organization was supposedly strong, the Kenny candidates could not hold their own. Just as in the 1956 Eisenhower tidal wave, only Kenny's home ward, the Second, stayed moored to the organization. Out of a total of twelve wards, the Victoryites captured ten and split one. They had beaten the Boss at his own game--organization. Unified with active workers, in the districts, the Gangemi army showed how dependent Kenny's organization was on his leadership. The party workers could do nothing to remove the stain of the Larner probe. Despite all their rallies and fanfare, the Kenny organization made little impression on the independent voter. "Throw the rascals out" had been the chant of the taxpayer. The Victoryites had organized so well that out of 149,000 registered votes over 130,000 cast ballots.[92]

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[91] Newark Evening News, May 15, 1957, p. 1.
[92] Ibid.

TABLE 9

1957 Jersey City Commission Vote

Ward	Murray	McL'ghlin	Witk'wski	Heckm'n	Berry	Gangemi	Ringle	Whipple	Michalski	Soriero
1	1,328	1,388	1,366	1,198	1,121	1,207	1,050	1,038	1,118	976
2	1,151	1,109	1,219	1,023	2,417	936	2,347	2,338	2,434	2,275
3	2,374	2,380	2,368	2,200	2,158	2,307	2,035	2,034	2,168	2,010
4	2,090	2,072	2,111	1,934	2,089	1,989	1,995	1,981	2,037	1,954
5	2,254	2,190	2,084	2,084	1,587	2,369	1,511	1,406	1,603	1,754
6	3,102	3,057	3,091	2,953	2,884	2,893	2,692	2,847	2,656	2,561
7	13,882	13,332	13,036	12,399	12,427	12,085	11,668	11,207	10,418	10,477
8	9,503	9,382	9,064	8,729	8,857	8,437	8,334	8,089	7,445	7,385
9	9,694	9,613	9,180	8,833	8,237	8,444	7,494	7,351	6,586	6,638
10	5,988	5,894	5,813	5,430	4,583	5,511	4,312	4,190	4,102	4,123
11	5,549	5,593	5,356	5,150	4,928	5,136	4,677	4,609	4,463	4,386
12	6,439	6,505	6,294	6,094	5,844	5,839	5,672	5,473	5,298	5,196
Absentee	95	96	94	82	329	77	319	319	312	307
TOTALS	63,449	62,611	61,076	58,109	57,461	57,324	54,106	52,882	50,638	50,537

Source: Newark Evening News, May 15, 1957.

By losing so decisively, Kenny's eight-year regime seemed ended. Much like Frank Hague, the former ward leader seemed unable to run Jersey City from behind the scenes. Some of his followers urged him to get out of politics. His sixth-ward leader, Francis X. Beirne, went so far as to write a front-page "Dear John" letter in the Jersey Journal asking Kenny to step aside.[93] Beirne assumed, like many other politicians, that without Jersey City Kenny was finished. Even Kenny gave indications he was through. After the defeat he commented, "I say 42 years is enough, I'll pull out in November."[94] This time he sincerely intended to resign. He planned to let his followers salvage what they could. But, the defeated Boss soon learned he had no reason to retire.

During the summer of 1957, Kenny sent his campaign coordinators, Lawrence Whipple and John Grogan, to a peace conference with the Victoryites. At the meeting, Whipple and Grogan learned the Victoryites were no longer united. Arguing over who should be on the county ticket in November the reform commissioners had split into three blocs. Gangemi resented the four commissioners for having gained office while he remained a loser. He was especially angered at Murray because in some of the districts a flyer with the slogan

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[93] Jersey Journal, August 22, 1957, p. 1; September 28, 1957, p. 1. Newark Evening News, August 28, 1957, pp. 1 & 16.

[94] Jersey Journal, May 15, 1957, p. 1.

"Remember the Shamrock" had been distributed.[95] The Irish had voted along ethnic lines and helped elect Berry and gave Murray the largest total--63,449 votes. Those few hundred votes could have made Gangemi the fifth commissioner. Other divisions within the Victory camp came from a dispute over who would be mayor. Murray had all the qualifications and as the top vote getter seemed a logical choice. But, Gangemi was furious and through his control of two commissioners, Heckman and McLaughlin, made Witkowski the mayor. With Witkowski as mayor, Murray overshadowed, and Gangemi out of office, the Victoryites splintered. City Hall soon resembled something out of the Third French Republic with a multiplicity of factions seeking to rule. Kenny saw his opening.

Gangemi had tried to gain office by challenging Berry in the courts, but his efforts proved futile. He soon became a displaced man. All dressed up for the party at City Hall, he lacked the invitation to be mayor. The commissioners soon pushed him aside. Witkowski started building a personal organization and rejected some of Gangemi's appointments. Frustrated at having lost for a second time and by so narrow a margin, Gangemi was in the worst possible position for a politician. He was without office and without influence. As

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[95]This analysis was drawn from a series of interviews with ward leaders and Hudson County's Public Relations Director, John R. Longo, who witnessed the counting of the votes at Laurel Hill. Gangemi's anger was so great that he took a swing at Murray but missed and slammed his fist into the voting machine. See also Newark Evening News, May 18, 1957, p. 22; May 26, 1957, p. 24; Hudson Dispatch, January 17, 1958, February 18, 1958.

soon as Kenny learned of the divisions at City Hall and Gangemi's troubles, he sent for the defeated candidate. Kenny was to give a masterful demonstration of how a broker/boss can survive the most disastrous defeat by understanding the weaknesses of the opposition. Knowing Gangemi desired to be the mayor, the Boss played upon his frustration. He would make the also-ran candidate "Mayor of Hudson County," by running him for county supervisor. To make the offer even more appealing, the Boss promised to make Gangemi mayor of Jersey City four years hence. In return, Gangemi would merge his organization with Kenny's. The deal was consummated in September, 1957, when the Boss removed five of his candidates from the county ticket and replaced them with Gangemi and his followers. The nominee for county supervisor commented on the marriage of convenience, "Politics make strange bedfellows, and I had to live with the strangest bedclothes on May 14." Noting he "had been dealing the last two weeks with men, and men were scarce last May," Gangemi predicted his new ally would "keep his word."[96]

Gangemi and Kenny began to unite their organizations by appointing lieutenants in the wards. In ward seven, Kenny's man, Joseph Soriero, shared power with Gangemi's supporter, James DiNardo. Joseph Culloo, Kenny's first ward leader, divided the ward with William DeNoble, a Gangemi man. In the third ward, Joseph Brady, a Kenny man ruled with Vincent

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[96] Jersey Journal, October 1, 1957, p. 12; Interviews with Joseph Soriero, John Longo, and Ray Quinn.

Sullivan, a supporter of the Italian leader. Similar divisions of power occurred in the eighth and eleventh wards where John Brandle and John J. Kenny became co-leaders with the Gangemi men, Peter Grompone and Frank Guarini. Throughout Jersey City the two armies joined together and made the Democratic organization a powerful force. By filling in the wards and districts where he had been weak, Kenny gained a new life and rebuilt his machine.[97]

With the Italian and Irish leader united, the eleven Hudson County mayors refused to swing over to the Victory camp. Union City Mayor, William Musto, saw the Kenny maneuver as another example of the little guy's ability to "divide and conquer." The Victoryites were left to fight among themselves. Murray and Witkowski had planned to run their own county ticket but delayed when Governor Meyner sought their support. After going into discussions with Meyner, the Commissioners decided to endorse the Governor but not the regular Democratic ticket. Kenny did not care; by shuffling his ticket he was ready to play a new hand with the Gangemi organization as his aces.

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[97] For information on how the Kenny and Gangemi organization united see Hudson Dispatch, January 31, 1958, p. 1; Jersey Journal, December 13, 1957, p. 1; January 31, 1958, p. 1; February 18, 1958. This analysis was supported by interviews with State Senator William Musto, Ward Leaders Joseph Soriero, Samuel Pizzuto, and Ray Quinn. Other examples of Kenny and Gangemi dividing the wards were in ward nine where William Albers joined with Gangemi's man, John Bennett. In the sixth ward, Vincent Ferro worked with John Duff and in the fourth ward Ray Quinn and Joseph Connors worked together as did Angelo Bevacqua and George Gentile in the fifth ward.

Another critical reason for Kenny's survival was the assistance given by Meyner. Running for re-election in November, the Governor dreaded the prospect of having to campaign in a divided county. After the May upset, he refused to abandon Kenny. Commenting on Politics in Hudson County, he said it was "in a state of flux" and did not recognize the Victory forces as the new leaders. In shunning a fight on Kenny's status, he called the people of Jersey City "very discriminating" in their selection of candidates.[98] By using the term "discriminating," Meyner inadvertently convinced Gangemi that ethnic bias had prevented an Italian from gaining office. The Governor had intended a different interpretation, but Gangemi assumed the slur was meant for him and was further encouraged to join Kenny. One thing that the Chief Executive did not do inadvertently, however, was to visit Gangemi's home and urge him to unite with Kenny and the Democratic Party. The Governor had even asked an old Hague advisor, John Milton, to unify the competing factions.[99]

The maneuvering by Kenny, Gangemi, and Meyner proved beneficial to all three. In the November election, Kenny's ticket swept the county by 40,000 votes. The Kenny-Gangemi marriage worked. By tightening his grip on the county, Kenny had out-trumped the opposition. He could now sit out the

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[98] Newark Evening News, May 16, 1957, p. 1.

[99] Jersey Journal, May 18, 1957, p. 1; October 2, 1957, p. 1; Editorial, Newark Evening News, Octo-er 3, 1957; November 3, 1957, p. 1; November 10, 1957, p. 22. Interview with John Longo and William Musto.

Victory captivity of City Hall. Governor Meyner also tightened his grip on the State House, trouncing his opponent, Malcom Forbes, by over 200,000 votes in the state election. In Hudson County he received 144,388 votes to Forbes's 101,489. With Meyner remaining in Trenton and a new Hudson State Senator, William Kelly, Kenny prepared to gain needed patronage to offset his city losses.[100]

The prosecutor's office was the key post. Meyner again proved cooperative. The Governor accepted a nominee right out of the Kenny school of machine politics. Lawrence Whipple, the recently defeated commissioner and chief negotiator for the Boss, became the nominee. In accepting Whipple, Meyner acted with his usual caution. Hoping to run for national office in 1960, the popular Governor did not want any embarrassing scandal to damage his chances. He consented to appoint Whipple as "acting prosecutor" of Hudson County. State troopers were placed in the Kenny appointee's office to insure no gambling or other types of scandals occurred.[101] Kenny and Whipple agreed to the terms. Meyner assumed he had quelled any criticism by making Whipple acting prosecutor, but the Newark Evening News quickly analyzed the situation and commented on how the reform Governor and the Boss got along:

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[100] Hudson Dispatch, November 13, 1957, p. 1; Newark Evening News, November 6, 1957, p. 1; November 13, 1957.

[101] Interview with Governor Meyner; Newark Evening News, January 15, 1958; January 16, 1958, p. 1.

> Governor Meyner has appointed Hudson County Counsel Lawrence Whipple as special deputy attorney general in charge of the Hudson prosecutor's office.
>
> Where so sensitive and influential a position is involved controversy is to be expected. In Hudson particularly, an appointee to head the county prosecutor's office might well expect that more than casual public interest would be shown in his background and political affiliations.
>
> . . . In the prosecutor's office, Mr. Whipple will have the primary responsibility of trying indictments resulting from the Larner Probe of Jersey City finances in the first four years (1949-1953) of the Kenny regime. Still pending are 56 indictments against 28 individuals. No convictions have resulted from indictments already tried.
>
> . . . Governor Meyner apparently believes that the extremely close alliance of Mr. Whipple with the Kenny machine will not prove a detriment.[102]

Whipple's appointment helped Kenny in his political recovery. No embarrassing probes would now be made on the county level--like Larner made in the city. Commissioner Murray expressed his disappointment when he said the naming of Whipple "was in line with Governor Meyner's regrettable conduct in this county by being afraid to do anything to offend Mr. Kenny."[103]

In February, 1958, Whipple was nominated by Meyner to be permanent prosecutor and later confirmed by the Senate. Having a firm grip on things, Kenny decided to resign for the second time. On 22 January 1958, he announced his retirment by claiming "40 years of Jersey City politics was enough."[104] The Boss declared he was turning the party over

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[102]Editorial, Newark Evening News, January 16, 1958.

[103]New York Times, January 15, 1958, p. 1.

[104]Jersey Journal, January 22, 1958, p. 1; Newark Evening News, January 23, 1958.

to a new executive board called the Hudson County Democratic Council. Mentioning his business interests and the needs of his family as other reasons for stepping down, the sixty-four year old Kenny seemed ripe for Florida. But, his desire to retain power and his unwillingness to appoint a successor made his abdication a hoax.

Kenny showed in the next primary that his retirement was a charade. Reaching out for state recognition, the Boss endorsed his Hudson County ally, Mayor John Grogan of Hoboken, to run for U. S. Senator. At stake was more than Grogan's candidacy. The Victoryites had not given up in their attempts to unseat the Boss from county power. Witkowski and Murray reunited in an attempt to win the county primary. Murray ran for the Democratic nomination in the Thirteenth Congressional District. Witkowski put up county candidates as well as a slate of committeemen to beat the Boss in the districts. The 1958 primary became a major test of Kenny's recuperative powers. He not only had taken on the Victoryites but Governor Meyner as well. Although Grogan had strong labor support and was assured of Hudson County's backing, Meyner rejected his candidacy and put forward another candidate, Congressman Harrison (Pete) Williams. The Governor lined up twenty of New Jersey's twenty-one counties. But, Kenny refused to go along and challenged the state leader to back up his choice with votes.[105]

Kenny's ticket reflected the changes in his organization.

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[105] Newark Evening News, April 17, 1958, p. 1.

To counter Murray's challenge, the Boss dropped the incumbent, Alfred Sieminski. Sieminski had become too liberal for the organization. Defending Alger Hiss's right to speak at Princeton University and having difficulties with the Catholic Church, the Polish candidate was forced to run on his own.[106] A young party worker, Cornelius Gallagher, was substituted. Gallagher had worked his way up the organization and Meyner appointed him to the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. Having a strong following in Bayonne, he was a likely choice to succeed Sieminski. In the Fourteenth Congressional District, Kenny ran an Italian, Dominick Daniels. The primary became a re-enactment of the 1951 battle between the Kenny and Eggers forces. Kenny's survival depended on his county ticket.

Grogan came to his aid. By having the head of a CIO union and popular county figure on the ticket, the Boss had a good drawing card. But, Kenny relied on more than candidates. He again started to manipulate his opponents. He persuaded Gangemi to influence the Republican Commissioner, August Heckman, to stay out of the Victorites primary drive. Murray urged the Republican to join the fight and reminded the Commissioner that the battle against Kenny would not be finished until his county power was destroyed. But, Heckman refused to enter the melee.[107]

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[106] Jersey Journal, April 11, 1956, p. 1; April 20, 1956, p. 1; Hudson Dispatch, April 20, 1956, p. 1.

[107] Heckman's support was essential, since he controlled the Public Works Department where many Kenny committeemen remained ensconced. Another important development was the failure of the Victoryites to win over Berry. If the full five-man commission had united, Kenny would have been finished.

The results of the primary again showed Kenny adroitly outmaneuvering the opposition. His county ticket defeated the Victoryites by over 25,000 votes. Although not a large majority, it was enough to keep him in power on the county level. In the Congressional races, both his candidates won. The fight for control of the county committee proved a fierce contest with Witkowski's supporters gaining 117 district seats out of the 464 contested. A key reason for the primary win was Grogan's position on the ticket. The labor candidate rolled up a big vote in his home county, beating Meyner's nominee, Harrison Williams, by a plurality of over 72,000 votes. Grogan came close to winning the state primary; Williams won by a mere 11,000 votes. Only the entry of the Victory candidate, Joseph McLean, a Princeton professor who garnered 38,666 votes in Hudson County, prevented Kenny from putting Grogan over.[108]

By winning the critical county primary, Kenny was assured of retaining control of the Hudson County Democratic Party. But, the primary victory again showed how fragile a power base the Boss stood on. No longer was Hudson the state powerhouse. The county produced 35 percent of the Democratic vote, but with Meyner leading the other counties it was impossible for the "Gibraltar of Democracy" to run the state. The aging Boss would have to be content with being a county liege. In the November election, he showed his deference to

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[108] Ibid., March 8, 1958; April 19, 1957. Hudson Dispatch, April 20, 1956, p. 1.

Meyner by endorsing Williams and providing a 75,000 vote majority.[109]

Kenny's 1958 primary victories showed the importance of ingathering Gangemi the preceding fall. Many of his best district workers came from the Gangemi organization. To make for a smoother merger of the armies, he and his advisors began to change the role of the ward leader. The number increased from 16 to 50. The new ward chiefs no longer ran the whole ward but between 8 and 12 districts. This allowed Kenny to bring in Gangemi people, yet keep his own followers. The dispersal of authority also helped Kenny to remain on top.[110] No ambitious ward leader had a large enough base to reach out for a city following. Another advantage of organizational expansion was that it allowed Kenny to make full use of the "Nylon Revolution." Eighteen of the new ward leaders were women and the Boss also showed his affection for the distaff voters by putting his female followers in governmental posts. He had learned early that women were critical to his success. Always in the districts boosting "Johnny," they became the major part of his personal following.

During the Victoryites control of City Hall, Kenny showed

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[109] Jersey Journal, November 5, 1958, p. 1.

[110] Two outstanding district leaders who came from the Eggers and Gangemi organizations were John Duff in the sixth ward and Ray Quinn in the fourth ward. Jersey Journal, November 21, 1957, p. 1; January 31, 1958, p. 1; Newark Evening News, January 31, 1958, p. 28; Interviews with William Albers and John Longo.

other methods of adaptation. To solve some of his patronage problems, he began to shift committeemen to the county courthouse. With over 4,515 jobs available, he could relocate people into different posts. Another method used to ease the patronage drought was the reduction in the number of election districts. Through control of the County Boards of Elections, the number of election districts was reduced from 315 to 232. The effect of the redistricting was to cut down the number of committeemen. Since each district had one committeeman and woman, fewer troops had to be provided with jobs.[111]

In using the county to solve some of his patronage problems, Kenny put a strain on Hudson's fiscal resources. The freeholders followed his orders and increased expenditures by creating new jobs. They established a Department of Industrial and Real Estate Development and appointed a Gangemi associate, Benjamin Schlossberg, to head it. Other party workers received jobs in the newly established Building Maintenance and Public Relations Departments. As the Newark News put it:

> The payroll suggests that Hudson must be the most closely inspected and most minutely investigated county in New Jersey. Every department abounds with inspectors, investigators, and special investigators.
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> There are bridge investigators, road investigators, and mental disease investigators, besides surrogate investigators, and prosecutor's investigators.

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[111] Hudson Dispatch, February 5, 1958, p. 1; Jersey Journal, November 21, 1957, January 31, 1958; January 19, 1961, pp. 1 & 8.

> There is a chief mosquito inspector, special inspector of meats and not less than four organists assigned to county institutions. Besides the chief inspector, the county mosquito commission had a mosquito identifier and several mosquito counters.
>
> It is no surprise that many of these officials turn out to be key ward leaders in the organization controlled by Boss Kenny. . .[112]

This padding caused the budget and tax rate to swell. Kenny's opponents noted from 1957 to 1961 the county tax rate as applied to Jersey City rose from $17.74 per $1,000 to $18.70 per $1,000, and county spending increased a total of $3.8 million with total operational appropriations rising from $23.3 million to $27.5 million.[113]

Feeding his organization at the county trough was only one example of Kenny's loose spending. In purchasing furniture for a newly constructed Hall of Records, the Boss and his officials overreached themselves. The contract was so extravagant that the Jersey Journal gave embarrassing details. It included such furnishings as custom made "marble-top desks" for department heads "ranging in price from $1,200 to $1,600 each."[114] That was more than the cost of President Eisenhower's desk. Brass bottom swivel chairs to match the desks were included at "$221 a swivel." To complement the desks and chairs, "gold-lined waste baskets" and "custom-made

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[112] Editorial, Newark Evening News, November 4, 1961.

[113] Jersey City, "Community Charter Council Crusade for Change," pamphlet found in James F. Murray, Jr., papers. New Jersey Division of Local Government, Statement of the Financial Conditions of Counties and Municipalities Annually, (1957-61).

[114] Jersey Journal, January 9, 1961, p. 1.

paper trays" at $65 and $45 apiece were to be ordered. When the public learned details of the contract a huge outcry went up. Witkowski's Deputy Mayor, T. James Tumulty, started a civil suit to compel cancellation of the $1,068,000 contract.[115] Other critics charged rigged bids and false specifications had inflated the costs. To quell critics, the Boss and County Supervisor, Thomas Gangemi, told the freeholders to revoke the contract. But, other scandals were soon uncovered. The county government seemed to be like a brokerage office with commissions going to friends of the organization. An attempt to lease the Top Hat Club in Union City for a geriatrics hospital became a case in point. County officials claimed they needed additional space. The lease was to be for $5 million with the county paying $251,250 a year for twenty years. The Newark Evening News alerted the public to the terms of the agreement. They pointed out the building had been leased to the Army for $45,000 a year and had sold for $224,000 in 1947. The Top Hat scandal became so embarrassing that Gangemi finally vetoed the pact and claimed the site was inadequate.[116]

Other questionable county transactions involved the Boss. In what George Washington Plunkitt would have called an example of "honest graft," a friend of Kenny made huge profits by gaining favorable terms from land exchanges in the

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[115] Newark Evening News, December 25, 1960, p. 1; January 6, 1961; Jersey Journal, January 9, 1961, p. 1.

[116] Ibid.

Secaucus Meadowlands. The Meadowland and Improvement Corporation headed by William J. Bigley of Hoboken prospered from buying and selling land at the right time. On January 16, 1959, the Meadowland Company bought five Hudson County acres of meadlowland for $31,250. On the same day the company sold them to the New Jersey Motor Lodge, Inc.,--Howard Johnson, Inc.,--for $150,000. On February 5, 1960, M. & I. bought a county half acre for $3,125 and sold it the same day to Viking Pump Company for $10,000. On November 29, 1960, the company bought 20 acres from Hudson County for $125,000 and the same day sold them to E. I. duPont Corporation for $525,000.[117] As the Newark Evening News commented, "Hudson County again stands enthralled by the incredible luck which from time to time attends the fortunate few who deal with the board of freeholders."[118]

Indications of corruption in Hudson County were so flagrant that the Chairman of the Hudson County Democratic Party, John Deegan, explained the organization's method of fund raising:

> When we were financing a campaign, I would call up every firm that does business with the county and I asked for a campaign contribution. If I'm refused, and that's rare, then the firm can expect business won't be as good during the next year.[119]

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[117] Ibid., February 22, 1961, pp. 1 & 6. Ironically, Bigley's name was to appear again when Kenny was close to death in a nursing home. The boss's family started a suit asking to declare Kenny incompetent, so they could sue Bigley for a percentage of profits on several business transactions.

[118] Editorial, Newark Evening News, February 23, 1961.

[119] Jersey Journal, February 9, 1960, pp. 1 & 22; "Theory & Practice," Time, March 28, 1960, p. 89.

Contributions from businessmen were not the only methods used. The collection of a percentage of government employees' salaries by way of selling Democratic dance tickets and forced donations assured the Boss of having at least $300,000 a year for a campaign. Once again Deegan explained how party members had the bite put on them. "Forget about that three percent of your pay business. We ask for a flat contribution. When I was a city employee in 1931, I was asked for $25 a campaign and I thought my job was well worth it. It's almost like paying union dues or insurance premiums."[120] The County Chairman explained further how money as the mother's milk of politics fed the party. The Democratic organization "spent up to $250,000 on a tough campaign in Hudson and $50,000 of that was passed out in the districts on election day." What about state laws controlling the amount that can be legally spent? Deegan said they were worthless since "nobody pays any attention to them."[121]

Having a stuffed war chest, played a key role in Kenny's ability to retain power. By filling the party treasury, he was able to contribute to gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional elections, and tie the candidates to his purse strings. He even dabbled in presidential politics. In the 1960 Presidential election, he supported John F. Kennedy. The Boss knew the Massachusetts Senator's father, Joseph Kennedy, and occasionally met with him at the track in Florida.

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[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

When John Kennedy announced his plans to run, Kenny and his freshman congressman, Cornelius Gallagher, eagerly backed him.[122] But, Governor Meyner also had intentions of running. A bitter feud developed. Meyner pressured the New Jersey delegation into backing him as the favorite son. In making his move, the Governor cooperated with Senators Lyndon Johnson and Stuart Symington. He promised to have New Jersey hold firm on the first ballot. Kenny and his supporters--called the Irish mafia by some--resented the Governor's candidacy. At the convention Meyner again put the pressure on and Kenny could do nothing. When the balloting commenced, New Jersey held for its favorite son. Only when it was apparent that Kennedy had the nomination did Meyner attempt to switch to the favorite candidate, but it was too late. Wyoming had the honor of putting Kennedy over the top. The Hudson County delegation accused the handsome Governor of "going Hollywood."[123] Having failed to vote for the first Irish Catholic President in the nation's history, Kenny swore to get revenge some day. But, the fight with Meyner was illustrative of the limits to his power. Despite Kenny's financial resources, Meyner proved he was still state Boss.

Other signs of the thinness of Kenny's power could be seen in the returns from Kennedy's election. The future

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[122] Hudson Dispatch, May 23, 1960, p. 1; July 8, 1960, p. 1; July 13, 1960, pp. 1 & 9.

[123] Hudson Dispatch, July 13, 1960, p. 1; July 8, 1960; "New Jersey and the Democratic National Convention," pamphlet found in papers of Governor Robert B. Meyner, Boxes 84, 85, & 99, (Trenton, N. J.).

president visited Hudson County and Jersey City. The Boss worked hard for him. At a rally Kennedy addressed Kenny's flock and received enthusiastic support. The candidate told the politically conscious multitude that he hoped to win New Jersey's fourteen electoral votes. They shouted back "no we have sixteen." Kennedy responded, "I'll bet you are the only city in the country that knows how many electoral votes you have."[124] Kennedy showed his appreciation to the Boss by addressing him as Mayor Kenny, and the little leader returned the compliment by promising the Irish candidate a 100,000 vote majority. But, Kenny's promise was unfulfilled; he could only produce a 59,000 vote majority. As one observer explained:

> In the last analysis Kenny did not short change Kennedy. He delivered all he could. It's just that he can no longer do a presidential year business in the 100,000 vote manner with a nickel and dime organization.[125]

The mediocre showing for Kennedy indicated the Boss had to regain City Hall. Encouragement came from the rumblings at Grove Street.

At City Hall the internecine struggle went on. Witkowski and Murray argued over leadership and the other commissioners went their own way. Constant reshuffling of coalitions occurred with McLaughlin, Heckman, Berry, and Murray lining up against Witkowski and then McLaughlin and Heckman against the others and finally back to Witkowski against the four

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[124] Hudson Dispatch, November 7, 1960, p. 1.

[125] Newark Evening News, November 13, 1960, p. 23.

commissioners.[126] On the first anniversary of "victory" the Jersey Journal commented on the chaos:

> The victory commissioners are hardly speaking to each other any more. Each has retreated into the confines of his own department, from which on frequent occasions can be heard noisy attempts to fabricate a working majority. . .[127]

Kenny took full advantage of the divisions and showed how his opponents' mistakes and reform could sometimes be used as tools for the Boss. Witkowski's position as mayor gave him extensive symbolic power, but when he tried to exercise his executive authority he often stumbled. As Mayor and head of the Public Affairs Department, he controlled the Board of Education and Medical Center. He fired some employees from both institutions and replaced them with temporary appointees loyal to him. But, civil service regulations blocked the substitutions. The Hudson County Civil Service Association Council Number 2 appealed the firings by charging they were political in nature. The State Civil Service Commission upheld many of the appeals. Witkowski and the other commissioners became furious because they realized many Kenny workers had been locked into their positions. The Mayor called the Kenny implemented reclassification program "a subterfuge under which favored employees are accorded job protection without ever taking tests."[128]

A striking example of how difficult it was for the

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[126] Hudson Dispatch, July 20, 1960, p. 5.

[127] Jersey Journal, May 19, 1958, p. 1.

[128] Newark Evening News, June 29, 1957, p. 31.

Victoryites to remove the opposition came in the case of Mrs. Isabel Churlin Spence, wife of the Kenny appointed hospital administrator. After the 1957 election, Mrs. Spence continued in her post as administrative secretary in the Revenue and Finance Department. When James F. Murray, Jr., assumed control, he tried to get rid of her. First, he demoted her from a $8,000 a year job as secretary to that of administrative secretary in the Revenue and Finance Department. Later, she was again demoted from administrative clerk to senior-clerk stenographer and, finally, removed from the payroll on 12 November 1957. Throughout the changes, Mrs. Spence took her case to the courts and Civil Service Commission. In a series of rulings she finally won. The Commission had her reinstated and ordered the city to give her back pay amounting to $19,397.[129]

Mrs. Spence won her case because of several landmark rulings on the civil service regulations. The 1952 Rogers-Seiper Case guaranteed civil service employees demotional rights. Legislation was enacted stating:

> . . .any municipal employee in the classified civil service who has been separated for reasons of economy or whose position has been abolished for reasons of economy, shall whenever possible, be demoted to some lesser position in the same department in the regular order of demotion according to efficiency records and/or seniority.[130]

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[129] New Jersey Civil Service Commission Annual Reports, Vol. 27, 1960-61; Vol. 28, 1962-63; The Shield, December 15, 1962, July 2, 1960; Jersey Journal, May 2, 1958, p. 2, Interview with Leo Steiner, editor of The Shield.

[130] New Jersey Law Journal, LXXVIII (March 10, 1955), 2.

The ruling further stated the Civil Service Commission would determine the lesser position to which employees may be demoted. Another major ruling prevented the dismissal of an employee for economy reasons unless "good faith" to make actual economy moves had been shown. Firing personnel could not be a political "device to circumvent the employees civil service protection." Finally, employees had the right to receive a 45-day notice before being dismissed. The growing importance of civil service ironically aided Kenny in plugging some of his patronage leaks. In fact, Kenny even expanded his power through the blunders of his opponents. In November, 1958, the Boss had a referendum drawn up extending civil service protection to non-instructional personnel on the Board of Education.[131] Witkowski did nothing to stop the proposal, and the four other commissioners--jealous of the mayor's power--approved the resolution. The referendum passed by a 44,854 to 13,910 vote. Kenny had more of his followers locked into their jobs. Witkowski became so inept at playing party politics that he even fired his own supporters by abolishing the Board of Education's Recreation Department.[132] With opponents like Witkowski, Kenny had little trouble surviving.

The blunders made by the "reform commissioners" continued through their four year "control" of City Hall. The Mayor became so unacceptable to Murray and the other commissioners

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[131] Jersey Journal, November 5, 1958, p. 1.

[132] Jersey Journal, November 5, 1958, p. 1; May 27, 1959, p. 1.

that they stripped him of many of his powers. The Medical Center was taken out of his hands when they appointed a Board of Managers to administer it.[133] The divisiveness became so overt that it took the form of an open exchange of insults. Typical of the verbal dueling was one exchange between Murray and Witkowski over the discussion of a controversial insurance resolution:

Witkowski to Murray:	You are going into oblivion on May the ninth.
Murray to Witkowski:	You've been there for 20 years Charlie.
Witkowski's reply:	You've been acting like this because you are not sitting in this chair (the mayor's seat).
Murray's reply:	I don't see you sitting in that chair much either Charlie.
Witkowski's summary . . .	from now on I'm going to have someone watching this chair when I'm not here.[134]

While back biting and factionalism gripped City Hall, Jersey City's economic and social decay continued. The reform commissioners had pledged to cut taxes by ten percent during their first year in office, but they had reduced them by only ten cents, and after four years the rate had increased by over ten percent, going fron $86.58 per $1,000 to $98.13 per $1,000.[135]

Other unresolved urban problems indicated the reformers

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[133] Newark Evening News, February 7, 1961, p. 30; Jersey Journal, February 7, 1961, p. 1.

[134] Hudson Dispatch, March 8, 1961, p. 1; Jersey City, Minutes of the Board of Commissioners (March 7, 1961).

[135] New Jersey, Division of Local Government, Annual Reports (1957-61).

could not run the city any better than their predecessors. Continuous mismanagement plagued city authorities and the Redevelopment Agency. The $40 million sewerage system became an engineering and financial disaster. Investigations by a consulting firm (Mayor-Lynch & Associates) and the Interstate Sanitation Commission showed the system operating improperly. One problem was the repeated bypassing of untreated sewerage at the West Side and East Side plants. The sedimentation tanks at both plants became filled with sludge and were inoperative. Only one sedimentation tank out of five worked on the West Side plant and none operated at the East Side plant. These difficulties were only part of a long list of problems emanating from the sewerage authority. Its troubles included an annual deficit in the six-figure category, rising rates accompanied by taxpayers' tempers, and the controversial awarding of contracts as exposed by the Larner probe. In its first year of operation, it ran up a $340,000 deficit; increasing to $985,000 by 1960. The authority claimed the city was obligated under the original agreement to make up any deficit. Part of the difficulty was attributed to a drop-off in water use. Another factor was the loss of sewerage charges because some local industries were not even tied in with the authority's interceptor system.[136]

Progress in the city's redevelopment program flowed as

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[136] Newark Evening News, December 4, 1960, pp. 1 & 13; April 4, 1961, p. 1; Jersey Journal, March 20, 1959, p. 1; May 18, 1959; Hudson Dispatch, June 24, 1961, p. 1; Summary of report of Mayo-Lynch & Associates found in James F. Murray, Jr., papers.

slowly as its sewerage. Few developers could be found to finance the middle income projects and those who did soon went bankrupt. Only through the efforts of Commissioner Murray was anything accomplished. He appointed a prominent Chicago lawyer, John X. Irving, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency. Irving reorganized the agency and began construction on the long delayed St. John's Apartments. Besides starting movement in the redevelopment program, Murray brought in the only major housing development by persuading investors to build a "Country Village" in Greenville. The energetic Commissioner also attempted to raise the city's cultural values by constructing a new arts and cultural center at the Five Corners. He offered industry an opportunity to come to the city by holding an "Operation Rebirth" symposium to discuss Jersey City's economic advantages. In seeking to attract industry, Murray proposed to develop the waterfront and devised a plan for a transportation loop around the city.[137] Despite the Finance Commissioner's vision and talent, he was not able to implement many of his proposals. By the end of the reform commissioners term, the five departments had turned into private payroll armies with each commissioner seeking to build his own empire.

The chaos in city government and the plunder on the county level caused many citizens to wonder if any solutions

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[137]Interview with John X. Iriving, former Dean of Seton Hall Law School. Various proposals found in James F. Murray, Jr., papers.

were available. It was in this climate that a proposal to cure some of the city's political ills was put forward. The defects of commission government had been clearly exhibited. In 1960, James F. Murray, Jr., addressed one of the problems by appointing the first black to an executive municipal office. Julian K. Robinson, a bright, young educator, became Deputy Commissioner of the Finance Department. Blacks represented over 13 percent of the city's population but had been denied a voice in major policy decisions. They had only token representation on the Board of Education and had been discriminated against in applying for jobs and promotions at City Hall by being limited to clerical or utility positions.[138] Another minority not given fair representation had been the Jewish voters. Although small in numbers, they had been active in the community and sought public office. The desire of minorities to gain recognition and the disgust of many citizens with commission government helped trigger a movement for a charter change. First proposed by a group called Independent Voters Council, the idea received little support. The Witkowski supporters insisted the county government, run by the Kennyites, should be the principal target for governmental reform. Bernard Kaye, the head of the IVC, stated the law provided no means to change the form of county government and urged city change. The IVC's proposal lingered but on 4 November 1958 Parks Commissioner Bernard Berry revived it.[139] Introducing

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[138]Newark Evening News, November 28, 1960, p. 1; Jersey Journal, July 22, 1957, p. 1. Interviews with Julian K. Robinson and Fred Martin.

[139]Newark Evening News, August 8, 1958, p. 47.

a resolution calling for a charter study, Berry wanted the inquiry to evaluate the city's needs and recommended one of the optional charters provided by the Faulkner Act--the state's home rule statute. The ordinance was adopted by a four to one vote with only Mayor Witkowski voting against it.

The adoption of the resolution was only the start of a two step process to change the city's government. The first step was to hold a referendum on having a charter study. If this passed, then a Charter Commission elected simultaneously with the referendum would undertake the study. If the Charter Commission recommended a new charter, the second step would be another referendum in which the voters would accept or reject the new charter.[140]

Leading the movement for a change was a new political element in Jersey City. Called the Community Charter Council it consisted of "good government" types. A group of young men from the Junior Chamber of Commerce, headed by Maxwell Lazarus and Lowell Harwood, helped start the drive for a nonpartisan citizens movement to promote the charter study. In Jersey City independent voters were usually drowned out by machine politicians, but this time it was different. The charter movement caught on and politicized many groups and people who had long been "turned off" by machine politics in Jersey City. Besides reviving the Chamber of Commerce, the

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[140] For a good summary of the charter movement see Francis P. Canavan's, "The Revolution That Failed," America CV (July 1, 1961) 484-487. Newark Evening News, May 19, 1959, p. 41.

movement gained the support of the clergy (usually politically neutral), college students, parents councils, and the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs.[141]

The CCC emerged as a surprisingly strong force in the city's politics. Included in its executive committee were John W. Ault, director of the YMCA; Mrs. Gilbert Leigh of the League of Women Voters; Leon Goodman, Vice President of the Kiwanis Club; Thomas Lysaght, President of the College Towers Tenants Association; and Dr. Benjamin Michalik and Father Francis P. Canavan of St. Peter's College.

After getting organized, the CCC carried on two operations. Their first aim was to gain approval of the referendum required by the Faulkner Act to initiate a charter study. The vote would be held in November, 1959. They solicited politicians in order to gain support for the charter study movement, but the professional politicians offered little help and let the "goo goos" run their course. Kenny's organization took a wait-and-see attitude; the Victoryites gave them the runaround. Unable to gain any assistance from politicians, the CCC turned to its next objective--the search for candidates for the Charter Commission. Here the CCC was fortunate. Working as amateurs they recruited five individuals with no political connections.

Among the candidates nominated were John P. Loftus, a lawyer and professor in the Seton Hall University Law School;

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[141] Ibid., Letter from Professor Richard J. Connors of Seton Hall University, an on-the-spot observer of the charter change movement.

Patrick J. Barratta, President of the Rotary Club and head of a construction company; E. Curtis Plant, a former member of the Board of Education; Mrs. Ann Borf-Quinn, a housewife and past President of the Public School Parents' Council; and Dr. Benjamin Michalik, a professor at St. Peter's College.

Prepared to study the city's government, the CCC asked Mayor Witkowski to give assistance, but he continued to consider the CCC movement an attack on himself. The Mayor's opposition backfired and, indeed, gave the movement needed publicity. In addition to the Mayor's blunders, luck was with them. Neither the Kennyites or Victoryites entered candidates to run for the commission. The CCC had the field to themselves, but they still needed political assistance to obtain the necessary petition signatures to place their candidates' names on the ballot. Help came from Commissioner Berry. In September, 1959, Berry joined the CCC and provided the needed manpower. Besides Berry's support the amateurs had started to mobilize by themselves. Albert Burstein, a lawyer, organized a speakers' bureau that gave talks to civic and social organizations. Street banners were set up, literature distributed, and a telephone campaign of 6,000 calls organized by Jerome Lazarus. Hard work required some financing. The CCC raised about $12,500, largely through the efforts of Leon Goodman. With the Berry organization doing much of the work in the trenches, the CCC started to roll. Lending valuable symbolic support was St. Peter's College. The participation of Father Canavan and Dr. Michalik represented an unusual break from Jersey City's past when the

clergy usually accepted the status quo. The final ingredient in assuring victory was the support of the Jersey Journal,[142] whose editor, Eugene Farrell, decided the movement had merit. Farrell took up the charter change crusade and ran feature stories and editorials to explain how the proposal would benefit the city. With little opposition from the professionals the referendum was approved by a vote of 43,202 to 31,741, and the CCC-indorsed five-person study commission simultaneously elected.[143]

The commission soon began to examine the city's problems in open hearings conducted by John P. Loftus, the Chairman of the Commission. Leading city politicians and community spokesmen were called to give their views; citizens were urged to participate and present their opinions. Unfortunately, few appeared. Nonetheless, helped by intensive media coverage, the movement for charter change dominated city politics. The professionals saw an overwhelming wave of support for change. Kenny and Witkowski, after vacillating, finally supported charter reform. In July, 1960, the reform commission published its findings. Spelling out some of the city's problems, the panel placed part of the responsibility on the structure of the government:

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Canavan, "The Revolution that Failed," p. 487. Jersey Journal, September 9, 1959, p. 1; Newark Evening News, May 19, 1959, p. 41.

> One of the greatest losses to the people of Jersey City during the years of commission government has been the loss in reputation that our city has suffered--the decline in our 'public image.' The city's great assets have been submerged by divided government incapable of handling the complicated problems of our modern economy.
>
> There is a ready tendency to blame the men in office for poor government.
>
> Based on our studies, however, it is our firm conviction that the commission form of government is the underlying cause for the failure of Jersey City to meet its problems.[144]

To solve the city's problems, the advisory group recommended a strong mayor-council plan. Typed a Plan C under the Faulkner Act, the new charter provided for a mayor with strong executive powers elected for a four year term. The city's legislative power was to be vested in a nine-member council elected concurrently with the mayor for a four year term. Three of the councilmen were to be elected at-large and six from wards. This would assure the election of a black councilman, if the wards were evenly drawn. Under the new charter the city's twelve wards were to be consolidated into six and changed from numbered ones to letters A to F. (See Map 7.) The difference in population between the largest and smallest ward was 5.8 percent. Each new ward was to average 46,000 residents, based on the 1960 census. Ward A, the Greenville District, took in the southern end of the old seventh ward. Inhabited by 45,575 residents it had a voter registration of 54 percent. The West Side Ward (B) took in the western sector of the old seventh ward, the eighth ward,

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[144]Jersey City, Report of the Jersey City Charter Commission, (July, 1960), p. 3.

and ninth ward. It had 46,725 residents of whom 61 percent were registered. The Journal Square Ward (C) made up parts of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh wards, and a small segment of the fifth ward and had 45,487 residents and a voter registry of 55 percent. The Hudson City Ward (D) took in the entire twelfth ward, part of the eleventh, and a small portion of the tenth. It was the least populated with 44,245 of whom 59 percent were registered. The new Downtown Ward (E), a key source of the Kenny organization's strength took in the first five wards with the exception of a small part of the fifth. Potential problems facing Kenny could be seen from its population which numbered 45,216 with only 45 percent registered. The last Ward (F), the Lafayette area, had the largest number of black voters and took in all the old sixth ward, the eastern portion of the seventh, eighth, and ninth wards. It had 46,810 residents with 46 percent registration.[145]

Besides redistricting the city, the new charter gave important powers to the mayor. It strengthened his fiscal and appointive authority and gave him an opportunity to exercise political and civic leadership. He could appoint the business administrator and department heads with the advice and consent of the council. In addition, he was to supervise all city operations and have a veto power.[146] The mayor was to be elected directly by the voters, in contrast

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[145] Ibid., Jersey Journal, December 11, 1960, pp. 1 & 13.

[146] Jersey City, Report of the Jersey City Charter Commission (July, 1960), pp. 27-28.

to commission government where the commissioners chose the mayor. Another provision stipulated he be elected by the majority of the voters and "if no candidate for mayor receives a majority of the votes cast, then a special election between the top two candidates from that office is held five weeks later."[147] Similar provisions applied to ward councilmen and at-large candidates. The run-off was to prevent the boss's candidate from splitting the vote and gaining office by a "slim plurality."[148] Jersey City's tradition of non-partisan elections was to be continued.

In concluding their study the commission touched on a critical issue:

> Jersey City's future rests with the people. They must accept the final responsibility for our city government. In the ultimate sense, it is the people who make the city.[149]

In November, 1960, the people spoke and overwhelmingly adopted the new form of government by a 84,589 to 9,694 vote. With the passage of charter change, the reformers had led a revolution half-way.[150] To complete it, they needed to elect candidates for mayor and councilmen. The most logical choice was John P. Loftus, the Chairman of the Charter Commission. But Loftus was not a politician and, after deliberating and failing to gain the financial and organizational support

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[147] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid., p. 50.

[150] Canavan, "Revolt That Failed," p. 489.

required, decided not to run. The CCC had to search for a new candidate.

Boss Kenny had no such problems. Expecting to run against the Victoryites under the old charter, Kenny had his candidate ready--Thomas Gangemi. The new charter gave an added incentive to elect a mayor. It also required additional candidates for the councilmen posts. Kenny shrewdly decided to bring in fresh faces to go along with the new form of government. An insurance salesman, a doctor, a telephone executive, a female Republican, and other good government types were selected.

The 1961 city election became an example of how the Boss allowed the reformers to deliver the body while he captured the wake. As Frank Hague had done in 1913, Kenny intended to use a reform movement to regain power. But Gangemi's candidacy raised several problems. A poor speaker and an ambivalent figure who had been against and then for Kenny, Gangemi needed boosting. To advance the County Supervisor, Kenny emphasized his business qualifications. Gangemi also gained some media attention by speaking out for county economy and improved efficiency. He became active in an attempt to move the $500 million farmer's market from New York to New Jersey.[151] Another selling point was his ethnic identity. As an Italian running with the support of an Irish boss, he would reach many "bullet" voters. His physical

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[151] Newark Evening News, March 11, 1960, p. 1; December 25, 1960, p. 14.

attractiveness gave him an added advantage with women voters.

Gangemi's ethnic identity was to be exploited to its fullest by the Irish boss. For years Italians had been denied recognition, and now they saw their chance. The Irish monopoliy of power had convinced some Italians that political leadership and winning qualities came from some mystical secret of the Celts. Gangemi finally gave the Italians their chance to show they too could win. To insure the ethnic issue would not be forgotten, Kenny had his former county supervisor and ward leader, John Deegan, appear on television. In a carefully scripted show written by William Flanagan, Deegan stirred up the Italian community by making a subtle remark about Gangemi's candidacy. "To my Irish friends and supporters, I say don't hold it against Gangemi and vote against him because he is an Italian." Deegan succeeded in arousing the Italian voters' ire and may well have solidified them behind the organization candidate.[152]

While Kenny put forth a former enemy, the CCC decided to run a former ally of the Boss, Bernard Berry. The decision divided them. A minority felt a new face was needed to change not only the brand of politics which stamped the city but the brand of politicians. The majority of the CCC, however, felt Berry was the best available candidate. The business community had not placed much faith or money in the reformers' efforts and to win, the independents needed someone with a base

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[152]This information was obtained from an interview with John R. Longo.

of support. Berry had broken with the Boss after the 1957 city election, because Kenny would not let him have a say in the make-up of the county ticket. Although not a new face, the "little fire plug," had gained an independent image by striving for efficiency in city government while mayor. He also had built up a small but pivotal organization from the patronage in the Parks Department. He became the "last best hope" of the reformers.

To prevent the independents from changing Jersey City's brand of politics, Kenny prepared his organization. At an April primary rally he shook off any pretense of having retired and reminded his troops their jobs depended on Gangemi's victory.

> I intend to scrutinize the returns very carefully and I will not be fooled or deceived by alibis, excuses, or explanations. I am serving clear and positive notices to everyone who counts himself part of the Democratic organization who expects to reap the fruits of victory . . .
>
> I take no stock whatsoever in lip service. You better get on the ball tonight. Keep on it all day tomorrow and keep it up until May 8.[153]

The Boss could not afford to sit out another four years. The "little white house" had to be retaken, but Kenny had a fight on his hands. Opposing Gangemi was not only Berry, but the incumbent, Charles Witkowski, and three minor candidates. A run-off thus appeared likely.

Lasting three months, the campaign was a gruelling affair. Started in overcoats in April, it ended in shirtsleeves in

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[153] Newark Evening News, April 18, 1961, p. 21.

June. The issues were clear from the opening bell. Running as the candidate of reform, Berry campaigned against the machine. He asked voters to "shake off a half century of commission government and boss rule." Gangemi and Kenny replied by attacking Berry for being part of the chaos during the last four years. The Kenny forces tried to present Gangemi as a "new man," who would bring about the reforms advocated by the charter commission.

As the campaign heated up, the two major opponents, Berry and Gangemi, squared off. The reform candidate questioned Gangemi's record as a businessman and county supervisor. He pointed to the "marble top desks" and "Top Hat night club" scandals. "Gangemi has crust to campaign on his business ability when in effect he has been giving the people the business since 1957." The County Supervisor responded by reminding Berry the Top Hat agreement never "took place." Berry is "talking about things that didn't even happen," claimed Gangemi.[154]

The debate soon shifted to the issue of Kennyism. Berry charged if Gangemi were elected he would be Kenny's "puppet." Gangemi blundered by giving credence to the charge:

> I say to you Berry that you are not fit to be mayor. If you could doublecross a great man like John Kenny, then you will doublecross the people of Jersey City, if by some miracle you should be elected. Berry has called me Kenny's puppet. Let me say that I want to be a puppet of a great man like John V. Kenny.[155]

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[154] Newark Evening News, April 20, 1961, p. 26.

[155] Ibid., April 22, 1961, p. 6.

Another candidate who made Kenny the issue was Charles Witkowski. The Mayor, running on an "I Stand Alone" platform ripped into the Boss for using county power to persecute him. Witkowski accused Kenny of using an "old political weapon," last minute indictments. (Nine of the Mayor's appointees to the Board of Education had just been indicted by a Hudson County Grand Jury.) In a spirited speech the Mayor charged: "Those men were indicted for one reason. I appointed them. I know who they're after. They're after me. Why don't they have the guts to come and get me. I'm going to meet the best jury of all May 9. The people."[156] In a more specific attack the candidate charged: "Only John V. Kenny, the boss of our judicial processes in the county, is capable of election eve skullduggery."[157] Further, Witkowski stated "the grand jury sworn in May 2, 1960, did not hand up the indictments until after my candidacy had been announced almost a year later." Reports that indictments were pending had been rumored for many months. They concerned alleged attempts by Board members to conspire with two school employees and business firms to defraud the city of a total of $120,389 in repairs and purchases.[158]

Witkowski's attacks did not worry Kenny. He was more

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[156] Ibid., April 20, 1961, p. 26.

[157] Ibid., April 22, 1961, p. 6.

[158] Ibid., April 13, 1961, p. 18; April 12, 1961, p. 36; April 18, 1961, p. 21; May 17, 1961, p. 26; Jersey Journal, May 11, 1961, p. 1.

concerned with his chief opponent. Entering the campaign, the Boss belittled Berry's attempts to claim credit for the city's school building program. "I want everybody to know the man responsible for building four new schools and rebuilding No. 8 is not a candidate but your speaker, John V. Kenny." He continued his attack by criticizing Berry for lack of gratitude:

> . . .I said to this fellow who succeeded me. I'm going to make you mayor. I'm going to make you leader of the Democratic Party. He didn't believe me. In politics and friends I respect loyalty.[159]

Berry countered by claiming that Kenny's machine was the major threat to achieving the reformers' goals. In an impassioned speech he warned:

> If the Kenny-Gangemi machine is able to move from the courthouse to City Hall, you will have the same cancer that has afflicted Jersey City for the last 50 years.
>
> This is the real issue. Machine politics against government to be set up by business and professional people to do something to pull Jersey City up by the boot straps and set her on the road to economy and efficiency.
>
> The job is only half done. Don't wake up on the day after election to find that the same old political hacks and machines are in control of city government.[160]

On election day the party hacks, indeed, were still in control. Gangemi did not win a majority, but he received the largest vote. The returns showed him gaining 49,340 votes to 30,400 for Berry and 23,591 for Witkowski. Since no candidate received a majority, a run-off was necessary. In the council

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[159] Ibid., April 21, 1961, p. 26.

[160] Ibid., April 28, 1961, p. 38.

races the same result occurred except in the Downtown Ward where the Kenny candidate, Joseph Connors, won by an overwhelming majority. In commenting on the results, Kenny expressed his bewilderment. He compared the election to a baseball game where a team scores the most runs but does not win. The run-off to him was a needless extra inning.[161]

The extra inning proved to be as gruelling as the regulation contest. It was fought with everything from hurled eggs on street corners to briefs in the New Jersey Supreme Court. Berry restructured his campaign to gain a broader appeal. He and his aides had hoped the Jersey Journal would have backed their campaign as they did the charter reform. The former Mayor was the candidate of the CCC, and it had been the Journal's strong support that helped the reformers overcome the machine in changing the city's government. But in the 1961 city election, the Journal failed to take a stand, and only gave Berry equal time with his opponents.

Another problem Berry faced was the unwillingness of many of the good government forces to continue the fight against the machine once they had salved their civic consciousness by pushing charter change through. This cohesive force disintegrated in the face of a contest of personalities among Berry, Gangemi, Witkowski, and others which divided the reformers. The marriage of the Berry forces and the CCC was thus a limited partnership. Lacking the

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[161]Jersey Journal, May 10, 1961, p. 1.

support he expected, Berry came out swinging and hoped to land a heavy blow. The former Mayor shifted from a mass media approach to a hard hitting street corner one. Speaking from the back of trucks at outdoor rallies and going into food markets to talk to shoppers, Berry tried to reach the voters with physical contact. To draw out his opponent, he again challenged Gangemi to a face-to-face debate.[162]

Waging a vigorous campaign, Berry gained unexpected help from the courts. In a battle over the ballot position, his forces had challenged City Clerk, James A. Tumulty's listing of candidates by rows. The State Supreme Court upheld their appeal by ruling the candidates for mayor, councilmen-at-large, and ward councilmen had to appear on separate ballot lines because of the non-partisan nature of the election.[163] After the court ruling a new drawing took place, but again the Berry forces challenged Tumulty. At a riotous confrontation with fists and epithets exchanged, the Berry and Kenny armies fought for control of the precious ballot drum. Berry contended that neither candidate's card moved in the drum if it was not thoroughly shaken, and thus a card could easily be remembered and located. The candidate told the City Clerk, "Don't forget to draw the card on the left." Tumulty answered with a glare and remarked Berry knew which direction his "heart lies." "We know where your heart is," shouted Maurice McLaughlin,

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[162] Ibid. June 2, 1961, p. 1. Interview with Hal Kierce.

[163] Newark Evening News, June 14, 1961, p. 24.

Berry's attorney. "We want to know where the cards are." The anti-Kenny forces even had a movie camera to record the City Clerk's moves. But it did not change their position. After the drawing they attacked Tumulty for failing to shake the drum and for refusing to hold separate drawings for each of the five ward councilmen.[164] The proceedings were again declared invalid and a judge conducted a special drawing. This time Berry was satisfied when his name was drawn first.[165] By gaining the top row, the Berry workers had given their campaign a needed lift. With the candidates appearing on separate lines, the contest was to be more of a head-to-head fight between Gangemi and Berry. The CCC candidates for at-large council seats used the ballot victory to urge voters to "prevent the domination of the city government by the county machine" on June 13.[166]

The reformers' mayoral candidate kept his momentum by going back on the stump and giving some stinging speeches. At a rally at the Fairmont Hotel, he portrayed his opponent as a "mythical millionaire." "Why," he asked, "does Gangemi call himself a big businessman, yet he has been on and off the city and county payroll since 1933."[167] "Gangemi has described himself as the head of five corporations. Listed among these five corporations is Spada Fruit Sales Agency,

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[164] Jersey Journal, June 2, 1961, p. 1.

[165] Hudson Dispatch, June 3, 1961.

[166] Jersey Journal, June 5, 1961.

[167] Newark Evening News, May 26, 1961, p. 24.

Inc. of Tampa, Florida. Now, Spada Fruit Sales is a flourishing corporation, but Gangemi is not the head of it; not the vice-president or secretary or treasurer. He is not the chairman of the board or even a member of the Board of Directors. He also claims to head the Citra-Fresh Inc. in Tampa. This corporation of which he is listed a secretary-treasurer consists of a shanty and two gas pumps listed by a credit rating house as worth between $3,000 and $5,000. So Mr. Gangemi is secretary-treasurer of a couple of gas pumps."[168]

The ferocity of the campaign increased as the run-off date drew closer. Attacks on Gangemi's background and character became almost a daily occurrence. Berry charged his opponent's refusal to debate left "serious doubts as to his qualifications as a candidate." "Why is he hiding. Is he afraid to tell the people the truth about his business holdings?"[169] Even Gangemi's associates were questioned. The reform candidate wanted to know why the Kenny-Gangemi camp had such people as a numbers runner, Ralph Faccone, and a waterfront hoodlum working for them. In an effort to further embarrass the Kenny candidate, the good government forces used a novel technique. They played back a 1953 radio broadcast made by Gangemi and his campaign manager, Ezra Nolan. The two former Kenny enemies had accused "the boss" of being linked with racketeers and mobsters.

Although under heavy pressure, the Kennyites did not back

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[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid. June 9, 1961, p. 24.

away from the heat of battle. Gangemi and Kenny went on the offensive. The candidate denied having any associations with criminal elements and claimed his closest friends were the clergy, businessmen, and respected citizens. He turned the tables on Berry by criticizing the Commissioner's role in the city government. Gangemi claimed the county taxes had stabilized and wondered why his opponent did nothing to improve the city's economy:

> Here we are located right next to New York, the greatest city in the world, but instead of looking like a proud neighbor we are a dirty back yard.[170]

The County Supervisor promised if elected to hire "the greatest expert in the nation to advise and assist him" and to use "every available federal and state law to remove slums and to speed effectively the rebuilding of our industry."[171]

Rushing to defend his candidate's reputation, Kenny, too, laced into the opposition. Sounding much like Hague, he charged:

> They have attempted to malign, villify, and smear Tom Gangemi. In spewing forth their slurs they have assailed his character by accusing him of associating with gangsters and racketeers. But Tom Gangemi is associated with outraged citizens, outraged over the highest tax rate in the city's history, who will answer falsifications with facts, lies with truths, smears and slurs with rising indignation.[172]

The Boss delivered this blistering attack at a $25 a plate

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[170] Jersey Journal, June 7, 1961, pp. 1 & 14.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

dinner sponsored by the Business and Professional Men's Club of Jersey City. Over $30,000 was raised. Kenny needed the money to make an all-out effort to counter the attacks on Gangemi's character that were growing even more serious.

In the last weeks of the campaign, some startling information came to light. The Berry camp had investigators probe Gangemi's background. They learned he had a questionable citizenship status. Some of Berry's advisors urged him to use the explosive information, but the candidate refused. He came to tears when discussing how it might ruin Gangemi and his family. The little Irishman told his public relations man, Hal Kierce, he would rather lose the election than destroy his opponent.[173] Although Berry did not raise the issue, he did allude to it, and in a cloaked appeal asked Gangemi to explain himself:

> In all the years he (Gangemi) has been in public life he has kept his background such a mystery that we still do not know what school or schools he attended.
>
> I think the people have the right to know something of the early years of the candidates for chief executive of the city. We know practically nothing about the life and background of Candidate Gangemi.
>
> A man in public life has an obligation to the people to make his background and qualifications available to the public. Gangemi has continuously hedged on releasing all pertinent data involving himself, his early life, his education, his business dealing, and his associates.[174]

Despite Berry's revived campaign and hard hitting attacks,

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[173] This analysis was drawn from interviews with Hal Kierce, Francis X. Beirne, and John Longo.

[174] Hudson Dispatch, June 7, 1961, p. 1.

the Kenny organization had too much money and manpower. The basic "organization" vote of 30,000 (as could be seen from the no vote on charter change) and the ethnic pride of the city Italians gave the Boss two potent weapons. Moreover, Witkowski's supporters were now supporting Gangemi. Witkowski had garnered over 23,000 votes in the May election and appeared almost certain to join the anti-Kennyites. But the machinations of the Boss prevented this. Kenny convinced Witkowski to stay out of the run-off. The prosecutor's office began to probe the Mayor on the statements he made during the campaign and his charges about the Board of Education indictments.[175] Witkowski was even called before a holdover Hudson County Grand Jury to testify about the Jersey City public school contracts. With the pressure of the prosecutor's office bearing down on him, the former Kenny fighter went into hiding. His organization then moved into Gangemi's camp. Berry's cause was lost.

Indications of the betrayed candidate's desperate position were revealed during the last week of the campaign. Berry made one final appeal and urged the citizens to break with the past:

> Jersey City has been retarded for so long because of a political boss and a machine that now threatens to return to City Hall.
>
> If the machine gets back in power the new image of Jersey City promised by the charter will be lost. During the past 10 years most of the old political machines have crumbled and we all thought the machine had crumbled in

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[175] Ibid., Interview with Hal Kierce.

> Jersey City in 1957, But now it threatens to take over again.[176]

The election results showed the Boss was back. Gangemi defeated his rival by a 14,650 vote majority. Along with the Kenny mayor, seven organization councilmen gained seats. The returns demonstrated Kenny had revived his organization. The stronghold of the Boss's following, the Downtown Ward, produced half of the 14,650 vote majority for Gangemi, and it was without the added lure of a ward councilman race. (See Table)

TABLE 10A

Jersey City Run-Off Returns
Mayor by Wards

Ward	A	B	C	D	E	F	Totals
Berry	8,294	10,042	7,198	8,236	3,175	5,832	43,277
Gangemi	9,605	10,519	10,295	9,712	10,250	7,546	57,927
						Majority	14,650

Source: Jersey Journal, June 14, 1961

Kenny's victory showed how Jersey City politics had come full cycle. In 1957 Berry had been his candidate and Gangemi the enemy. But in 1961 it was now Gangemi the candidate and Berry the enemy. The broker/boss demonstrated how a dealer can adroitly shuffle the cards and come out with a winning hand. By electing Gangemi, Kenny showed structural reform does not always bring social reform. The Boss realized his organization could not win and could not produce for him

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[176] Newark Evening News, June 2, 1961, p. 1.

after his 1957 defeat. To retain power, Kenny had to be able to do business with anybody and make himself the pivotal figure. By using his former opponent's workers and taking full advantage of the reformers' weaknesses, he made a comeback. His majority of 14,650, although not a large one, compared to the salad days of the Hague machine, was enough to win. The amazing recovery displayed his method of operation. Only he could bring order out of the factionalism existing in the city and county. Even when he retired and set up a council, he was only a phone call away. He had to do the brokerage job of compromising and arbitrating among competing interests. He was not so much a force in himself but the focal point. He stood on the spot where the lines of force intersected. As a broker/boss he became a specialist in estimating pressures and weighing their importance. He made judgments about where money, manpower, and propaganda could be used to retain power. Of course, he did not win every decision and knew how to adapt to defeat. He also knew his limits. It was his resourcefulness in adjusting to change that became one of the critical determinants in his amazing durability. In recapturing City Hall, he expanded his power and grew stronger. Like a phoenix, he rose up on the ashes of his enemies. By the mid 1960's he would become undisputed boss of Hudson County.[177]

The victory so invigorated the sixty-eight-year-old boss

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[177] John Chamberlain, American Stakes (New York: Liveright Press, 1935). Chamberlain gives the best analysis of how a broker politician needs to balance competing forces.

that he once again declared himself the leader of Hudson County Democratic organization. "I'm back," Kenny boasted. Promising to begin the task of welding together the party's rival factions, he said: "This is not difficult when you are on the winning side."[178] Although savoring his victory, Kenny did not waste much time before setting his next political goal: the election of Richard J. Hughes as Governor. Kenny predicted with a unified Democratic vote in Hudson, "Hughes would make it in November."[179]

Hughes needed all the help he could get. A political unknown from Mercer County, he had gained the nomination in April, 1961, as a compromise candidate. Incumbent Governor Meyner had tried to pick his own successor, but the county bosses rejected his choices. Kenny initially had pushed for the defeated Senatorial contender, John Grogan, and even Cornelius Gallagher offered to represent Hudson. But to avoid any bloodshed, the party chieftains finally settled on Hughes because of his identity with the organization. A protégé of the Mercer County leader Thorn Lord, and the son of a former Burlington mayor, Hughes knew the workings of city and county politics. He had edged his way up through the organization by serving as a state committeeman, assistant to the U.S. Attorney for New Jersey, and State Superior Court Judge. Through his political schooling he built up a lucrative law practice by serving as a lobbyist for railroad

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[178] Jersey Journal, June 14, 1961, p. 1.

[179] Ibid.

and drug firms.[180]

As an organization man, Hughes was acceptable to Kenny. The nomination of the former Mercer County committeeman gave Kenny added delight by defying the outgoing Governor. The Boss and his once "reliable" state leader were no longer on good terms. The actions of the Governor at the 1960 national convention, his slowness in filling patronage requests, and his opposition to a proposed new daylight harness racing track at Secaucus left Kenny less than enthralled. The Hudson Boss and other county leaders showed Meyner no longer ran the party when Hughes gained the nomination by an overwhelming primary vote.[181]

In the general election, the Democratic candidate had a far more difficult time. Although religion played no role in the election since Hughes and his opponent were both Roman Catholic, the Democratic nominee's closeness with two Irish bosses, Kenny and Dennis Carey of Essex County, gave him the image of a hand-picked candidate. Hughes also lacked state-wide recognition. His opponent, James Mitchell, had no such problems. As President Eisenhower's Secretary of Labor, he gained popularity as a "progressive Republican."[182] His public appeal had won him the Republican primary despite opposition from the GOP county bosses and their candidate,

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[180] Current Biography, 1962, Vol. XX, 220; New York Times, February 2, 1961, p. 18; November 8, 1961, p. 1. "New Governor," Time, November 17, 1961, p. 78.

[181] Newark Evening News, March 2, 1961, p. 21.

[182] Ibid.

Walter Jones of Bergen County. With the popular U.S. Senator Clifford Case backing him and President Eisenhower doing the same, Mitchell seemed a likely winner. The Republican candidate used two central issues with which to attack his opponent--Hughes's closeness to big business and bossism.

First, inveighing Hughes for his lobbying activities, Mitchell stated if elected, "I will not march down to the legislature with a paycheck of the Pennyslvania Railroad in my pocket."[183] He then turned to the issue of bossism. Assailing Kenny and Carey, the Republican candidate promised to put the Hudson County boss "out of business."[184] He labelled Hughes the Boss's "puppet:" . . ."The Democratic candidate was selected not by open primary, not by the rank and file of his party, but in a smoke filled room in Trenton."[185] With Mitchell talking about smoke filled rooms, Kenny, who did not smoke, knew there was political fire coming from the Republicans. The Boss readied his organization for another crucial battle and called for help from Washington. President Kennedy came to the rescue. The President spoke at a rally in Trenton and linked Hughes's campaign with his own domestic program while chiding Mitchell for refusing to debate. By having the President actively supporting him, Hughes received the critical recognition he needed. The Democratic nominee

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[183]"New Jersey Race," Time, June 6, 1961, p. 21.

[184]Ibid., Jersey Journal, November 3, 1961, p. 1.

[185]New York Times, November 3, 1961, p. 26; Jersey Journal, November 3, 1961, p. 1.

also helped his own cause by campaigning vigorously. Visiting every county at least twice, the Mercer County lawyer became a political dynamo. Unexpected help had come when Mitchell broke his leg and had to curtail his campaign.[186]

As the election neared, Hughes, too, had to curb his campaigning. The death of his father forced him to let other Democrats take over. Kenny and the other state leaders responded. The "Boss" used every resource he had to insure Hughes's victory. Money poured into the State Democratic campaign fund. Of the 2,500 tickets sold to a $100 a plate fund raising dinner, Hudson County provided more than twenty percent of the purchases. The election hinged on how well Hughes would do in the large Democratic counties. Kenny called in the candidate and even Berry and the anti-organization Democrats united behind Hughes.[187] When the returns came in, Kenny and the other bosses showed how important their efforts had been. The Democratic candidate beat his rival by only 34,920 votes. The totals were Hughes 1,084,194 and Mitchell 1,049,274.[188] Hudson County although not providing a large majority was still the banner county and gave the Democratic

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[186] Ibid. June 7, 1961, p. 35.

[187] Berry supported Hughes not because of Kenny but in spite of him. Hughes came to Jersey City and talked tough and independent to gain the support of Berry and others. Some observers claim Hughes broke a bargain with Berry after the election, when the governor told the former mayor to go see Kenny for any patronage. Berry refused to see Kenny until the day he died. Interview with John Longo.

[188] State of New Jersey, Manual of Legislature of New Jersey (Trenton, N.J., 1967).

candidate over a 40,000 vote majority. Jersey City came through with a 18,449 vote plurality. (See Table.) The Hughes victory in many ways paralleled Gangemi's. The organization produced best in the Downtown Ward and had its most difficulty with Hudson City which remained in enemy hands with Councilman William Maresca against the organization. Despite the mediocre size of the vote, Boss Kenny had no qualms and said, "It's only the wins that count and the size of the majority doesn't matter."[189]

The Boss looked upon the victory as a crowning achievement. He now had three layers of government to protect him. In Jersey City, Gangemi was in power; in Washington he had a fellow Irishman, John F. Kennedy; and in Trenton a new ally, Richard J. Hughes. Like Hague, he had built a shield. The Boss was so ecstatic over the Hughes's win that he remarked, "No one is getting us out for the next 50 years."[190]

TABLE 10B

Jersey City Returns
Comparison of Hughes and Gangemi's Plurality

Ward	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total of Plurality
Hughes	3,706	2,627	4,012	-270	6,809	3,007	18,449
Gangemi	1,311	477	3,097	1,476	7,075	1,714	14,650

*Source Jersey Journal, June 14, 1961; November 8, 1961.

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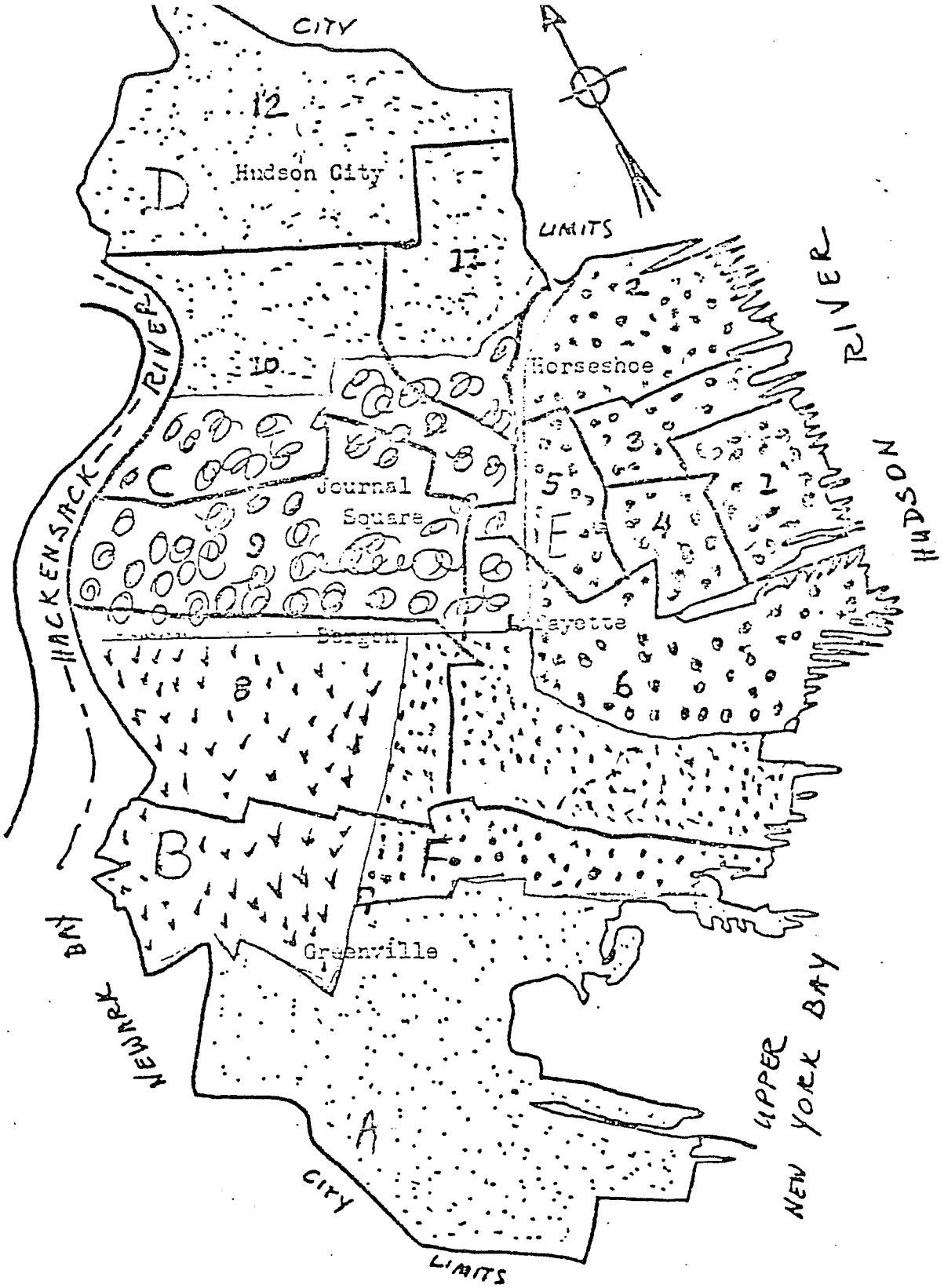
[189] Newark Evening News, November 12, 1961, p. 24.

[190] Jersey Journal, November 8, 1961, pp. 1 & 6.



1 thru 12--WARDS AND SECTIONS OF JERSEY CITY, 1913-1960

A thru F -- " " " " " , 1961--

Map 7

CHAPTER VI

THE GOLDEN ERA, 1961-1965

The Golden Era for the Kenny machine came in the 1960s. Having survived the challenges of the 1950s, John V. Kenny and his mercenary army were able to starve-out, buy-off, and beat down the opposition. Times were good. Through the election of Democratic Presidents, Governors and local officials the Kenny machine was well greased with booty and patronage. But more important, no damaging probes by federal or state authorities had shaken its mechanism. Always acting like a political broker in an unpredictable market, John V. Kenny showed if a boss could adapt, shift directions quickly and recognize his limits he could delay his "last hurrah" until a ripe old age.

The first example of adaptation came with the election of a new mayor in 1961. Kenny had survived certain defeat four years earlier by making an alliance with Thomas Gangemi. It was now the Italian leader's turn to collect on the pact. Before being sworn into office Gangemi announced he would be a "strong mayor." When asked about his ties to the Hudson boss, Gangemi responded: "I'll be happy to talk with John Kenny as with other leaders."[1] Denied the city's highest

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[1]Newark Star Ledger, June 18, 1961, p. 1.

office four years earlier, the former County Supervisor had numerous political debts and planned to pay them off. At his swearing in ceremony, he showed the strain by breaking down and crying. Having become the first Italian mayor in Jersey City's history, Gangemi was overcome with emotion and turned to his mentor, John V. Kenny, and his publicist, William Flanagan, for support. But soon the Mayor regained his composure and promised his administration would mark "not only the end of forty-eight years of commission rule but also a beginning."[2] He concluded by warning there would be "rough sailing ahead."[3] Little did he know how stormy the political waters in Jersey City could be.

Although he promised a "new image" for Jersey City, Gangemi represented continuity. A product of the Hague organization, he retained the qualities of a machine politician-ambition and acquisitiveness. As the city executive under the new form of government, he had extensive authority. Not having to share appointments with four other commissioners, the Mayor had over 550 jobs at his disposal. These patronage appointments included nine city directors, fifty deputy directors, scores of department secretaries, aides and many other positions not covered by civil service

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[2]Newark Evening News, June 18, 1961, p. 1.

[3]Jersey City, Minutes of Municipal Council, July 7, 1961; Newark Evening News, June 28, 1961, p. 1.

regulations. Given a healthy salary of $25,000, Gangemi prepared to reap the benefits of his political partnership.[4]

The new Mayor appointed loyal followers to top city positions. Ezra Nolan, his campaign manager, became Corporation Counsel. William McLaughlin, another supporter, became Police Director while John Moriarity was made Business Administrator, Michael Fiore placed in charge of the Department of Health and Welfare and Lawrence Camisa appointed Finance Director.[5] In a drive to take complete control of the city, Gangemi and his followers put pressure on holdover appointees. John X. Irving, a Murray follower and head of the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency, was told to resign or face a fate similar to one experienced by John R. Longo - a political activist jailed by Frank Hague.[6] Commissioners on the Incinerator and Sewerage Authorities were similarly told their terms of office ended with the installation of a new mayor. Even lower echelon employees were harassed. Some twenty part-time city recreation employees had their hours changed from day to night work in an attempt to oust them.[7]

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Jersey City, Minutes of Municipal Council, July 3, 1961.

[6] Interview with John X. Irving, former Executive Director of Jersey City's Redevelopment Agency and former Dean of Seton Hall Law School.

[7] Newark Evening News, July 12, 1961, p. 34; July 18, 1961, p. 1.

Gangemi also reached for one of the pivotal gears of city power--the Board of Education. Immediately after taking the oath of office, he swore in three new members. Although he had promised "to take politics out of education," Gangemi's appointees had been active in his campaign. When he gained full control of the Board, his followers proved to be anything but non-political. Like preceding Boards, they brought in their own people. John F. Sheehan, the Witkowski appointed president, was stripped of all but ceremonial powers. Shuffling of jobs and political reprisals followed. Important committee assignments were rearranged and reserved for the Mayor's followers. Joseph Toscano, a Gangemi appointee, became the key decision maker. He instructed the Superintendent of the Schools, Robert Coyle, to "invite" salaried members of the Board of Examiners--the strongest administrative body in the system--to resign voluntarily. The examiners controlled tests and certain appointments and promotions. To tighten their grip, the Gangemi bloc removed Sheehan from the Board of School Estimate--the body that drafted school district's budget. Even high school principals were ordered to change jobs as part of the board's new appointment policy.[8]

The power play by the new administration, however, did not go unchallenged. The displaced President of the Board,

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[8]Jersey City, Minutes of the Board of Education, Nov. 16, 1961; Jan. 11, 1962. See also John T. McGowan's column "On the Square," Newark Evening News, Jan. 14, 1962, p. 23.

John Sheehan, laced into the Mayor's economic and educational policies. After Gangemi demanded the Board revise its spending practices, Sheehan suggested: "Mayor Gangemi, who is a successful businessman in his own right, could lead the way, by giving up his $25,000 salary and serving the community as an unpaid servant, as board members do."[9] Gangemi ignored the suggestion and replied, "I have accepted the office and both the spiritual and material rewards that go with it."[10] But the criticism did not stop. Fred Martin, the only black City Councilman, called the Board of Education's suggestion that members of the Board of Examiners resign as "politically motivated."[11] Other attacks upon the Mayor came from the shifted recreational workers. They hired an attorney and took their case to the Civil Service Commission, charging political discrimination. More opposition came from other city employees. The City Tax Collector, Frank Beirne, and members of the Incinerator Authority also sought judicial review to prevent their being fired.[12]

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[9] Ibid.; Newark Evening News, July 12, 1961, p. 34; Jersey City, Minutes of the Board of Education, July 1961.

[10] Newark Evening News, July 11, 1961, p. 24.

[11] Ibid., July 12, 1961, p. 34.; Jersey City, Minutes of Board of Education, July 1961.

[12] Ibid., July 12, 1961, p. 34.

Despite the resistance, Gangemi pursued his goal of being an enterprising mayor. He pushed forward on all fronts and offered plans for economic revival. Proposals for a slum clearance program, redevelopment of the city's waterfront, construction of Liberty Industrial Park and the relocation of New York's Wholesale Produce Market to the Hackensack Meadowlands were discussed. Construction of the produce market in New Jersey had been Gangemi's pet project while County Supervisor, and he kept close surveillance over it by having his son, Thomas Gangemi, Jr., made Executive Director of the Hudson County Market Commission.[13] The Mayor knew if the produce market ever became a reality, numerous jobs and freight agreements would become available and with his deep interest in the business he would be given a chance to enrich himself politically and perhaps financially.

With the Mayor moving so quickly to consolidate power, many members of Kenny's organization felt uneasy. Ward leaders grumbled about the large number of jobs taken by the Mayor. They also saw Gangemi getting closer to other Hudson County Mayors such as Angelo Sarubbi of North Bergen and John Armellino of West New York, and wondered what his next move would be. But John V. Kenny showed no signs of uneasiness. Visiting his Florida haunts, the Boss let the Mayor be his own man. When complaints persisted, the "little Leader" told

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[13] Jersey Journal, July 2, 1961, p. 1; July 4, 1961, p. 1; New York Times, Aug. 5, 1961, p. 23; Oct. 31, 1961, p. 33.

his followers to "stop fighting and finding fault with Gangemi."[14] Defending the Mayor's appointments and pay raises he said: "One deserving fellow gets a raise and forty other guys want one and holler."[15] Despite the Boss's confidence, many Irish ward heelers grew increasingly suspicious. Knowing Kenny was nearing his seventieth birthday, they wondered if Gangemi would eventually try to dump the absentee boss.

The animosity and tension seething at the ward level finally erupted. In January 1962, a mere six months after Gangemi took office, John Brandle, the County Register and Bergen-Lafayette ward leader, decided to make the grievances of the organization public. While the Boss was south, Brandle led a coup against Gangemi by beginning a recall movement. Charging the Mayor used the payroll for his personal advantage the Register explained:

> The welfare of our ward's residents does not occupy any place in Gangemi's mind or heart. He is interested only in Tom Gangemi and the establishment of a royal family of his own. His family takes in $100,000 of city and county money in political jobs.
>
> A recall of Gangemi is absolutely imperative-right now and not three years hence. We cannot afford to wait for the next election. There will be no city to save if we wait three years.[16]

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[14] Newark Evening News, Dec. 21, 1961, p. 24.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., Jan. 31, 1962, p. 1.

Brandle expected other party workers to assist him in obtaining the needed signatures for the recall and predicted by June 1962 Gangemi would be out of office.

But the County Register had failed to gain the approval of the Boss. Kenny disavowed the insurgent:

> Brandle's announcement is definitely not the stand of the organization or anyone else in it. Gangemi is earnest in his efforts to do something for the city. He has a thankless and most difficult task and the least anyone can do is have a bit of patience.[17]

Without the Boss's support Brandle's rebellion fizzled. Only an anti-organization Councilman, Thomas Maresca, gave encouragement by charging, "the professional politician has had his day in our city and has failed miserably."[18] But Maresca was not in the organization and could afford to back Brandle; however, no other ward leader dared challenge Kenny and Gangemi.

To show his displeasure with the rebel, the Boss stripped him of his party position. Brandle became an alienated office holder and retaliated by firing several organization workers from his department, including Peter Grompone, a west side ward leader. A minor eruption fomented. Brandle had a large following in his ward and could cause serious problems if left unchallenged. But the Boss showed his resourcefulness by filling in his weaknesses

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., May 20, 1962, p. 25; May 21, 1962, p. 23.

with new supporters. Brandle had been criticized by some blacks for living outside the Bergen-Lafayette ward, and Kenny took full advantage of the situation. Reaching out for new followers, he made overtures to the black Councilman, Fred Martin, and had one of the Councilman's followers, Julian Robinson, appointed to the Jersey City Housing Authority. Other blacks received positions on the city or county payroll. Besides bringing in blacks, Kenny and Gangemi co-opted other district workers in the ward. John R. Longo, a long time organization foe and supporter of independent movements, was appointed to the Jersey City Incinerator Authority.[19] Having been a vocal critic of the Hague and Kenny organizations and a skillful organizer of the Junction (a section of old wards six and eight) Longo became a valuable asset to the organization. To tie the ward even closer, Kenny allowed Gangemi to work with a defector, Frank Beirne, the former sixth-ward leader. In return for his support, the Mayor stopped demanding Beirne resign as City Tax Collector. Vincent Ferro, an active worker in the ward, was named the new leader of the ward. By going into the districts and putting new supporters on the pad, Kenny was able to say goodbye to Brandle. Sticking to his favorite adage, "today's enemies are tomorrows allies,"

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[19] Newark Evening News, Aug. 5, 1962, p. 23; Feb. 8, 1962, p. 22; Interviews with John R. Longo, Frank X. Beirne and Fred Martin.

the Boss had solved another problem by adaptation.[20]

The strength of Kenny's organization was shown at the ballot box. With his and Gangemi's armies united and new supporters joining, his county and Congressional candidates rolled over the opposition. In November 1962 the organization won an "old fashion victory" with a 90,000 vote majority. The Kenny machine was also able to reap the benefits of having friendly executives in Washington and Trenton. President John F. Kennedy pumped some grease into the machine by giving Hudson County a massive federal contract. Construction of the nation's largest automated post office was to begin in Kearny--a town in West Hudson. The $40 million contract included a $20 million subcontract for building the plant. This contract was awarded to Kearny Associates, a firm headed by North Bergen Mayor Angelo Sarubbi, an ally of the Boss. The design contract went to the architectural firm of Comparetto and Kenny, Inc., a Jersey City company. Bernard Kenny, the key figure in the firm had previously served a prison term for concealing his interests in the architectural business while head of Jersey City's Redevelopment Agency. But despite his past misdeeds, Bernard Kenny found little difficulty in gaining work and became the Boss's tenth freeholder on the Hudson County leglislative body

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[20]This quote comes from a pamphlet put out by the Kenny organization. Entitled "A Page Out of John V. Kenny's Story of Success," it gives some of the rules the Boss urges his followers to adhere to. The author is grateful to John R. Longo for showing me this and other information on the Kenny organization.

and received many contracts for his firm.[21]

John V. Kenny also received valuable patronage from the Democratic President. In September 1961 a Hudson County resident, Anthony Augelli, was appointed to the Federal District Court. The following year James A. Coolahan, a Superior Court judge and long-time follower of the Boss, gained a seat on the federal bench. Coolahan's appointment proved particularly valuable. It showed Kenny had a link to the White House. President Kennedy called the Hudson Boss to tell him of the nomination and, when told Kenny was at the track he called the following day and said to "Mayor Kenny" that he was appointing "an old friend" to a federal judgeship. Kenny used Coolahan's appointment to hold out the carrot to his followers. He mentioned how President Kennedy "remembered the work that was done for him before the 1960 election, and some of you people could learn from him."[22] Having influence

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[21] According to the United States Attorney General for New Jersey, the lucrative post office contract proved to be worth $400,000 in kickbacks to John V. Kenny and his underlings. He and three other officials were indicted for extortion. See Newark Evening News, Feb. 17, 1969, p. 25; Newark Star Ledger, Aug. 13, 1971, p. 1; Paul Hoffman, Tiger in the Court (Playboy Press, Chicago), 1973, p. 171.

[22] Newark Evening News, Sept. 18, 1962, p. 1; U.S.Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, Nomination of James A. Coolahan To Be U.S. District Judge For the District of New Jersey, Report of Proceedings, Vol. 1, 88th Congress, 1st sess., March 27, 1962; Newark Evening News, May 4, 1962, p. 15, "Kenny at Capital: Visit Stirs Judgeship Speculation." Augelli's appointment was not totally attributable to Kenny. John Milton, a prestige lawyer in Hudson County and a former Hague advisor, was most responsible for Augelli's appointment.

in high places, the "little guy" showed struggling lawyers if they remained faithful the rewards might be great.

Governor Richard Hughes was also a source of patronage. The indebted Governor did not forget Hudson County's 40,000 votes in his election. To repay Kenny, the Governor filled sensitive judicial and law enforcement positions with loyal allies. The Governor moved up the incumbent Hudson County Prosecutor, Lawrence Whipple, to the Superior Court. The appointment did not go unchallenged, however. Senate Majority leader Charles W. Sandman, a Republican from Cape May County, expressed surprise: "I didn't think he (Whipple) would be nominated."[23] The GOP leader criticized Whipple's running of the Hudson County's prosecutor office. Noting that the Attorney General had once summoned Whipple to Trenton to complain about the operation of the Hudson office, Sandman wondered how a "county where law enforcement has broken down" and where they have "everybody but Eliot Ness in there trying to clean it up" could have the prosecutor promoted.[24]

The Hudson prosecutor had been embarrassed when raids by state and federal officials uncovered many gambling activities in Hoboken and Jersey City. Further embarrassment came when a safe in the prosecutor's office was stolen. (Whipple claimed nothing of value was in it, but outside

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[23]Newark Evening News, May 1, 1962, p. 21.

[24]Ibid., July 16, 1962, p. 27.

observers wondered if the jailhouse was safe.) Another bizarre episode concerned the county's leading numbers runner, Joseph "Newsboy" Moriarity. In July 1962, two laborers found $2.4 million while doing work on a garage in Jersey City. Shortly after this another $168,000 was found. The money belonged to "Newsboy," adding to the belief that Hudson had "problems" with law enforcement.[25] Despite the problems, Whipple's nomination received Senate approval.[26]

To replace Whipple, the boss recommended a candidate right out of his Hudson County school for machine politics--James A. Tumulty. The controversial City Clerk and former Corporation Counsel represented the ultimate in loyalty to the Boss. Highly emotional and autocratic, Tumulty feared no one. Governor Hughes and the New Jersey Senate went along, and Tumulty became Hudson's new prosecutor.[27] At his installation the Kenny organization used the occasion as a time of rejoicing. Speaking on the qualifications of a

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[25] Newark Evening News, June 29, 1962, p. 17; July 2, 1962, p. 23; July 12, 1962, p. 23; July 16, 1962, p. 2; Nov. 25, 1962, p. 1. For more information on the Moriarity case see the article "Money Mad: The Case of Joseph Moriarity," Newsweek, July 16, 1962, p. 25, and Jack McGowan's profile of Moriarity in the Newark Evening News, Jan. 12, 1969, p. 21.

[26] Newark Evening News, June 30, 1962, p. 3; Nov. 19, 1962, p. 12. Governor Hughes and Senator Sandman debated on television and Hudson County was referred to as a place "where law enforcement had broken down."

[27] Ibid.

prosecutor, County Supervisor John Deegan gave this opinion:

> ...He must have the dedication of a college professor, the executive ability of a financier, the humility of a deacon, the discipline of a demon, the adaptability of a chamelon, the hope of an optimist, the courage of a hero, the wisdom of a serpent, the gentleness of a dove, the patience of Job, the persistence of a devil...and the O.K. from Johnny.[28]

Hudson's State Senator, William Kelly, was more succint: "So long as he has the last one he doesn't need the rest."[29] As for the new prosecutor he emphatically explained what qualifications he had:

> I'm Kenny...I said I'm Kenny and just so there will be no ambiguity about it in the mind of anyone present here or outside the reach of my voice throughout the length and breadth of New Jersey and beyond. I want to say that again, lest there be any misunderstanding for the record make that John V. Kenny, former mayor of Jersey City.[30]

The loyalty expressed by Tumulty was not unusual for a Kenny appointee. A year earlier, a Hudson freeholder upon being sworn in and pledging his fidelity to God and country, concluded by saying, "My loyalty to John V. Kenny on this board will always be 100 percent."[31]

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[28] Newark Evening News, Feb. 1, 1963, p. 1.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., April 22, 1962.

Why Kenny could secure such loyalty and patronage can only be understood by examining the role of New Jersey's county bosses. As one scholar has noted, "County leaders in New Jersey enjoyed a degree of power not matched by their counterparts in other states."[32] Essentially this power derived from the fact that the county was a unit for electing senators and assemblymen, as well as county officials. Thus the county leader could control extensive patronage resources, manage nominations, influence decisively the voting behavior of his legislative delegations, and bargain from strength with governors seeking to advance particular programs. Governor Hughes, during his first administration, proved so cooperative in fueling the Hudson machine that Kenny called him "the best friend Hudson had since A. Harry Moore"--a former Hague governor.[33]

As patronage flowed from Trenton, Kenny used the appointments to keep shuffling his organization. A broker in an unstable market, his favorite strategy was to keep everybody guessing about his role in the organization. Freeholders never knew when he would want them to resign. Since gaining power he had appointed eight and personally selected a score of others. No one ever got too comfortable. Rising challengers were shifted in and out of the county.

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[32]Richard P. McCormick, "An Historical Overview," in Politics in New Jersey, ed. by Alan Rosenthal and John Blydenburg (Princeton, N. J.: Rutgers University, 1975), pp. 1-31.

[33] Hudson Dispatch, November 6, 1962.

Frank Rodgers, Mayor of Harrison, moved from a county post to Secretary of the State Racing Commission. William Musto, Mayor of Union City, moved to and from Trenton as an Assemblyman and State Senator.[34]

Kenny let potential challengers keep a bloc of power but never gave them the opportunity to replace him. He even allowed his protégé and right-hand man, William Flanagan, the County Sheriff, to leave Hudson and go on to become the Executive Director of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. Flanagan had been one of the few people in the organization who planned strategy and tried to bring some efficiency to the districts.[35] The loss of Flanagan left a void in the organization, but for Kenny there was no indispensable man. He reacted quickly by training a new chamberlain, John J. Kenny (no relative). A ward leader and "forty-niner," the younger Kenny differed from Flanagan by being less a personality and more of a behind-the-scenes operator. To assist the younger Kenny in learning the intricacies of the organization, the Boss brought in Benjamin Schlossberg, a shrewd political whip from the Hague days and

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., March 30, 1962; April 13, 1962, p. 1. Interview with John T. McGowan, reporter for the Newark Evening News. Not even Kenny's crony and travelling companion, Joseph Culloo, remained with him. Culloo and the Boss had a falling out over a personal matter and never settled their differences.

and County Real Estate Director.[36] It would take time to train John J. Kenny, and in the meantime the Boss remained Hudson's chief political coordinator.

The juggling of personnel did more than keep Kenny in control, however. It gave recognition to many groups. Although a Celt to his bones, he allowed Italians and Poles to move up the organization ladder. George Bonelli, a ward leader on the western slope in Hudson City, replaced Flanagan as sheriff. Bonelli had much ability and as an important county official he gave Italians some of the rewards they expected. Dominick Daniels had already been made Congressman and with Gangemi as mayor, Italians appeared ready to assume control. But Kenny never let it happen. He kept balancing one group against another. To counterbalance the Italians, he had Poles placed in key jobs. John J. Kijewski became President of the City Council; Jacob J. Duszynski, a freeholder; and Alfred Suminski, an assemblyman.[37] By keeping all lines open the Boss left everyone in a state of uncertain expectation. Staying on top required juggling and a sense of balance, and the "little guy" was adept at both.

Kenny had also learned not to move too quickly. The lesson served him well as he let Gangemi run Jersey City.

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[36]This analysis came from interviews with ward leaders and county officials.

[37]Newark Evening News, June 23, 1961, p. 1.

After Brandle's aborted coup, the Mayor remained a forceful and domineering figure. Making better speeches and building his own following, Gangemi gave his people a sense of ethnic pride. He launched an ambitious building program which involved a $100 million general construction plan for Journal Square. The new site was to give the city its first complete department store and be called Journal Square Plaza. Gangemi also refocused attention on the Hudson River and Upper Newark Bay where railroad terminal operations once made the city a booming transportation hub. The mayor's office talked of making 2,500 acres of railroad property on Upper New York Bay into an industrial center. His plans for the construction of a 180 acre Liberty Industrial Park received a boost when a paper manufacturer, Mead Corporation, signed as the first tenant.[38]

Jersey City seemed full of economic hope. The Hudson County Market Commission negotiated with the railroads on a freight delivery agreement. Even the dismal environs of the Holland Tunnel gained attention when Gangemi announced plans to commence construction of a Holiday Inn and commercial facilities at the tunnel's entrance.[39] Jersey City's dilapidated housing stock also was to be repaired. The ambitious Mayor hired a full time housing specialist trained

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[38]Information on the building programs under Gangemi's leadership can be found in a good summary article: Dudley Dalton, "Vast Changes Due for Jersey City," New York Times, Sept. 29, 1963, Sec. IV, pp. 1, 6.

[39]Jersey Journal, Jan. 4, 1962, p. 1.

in area preservation and rehabilitation techniques. With housing went schools, and Gangemi had plans for them too. A new downtown high school and three new elementary schools were to be built.[40] The city executive's grandiose building programs gave support to the belief he had "found" himself as mayor. It also caused the Jersey Journal to comment on the progress of the new city charter, "The new form of government does what had been hoped for--it does restore power of decision to City Hall."[41]

Indeed, power gravitated toward City Hall. Gangemi kept reaching out and expanding his organization at the expense of Kenny's. The Mayor had a survey of the Medical Center conducted and demanded the resignation of the Kenny appointed hospital administrator. When the official refused to quit, Gangemi fired him. Kenny, trying to avoid a confrontation used his own influence in the underworld to relocate the dismissed official. According to transcripts of tapes from a mafia leader, Angelo "Gyp" DeCarlo, the Hudson Boss asked the Cosa Nostra leader to have Newark Mayor Hugh Addonzio appoint his man to the Martland Medical Center in Newark.[42] Kenny showed an unwillingness to challenge Gangemi

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[40]New York Times, Sept. 29, 1963.

[41]Editorial, Jersey Journal, July 2, 1963.

[42]Newark Evening News, Jan. 8, 1970, pp. 1, 11; New York Times, July 24, 1962, p. 18; July 26, 1962, p. 15.

and preferred to issue his perennial warning about laxity.

Calling some workers "butter buns," he complained:

> ...You get on the payroll. You get fat. You say I got mine. Then you come to me or Tom Gangemi with a guy and tell us he's the greatest worker you got. The fellow gets a job and he's a waste. Don't come to Gangemi or don't come to me saying you need 40 people off to go make a canvass and they stand around the street reading old election returns. Get them in the districts. Any shirker, any phony won't be around long.[43]

Mayor Gangemi took a softer approach and urged the organization to "march together" and "set our differences aside."[44] But the organization was not together, and it would not remain united with the Italian and Irish factions battling.

The Mayor had already faced a revolt by Brandle. Another rebellion developed when the Downtown Councilman and Kenny ward leader, Joseph Connors, started stirring things up at council meetings. Although he did not intend a coup, Connors intended to show not all was harmonious in the Gangemi-Kenny alliance. The only candidate to have won without a runnoff in the 1961 elections, Connors expected to have an important post in the new administration. Boosted for President of the City Council, the Downtown leader became frustrated when he did not gain the position. Further tension occurred when Gangemi refused to appoint one of the Councilman's strongest backers, Edward Robinson, to the

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[43] Newark Evening News, Sept. 16, 1962, p. 11.

[44] Ibid.

sewerage authority.[45]

To vent his anger, Connors became critical of the Gangemi administration and on an important sewerage bond issue defied the Mayor and Boss by voting "No." He labelled the proposal a "$3 million giveaway."[46] Charging the Mayor and Council spent "more time deliberating over an $18,000 demolition contract than on the bond issue which will saddle the citizens of Jersey City with a tab of $4.6 million for the next 20 years," Connors gave signs of bolting.[47] When witnesses testified to defend the expenditure, the irritated Councilman wondered why the "experts came only from those parties who are in line to receive a fat percent of monies expected." In commenting on the testimony of a sewer engineer and city bond counsel, Connors noted "there was no rebuttal or endorsement from unbiased sources" and, added, "one item of $170,000 for painting pipes, cries out for refutation."[48]

Connors's criticism proved to be only one of many problems facing Gangemi. As a candidate in 1961 he had made

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[45]Interview with former Newark Evening News reporter, John T. McGowan. See his column "Connors Differs But Not Breaking," Newark Evening News, Sept. 23, 1962, p. 18. Jersey City, Minutes of Municipal Council, Sept. 6, 1962; Newark Evening News, Feb. 3, 1963, p. 34; Sept. 16, 1962, p. 11.

[46]Ibid., Sept. 23, 1962, p. 18.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid., Minutes of Municipal Council, Sept. 6, 1962.

many promises; those promises came back to haunt him as an office holder. When he became mayor he promised to create a "new image," but his heavy spending on building projects and payroll additions caused the old image of Jersey City as a heavily taxed city to remain. During his first year in office the property tax rose by over $15.00, going from $98.00 to $113.90 per $1,000 of assessed valuation.[49] The large increase caused the business community dismay. Another cleavage between the Mayor and business leaders was the new shopping center on route 440 in the western section of the city. Established merchants feared a loss of trade and urged the Mayor to block its construction. Gangemi, at first, supported the merchants but then reversed his stand and announced: "the shopping center would be built."[50] The Mayor's stand caused him to lose the support of an important ally, Harold Solomon, President of the Jersey City Merchant Council and member of the Board of Education.

Solomon's defection was followed by that of other allies. The policemen and firemen had remembered the Mayor's campaign promise of salary parity with New York employees. But when he came into office, Gangemi found his promise could not be kept. Claiming the city could not afford the raises, the Mayor engaged in a bitter dispute with the public safety

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[49]New Jersey, Division of Local Government, Annual Report 1961-62. Newark Evening News, Oct. 24, 1962, p. 55.

[50]Newark Evening News, Oct. 30, 1962, p. 41.

employees.[51] Patrick McGee, Chairman of the Jersey City Policemen and Firemen's Council, accused him of reneging on a commitment. A complete break between Gangemi and the police came at a negotiating session when both sides terminated discussions and started a name calling exchange.[52] The police put on the pressure and took to the streets. They picketed a Democratic fund raising dinner and carried signs reading, "Gangemi Sells Melons--We Arrest Felons."[53] To put more muscle into their demands, they contributed to a war chest which paid the salaries of a budget accountant and public relations man. Opposition to the Mayor spread from the police to the City Council. Gangemi's intransigent position on the raises had unsettled the Council--which had final responsibility under the new form of government. When they met to discuss the budget, Gangemi found the lines opposite his had been "strategically strengthened."[54]

Strong support for the boys in blue came, at first, from the two independent Ward Councilmen, Fred Martin and Thomas Maresca. But in a short time the Kenny councilmen

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[51] Ibid., July 21, 1963, p. 26.

[52] Ibid., Oct. 24, 1962, p. 41; Oct. 30, 1962, p. 41.

[53] Jersey Journal, Nov. 5, 1962, p. 1; New York Times, Nov. 5, 1962, p. 28.

[54] Newark Evening News, April 11, 1963, p. 26; Jersey City, Minutes of Municipal Council, March 26, 1963; April 2, 1963; Oct. 24, 1962; Oct. 30, 1962.

lined up with the police, Ward Councilmen, Thomas Whelan of Journal Square, Thomas Flaherty of Greenville, John Kelaher of the West Side, and Joseph Connors of Downtown bucked the Mayor also. They challenged him by voting for the pay increase. The Mayor showed visible anger and vetoed the ordinance. The Council retaliated by overriding the veto. Gangemi, in an attempt to strengthen his position, called in his Police Director, William McLaughlin, and Fire Director, William F. Peters, but even they abandoned him and supported the pay increases.[55] The Mayor still refused to compromise. He turned to the public and a group called the Jersey City Taxpayers and Rentpayers collected signatures to have a referendum put on the ballot to repeal the increase. In making his case, Gangemi argued the police and firemen had smoke screened the cost of the pay boost, and the raises would go as high as $2,400 for some ranks over the three year period of the contract.[56]

Another smoke screen the Mayor failed to detect was the one John V. Kenny had set up. The Boss backed the Mayor, yet let the City Council irritate him. Kenny could have put pressure on the Council and ended the pay dispute, but he acted coy and let the divisions at City Hall continue. His committeemen and ward leaders assisted the Mayor by joining

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[55] Minutes of Municipal Council, April 2, 1963; May 7, 1963.

[56] Newark Evening News, Oct. 24, 1962, p. 55; Oct. 30, 1962, p. 41.

the taxpayers movement and obtaining the needed signatures for the referendum, but the Boss refused to take a firm stand on how the Council should act. The battle over the police raises and budget was only the immediate cause for the break between the Mayor and Council. Tension had been mounting since Gangemi's election. Grumblings about the arrogance shown by the Mayor and his advisors were heard intermittently from the city ante-chamber. Connors vocalized some of the hostility, but other councilmen also felt neglected and unappreciated. It was just what Kenny wanted.[57] Keep everybody arguing and they were sure to turn to him. With the Mayor under attack and the organization rent with faction, the "little guy" waited to see what would happen.

Just as the civil war at City Hall approached a climax a dramatic development occurred. In September 1963, Jersey City's first Italian Mayor prepared to make a good will visit to Genoa, Italy. The purpose of the trip was to bring back a seventy-four year old war veteran, Christopher Columbus, to rediscover America. Eugene Farrell, the ubiquitous editor of the Jersey Journal, was to accompany the Mayor and build up publicity for the Columbus Day Parade. What appeared an innocent gesture turned into a political nightmare. While applying for a passport, Gangemi was notified by the U. S. State Department that he was not a citizen. According to a Department spokesman, the Mayor was born in Italy and brought

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[57] Ibid., July 28, 1963, p. 30; Aug. 22, 1962, p. 52; Jersey City, Minutes of Municipal Council, May 7, 1962.

to the United States from the province of Calabria as a boy. Kenny had learned from an inside source at the State Department that "his man was in trouble" but the Boss waited.[58] Gangemi dug his own grave. When notified of the calamitous news, the Mayor suffered a physical and political collapse. He entered Harkness Pavillon of Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center and prepared for the worst. The City Councilmen were summoned to his bedside and asked to consider his son, Thomas Gangemi, Jr., but they refused to make any commitment. In the dark of night on the 26th of September, 1963, the Mayor formally announced his resignation.[59] In giving up the office he had fought so long and hard to gain, Gangemi said:

> It is with a heavy heart and the deepest sorrow that I make this decision today after notification by the State Department that there is some question about my citizenship.[60]

Although resigning the Mayor refused to admit he was not a citizen and defended his past:

> To the best of my knowledge, I was born and raised in Jersey City and have lived here all my life. However, my love for this city, its people, its traditions is such that I could not continue in office under such a cloud of doubt.[61]

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[58] Interview with former Public Relations Director for Hudson County, John R. Longo.

[59] Newark Evening News, Sept. 26, 1963, p. 1, 7.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

The doubt had been there since 1961 when Berry's followers had sent a private detective, Louis Raino, to Gangemi's home town in Calabria, Italy. By 1963 the ill-fated politician could no longer hide his past. He desperately tried to disprove the charges and sway the Council by explaining why he believed he was a citizen.[62] He recalled how he once secured a Coast Guard permit to pursue his wholesale business on the docks during World War II. He had acquired a visa in 1941 by use of a birth certificate he received from a Hudson County District Judge on the testimony of two relatives that he was born here. But the Council and entire city ignored his defense.[63]

Jersey City's reaction to the Mayor's plight showed how disillusioned many citizens had become. Expecting a different brand of politics under the new charter, voters found little had changed. People were stunned that Gangemi could have been elected without having one of the few qualifications to be mayor--United States citizenship. One inhabitant quipped, "A guy gets to the highest office, and they don't even know if he's a citizen." A local lawyer, Raymond Chasan, reflected on his city's plight, "This is a comedy situation from which Gilbert and Sullivan could have made a fine operetta. However, for a city and its people it's

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Newark Evening News, Sept. 26, 1963, p. 1; Interview with a former Jersey City Councilman who wished to remain anonymous.

degrading."[64] A bartender expressed a more practical view, "Just my luck, I was supposed to see him this week for a favor." While many citizens remained bewildered the police were exhilarated. One law enforcer remarked "Right wins out," while another commented "Poetic justice."[65] Gangemi's resignation proved to be more than poetic justice; however, for it marked another turn in the career of John V. Kenny.

With the Mayor's departure went the six year alliance between the Irish leader and his Italian office holder. No longer an asset, Gangemi was left on his own while Kenny prepared to seek out new allies. Gangemi's "malefortuna" could not have come at a worse time. Under attack, he had little political currency to buy support. The Council accepted his resignation by a unanimous vote. When Gangemi's ally, John Kijewski, President of the City Council, introduced a resolution to name Thomas "Buddy" Gangemi, Jr., as mayor, it was rejected. The Council showed its independence by next rescinding Gangemi's appointment of John Moriarity, the Business Administrator, as acting mayor. The Council claimed the appointment was illegal since Moriarity was not a Jersey City resident--he lived in Westfield. They did agree, however, to let the Business Administrator continue

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[64] New York Times, Sept. 26, 1963, p. 44.

[65] Newark Evening News, Sept. 26, 1963, pp. 1, 7.

in his post and assist in running the city.[66]

The Council's actions indicated the choosing of Gangemi's successor would take time. They had realized their own importance and acted much like the College of Cardinals in choosing a pope. Under the state home rule law, the Faulkner Act, if a vacancy occurred in office during the third year of a term and after the ninth Friday before a General Election Day, the council was to choose a new mayor to serve out the balance of the term. They had from sixty to ninety days to make a choice. The Faulkner Act stipulated a sixty day limit, but the city code adopted shortly after Gangemi took office said ninety days. The Council used the time to insure the next mayor would not be so independent and self-asserting. They vowed he would be one of their own. Seven of them let it be known they were available, but within a short time three major contenders emerged--each seeking the needed five votes to be mayor.

Joseph Connors, the Downtown Ward Councilman, made a complete break with Kenny by resigning his $9,000 a year job as Warden of the Hudson County Penitentary. Connors tried to show he was a legitimate candidate outside of the organization, but he could gain only three votes.[68] The

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[66]Newark Evening News, Sept. 27, 1963, p. 1.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Newark Evening News, Oct. 5, 1963, p. 11; Oct. 20, 1963, p. 20.

next contender, John J. Kijewski, was put forward by Gangemi. When the ousted officeholder realized the Council wanted somebody from within, he turned to his bloc of the three at-large council persons which included, Evelyn Holender, James Rochford, and the President of the City Council. But Kijewski could not get the needed votes either. This left the third candidate to the Boss; however, Kenny did nothing and remarked he was not going "to advise the Council."[69] He thought of offering County Supervisor, John Deegan, or John J. Kenny but realized the Council had run away. After hesitating, he finally decided that Thomas Whelan, the Journal Square Councilman, would make the best choice.

Kenny's slowness in making a decision came from the political problems facing him. Gangemi's resignation came just prior to an important November election. The Hudson leader was anxious to roll up a big vote for Governor Hughes who had proposed a $750 million bond issue. Kenny had promised his Trenton ally a 150,000 vote majority and believed the delay in choosing a new mayor would help him since no disappointed followers of mayoralty aspirants would defect and cut into his organization strength.[70] But the November election showed the Boss needed to pay closer attention to his

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[69] Ibid., Sept. 26, 1963, p. 1.

[70] Ibid., Oct. 20, 1963, p. 40; Oct. 5, 1963, p. 11; Sept. 27, 1963, p. 1.

demesne. Hudson County managed only a 32,328 vote majority on the first question of the bond issue dealing with education and institutional facilities and an even less impressive 27,400 vote on the one dealing with highway construction.[71] Although Kenny did sweep the county and congressional races, his failure to produce in a big way on the bond issue damaged his image as a state leader. To insure no further embarrassment, he turned his full attention to the question of city leadership.

The "little leader" used his skill as a broker to shift the balance of power. Offering a freeholder post at first, he then promised city jobs and favors to any councilman supporting Whelan.[72] The Boss's power of persuasion finally had effect. On November 12, 1963 at a meeting announced as a "marathon session," the Council took three minutes to chose Kenny's candidate, Thomas Whelan.[73] The three votes of the organization councilman (Flaherty, Kelaher and Whelan) had been expected, but the Boss sewed up the deal when the two independent councilmen gave a yes vote. Fred Martin, a

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[71] Ibid., Nov. 6, 1963, p. 43; Jersey Journal, Nov. 6, 1963, p. 3.

[72] For comments on Kenny's activities prior to the selection of Whelan see the Newark Evening News, Jan. 1, 1964, p. 33.

[73] New York Times, Nov. 13, 1963, pp. 1, 46. Newark Evening News, Nov. 8, 1963, pp. 1, 19.

black leader from the Bergen-Lafayette Ward and Thomas Maresca, the Hudson City Ward Councilman and a Kenny foe of fifteen years standing, gave their votes to Whelan for a quid pro quo. Martin sought recognition for his race. Kenny gave it to him by moving blacks to the state assembly, Board of Education, and important city departments. Maresca also gained recognition and patronage when members of his association received city and county jobs.[74] By bringing Martin and Maresca over to his side, the little leader showed once again he was a master of brokering the opposition. He had outmanuevered Connors and Gangemi and now had two former critics working with him.

It was logical that Kenny would select Whelan. A pillar of his church, a war hero, and a reputed business executive with the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, Whelan could be used to present a "good government" image. The new mayor would fill the Boss's requirements by appearing as an efficient administrator, but one willing to work with the organization.

Kenny also knew Whelan was not well-heeled. He lived in a modest home on Bevan Street, had a large family and drank beer with the local gentry at a Journal Square pub. Although represented as a business leader, the former councilman really belonged to middle management as chief of

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[74] Newark Evening News, Jan. 26, 1964, p. 33; Interview with a former Jersey City Councilman; Hudson Dispatch, Nov. 13, 1963, p. 1.

security for the telephone company.[75] He had only a high school education and knew what it meant to be deprived and underprivileged. One of thirteen children, Whelan grew up in the grime of Jersey City. Instilled with a respect for authority, he deferred to power and those who held it. Three of his brothers were policemen, one a priest and two sisters were nuns. His father had been a committeeman in the Hague organization, but the new mayor had not participated in politics until 1961 when the telephone company began a community involvement program. As a barroom politician Whelan had known only about the fringes of city politics. He tried to join theCommunity Charter Council reformers in early 1961 but was rejected. He next turned to the incumbent, Mayor Charles Witkowski, but the Polish candidate intended to run by himself. As a last resort he joined the Kenny organization and fitted perfectly as a candidate with a new face and good credentials.[76]

When chosen mayor, the neophyte politician expressed surprise:

> I never dreamed I would be mayor, and further more I never thought any one would ever think of picking me. But I have a job to do now and I'm sure I'll get it done. I'll accept

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[75] Newark Evening News, Nov. 17, 1963, pp. 1, 14. For an interesting profile of Whelan see John J. Farmer's "Rise and Fall of Jersey City," Reporter, Aug. 13, 1964, pp. 47-49 and the article by John T. McGowan "Started Early in Politics," Newark Evening News, Nov. 17, 1963, p. 35.

[76] Interviews with ward leaders and county officials.

all the well intended help I can get.[77]

As a councilman Whelan had just been another pinion in the machine, but now as mayor he became an important gear. The City Executive tried to show he had a little more polish than the typical Jersey City politician by quoting from Shakespeare's Twelfth Night:

> Some persons are born with greatness; some have greatness thrust upon them, and I am grateful that the city council has thrust this greatness upon me...I pledge that I will work for the city council and the rebirth and a new life of the city.[78]

Wearing vested suits, having an imposing six-foot frame, weighing two-hundred pounds, and showing just the right amount of grey hair, Whelan looked like a respectable city official. He immediately received support from the business community. Louis Webster, Vice-President of the Thomas Lipton Company, remarked: "Whelan who is a businessman himself, will I think, show an interest in new home development and in working with various government agencies and putting a new face on the city. That's the only way to attract industry."[79] The President of Jersey City's Chamber

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[77] Newark Evening News, Nov. 17, 1963, p. 1.

[78] Hudson Dispatch, Nov. 13, 1963, p. 1; New York Times, Nov. 13, 1963, pp. 1, 46.

[79] Jersey Journal, Nov. 13, 1963, p. 1.

of Commerce and Vice-President of the First National City Bank, Thomas J. Stanton, agreed: "The bank is delighted that the city council has chosen Whelan as mayor. His solid civic background bodes well for the continued progress and rejuven ation of Jersey City."[80] The new Mayor tried to show the confidence expressed in him was well placed. Although in a difficult position as the successor to Gangemi, he immediately went into action. With the police and firemen angry, the city council divided, and the electorate confused, Whelan decided to "make his enemies in one full stroke."[81] The voters had only two weeks earlier rejected giving the public safety employees their raises, but the Mayor decided to grant it to them. To appease the taxpayers he promised no new taxes and cut the city payroll by firing 503 municipal employees and dismissing 102 city paid school board clerks. The daring Mayor later lengthened the work day at City Hall and had time clocks installed to eliminate latenesses and "no shows." City Hall government soon became a business operation. No ward leaders were found in the corridors and municipal employees were required to be present at their desks. Whelan's only critics were the members of the Kenny organization who lost their jobs or

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Connors, Cycle of Power, p. 208.

resented his efficiency program. But the Mayor cared little about their gripes since he knew they were still dependent on the Boss.[82]

Whelan's attempts to build a good government image did not end with firings and budget cuts, however. Realizing he was a political accident, the Mayor saw the need to do things big. During his first few months in office, he pressed for efficiency and productivity in running various city departments. Streets were cleaned, abandoned cars removed, garbage collection improved,and a new snow removal program implemented. After appointing a new Police Director, Alfred Suminski, the Mayor ordered more men assigned to foot patrol and had sergeants placed in patrol cars to improve supervision techniques.[83] Whelan's favorite public safety division, the fire department, also received attention through a reorganization and consolidation program. He ordered the city's fire signal system modernized and formed an arson squad. To pay for the improvements, a million dollar bond issue was sponsored. Included in the proposal was money for library repairs, bookkeeping machines, street sweepers and other improvements for city life.[84]

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[82]Jersey Journal, Jan. 8, 1963, p. 1; Newark Evening News, Jan. 12, 1964, p. 28; Feb. 20, 1964, p. 27. Interview with Ray Quinn, former Downtown Ward Leader.

[83]New York Times, May 12, 1963, p. 15: Jersey Journal, Nov. 30, 1963, p. 1.

[84]Newark Evening News, April 26, 1964, p.c. 7; April 12, 1964, p. 23.

To further his image as an urban reformer, the Mayor opened new schools and started health programs aimed at the underprivileged.[85] Showing "good government" could mean "good politics," Whelan became a taxpayer's mayor. He not only improved services but cut taxes during his first two years in office.[86] To encourage city employees and supervisors to be more productive and conscientious, he granted pay raises to key personnel he thought did outstanding jobs. Included in his select list were the Coordinator of Public Works, Nunzio D'Elia, License Supervisor, Victor Bergwall, Sanitation Supervisor, Anthony Amoroso, Superintendent of Streets and Sewers, Harold Dohrman and the Assistant Administrator, and Personnel Director of the Medical Center, Sylvester Flanagan.[87] The Mayor said the increases did not contradict his economy pledge "since they were, in fact, caused by economics." He claimed the firing of over 500 city employees required "better supervisory control."[88]

In pursuing his fiscal policies, however, Whelan did meet some resistance. His demands for austerity caused a

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[85] Ibid., April 19, 1964, p. 39.

[86] See article, "Whelan Points to Progress," Hudson Dispatch, Nov. 13, 1964, p. 1.

[87] Newark Evening News, March 31, 1964, p. 37.

[88] Ibid.

clash with the Board of School Estimate. Members of the Board balked at firing personnel, but Whelan barked: "they say it's unprecedented by law, but I say it's dictated by existing conditions. The School Board will live within the budget we provide."[89] The Mayor's economy moves were not limited to policy makers, however. School teachers were also expected to live within the budget. When they requested a salary adjustment, he told them "there's no money in the till."[90] Teachers suggested the money could be found without a tax increase by trimming administrative costs. They argued Jersey City spent far more than the national and state average or the other five large cities in New Jersey on non-instructional aspects of education. They proposed a shift of emphasis to the instructional side, but Whelan refused to hear of it.[91]

The Mayor's unwillingness to expand the budget came from his desire to build his political image and attract the financial and industrial community back to Jersey City. In discussing the link between business and politics, the former telephone company official commented on his philosophy of

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[89] Newark Evening News, Feb. 7, 1964, p. 15; Jersey City, Minutes of Board of Education, Nov. 1964.

[90] Minutes, Feb. 13, 1964; Newark Evening News, Dec. 31, 1963, p. 7.

[91] Ibid.

government:

> Let's face it, if we just go along as we have been with petty politics getting in the way of advancement, then the bankers are not going to change their minds about investing here and the city is not going to survive. The city at this point has to have a businessman at the helm instead of a politician. Not me especially but somebody. Jersey City is past the point of affording someone intent on building a political machine for himself.[92]

By weaving a reform web around himself and appearing the guardian of the taxpayer, Whelan became the glamor boy of the business community and local press. But he also became something of a spokesman for urban problems. Calling for federal assistance in rebuilding the cities, he defended big government programs.[93] In one speech he asked for $100 million in aid for public works programs to help Jersey City repair or replace schools, fire and police stations, the Medical Center, and a century old wooden sewerage system. The urban statesman argued the city by itself could not afford the cost. All but $16 million of Jersey City's authorized borrowing capacity was exhausted and even if the state approved expansion of its borrowing limits, the interest rates would be extremely high. Appealing for federal help and deprecating the mistakes of his predecessors, the Mayor warned, "This town is bankrupt, I just hope one of those old

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[92] Newark Evening News, Feb. 20, 1964, p. 39.

[93] Ibid.; Part of this analysis came from interviews with former Health & Welfare Director of Jersey City, Julian Robinson and Newark News Reporter, Joseph Sullivan.

sewers doesn't cave in."[94]

To demonstrate how important federal assistance was, Whelan made frequent trips to Washington seeking funds for housing, urban renewal, and the sewerage system.[95] His attempts to revive the city's port economy received a boost when U.S. Interior Secretary Stewart Udall came to Jersey City and announced plans for the conversion of Ellis Island into a historical site run by the National Park Service. A causeway connecting Jersey City with Liberty and Ellis Islands was to be used for the conversion of part of the city's waterfront into a 480 acre state park.[96] Whelan hailed the news as being "one of the most significant milestones in open space programs for urban areas."[97] More enthusiasm was expressed when the Mayor presented his urban renewal program. In keeping with his method of doing things big, Whelan proposed a $350 million project to replace dilapidated buildings and shabby waterfront property in the downtown area. A new urban renewal director, Anthony Padula, was appointed and he proclaimed, "slums are a luxury which

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[94]John J. Farmer, "Rise and Fall of Jersey City," Reporter, Aug. 13, 1964, pp. 47-49.

[95]Interview with Julian Robinson and John Longo.

[96]Hudson Dispatch, Nov. 11, 1964, p. 1; New York Times, March 1, 1964, Sec. VII, pp. 1, 8.

[97]Ibid.

Jersey City can't afford."[98] Padula promised to have "bricks and mortar" put into place within a year. To replace run-down apartments, obsolete industrial buildings, rotted-out-piers,and other signs of blight the city planner proposed a complex of high-rise garden apartments and town houses.[99] The Mayor and his advisors expected the program "to revitalize the city and draw off New Yorkers who worked in the Wall Street area."[100] To provide for the relocation of families, city officials promised vacant sections of tract would be developed first. In addition to promising new housing, Whelan began the perennial undertaking of remaking Jersey City a transportation hub. He urged the Port of New York Authority to follow through on its proposed transportation terminal at Journal Square.[101] To show his vision of a greater Jersey City could be realized, he pointed with pride to the completion of the long-delayed Gregory Gardens--a high rise middle income housing project near City Hall.[102]

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[98] Ibid. (Padula was a builder-speculator active in Newark's redevelopment program.)

[99] Newark Evening News, Jan. 11, 1964, pp. 1, 14.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Newark Evening News, April 19, 1964, p. 3.

[102] Ibid.

Whelan's visions made him seem more like a civic leader than a politician. His speeches constantly reflected his rhetoric about the need for a businessman's approach to Jersey City's problems :

> The city needs saving because political fratricide has complicated the serious twentieth-century illness this city shares with other old cities. Political stability and financial stability. Those are the two things we want and must have if we are going to attract private capital and new ratables and get this city off its back.[103]

While emphasizing the continued need for a businessman's approach, the Mayor did a little self-boasting:

> This may be immodest but in the matter of payroll cuts, this was unheard of. But it was necessary. I knew the cuts could be made. I knew instinctively where to make them, and I had the courage and power to make them.[104]

To show he could do more than make cuts, Whelan responded to cynics who wondered what was being done about the usual shakedowns of honest businessmen. The Mayor gave a curt answer: "I have told them if anybody has his hand out I'll cut it off. That's as plain as I can make it."[105]

Continuing his discussion on how urban government must work, Whelan talked to city merchants about the need to end

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[103] Ibid., Feb. 20, 1964, p. 39.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., March 20, 1964, p. 22.

the selfish attitude held by most citizens. Parodying the National Anthem, he charged some residents prefer to live by the creed, "O Say Can You See What's In It For Me."[106] In defending his policies, Whelan claimed he was trying to "restore morality to government" but "everywhere we turn we get opposition."[107] Becoming something of a doubting Thomas he remarked, "I'm not convinced that people really want it any different."[108] The Mayor's comments received cautious acceptance, however. Leon Goodman, a strong supporter of the charter reform movement and a furniture store owner, told the high-sounding orator, "I think people do want the kind of change you speak of. I think they showed this by voting 80,000 to 9,000 for a change in 1960--that's ten to one. You sound good. I hope you stick with it."[109]

The former telephone official's dynamism created a new sense of confidence. This feeling was enhanced by his personal acts of heroism. Travelling through the city with an emergency radio in his car, he became the leading good samaritan. While returning to City Hall one afternoon, he noted an injured motorist and went to the rescue while his

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[106] Newark Evening News, Feb. 25, 1964, p. 18.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

driver radioed for an ambulance.[110] The Mayor's fame next spread to pedagogy. During a teacher's work stoppage, he took over a civics class and instructed the students in the need for efficient city government.[111] He even attended city fires and showed the publicity wise heroics of a Fiorello LaGuardia. In one instance he helped put out a kitchen fire before the fire engines arrived. The fire fighter later realized a childhood dream while presiding over a departmental ceremony for new battalion chiefs. At the proceedings he confessed a life-long ambition: "I spent most of my boyhood around No. 7 Engine House and if things had been different, I would have been standing there with you today and very proud to be. For that was my one ambition to be fire chief."[112] To make a dream come true the fire department surprised the Mayor by making him an honorary chief.[113] If Whelan had been unknown as a councilman, he made sure people recognized him as mayor.

The new Mayor's feats of heroism, however, were not intended for publicity alone. His primary goal was to gain the nomination for 1965. Whelan knew he had to impress

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[110] Ibid., March 4, 1964, p. 19.

[111] Ibid., Feb. 4, 1964, p. 23; Oct. 30, 1964, p. 1.

[112] Newark Evening News, Nov. 27, 1963.

[113] Ibid., Oct. 30, 1964, p. 1.

Boss Kenny. But the organization did not receive the Mayor warmly.[114] Many forty-niners resented his braggadoccio and meteoric rise. And although Whelan's actions as a dynamic mayor impressed the business community and other good government elements, they still did not assure him the Boss's support. It would take more than grandstanding and hoopla to win the nomination. This Whelan was to do. Ironically he was to be assisted in his quest by the propertyless and alienated element in the city.

On a warm August night in 1964, a young black woman was arrested for being drunk and disturbing the peace. A black man jumped off his porch and objected to the treatment she received from the police. He too was arrested and charged with assault and battery.[115] A crowd soon gathered and marched on the local precinct shouting "police brutality."[116] The police dispersed them but others congregated. Black youths started throwing stones, garbage

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[114] For signs of opposition to Whelan in the Kenny organization, see comments in Newark Evening News, Dec. 20, 1964, p. 31; April 1, 1965, p. C36.

[115] An analysis of the riots in Jersey City can be found in Newark Evening News, Aug. 3, 1964, pp. 1, 8, 9, 11; New York Times, Aug. 3, 1964, pp. 1, 11; Aug. 5, 1964, pp. 1, 36. "Rampage in New Jersey," Time, Aug. 14, 1964, p. 17; See also U.S. Presidential Commission, "Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders," March 1, 1968, pp. 38-39, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, Supt. of Docs.

[116] Ibid.

can lids, bricks, and other objects. The police tried to quell the disturbance but found themselves engaged in a full scale social conflict. Mob rule had taken over. Windows were smashed and looting began. A white driver and his passengers were attacked. A news photographer was beaten and thrown to the ground.[117] For three nights Jersey City's black ghetto, the Lafayette section, became a combat zone. Streets were cordoned off, lights darkened, gunshots echoed through alleyways, and molotov cocktails hurled from abandoned buildings. As one civil rights leader said, "the tinder that had been there for the last 100 years finally ignited."[118] When black leaders went into the streets and urged people to go home they were met with the response, "No You Go Home." Others yelled, "We're gonna win."[119] The riots in Jersey City, like in so many other American cities, represented a tragic eruption of social forces. Blacks felt unrepresented and neglected. They acted out their frustration in a riot. When it ended forty-six people were left injured, sixty-five were arrested, and others suffered thousands of dollars of property damage. But the greatest tragedy was the deep racial hostility that left unhealed scars. Throughout the riots, Jersey City's Mayor showed he

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[117] Newark Evening News, Aug. 3, 1964, p. 8.

[118] New York Times, Aug. 3, 1964, p. 11; Newark Evening News, Aug. 3, 1964, p. 8.

[119] Ibid.

was a man of law and order. Defending the police and refuting charges of brutality, Whelan said he believed the police "used judgment, courage, and effective methods in coping with the riots. The people can be proud of them as I am."[120]

As for the rioters he warned:

> I am not going to permit Jersey City to become another Harlem or Rochester because of the actions of a few terrorists, intent upon destroying years of excellent relations in our city among all races...
>
> The rioting that broke out in this city as the aftermath of a routine arrest is another piece in the fabric of pressure being wrapped around enforcement agencies...
>
> I will not hamstring our department, and I will not licence lawbreaking. This is simply a case of hoodlumism versus law and order, and I am determined that law and order will win.
>
> Anyone who attacks a policeman had better be prepared to come off second best.[121]

Emerging as the defender of law abiding citizens, Whelan promised to meet "force with force" and assured "all respectable citizens that their persons, their homes, and their businesses" would be protected.[122] He refused to examine the social and economic conditions leading to the

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[120] Newark Evening News, Aug. 3, 1964, p. 8.

[121] New York Times, Aug. 5, 1964, p. 36.

[122] Ibid.

riots and spoke about his own experiences:

> I came from a marginal family, I was one of 13 children. I know what it's like to try to do homework with seven kids around the table in a cold kitchen. I know what it's like to compete against people with better education. But being poor is no excuse for taking the law into your own hands. I will not condone violence by anyone for any reason.[123]

When responding to criticism about his approach to handling the riots, the Mayor gave more tough talk. In one heated exchange, Whelan was urged by a group of citizens to increase recreation facilities in the riot area. He responded by pulling out a criminal record on one riot leader which showed a series of arrests dating back three years. After reading it for the benefit of those present he asked, "Now do you really think this fellow will keep off the streets if I put a swing in front of his house?" As one observer noted, "Of such quotes are candidates made."[124]

Indeed, the Mayor's handling of the riots made him an excellent candidate. Although Jersey City had a growing black population, it was still inhabitated mostly by lower-middle class whites with deep seated fears about the social and economic changes taking place. Many residents agreed with the Mayor's philosophy that hoodlumism had been the cause for the riots. By verbalizing these feelings Whelan

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[123]"Rampage in New Jersey," Time, Aug. 14, 1964, p. 17.

[124]Newark Evening News, Aug. 9, 1964.

became a hero. His tough stand caused his popularity to spread beyond city borders. He became a national figure and was called Jersey City's "Young Tough Mayor."[125] Walter Winchell devoted a column to him and Minnesota's Senior Senator, Hubert Humphrey, praised the Mayor for his "courage and frankness in handling the riots."[126] By being so effective as a law and order mayor, Whelan changed his interim status to one of permanency. The Boss rocognized talent when he saw it.

Kenny's willingness to nominate Whelan, however, came from more than a respect for his leadership. The Boss needed someone who would work with him, and Whelan proved cooperative. Although outspoken about law and order and the need to restore "morality" to government, nothing prevented Whelan from dealing with the Hudson County leader. When Kenny wanted something done, the Mayor cooperated. An early indication of the alliance could be seen in the Mayor's approach to the Medical Center. Kenny had scores of personal friends and relatives on the hospital payroll, and despite Whelan's howls about economy, he never threatened the Boss's appointments. One of the Mayor's first acts in office was the appointment of Kenny's son-in-law, Paul Hanly, as

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[125] New York Times, Aug. 8, 1964, p. 36.

[126] Jersey Journal, Aug. 8, 1964, p. 1.

Director of Jersey City's Medical Center.[127] As one outside observer commented, the Boss liked to keep the patronage plums, "All In The Family."[128]

The appointment of Paul Hanly did not come without some political embarrassment to the Mayor, however. Besides a $20,000 salary, the hospital administrator had the right to live in a grand fashion. He decided to refurnish the penthouse with such items as a $1,700 high fidelity system, $900 bedspread, ten lamp shades averaging in price $300, carpets at a cost of $3,000, and furniture at $16,000. The total bill came to $38,000. Extravagant expenditures such as these gave little credibility to Whelan's claim about economy. But the Mayor argued it was cheaper to use Kenny's political organization than to build his own, and the city's Purchasing Agent, Bernard Murphy, excused Hanly's extravagance by saying the family was used to living in style.[129]

Another controversy arose when the Mayor fired the Medical Center's Director of Surgery, Dr. Kenneth Judy, and appointed Dr. Earl Halligan, a former director and friend of

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[127] Newark Evening News, Dec. 7, 1963, p. 24; Aug. 16, 1964, p. 35.

[128] Ibid., Dec. 27, 1963, p. 18.

[129] John Farmer, "Rise and Fall of Jersey City," Newark Evening News, Jan. 1, 1966, p. 60; New York Times, July 3, 1964, p. 22.

John V. Kenny. Seton Hall University and the medical community denounced the dismissaland accused Whelan and his administrators of reneging on the contract--which stated the same man would head both city and school departments. Whelan argued the contract left this clause open to interpretation. The Mayor's action caused a protest by doctors and interns and two heads of hospital departments resigned.[130] Demonstrations were held and letters written to the governor and state medical society criticizing hospital policies. But Whelan defended his actions:

> Nothing could be further from the truth than these charges of politics. To begin with there is no salary attached to the job, and Dr. Halligan didn't seek it. He is filling in on a temporary basis as a service to the city he served all his life until we can agree with Seton Hall on a replacement for Dr. Judy.[131]

The Mayor's denial of politics, however, cast doubt on his plea for "morality" in government. The Newark Evening News reflected this cynicism:

> (The dismissal of Dr. Judy) surely wasn't one of Mayor Whelan's better contributions to municipal morality. In fact, if this is his idea of good government, no wonder the people of Jersey City don't want it.[132]

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[130] New York Times, Feb. 28, 1964, p. 34; Feb. 29, 1964, p. 7; March 21, 1961, p. 53.

[131] Newark Evening News, March 20, 1964, p. 22.

[132] Ibid., Editorial, March 1, 1964.

The controversial appointments of Paul Hanly and Dr. Halligan showed Whelan was not truly his own man. The Mayor could only change things that did not displease Kenny. Whelan had brought some economy and efficiency to the Medical Center by firings and belt tightening, but these were only superficial changes. Although Whelan talked about the drain on the city economy and the need to reduce the facilities, he dare not risk the wrath of the Boss. Over 2,000 hospital employees provided Kenny with a large patronage pool and many workers came from the downtown ward. The Center also provided a valuable lever for the organization in raising campaign funds. Much city buying was done for the Medical Center and the vendors always showed generosity during a campaign.[133] The Boss remained content to let the Mayor make speeches and fire lower echelon workers. The Mayor did not have the political power to do more.[134]

Whelan's willingness to work with Kenny came out of the need to survive. The Boss still controlled the organization and City Council. No mayor could hope to run the city without his cooperation. Only a phone call away, Kenny advised the Council. They took his advice because he controlled the county payroll. In 1963 four of the nine

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[133] Ibid., March 20, 1964, p. 22.

[134] For a good review of city problems at the Medical Center see John T. McGowan's "On the Square," Aug. 2, 1964, p. 8.

councilmen were dual jobholders (Connors later quit), and the others had friends or relatives on the county payroll. City salaries were thus augmented by county positions given out by the "little guy." Another important leverage the Boss held over the Mayor was his control of the Hudson County legislative and congressional delegation. Any piece of legislation Whelan wanted required support from Hudson's assemblymen, senators, and congressmen who owed their posts to Kenny. If the Boss advised his law makers to ignore or delay the Mayor's suggestions, Whelan would find himself in the embarrassing position of not even having the endorsement of his home county. This did happen when the Mayor emphasized the need for a state or county take over of the Medical Center but found none of Hudson's legislators willing to meet with him.[135] Kenny also had another weapon to keep Whelan in check. His stalwart, Prosecutor James A. Tumulty, had the authority to investigate any Hudson municipality and throw the fear of the Lord into local officials. To show how unpredictable and independent he was, Tumulty had the Jersey City Clerk, Benjamin Rosengard, and two public works aides indicted on embezzlement charges.[136] Whelan knew the Prosecutor would not hesitate to do the same to him. Thus, although the "businessman's mayor" emphasized the need to eliminate machine politics from the city, he was still as

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[135]Joseph F. Sullivan, "On the Square," Newark Evening News, Jan. 16, 1966, p. 32.

[136]New York Times, Jan. 9, 1965, p. 12.

dependent on the Boss as any other Hudson County official.

Whelan's delicate position made him vulnerable, but it did not prevent him from trying to develop his own following. If the Mayor could not replace the Boss, he could certainly be prepared to succeed him. Support came from the policemen and firemen, who showed their gratitude by raising $25,000 for his election. Whelan also began to develop his own clique at Grove Street. His closest friend and advisor, Thomas Flaherty, became President of the City Council and spoke most favorably of the Mayor's executive ability. Another Whelan proponent was Bernard Murphy, the City Purchasing Agent, who advised him on the running of city hall and campaign financing. The City Purchasing Agent started a fund raising drive by sending out letters to all businessmen who sold to the city and invited them to mail contributions to the Mayor's office. The bold act received national attention and even gained a comment on the NBC newbroadcast of Huntley and Brinkley. But Murphy argued "There's nothing illegal or improper about it, and I'm sure the businessmen aren't offended."[137] Helping Murphy to insure Whelan's election were other supporters who formed an organization called WIN or "Whelan Is Needed."[138]

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[137] Newark Evening News, Feb. 21, 1964, p. C8; April 1, 1965, p. 1. For comments on Murphy's letter see Jersey Journal, April 2, 1965, pp. 1, 12.

[138] Newark Evening News, April 4, 1965, p. 40; April 1, 1965, p. 12.

As the 1965 election neared, it was apparent Whelan had come a long way in politics. By having efficient and responsive people in the public works department, finance department, incinerator authority, and other key areas, Whelan could campaign not only on a law and order platform but a good government one too. In addition to improving city services the Mayor worked on his image. Taking public speaking courses he gained assistance from a team of public relations experts. Warren Murphy, the Public Relations Director for Jersey City, sold Whelan as an independent and creative urban leader. He defended the Mayor's attempts to revive the city economy and noted how a reversal of urban decay had been started under Whelan's leadership.[139] Another important advisor, William Flanagan, came down from New Brunswick to give advice and strategy in running the campaign. Flanagan, a former newsman and Deputy Mayor, proved a knowledgeable counselor. Another valuable advisor was Eugene Farrell, editor of the Jersey Journal. Having lunch with Whelan, Farrell applauded the Mayor's forceful approach and boosted him as a "strong, active executive."[140]

Whelan's importance to the Kenny organization became more and more apparent as the election neared. Although Whelan needed the Boss and the organization's grass roots

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[139] New York Times, Aug. 22, 1964, p. 5; Sept. 5, 1964, p. 18, for Murphy's support of Whelan's urban improvement program.

[140] Jersey Journal, April 26, 1965; April 30, 1965, p. 22.

workers, his popularity made him as important to them as they were to him.[141] Whelan also helped to co-opt former enemies. In the 1961 mayoral battle, the two independent ward councilmen, Martin and Maresca, had beaten the organization candidates in Wards F and D. But in 1965, thanks to Whelan's popularity and the Boss's maneuvering, they were on the Kenny ticket and gave the organization power in the volatile Bergen-Lafayette Ward, and the heavily independent Hudson City Ward. Kenny had the best of both worlds: his machine and a personable, "good government" candidate willing to work with it.[142]

The only strong potential opposition facing him came from Thomas Gangemi. The short-term Mayor had straightened out his citizenship problems but not his political ones. After his departure in 1963, Gangemi became a naturalized citizen and in 1965 he won a successful court fight to have his name entered on the ballot.[143] But many of his best district workers remained with Kenny, and for the most pragmatic of reasons--positions on the city and county

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[141] For an interesting analysis of personality politics see Richard Banfield's Political Influence (New York: Free Press, 1961), pp. 258-261.

[142] Newark Evening News, Dec. 26, 1965, p. C16.

[143] "Court Clears Gangemi's Path," Newark Evening News, Feb. 9, 1965, p. 15; Feb. 26, 1965, p. 2. New York Times, Sept. 3, 1964, p. 3.

payroll tied them to Kenny's organization.[144] The ex-Mayor's only hope was to have other enemies of Kenny divide the overall vote. Charles Witkowski and Joseph Connors, the Downtown Councilman, entered the race, as did several minor candidates. With seven candidates running, the "little guy's" enemies hoped to reverse the tables and divide and conquer. But it was a forlorn hope. In a cluttered field the popular young mayor and shrewd old boss proved a strong combination.

The official kick-off came in March, 1965, when Whelan promised to "pick up the city, dust it off and turn it in the direction of the future not the past."[145] The Mayor paid homage to Kenny by calling him "not only the greatest Democratic leader in New Jersey, but the greatest leader of the Democratic party in the United States."[146] The elderly leader tried to live up to Whelan's claims by unsheathing his campaign sword and taking to the trenches with his troops.

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[144] Interviews with committeemen. Some of the important district workers who remained with Kenny were Ray Quinn, an active downtown leader; James DiNardo, a close friend of Gangemi and a Greenville leader; Peter Grompone, a leader on the West Side; and Freeholder Jacob Duzynski, a prominent Polish leader. Even Gangemi's right hand man, Benjamin Schlossberg, remained with the Irish Boss.

[145] Newark Evening News, March 24, 1965, p. 23.

[146] Ibid.

At a Jornal Square rally, Kenny berated the Mayor's chief rival. "Gangemi knew he wasn't a United States citizen when he ran four years ago. Gangemi does not deserve to be mayor again because he deceived me and everybody that voted for him."[147] Feigning injured innocence, the king maker argued, "I didn't know he was a non-citizen or I never would have selected him as a candidate. But he knew it."[148] When reminded Gangemi had been his candidate more than once, the puckish leader replied:

> They'll tell you I had him on the ticket twice, as county supervisor in 1957 and mayor in 1961, but remember Hague had him on the ticket too and so did my opponents in the 1957 city election...
>
> But he only won when we supported him. He never won before. And I'm telling you now, he'll never win again.[149]

The strategy of the other candidates, hardly original, was to show Whelan as the Boss's satrap. Gangemi raised the question when he charged the Mayor with being a puppet who "does everything Kenny tells him to do, including setting up Paul Hanly in a penthouse atop the hospital with $38,000 worth of furniture bought by the taxpayers."[150] The Kenny-Whelan Alliance also received the attention of Joseph Connors.

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[147] Ibid., April 28, 1965, p. 37.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Newark Evening News, April 27, 1965, p. 27.

At a Journal Square rally the Councilman reminded his audience that when Whelan served on the City Council he "consistently voted for spending programs that flew in the face of needed economy."[151] The mayoral contender stated his former colleague voted for the $15 tax increase for several extravagant bond issues." Belittling the Mayor's high-sounding rhetoric, Connors wondered why Kenny's viceroy voted for $70,000 worth of doors for a local high school. "The Gates of Heaven couldn't cost that much." He also wondered why Whelan approved spending $165,000 for painting pipes at the sewerage plant. "Rembrandt could have done it cheaper."[152] The Mayor rebuked all criticism, however, by saying "he would not deal in personalities during the campaign."[153]

Whelan could well afford to take this line. His popularity remained so high that he received endorsements from the Jersey Journal and Hudson Dispatch. The Republicans lived up to their reputation as being Democrats out of office by promising the Kenny candidate "100 percent cooperation."[154] The Jersey City Republican Chairman, Clarence Fraser, was so delighted in Whelan's running that he

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[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid., April 27, 1965, p. 22.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

remarked, "God bless you for being our candidate."[154] County GOP Chairman, John Theurer of West New York, echoed the praise, "If I was living in Jersey City I'd vote for him myself."[155]

With Republican backing and a good basic organization, the Kenny-Whelan bandwagon started rolling. The incumbent focused on his record--which was impressive. "I can only say to you that my record of the past is my promise of the future. I would rather act than talk."[156] Pointing to specific changes, he rifled off his accomplishments:

> When my administration began...we didn't talk about clean streets, we cleaned them. We didn't talk about lower taxes, we lowered them. We didn't talk about street lighting, we lighted them. We didn't talk about a lower crime rate. We lowered it. We didn't talk about giving salary increases to city employees. We gave them. And we didn't talk about snow removal. We removed it.[157]

In addition the Mayor discussed his tough stand on law and order: "I think we have demonstrated that we can't and won't tolerate hoodlumism and neither will our police force. There's only one way to handle hoodlums and that is to get tough with them stand for no nonsense. Either throw them in jail or run them out of town."[158]

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[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid., March 24, 1965, p. 23.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid.

Kenny allowed Whelan to talk about the record while he did the infighting. The aging boss laced into the Mayor's critics. He charged Gangemi with "setting Italians back 20 years" by misusing his office to gain favors for close associates.[159] Ridiculing another opponent, Charles Witkowski, Kenny said the former Mayor knew so little about Jersey City that he "once had a snow plow plowing up streets in Bayonne."[160] To remind his enemies that he was still in control, the Boss made a personal pledge to defeat any and all who opposed him and his ticket. "There are those who say they are going to beat me this time. Well, I've fought bigger and better people than they are, and I knocked them out in one round. I'm sure it won't take even that long on May 11."[161]

With the Mayor running on a strong record and the Boss swinging hard, the last hope for Kenny's enemies was to have defections occur within the organization. Rumors spread that John Deegan, a "forty-niner" and sentimental favorite for the mayor's chair, might replace Whelan. But Deegan cut short any movement by urging party members "whether you work for the city or county or whether you're just a Democrat by habit" to support Whelan.[162]

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[159] Ibid.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid., March 24, 1965.

[162] Ibid., March 24, 1965.

When election day came, the results showed Whelan had more than the support of the organization. He walked into office by receiving 10,000 more votes than the combined total of his opponents--and eliminated the need for a runoff. (See Table 11.) His majority was 35,000 higher than his closest competitor, Thomas Gangemi. Joseph Connors, the only Councilman to win without a runoff in the last city election, came in a disappointing third with 11,348 votes. Witkowski, who had collected 23,000 as an independent in 1961, could muster only 3,288 and finished a badly beaten fifth behind Michael Bell. The Kenny organization humiliated another former ally, Edward Zampella, who received only 488 votes in a last place finish. The city's first black candidate, Cornelius Givens, received only 991 votes. But the mayoral totals were not the only important results. Elected with Whelan were seven of his running mates for the city council. Two other organization candidates, John Kelaher of the West Side Ward and former Assistant Prosecutor, Anthony Peduto, gained their victories in the June runoff--thus completing a clean sweep.[163]

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[163] Newark Evening News, June 16, 1965, p. 1.

TABLE 11

SELECTED VOTING STATISTICS
JERSEY CITY: 1961 AND 1965

	Ward Total 1961 (Runnoff)						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Gangemi	9,605	10,519	10,295	9,712	10,250	7,546	57,927
Berry	8,294	10,042	7,195	8,236	3,175	5,832	43,277
	Ward Total 1965						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Whelan	10,618	10,983	10,177	12,002	4,888	8,392	57,812
Gangemi	4,372	4,790	4,159	3,399	3,706	2,288	22,798

SOURCE: Jersey Journal, June 14, 1961; May 12, 1965

By the summer of 1965, thus, John V. Kenny was in fine political shape. His intra-party competition had steadily declined since the death of Eggers in 1953, Berry in 1963, and James F. Murray, Jr., in 1965. Only the feeble Gangemi remained. The jerry-rigged machine he built in 1949 had been overhauled and was ready to run for another decade. Kenny's popular candidate had been elected mayor of Jersey City, and the County Courthouse was firmly in his grasp. Indeed, Kenny showed, in some ways, he was as remarkable as Frank Hague. Working as a non-office holding boss in a changed environment, Kenny's power was as much a product of manipulation and adaptation as of his grass roots organization.

Having a broader view of politics than his ward leaders, the broker/boss recognized the attractiveness of a candidate who appealed to the whole city. He adopted a strategy common to Boss Richard Daley of Chicago and let Whelan campaign on the theme, "Good government is good politics and good politics is good government."[164] In his literature, the Mayor played down his close association with the organization and emphasized his public service image and cost accounting policies.[165] As a result, Whelan did exceptionally well in the Uptown Wards (See Table 11), and even won handily in the Bergen-Lafayette Ward with its sizable black vote.

By using Whelan, the Boss helped make the Democratic party appear not as a machine and all that is associated with it, but as a "force for clean and progressive government."[166] The organization was thus able to gain some respectability by having a mayor who showed the voters they had nothing to fear and much to hope for.

The selling of Whelan proved so effective that outside observers watched with dismay as they detected the hand of Kenny behind the Mayor. The Newark Evening News, the Boss's severest critic, never became convinced Whelan was anything but a Kenny agent and attributed his victory mainly to the

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[164]Banfield, Political Influence, pp. 245-247.

[165]The author is grateful to John R. Longo for showing him some campaign literature on Whelan's election. See also Newark Evening News, May 13, 1965, p. 24.

[166]Banfield, p. 246.

voter's choice "between the adherents and escapees of the Kenny machine."[167] But the Newark Evening News was a Republican paper and rarely read in Hudson County.

Kenny's position in Hudson was secure from federal interference. The previous November, Hudson County produced a large vote in the landslide for Lyndon B. Johnson. The Boss had contributed heavily to the National Democratic Committee and was in good standing.[168] Assured of four more years of security from Washington by not having to worry about any over-energetic U.S. Attorney for New Jersey, Kenny next turned his attention to Trenton.

The reelection of Richard J. Hughes was as important as Whelan's and Johnson's election. Once again luck and the tides of state politics pulled Kenny to success. The Governor campaigned vigorously against his opponent, Wayne Dumont, a Warren County Republican, who attempted (along with Vice President Richard Nixon) to focus the campaign on a Rutgers Professor, Vito Genovese. Genovese identified himself as a Marxist opposed to United States involvement in the Vietnam War. Eventually, Hughes trounced Dumont by 1,279,568 votes to 915,996. Over 100,000 votes of that majority came from Hudson County, the "Gibraltar of Democracy" revived its faded reputation by giving Hughes

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[167] Editorial, Newark Evening News, May 13, 1965, p. 24.

[168] Ibid., Jan. 26, 1964, p. 33; Interview with John R. Longo.

74 percent of its votes. Not since the days of A. Harry Moore and the Hague machine had a Democrat gained such a majority.[169] With friends on every level of government, Kenny was assured of four more years of peace and prosperity. His only forseeable problem was how to keep his organization from destroying itself by warring over who would be his successor.

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[169] Jersey Journal, Nov. 3, 1965, p. 1; Nov. 4, 1965, pp. 1, 23.

CHAPTER VII

RULE BY CONFUSION

Coming to power in 1949, John V. Kenny was still on the scene in 1969. The Hudson Boss survived, not through a well disciplined and stratified organization, but by playing the role he knew best--the broker/boss. Never expending the energy needed to run a finely tuned machine, the "little guy" preferred to rule by confusion. Although well over seventy years of age, Kenny refused to retire. He liked power too much--and the money that came with it. To retain both, he allowed his followers to remain divided while he stayed the Boss. Always resting on a fragile power base, Kenny knew to stay on top he had to keep his options open and be ready to change with every situation. But the strategy of divide and conquer created many difficulties, and the "little guy's" talents as a broker/boss were regularly tested.

Indications of new problems came when Tom Whelan began to move out on his own. Swinging his economy axe, the Mayor purged Gangemi holdovers and put in his own followers. John Del Monte, a $11,000 City Personnel Officer, was replaced with

Raymond Kierce, a boyhood friend of the Mayor.[1] Another old friend, William Magee, became School Board Counselor, and the Mayor pushed to have Kenny ally, Louis Messano, resign from his post as School Board Secretary.[2] A Kenny follower, Police Director Alfred Suminski, was forced to share authority with Police Chief Joseph Smith. Whelan next turned to Jersey City's Housing Authority and attempted to have yet another Kenny appointee, Executive Director Joseph Connelly, removed from the payroll. Angered by conditions at the city's low income housing projects, the Mayor said: "Policy makers on the housing authority will either shape up or ship out."[3]

The Mayor's boldness, however, became most apparent in his running of Jersey City's Medical Center. Whelan was determined to reduce the large hospital deficit. In pursuing his economy measures, he became locked in a bitter struggle with the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry. The state had earlier replaced Seton Hall as the tenant at the Center and expected the city to continue its former contract. But the Mayor insisted the school pay $1.2 million a year in rent instead of $250,000 paid by Seton Hall. The college refused and threatened to leave if

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[1] Newark Evening News, Jan. 2, 1966, p. C11; June 27, 1965, p. 34.

[2] Ibid., Sept. 20, 1965, p. 12; June 19, 1965, p. 10.

[3] Ibid.

"no acceptable relationship" could be worked out.[4] Whelan became intransigent. He noted the city had been subsidizing the state's only medical school and reminded Trenton that city taxpayers carried an annual deficit of $1 million "at a time when all other levels of government including the state turned their backs on medical education." When the college refused to accept the Mayor's terms, he became incensed and told them to "clear out."[5]

With the loss of the college went one of the few attractions Jersey City had to offer, but Whelan could do nothing but give a bitter reply:

> The people of Jersey City deserve something more than the back of the hand treatment after supporting a facility that turned out the only doctors educated in New Jersey.[6]

Whelan's confrontation with the Medical College proved to be only part of a larger struggle, however. He blamed state officials for failing to provide intelligent leadership in solving New Jersey's educational problems. He used the loss of the college to show how myopic the state was in dealing with Jersey City. Offering to sell the entire Medical Center to New Jersey for $1.00, he argued "it was a bargain since it would take an estimated $80 million to construct a

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[4]New York Times, Dec. 24, 1965, p. 1; Dec. 28, 1965, p. 30.

[5]Ibid., Dec. 28, 1956, p. 23; Newark Evening News, June 8, 1966, p. 30.

[6]Newark Evening News, June 8, 1966, p. 30.

comparable facility for a new school."[7] But Governor Hughes and other state officials rejected his offer.

Rebuked by the state, Whelan continued to handle the Medical Center in his own way. To bring more efficiency to the Center and "remove it from politics," he named a Board of Managers with Eugene Farrell, the editor of the Jersey Journal, as chairman. Farrell brought in a new director, Dr. Theodore Austin, former Director of the Cambridge Hospital in Massachusetts.[8] Austin signed a three year contract paying $30,000--the highest salary for any city official. By appointing a board of managers and new director, Whelan drew attention to the mounting cost and waste at the Center. He explained the 1,000 bed institution had a patient population of only 730, and 280 of these were indigents from other Hudson County municipalities. The Mayor claimed the municipalities paid Hudson County only $8.00 a day and Jersey City was "saddled with the balance of daily cost," which he estimated at more than $40.00 a patient.[9] To reduce costs, Whelan and his Board of Managers fired more personnel, tightened up supervision, contracted laundry and food services, and reduced the Center from a

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[7] Ibid.

[8] New York Times, Oct. 29, 1965, p. 38.

[9] Newark Evening News, Jan. 10, 1967, p. 39.

1,000 bed to a 550 bed institution.[10]

As the Mayor and his advisors examined the cost of hospital care, they realized it was more than a city problem. Whelan urged the County Board of Freeholders to create an authority modeled after his Board of Managers. He suggested under such a system "there could be a smooth and efficient coordination of all medical programs available."[11] But his pleas fell on deaf ears. He could make cuts at the city level without too much interference, but the county remained the domain of the organization. When Whelan invited Hudson's legislative delegation to a meeting to discuss the hospital problem, he found no one willing to cooperate.[12] The reason was the actions of John J. Kenny. The County Chairman reprimanded the Mayor for ignoring "protocol." Kenny claimed Whelan had not asked him first, and so he told Hudson's nine state legislators to boycott the meeting. The conflict over the Medical Center indicated how divided the Kenny organization remained. Only John V. Kenny "with his fine tanned hand" on the phone in Florida kept things from going wild. He finally allowed the legislators to meet with Whelan, but no support for a state takeover of the Medical Center came about nor did a

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[10] Ibid., Aug. 1, 1967, p. 40.

[11] Ibid., Jan. 10, 1967, p. 39: Aug. 1, 1967, p. 40.

[12] For Whelan's bitter reply about being snubbed by his own county see Newark Evening News, Jan. 1, 1966, p. 30.

board of managers for the county hospital emerge.[13]

Besides the battle within the Kenny organization over hospitals other signs of division emerged. The Mayor and County Prosecutor, James A. Tumulty, became locked in a bitter feud over law enforcement. Tumulty led a number of gambling raids in Jersey City. Conducted without the cooperation or knowledge of Whelan's police force, the raids proved embarrassing.[14] To counter attack, the Mayor proposed a five point plan for fighting organized gambling on a county wide basis--including the use of a special post office box for gambling tips. He also suggested calling in state or federal authorities, if the city or county agencies fail to "wipe out" gambling. Giving a back of the hand slap at the Hudson prosecutor, Whelan said:

> The 50 arrests in gambling raids over the weekend in Jersey City were a good start, but no more than a start. An effective drive against gambling cannot be an exercise in selective indignation; it cannot concern only one city; and it cannot deal exclusively with 'small fry,' but must reach up to those who control gambling.[15]

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[13]For Whelan's conflicts with the county organization see Joseph F. Sullivan's column, "On the Square," Newark Evening News, Jan. 16, 1966, p. 32; Jan. 30, 1966, p. 35; Aug. 1, 1967, p. 40; and "Hudson Ignores Whelan," Jan. 11, 1966, p. 30.

[14]Newark Evening News, Feb. 9, 1966, p. 38; Interview with Joseph F. Sullivan, former reporter for the Newark Evening News.

[15]Ibid.

With Jersey City's Mayor talking about the possible use of federal and state officials to enforce the law, the gambling raids ceased but not the cold war between the court house and city hall.

Although faced with opposition, Whelan did not retreat from building his image as a businessman's mayor. Throughout his second term he gained more and more attention. Time Magazine portrayed him as the "Slide Rule Caesar."[16] The Mayor received much notoriety for his cuts at the Medical Center and hard line on law and order. When asked about his attitude toward a police review board, he replied: "If there's going to be any civilian reviewing...it'll be me."[17] In 1966 the Wall Street Journal did a feature story and called him the "Maverick Mayor."[18] The Journal noted his attitude towards job cuts and quoted the Mayor as saying, "We can't afford to listen to these cries of humanity."[19] The businessman's mayor also discussed his "day's work for a day's pay" policy and remarked it allowed him to keep taxes in line, yet raise the remaining city employees salaries.

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[16]"Slide Rule Caesar," Time, Dec. 31, 1965, p. 15A.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Wall Street Journal, March 21, 1966, p. 16.

[19]Ibid.

By becoming a celebrity, Whelan restored a sense of pride not felt since the days of Frank Hague. But like the old boss, he found it difficult to keep expenses and taxes down. Rising costs eventually forced him to raise the tax rate from $117.80 to $131.20 per $1,000 during the second year of his new term. To answer his critics, Whelan said the rate would have been over $150.00 if it had not been for his economy measures.[20] Another reason for the increase had been the Mayor's ambitious building program. By 1966 two schools were completed and three others in the construction stage. A new health program, better street lighting, mechanical sweepers, and construction of the first new firehouse in over fifty years gave other indications of an urban renaissance. Always building, Whelan's administration established a city record in 1967 with the investment of nearly $21 million in private and public construction. To allow for more growth, the Mayor scrapped the city's fifteen year old master plan and had his planning commission start work on a new comprehensive one. The planning board issued a series of reports assessing the problems of land use, transportation, economic conditions, and public facilities.[21] "A city with all its warts" was to be examined and proposals offered to

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[20] Newark Evening News, Jan. 10, 1967, p. 30; New Jersey, Division of Local Government, Annual Reports, 1967-69.

[21] New York Times, June 12, 1966, p. 117; Jersey Journal Nov. 15, 1968, pp. 1, 6.

solve problems caused by excessive business zoning, truck traffic, fleeing railroads, and a declining tax base. The Whelan administration was on the move.[22]

Although Whelan's image grew, his political base still rested on his law and order visage and his ties to the Boss. Having taken a firm stand on the riots in 1964, the Mayor never wavered in his belief that a strong response was a deterrent to any disturbance. In 1967 when violence erupted in Newark, and tension mounted in Jersey City with black youths throwing bottles and looting several stores, the Mayor issued a strong warning: "Force will be met with superior force, and anyone who chooses the side of lawlessness is hereby warned that he is taking his life in his own hands. Jersey City will not become a carnival of fear. The lives and property of our law-abiding citizens will be protected."[23]

By continuing to advocate the night stick policy, Whelan became a national spokesman on how to handle urban violence. The U.S. News and World Report featured him in an interview entitled, "A Mayor Tells How Firmness Stopped Riots." His controversial order to police to "meet force

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[22]For Whelan's massive building programs see Newark Evening News, July 31, 1967, p. 6; July 26, 1967, p. 27. Jersey City, Redevelopment Agency, Toward the Seventies. A Progress Report of the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency, 1969.

[23]Newark Evening News, July 17, 1967, p. 5.

with superior force" was noted along with his warning "no mercy on the lawless."[24]

Whelan did more than talk about how to handle riots. He also discussed their causes. In an appearance before President Lyndon Johnson's Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders he urged observance of the law and an end to the "curious condescension of explaining away any outrageous actions which might be committed by a Negro."[25] Quoting from Professor Daniel Patrick Moynihan of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Institute of Urban Affairs, Whelan contended the "biggest problem of the Negro is the instability of the family unit."[26] He recommended rebuilding the black family through "economic strength." "If we can tie this with the physical rebuilding of our cities so much the better. But if it requires a make work program, similar to WPA, then let's have a make work program."[27] Asking for an end to the debate between liberals and conservatives, the city leader remarked: "Let's admit, for once, that the real urban crisis is a physical one--a crisis of our entire nation. Let's quit the sociological tinkering and mount a major

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[24]"A Mayor Tells How Firmness Stopped Riots," U.S. News and World Report, Aug. 14, 1967, pp. 40-42.

[25]Newark Evening News, Oct. 6, 1967, p. C4.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

national effort to solve the physical problems of our cities."[28]

When President Johnson's Advisory Commission began to issue its findings, the Mayor continued his criticism. He chastised the Commission because it "may actually have helped to bring about another long, hot summer."

> The commission, in its haste to exonerate rioters from the responsibility for rioting, failed to give any real support to the nation's policemen, the 'thin blue line' that fights this battle against lawlessness every day.[29]

He called on the Commission to "reassert unmistakably the supremacy of the law."[30]

In pursuing "law and order" politics, Whelan remained generally popular but became entangled with some critics. Reverend Robert Castle, pastor of St. John's Episcopal Church in the Bergen-Lafayette Ward, was a notable example. Active in the black community, the Minister stood for everything the Mayor criticized. Father Castle issued several militant statements and participated in a federally sponsored program for rehabilitation of prisoners called Project Anti-Recidivism (PAR). The Minister allowed H. Rap Brown, Chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, to appear at his church while violence erupted in Newark.

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., March 7, 1968, p. 18.

[30] Ibid.

Brown at the time said: "We Negroes built Jersey City and we can burn it down."[31]

The actions of Castle and other liberal clergymen caused Whelan to open a blistering attack on "do-gooders." At a State Patrolman's Benevolent Association Convention in Atlantic City, he spoke about how antipoverty "money, incredibly even finds its way into the pockets of those crippled and diseased hate mongers who would destroy the society from whose trough they feed. Our churches have joined in this monstrous madness."[32] Continuing the attack he said: "Make no mistake, our churches have a debt to pay. Their century of silence...was wrong." But "the churches in their frenzy to repay a century of concern with racial inequality are now toadying to the whims of a lunatic fringe whose goal is racist war. No wonder the churches have membership troubles."[33]

Reverend Castle categorized Whelan's remarks as those of a "raving man with blatant, violent...attitudes."[34] The clergyman accused the Mayor of "selling the people a bill of goods that the city is going down because of the poor people

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[31] Ibid., Sept. 28, 1967, p. 24.

[32] Newark Evening News, Sept. 28, 1967, p. 24.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

and the black people, when in reality he is only covering up rottenness and corruption of racketeers in government."[35] Castle futilely called for the resignation of Whelan. Other clergymen disagreed with Castle, and the Hudson Dispatch applauded the Mayor for mincing no words as he attacked the "philosophy that says every day is open season not only on policemen but on all of organized society."[36]

Despite the acclaim given the Mayor by the local press, he still failed to convince the state's leading newspaper, the Newark Evening News, that he could truly be a man of the law while tied so closely to Boss Kenny. The News wondered how a city with allegedly little borrowing capacity could construct a bus shelter at McGinley Square for $76,000 and refurbish Roosevelt Stadium for $2.5 million. Particularly alarming was Whelan's willingness to allow the Jersey City Incinerator Authority to vote for a $25 million giveaway contract to a private firm headed by a contractor who was heavily involved in a kickback scheme in Newark.[37] The

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Editorial, Hudson Dispatch, Sept. 28, 1967.

[37] Newark Evening News, May 21, 1967, p. 38; Oct. 23, 1967, p. 5. The scandal involving the Incinerator Authority proved to be one of the most shocking "schemes devised by the Kenny gang." According to testimony by City Purchasing Agent, Bernard Murphy, Whelan told him, "It's something that myself, John V. Kenny, and Tom Flaherty are looking forward to,more or less, our retirement." George Amick, The American Way of Graft (Princeton, N.J.: Center for Analysis of Public Issues, 1976), p. 35.

Mayor's silence caused the paper to comment: "Strange stand for the public conscience to take."[38]

Examining further the close ties between Whelan and his mentor, the paper considered Kenny fortunate in having "a man who will shout about corruption 'across the land' while failing to get too specific about things in Jersey City."[39] The Mayor, for his part, never did deny his dependency on the Boss and in an earlier interview admitted, "The political leader is a fact of life in America. The system can't function without him. I have a cordial relationship with the county leader in order to succeed."[40]

The Mayor's cordiality did not extend to the whole Democratic organization, however. He still showed an arrogant and haughty attitude toward party workers, often ignoring their requests for favors and patronage. Surrounded by Deputy Mayor Joseph Sesta, President of the City Council Thomas Flaherty, Public Works Director Philip Kunz, and other members of his inner circle, Whelan considered himself the main gear in the Kenny organization. Tension mounted as the courthouse gang led by John J. Kenny, the County Chairman, and Benjamin Schlossberg, his campaign

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[38] Newark Evening News, Sept. 18, 1968, p. 39.

[39] Ibid., Oct. 1, 1967, p. 39; This article by Joseph Sullivan gives an excellent analysis of the symbiotic relationship between Whelan and John V. Kenny. See also May 21, 1967, p. 38.

[40] Wall Street Journal, March 21, 1966, p. 16.

coordinator, grew more and more resentful of the Grove Street crowd. Jack Kenny was also the Boss's protégé and ran the organization when the elder Kenny was out-of-town, which became more and more frequent. Aloof, introverted, and laconic, the County Chairman contrasted sharply with the flamboyant mayor. Jack Kenny preferred to work behind the scenes developing party strategy and handling the financial affairs of the organization. By being available and doing favors he gained the friendship and respect of the committeemen and women. His club in Hudson City was attached to a tavern with an outdoor garden to allow him to court the multitudes. Aided by his closeness to the Boss and his party position, Jack Kenny strengthened his defenses at Newark Avenue by building a hefty campaign chest and reminding the party workers the organization existed before Whelan and would go on after him.[41]

Ward leaders and district workers gravitated toward the courthouse because they still found some semblance of club house politics. Having better job protection and given more time for political work, the courthouse faction found city hall a place to avoid. Workers at Grove Street resented Whelan's good government politics and reminisced

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[41]Interviews with committeemen. One of John J. Kenny's chief attractions was money. Many people in the organization assumed when John V. Kenny moved over John J. Kenny would step in and ladle out the funds.

about the good old days when a ward leader was "the man to reckon with." He had "the biggest house in the ward, the biggest car, and he picked the police captain." "Today's ward leaders get nothing and are still expected to get out the vote,"[42] moaned some oldtimers. Blaming Whelan for their lowly positions, many party workers hoped Jack Kenny would take over the entire organization when the old boss finally left. But John V. Kenny had no intention of resigning and let it be known that Whelan was still his man at City Hall. Celebrating the first thousand days of Whelan's administration, the Boss clearly showed how he felt:

> He (Whelan) has created a fine image for the city from his very first day in office right up to now. There is no limit to his political future.[43]

When asked how the city executive's performance compared with earlier mayors, Kenny showered more praise, "The Mayor's record is outstanding. It is one of the greatest I have ever witnessed in Jersey City."[44]

The thought that Whelan would remain Kenny's favorite at City Hall did little to ease the tension within the organization. To prepare for an eventual showdown, Jack Kenny and Schlossberg moved committeemen from Grove Street to Newark Avenue. The shift had been going on since 1957

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[42] Newark Evening News, Oct. 10, 1965, p. 7.

[43] Ibid., Aug. 14, 1966, p. 17.

[44] Ibid.

when the organization lost the city but in the mid-sixties it accelerated. By 1967 out of a sample of 104 committeemen, 70 percent were found to be on the county payroll. (See Table 16.) Two notable district workers, John R. Longo and John "Lefty" Donnelly, symbolized the changes. Both had worked hard to elect Whelan in 1965 but shortly afterwards found the Mayor's brashness unbearable and left for the county.[45] The Boss went along with the shifts because he had firm control of the Board of Freeholders. Furthermore, the "little leader" liked to see everybody mad at each other. With Whelan and Jack Kenny battling, he assumed neither would be powerful enough to stage a coup.

John V. Kenny's willingness to let his county chairman and mayor wrangle once again reflected his approach to politics. The former ward leader often resembled James Michael Curley of Boston in his methods. Having led a rebellion against Hague and finally wearing down his opposition, Kenny, like Curley, did not replace the Hague organization with a unified machine of his own.[46] Instead, the Jersey City politician made himself the "lone general in an army of privates."[47] Preferring to make people loyal to

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[45]Joseph Volz, "Taxation Without Relaxation, Jersey City Aides Grumble," Newark Evening News, Sept. 8, 1967, p. 24. Interviews with various committeemen.

[46]William V. Shannon, The American Irish (New York: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1966), p. 211.

[47]Ibid., p. 214.

him rather than the organization, Kenny made himself the indispensable man. Always accessible, he had people follow him around to ask for a job or some favor such as having a child transferred from a school or their taxes reduced. Retaining the traits of a ward leader, he allowed people to importune him for favors at his home near Hamilton Park or at his office at Pollak Hospital. Kenny loved to accommodate people and talk about the jobs he obtained for them.

Hague never allowed anyone to approach him and had jobs and favors channeled off at the level of the precinct captain or ward leader. But for Kenny, as Curley, giving a person a job or doing any kind of favor gave him a deep personal satisfaction and provided him with an intimate bond to the voters of Jersey City.

The "little guy's" method of operation enabled ordinary men and women to have or, at least, feel they had direct access to the source of power. From a conventional politician's viewpoint, this method had serious defects since all the frictions and disappointments centered on the Number One Man himself. As one scholar has noted: "In any impersonal Tammany-style organization power adheres to the office rather than to the man, and once deprived of the key position, whether it be Grand Sachem or Cook County Chairman, the old leader is virtually wiped out as a political factor."[48]

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[48] Ibid., p. 212.

But in Jersey City,Kenny remained the key political factor and a real political force even while out-of-office because he knew how to use money and power. Using people like pawns in a chess game, Kenny sought to maximize his power by "negotiating with his competitors" and dealing only with those politicians that would influence the electorate that supported him.[49] For Kenny the chief objective of government was to further his own needs. In advancing himself he gained the confidence of thousands of voters who recalled past favors or who had favorable sentiments toward him "which under the right circumstances could be reawakened."[50] And Kenny's personal style gave him even more resources. Working from his office at Pollak Hospital (which stood midway between City Hall and the County Courthouse), Kenny remained the ring leader and robber baron while other people took the heat of holding office. He needed Whelan as a strong mayor in Jersey City, and Jack Kenny to run the county and organization. The Boss let both of them take the pressure of trying to carry out the promises he made. When a favor could not be granted, Kenny was able to double-talk the favor-seeker by alleging that either Kenny or Whelan had not carried out "his" wishes. Another benefit he gained from remaining behind the scenes was the illusion his enemies had

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[49]Edward Levine, The Irish and Irish Politicians (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 138-140.

[50]Shannon, The American Irish, p. 212.

of his machine. Assuming he headed a monolithic organization, they failed to realize he commanded a warring army which remained unified only as long as he remained in charge. One observer claimed that so long as Kenny was around "no intramural warfare could erupt" but as soon as he retired the fighting would be "fierce."[51]

By remaining behind the scenes and letting others hold office or give directions, Kenny ran his organization as "loose as ashes."[52] A conglomeration of contradictions, the Kenny Organization often seemed to be without organization. No discipline, no hierarchy, no leadership came from the "little guy;" he seemed only to want enough votes to win. Blowing hot and cold with his warnings about productivity, he never had the inclination or discipline to check returns and meticulously plot the vicissitudes of voter turn-out. His Mexican Army, with so many ward leaders, zone leaders, and precinct captains, remained what it had been since 1949--a mercenary rabble.

His troops, the committeemen, never were certain about what their General wanted done. But they remained loyal to him and aged with him. Many were World War II veterans who reached middle age in the 1960s. (See Table 17) They had supported the revolution of '49 to overthrow the tyrant Hague and Johnny was their hero. But, like the little guy,

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[51] Newark Evening News, Sept. 30, 1967, p. 39.

[52] The quote comes from a Kenny ward leader, Vincent Ferro.

they grew complacent after years in power and reflected the looseness of his style. Election returns were not analyzed, districts were not canvassed, committeemen sometimes were mere jobholders, and only the lack of a strong opposition kept some of the troops from defeat. The Boss let the organization run down with an easy come, easy go attitude, and if it were not for the attention given by Flanagan at first, and later by Ben Schlossberg and Jack Kenny, the machine's first line of defense might have collapsed.[53]

The Boss's failure to use a "shilleleagh" was partly responsible for the troop's laxity, but by the mid-sixties many environmental factors also began to take their toll. Working in the post-New Deal era, committeemen found it difficult to control the vote since people no longer felt dependent on them. The primary lure of a job remained, but these were not as plentiful or secure as they had been. Civil service regulations could be manipulated, but its long range effects were still felt. Some jobs had to go to qualified people while committeemen with civil service status felt secure and did not always produce. Another detrimental influence was the unionization of city employees. Kenny never resisted the movement and by the late sixties governmental workers began to have a closer identity with the union

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[53]For an interesting analysis of the Hague and Kenny organizations see the series by Peter Farrell, "Democratic 'Machine' Not What It Once Was," in the Jersey Journal, November 27-December 1, 1961.

hall than City Hall.[54]

The changing role of the committeemen resulted from court reforms as well. Constitutional reform adopted in 1947 streamlined the New Jersey Court system and with a strong chief justice in charge the politician's power declined. In Hague's day a committeeman could kill a traffic ticket without too much trouble, but as a result of reforms under Chief Justice Arthur T. Vanderbilt, traffic tickets became more and more difficult to handle.[55] A four way form with carbon copies sent to traffic courts, police headquarters, the police officer who wrote it, and the offender made it more difficult to fix a ticket. To kill it completely required the active aid of all parties. The best a district leader could do was reduce the fine by half and even this favor was not easily done in the late 1960s when the courts tightened up further on the minimum fines.

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[54]This analysis came from interviews with many district leaders and ward leaders. Most helpful were Barney Doyle, George Duva, Vito Cestone, William Albers, Sam Pizzuto, John Soltis, Ray Quinn, Joseph Soriero and others who wished to remain anonymous. Leo Steiner, editor of New Jersey's Civil Service newspaper, the Shield, also proved most informative. For the growth of government unions in Hudson County see Hudson Trent's, "Civil Service Role Going to Unions," Jersey Journal, December 15, 1969, pp. 1, 4.

[55]Arthur T. Vanderbilt, "Traffice Law Enforcement from the Standpoint of the Courts," Rutgers Law Review, IV(1949-50), 555-561; See also Newark Evening News, December 31, 1948, p. 12. Interviews with committeemen.

Other changes in the courts also added to the politician's woes. In 1961 Chief Justice Joseph Weintraub, a Meyner appointee, curtailed the political role of court workers. Weintraub and his fellow justices imposed the following rules:

> ...Supporting personnel shall not hold any elective public office nor be a candidate therefore, shall not engage in partisan political activity, nor hold any other public office or position.[56]

The regulation applied to administrative directors of the courts, probation officers, jury commissioners, clerks to jury commissioners, stenographers, court attendants, and all employees regularly assigned or appointed by a judge or any court. The order forced some committeemen to end their political activity. For some it was a grateful relief since now they avoided their political responsibilities but still held their jobs. But for the organization it meant a further erosion of power. The ramifications of the decision were discussed by the pro-Democratic publication, the Hudson Dispatch:

> New Jersey Supreme Court's ruling issued in August ordering judges and court employees to divorce themselves from political activity could almost be classed as ludicrous except for its serious connotations.
>
> The high court's ban on political activity prohibits even attendance at testimonial dinners for politicians and political contributions. This would mean that a court employee

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[56] New Jersey Law Journal, LXXXIV(Aug. 3, 1961)I.

> could not attend a function honoring a close friend or a relative. Does it also mean a judge could not attend a dinner honoring his father because he may be a political leader.[57]

The committeemen had another problem other than local court reform. By the 1960s they found they could do very little for their constituents. Many called their job a "thankless one," and blamed the increasing role of the federal government in community affairs.[58] The federal government funneled money into the city and often by-passed the party organization by setting up poverty programs with other community leaders in charge.

Jersey City's CANDO program (Community and Neighborhood Development Organization) was a prime example of how Kenny's organization was hurt. Organized in February, 1964, the anti-poverty program came under the control of Reverend Joseph Faulkner, a Downtown priest and founder of El Centro Catholico, a social action center for Puerto Ricans. Raymond Brown, head of the local NAACP and an attorney, also helped set up the program. Receiving federal recognition and a $358,000 grant for a youth corps project, Faulkner and Brown wanted the CANDO operation to directly assist the poor and demanded no interference from politicians.[59] The

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[57]Editorial, Hudson Dispatch, October 13, 1961,

[58]Interviews with committeemen.

[59]See Joseph Sullivan's article, "Hudson Politics Mixed With Poverty Program," Newark Evening News, Jan. 2, 1966, p. 10; and Father Joseph Faulkner's article on CANDO in the Jersey Journal, Aug. 25, 1964, p. 12.

anti-poverty program soon became the bane of the ward heelers. Jobs were given to youths and unemployed adults in the Bergen-Lafayette area without regard for the organization. Obtaining more grants from the Office of Economic Opportunity, the poverty program expanded to include a Head Start, preschool training project, summer camps, recreation activities, and experimental neighborhood centers. Outside the politicians grasp, the CANDO operation started providing many of the services of the machine.

With the large amount of funds being handled by the program's leaders it was impossible to keep politics out completely. But instead of the Kenny organization taking control, competing community leaders sought power and turned CANDO into an administrative disaster. The divisions became so bitter that New York Congressman Adam Clayton Powell called for a freeze on Jersey City's funds. Mayor Whelan pleaded with the Director of OEO, Sargent Shriver, to continue the funding.[60] The Mayor's request was heeded, but the program remained under the auspices of community leaders and did little for the organization. One district worker remarked, "CANDO could have done more in the politician's hands."[61]

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[60] New York Times, Aug. 11, 1966, p. 19.

[61] Interview with Committeeman from Ward F. For more information on the federal programs and their impact on the cities see Douglas M. Fox, editor, The New Urban Politics: Cities and the Federal Government (California: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1972).

On every side the old time politican saw the erosion of his base. Besides civil service, court reform, federal programs, and voter independence, he found the communications system weakening his position. Although Jersey City politics was not greatly affected by television or radio, newspapers did play an important role. In 1952 the Jersey Journal started a column called Mr. Fixit. Referred to as the reader's Civic Man Friday, the column attempted to solve various problems for city residents. Informing readers about social security benefits, welfare applications, veteran benefits, housing permits, municipal licences, and other bureaucratic questions, Mr. Fixit undercut the committeeman as a problem solver. By the end of its first year of service the Jersey Journal proudly remarked:

> ...Mr. Fixit has had a good first year and is embarking on his second happily. This morning when he came to work there was another big stack of mail from you asking him to run civic errands.[62]

Unable to compete with the many social and economic changes in the city, committeemen saw themselves as a passing breed. As one frustrated district worker told the author, "you can't get people to come down to the clubhouse and sit on these hard wooden chairs."[63] Symbolic of their

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[62]Editorial, Jersey Journal, May 5, 1963; for other examples of the changing role of the district worker see Jack Farrell's article, "Citizens Don't Know Their Committmen," Jersey Journal, April 10, 1959, p. 1; "Bossism in Hudson Not What It Once Was," Jersey Journal, Dec. 1, 1961.

[63]Interview with Barney Doyle, committeeman in Ward A.

declining importance was Kenny's attempt to close the ward clubs and have committeemen work on a more personal basis with voters. In 1963 all clubs were ordered closed, and the ward leaders told to centralize their operations at a Journal Square headquarters. But in keeping with his style the Boss later reversed himself and when an election approached allowed the clubs to reopen.[64] But the clubs were not what they once had been. By the late sixties the precinct captain's role had changed dramatically. Many were still tied to Kenny through a job or a chance to make money from insurance contracts, legal fees, or some other inside connection. But gone were the days when a committeeman was a soldier with rank, part of a disciplined army with the ward leader as his lieutenant and the boss as the general.

Voting returns reflected the organization's inability to control the electorate. In 1961 Hudson County gave Hughes a 40,000 vote majority; in 1965 it rolled in with over 100,000 votes. In 1960 Kennedy gained a 60,000 vote majority; in 1964 Johnson won with over 130,000.[65] Voting moved with the tides of state and national politics. Only in close local elections was Kenny effective in swinging the balance of power to his side. Voting machines and the loss of the graveyard vote no doubt contributed to the

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[64] Jersey Journal, Jan. 14, 1963, p. 16.

[65] Manual of the Legislature of New Jersey, (Trenton, New Jersey, 1960-1966).

ineffectiveness of his organization, but so too did the freedom he brought to his city. Gone was not only the efficiency of the Hague machine but also the terror. Few feared Kenny and his critics never risked the reprisals that Hague sought.

Although by the 1960s the Kenny organization was a pale replica of the Hague machine, the argument should not be overdrawn. There were still some services it could offer. Besides dispensing an occasional job, an active district worker could help to relocate people in the city's low and middle income housing projects or its senior citizens homes. He could service others by helping them to raise bail, gain entry to the Medical Center, or make a few dollars on election day. In a depressed economy like Jersey City's these favors still had some impact.

Despite the contradictions and weaknesseses, one constant still remained: John V. Kenny. He was the decision maker, co-ordinator, and chief problem solver. He cared little about the nuts and bolts of the machine, but he was ready to do emergency repairs when necessary. He continued to do the brokerage job of compromising and arbitrating among competing interests. Only he could unite the Democratic organization. Banner districts emerged, with favorite committeemen and women given extra funds to turn out the vote. Focusing on key areas, Kenny could tip the scale to his side. Of course, he did not always win, but

he compensated for his organizational weaknesses with shrewd political moves. He never built up his enemies and was ready to use and reuse anybody. James F. Murray, Sr., the defiant commissioner; John Brandle, the insurgent ward leader; and Joseph Connors, the rebel councilman, broke with him, yet he took them back. He found a place for whoever wanted to be in the organization. Even Frank Guarini, a leader in the 1961 Charter Reform movement, joined and became a state senator. Rarely bearing a grudge, the "little leader" went so far as to help deceased "enemies" by finding a job for their widows or families.

A critical reason for Kenny's ability to bring people into his following came from his control of sizeable portions of Jersey City and Hudson County's revenues. In a lower-middle class city, money was a powerful force. The political entrepreneur held it out to all. To the big wheels it was a chance to split the booty of public office. To the small cogs it was the payroll, but everybody had a chance at the green stuff. Proof that the payroll had been conquered can be seen from a sampling of committeemen. (See Table 14) Almost 90 percent of the district workers had some type of government job. Moreover, a study of twenty-one of Jersey City's Democratic ward leaders showed that (in 1962) 85.7 percent earned their livelihood by means of government positions.

This extensive use of the payroll by the Hudson County organization compares somewhat with the Pittsburgh Democratic

organization. Bruce Stave in a study, The New Deal and the Last Hurrah, found in 1962 that 77.6 percent of Pittsburgh's Democratic Committeemen held government jobs. By using quantitative methods Stave argued the conquering of the public payroll by the Pittsburgh organization lends support to his thesis that the New Deal did not sound the death knell for the urban political machine. His anti-Last Hurrah thesis has some validity, but the critical question might be not how many committeemen were on the payroll, but what could a committeeman do for his constituents. In Hague's day the committeeman was a neighborhood contact, but during Kenny's era he performed more erratically, sometimes doing a job and at other times just being a payroll worker.[66]

To insure some level of success, Kenny made sure his committeemen were on the payroll. With family and friends voting any district worker could bring in an additional twenty votes. Multiple this by Jersey City's 231 election districts and this could be a winning margin. In the primaries this proved especially important since the

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[66]Studies of the role of the committeeman and his place on the payroll can be found in Bruce Stave's The New Deal and the Last Hurrah (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970). Harold G. Gosnell in Machine Politics: Chicago Model (Chicago, 1937), pp. 54-56 found by 1936 of Chicago's Democratic party workers 75% held government jobs. Another study of New York County's Democratic, Liberal, and Republican committeemen found only 5 percent on the public payroll. See Robert S. Hirschfield, et. al., "A Profile of Political Activists in Manhattan," Western Public Quarterly, XV (Sept., 1962), 490-91. All these citations are discussed by Stave.

organization had to win to stay in power.[67] To insure the payroll remained conquered, Kenny sought out people with jobs and made them committeemen, or if he knew someone had a large family he found a job for him and made him precinct captain.

Not only did his organization have a high number of jobholders as committeemen, but it also had a large number of Irish. Adhering to the Jersey City adage, "One Irishman is worth four other workers,"[68] Kenny kept his organization filled with his clansmen, who although declining in numbers, still retained their political skills. (See Table 13) Making up less than 10 percent of the city population they had more than 40 percent of the committeemen and women's posts in 1962. The high percentage of Irish reflected their ability to retain power at a time when Italians, Poles, and blacks demanded entry. The aging Irish lived through it all and survived like the boss by playing off competing groups.[69]

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[67] See Frank R. Kent's The Great Game of Politics (N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1923), pp. 6-13; 103-111 for the importance of the primary to a machine. As found in Edward C. Banfield's ed., Urban Government (N.Y.:Free Press, 1969), pp. 200-208.

[68] This quote has been often attributed to T. James Tumulty.

[69] For an explanation on how the Irish have been able to retain power for so long see Edward M. Levine's The Irish and Irish Politicians, pp. 184-186; 198.

John V. Kenny kept many Irishmen in politics by making it interesting. Despite his diminutiveness and mild manner, whenever he appeared people flocked to him and excitement filled the air. In Jersey City, politics is not only a business but a source of entertainment, and the people looked for style. Kenny could always deliver a speech and stir a crowd. Furthermore, people knew they could talk to him and he could get things done. On the phone in a minute he could do what it took days or weeks for some bureaucrat or city official to do. Something of a ladies man, he kept his female workers on a short string by telling them they were the organization. He relied on them to do much of the leg work and inform voters through coffee klatches, church meetings, and supermarket gossip. His committeewomen were not political neophytes either. Many had years of experience in the districts and could match or better any (See Table 25) committeeman's performance. The "little guy" with his broad smile kept everybody excited. His political importance to the city and organization can be comprehended only in terms of the environment he worked in.

Doing favors since a boy, he had been on the scene for almost fifty years. Starting in his father's saloon, becoming a committeeman, ward leader, and finally boss, Kenny was an institution in the city. He was so well loved and respected that the organization put out a special pamphlet entitled, "A Page Out of JVK'S Success Story." The booklet included a five-point "political code" and described

the Boss as a "man of honor; a man of his word."[70] Committeemen and women were urged "to be gentlemanly and ladylike at all times, even to your opponents." They were advised not to go "modern" and lose the technique of knowing the voters personally. "The Personal Touch" was the key to success. The pamphlet became a manual for the upcoming politician. Distributed at the annual Hudson County Democratic fund raising dinner, it quoted the leader as saying "no problem should be too small. The personal appeal is your storehouse, your reservoir of strength. . . and votes." When discussing issues, Kenny urged his followers to be cautious. He noted the controversial state "sales tax" was a problem for Trenton. In summarizing his formula for success, Kenny stressed his cardinal rule, "Remember today's opponent, you can make tomorrow's ally."[71]

The "little guy's" power sometimes paralleled his popularity. Judgeships and other valuable appointments continued to flow through his hands. Lawrence Whipple, a staunch organization man and former City Commissioner, County Prosecutor, and Superior Court Judge received the Boss's approval for a higher post. On 25 August 1967, President

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[70] The author is indebed to John R. Longo for showing him the pamphlet, "A Page Out of JVK'S Success Story."

[71] Ibid.; For some perceptive analyses of Kenny's key to success see the following citations. John Farmer's, "On the Square," May 10, 1959, Newark Evening News, John T. McGowan, "On the Square," April 12, 1964, p. C7; Joseph Volz, "On the Square," Sept. 30, 1967, p. 37; and the Editorial in the Hudson Dispatch, Oct. 26, 1956.

Lyndon B. Johnson nominated the Kenny favorite to a United States District Court seat. In October, 1967, Whipple was sworn in. At the ceremony in the Newark Federal Courthouse, an Essex County Republican paid homage to Hudson County by calling it the "wellspring" for federal judges in New Jersey. The speaker, U.S. District Court Judge Reynier J. Wortendyke, after administering the oath of office to Whipple further observed that "five of the seven federal court judges either were born or reared in Hudson County."[72] Relishing the comments from a seat in the second row was John V. Kenny.

The Boss loved to see his followers get ahead. William Sternkopf, Jr., started out as City Auditor, moved to a position on the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and finally was appointed a member of the New York Port Authority. Sternkopf, Kenny's financial advisor, showed the Boss rewarded loyalty. Another--if less loyal--member of Kenny's organization who advanced was T. James Tumulty. Looked upon as the Jersey City jester, Tumulty survived the turmoil of several city administrations by always going to where the paychecks were being made out. He joined Kenny in 1950 and became a congressman in 1954, but later he broke and went with Witkowski. By the 1960s, however, the portly politician saw his future in the Kenny organization and was awarded with an appointment to the New Jersey Superior Court.

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[72] Newark Evening News, Oct. 28, 1967, p. 5.

Tumulty's appointment came as a surprise to some, but it reflected the vicissitudes of Kenny's leadership. The Judge expressed this point by thanking his mentor for "recognizing the rather erratic loyalty I've had." The former Congressman then remarked, "I expected to be anything but a judge for reasons you will understand," but in Hudson County "the leadership has heart."[73]

Dispensing patronage, doing favors, spending money, gaining intergenerational loyalties, and giving advice, John V. Kenny thus continued to make Hudson the home of machine politics. His counter part in Essex County, Dennis Carey, at a mere sixty-four years of age, fell from power after suffering a heart attack and a devastating loss in a legislative battle.[74] Carey and Kenny had been called the Big Bosses who ran New Jersey, but Essex did not have a solid Democratic vote because of its suburban influence and Carey had problems keeping his county under control. Another contender, Middlesex County Boss, David Wilentz, became a descending star after the 1966 senatorial election when his son, Warren Wilentz, could not even carry his home county. Only Hudson prevented a complete embarrassment by giving the Democratic candidate a majority vote against the

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[73] Newark Evening News, Dec. 15, 1967, p. C30.

[74] New York Times, Nov. 8, 1967, p. 1; Dec. 22, 1967, p. 26; Newark Evening News, Nov. 8, 1967, p. 5; Dec. 24, 1967, p. 16.

incumbent, Clifford Case. Thorn Lord, the Mercer County leader, passed from the scene in 1965 when he commited suicide.[75] By 1969 only Kenny survived.

While Kenny's state power never matched Hague's, it was sufficient to keep him a major force in Trenton politics. This could be seen after the 1965 landslide election of Governor Hughes. At the pinnacle of political power, Hughes had carried Democrats to victory in both houses of the legislature for the first time in half-a-century. Yet, he could not restructure the state's antiquated tax system and pass an income tax. When Essex and Hudson balked, Hughes suffered a disappointing legislative defeat. In explaining why county bosses could block the wishes of the Governor, a New York Times reporter wrote:

> The Governor's defeat illustrated the enormous power of the New Jersey County leaders such as Mr. Carey and John V. Kenny, the Hudson County Democrat. Carey and Kenny make Charles Buckley in the Bronx look like a piker. Buckley has to watch out for the reformers and the guy in City Hall and Albany. But Carey and Kenny don't have to watch out for anyone but themselves.[76]

The reporter's observation was partly correct. County leaders in New Jersey had much power, but they did not always get what they wanted, nor did they have to watch out only for themselves.

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[75] Ibid., June 17, 1965, p. 1.

[76] Ronald Sullivan, "Hughes Defeat," New York Times, March 25, 1966, p. 44.

In 1966 a near disaster almost put Kenny out of business. He and Mayor Whelan were accused by a New York lawyer, Thomas Meehan, of demanding $10,000 in return for giving his client approval for the construction of two gasoline stations near the Holland Tunnel. Meehan accused Whelan of saying the gas stations were worth at least $250,000 a piece. The Mayor labelled the charges as "without substance and maliciously untrue,"[77] but Meehan went through with a civil suit for $500,000. He further accused Hudson County Prosecutor, James A. Tumulty, of refusing to do anything about the charges but instead "wanted any information about wrong-doing on the part of Thomas Gangemi." Meehan claimed Tumulty told him in November, 1964, that Kenny would approve the gas station arrangements if he cooperated in securing an indictment of Gangemi. The disturbing charges raised many questions about how Hudson County politics operated, but nothing happened. Tumulty dismissed Meehan as a "disappointed office seeker." Kenny and Whelan disregarded the accusations and breathed a little easier when Meehan's case was dismissed by the New York State Supreme Court for "legal insufficiency."[78] Meehan's case indicated the Boss had something to watch out for. Another development

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[77] Ibid., March 11, 1966, pp. 1, 6. Newark Evening News, March 11, 1966, p. 1; March 12, 1966, p. 3.

[78] New York Times, March 20, 1966, pp. 1, 3; Dec. 12, 1966, p. 56; Newark Evening News, March 31, 1966, p. 62.

occurred a year after and showed Kenny could not always get what he wanted. Although baron of Hudson, the "little leader" never accomplished one of his primary goals-a race track for the county. Working for years to gain harness racing in Secaucus, the Boss seemed to have completed his goal in 1967. A harness track, nicknamed, "Kenny Downs," had been proposed with Kenny working with several real estate developers and businessmen. The former mayor expected to do what Frank Hague never could do.[79] Hague had owned large amounts of property in the Meadowlands and had worked with Eugene Mori, operator of Hialeah Raceway in Florida, to develop a track, but the proposal never gained legislative approval. In 1967, the State Racing Commission approved Kenny's venture and voters in Hudson County accepted it, but the plan met a last minute hitch. Residents of Secaucus, where the track was to be built, reversed themselves and defeated the proposal by a narrow margin. The defeat proved particularly bitter. The expected track was to have a $6 to $7 million payroll and provide employment for 2,000 track concession employees. Kenny not only could have made up for some of the patronage loss at the Medical Center but would have had the added advantage of having a private firm doing the hiring and thus avoid criticism of party "control of

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[79]Joseph Volz, "Kenny Riding High on Track," Newark Evening News, Oct. 4, 1967, p. 9.

public servants."[80] The race track defeat annoyed Kenny, but brought elation to his enemies. The Newark Evening News exulted:

> To the neighbors of Secaucus on this bright morning after, congratulations, felicitations, and the happiest of returns. All the King's horses and all Mr. Kenny's men and muscle couldn't force that night harness track on this small town.
>
> This was an uphill fight waged by unorganized voters against Boss Kenny and the superior resources of a rich gambling syndicate. As such it stands as a refreshing demonstration that against an aroused electorate no political boss is invincible.
>
> As for the Rt. Hon. John V. Kenny alas, it was a day of pain, grief, and disillusionment. Here his county wide racing referendum had carried Hudson by 70,000. It had carried the State Turnpike which stood by to lend a helping hand and a couple of hi-speed lanes direct to the track. And then came Secaucus and the great benefactor's golden dream lost. Governor Hughes, who lost a state and an entire legislature couldn't have felt worse.[81]

As the 1960s came to a close, Kenny's problems mounted. Hudson County continued to lose population and structural changes on the state level created further complications. As a result of the 1964 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Reynolds vs. Sims--incorporating the one man one vote doctrine--the New Jersey legislature had been reapportioned.

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[80] Newark Evening News, Oct. 4, 1967, p. 7; New York Times, Aug. 8, 1967, p. 34.

[81] Editorial, Newark Evening News, Nov. 8, 1967, p. 32.

Representation in the State Senate and Assembly would no longer be linked exclusively to the county. By destroying the political unity of counties the new arrangement brought to an end the "winner-take-all game that operated prior to 1965."[82] Legislative redistricting would spell trouble for Kenny in the long run, but in 1968 there came a more immediate threat-scandal.

In August, 1968, Life Magazine published a sensational story accusing New Jersey's Thirteenth Congressional District Representative, Cornelius Gallagher, of being the "tool and collaborator" of a Cosa Nostra figure.[83] Portrayed as a man obsessed with making money, Gallagher was specifically accused of interceding for a Hudson gambler, Joseph (Bayonne Joe) Zicarelli, in matters involving police protection for a Bayonne gambling operation. The article reproduced transcripts of a purported telephone conversation between the Congressman and the mobster. Life also charged that Gallagher had close ties with Zicarelli in deals involving the promotion of an illegal cancer drug (laetrile) and business ventures in the Dominican Republic. The most shocking allegation, however,

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[82]Rosenthal and Blydenburg, New Jersey Politics, pp. 27-27; See also Alvin Maurer, "The Pattern of Politics in Jersey Is Crazy Quilt," New York Times, April 24, 1977, p. 5.

[83]R. Sackett, et al., "Mob: The Congressman and the Hoodlum," Life, Aug. 9, 1968, pp. 20-27; "Mob: The Congressman and the Salad Oil Swindler," Life, Oct. 25, 1968, pp. 70-71; See also New York Times, Aug. 7, 1968, p. 21; Aug. 8, 1968, p. 63. For other information on Gallagher and his problems see Paul Hoffman, Tiger in the Court, pp. 195-205 and New York Times, Dec. 5, 1976, p. 1.

was the one charging that another mobster, Harold (Kayo) Koingsberg, on orders from Zicarelli, had removed the body of a small time loan shark, Bernard (Barney) O'Brien, from the basement of Gallagher's Bayonne home. Other accusations included phone calls between the Congressman and Zicarelli and mention of the "little guy" in Jersey City who the law maker supposedly asked to "reach out for police officials " who were getting too eager.[84]

The Life Magazine story produced an immediate and almost "fratricidal disunity" in Hudson County's political ranks.[85] Gallagher was not just another Congressman, but one of "importance and influence." First elected in 1958, he became a key member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the House Government Operations Committee. He had even been suggested as a Vice-Presidential nominee in 1964.

Now he found himself under attack from the courthouse gang. County Chairman, John J. Kenny, publicly urged Gallagher to resign as did Benjamin Schlossberg. But the Congressman refused and continued to deny the charges.

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[84]Life, Oct. 26, 1968, p. 76; Aug. 9, 1968, p. 20; Richard Madden, "Charges Against Gallagher Shock Colleagues: Bayonne Group Cheers," New York Times, Aug. 13, 1968.

[85]Ronald Sullivan, "Powerful Hudson County Democratic Organization Is Divided by Accusations Against Rep. Gallagher," New York Times, Sept. 8, 1968, p. 63; Aug. 17, 1968, p. 13.

He suggested John J. Kenny resign or prove the charges made by Life.[86] Support for Gallagher's position came from his constituents who felt the Congressman was no worse than any other Hudson County politician. As one Bayonne resident summed it up:

> Listen . . . nearly every politician around here has his hand in the till a little. Maybe Gallagher did or didn't. If he got a little piece of the action more power to him, and if he is a little fancy and this town has lots of slobs, so what, he's done O.K. by Bayonne. I'm going to vote for him.[87]

The Boss accepted this viewpoint and ordered his followers to stop attacking their fellow politician. When the Congressman promised to file a libel suit against Life, it gave his critics an opportunity to back off. The County Chairman reversed himself by saying, "We no longer disown him."[88] Ben Schlossberg added, "If Gallagher's going to sue Life, that ends it. We've had family fights before this and made up afterwards."[89] But these remarks were far from being the end of the feud.

Further signs of disunity appeared at the National Democratic Convention held in Chicago in August, 1968.

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[86] Ibid.

[87] New York Times, Sept. 8, 1968, p. 63.

[88] Ibid., Aug. 17, 1968, p. 13.

[89] Ibid.

While Boss Daley ordered his police to quell the dissidents in Lincoln Park, Boss Kenny decided to do a little blood letting himself. But Kenny always preferred to do things without confrontation and ordered his lieutenant, John J. Kenny, to do the dirty work. The Boss sent word that Benjamin Schlossberg, Jack Kenny's close friend, was to be fired. A brusque and audacious individual, Schlossberg had become too arrogant in boosting his ally, Jack Kenny, and the county wing of the organization. The campaign co-ordinator became embroiled in a struggle with Rene DeMarco, husband of the Boss's granddaughter. As a member of the Kenny family, DeMarco wanted a prominent place in the organization. He headed the New Jersey Young Democrats and rallied state wide support for Kenny. Schlossberg, however, considered DeMarco an opportunist and classified the Young Democrats as a "paper organization."[90] Fielding his own group of young politicos called "Youth for Democratic Candidates," Schlossberg assumed he and Jack Kenny could do what they pleased since they headed the organization and controlled much of the party finances. But he was greatly mistaken. At the convention he was told by John J. Kenny that the Boss wanted him out. A broken man, Schlossberg, left Chicago and died shortly afterwards.[91] Few people knew

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[90] Newark Evening News, Dec. 12, 1967, p. C7.

[91] This information was obtained from an interview with John Longo.

what had happened, or they might have taken heed and not have done anything until John V. Kenny gave his approval.

Rent with faction, the Kenny organization faced problems far greater than they realized. In November, 1968 a Presidential election loomed. Hudson County and the other urban areas in New Jersey were expected to pull the Democratic nominee, Hubert Humphrey, through the Republican suburbs. But in 1968 the "Gibraltar of Democracy" failed to produce a large enough vote. Humphrey carried Hudson by only 33,000 votes--not enough to make up for Republican strength in the suburban and rural areas. Nixon garnered 1,313,480 votes to Humphrey's 1,259,977 on the state level.[92] The Democratic defeat created a stir in the party with the liberal wing demanding party reform. The Kenny organization passed off the defeat to a Republican year. The Boss and his gang would soon learn--as Frank Hague had--that the loss of the "federal shield" could be extremely costly.

One reason for Kenny's failure to maximize the organization's effort in the Presidential election was his concern about things on the state and local levels. Both a city and state election were scheduled in 1969 and the "little leader" had been maneuvering for two years to have his man in the state house. Since the reelection of Richard Hughes in 1965, the Boss had groomed State Senator, William Kelly, for the governor's chair. Hughes was constitutionally

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[92]Jersey Journal, Nov. 8, 1968, pp. 1, 28.

barred from seeking a third consecutive term and the possibility of former Governor Meyner running again only gave Kenny another incentive. Denying he put Kelly forward as a stalking horse, the Boss told a group of county officials and political chieftians that the Senator had the qualifications to be governor.

> Let me say as firmly as I can and as sincerely as I can that I am interested in 1969 in only one candidate the next governor of New Jersey, Sen. Kelly.[93]

Kelly's nomination was important to Kenny for several reasons. The aging leader resented the Trenton crowd for not accepting his proposal to create a race track in Hudson. He also felt his county had been snubbed in patronage requests after 1965--not one of the state's twelve cabinet officers came from Hudson. At times a petty man, the former ward leader used the neglect of Hudson as a cuase for temporarily withdrawing his support from the State Democratic dinner in 1967.[94] His petulance became most apparent, however, when he talked about Meyner. Kenny had worked with the Governor for eight years and never showed any deep resentment. But once Meyner was out-of-office, Kenny's distaste became more and more apparent--and public. Kenny's discontent went back to 1953 when the Warren County lawyer first won the governor's office. Always cautious in making appointments,

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[93] Newark Evening News, Dec. 17, 1968, p. 25.

[94] Ibid., Feb. 1, 1967, p. 23.

Meyner often frustrated the Hudson boss by refusing to accede to his patronage requests. Kenny also resented Meyner for not approving an earlier plan for a racetrack in Secaucus, as well as for grandstanding at the 1960 National Democratic Convention, when the Garden State's delegation failed to support John F. Kennedy. The "little guy" faced humiliation for not having helped nominate the first Irish Catholic President. Another irritable point had been Meyner's condescending attitude toward Hudson. Surrounded by a coterie of intellectuals from Princeton, the Governor showed little enthusiasm for Hudson political types. When the 1969 gubernatorial primary neared, Kenny made it a point to remind his followers any candidate seeking his support needed two qualities, "loyalty and gratitude."[95] William Kelly was the man with those qualities.

Lacking support outside of Hudson County, Kelly's chance of winning seemed slim. But Kenny did not care, he was determined to make people recognize his domain. At a Hudson County Central Labor Council meeting, the seventy-six year old boss launched a blistering attack on Kelly's primary opponent, Robert Meyner. Calling the former Governor an

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[95] Newark Evening News, Dec. 17, 1968, p. 25.

"ingrate" Kenny said:

> I won't support that . . . for dogcatcher. I'll go on the platform and tell him to his face. As long as I live I won't support him. If he wins the nomination, I won't vote for him.[96]

Referring back to 1953, when Meyner first ran for governor, the Boss said he "picked Mr. Meyner" and financed the campaign. Kenny claimed the Democratic nominee called him and said, "I need some money." The Hudson chieftian told how he agreed to provide some operating funds and that State Democratic Committee Chairman, Robert Burkhardt, came over. Kenny next explained that he gave the Meyner messenger $10,000 but Burkhardt said, "That's not enough."[97] The Boss said he gave him another $40,000. Having provided such a healthy contribution the county leader expected the Governor to be grateful, but Kenny charged after taking office Meyner held a meeting with state leaders and said, "We have to get rid of him (Kenny)!"[98] The Boss's attack received support from Senator Kelly. Appointed by Meyner as President of the State Civil Service Commission in 1954, Kelly held a key patronage post for Hudson. But the former state official claimed when Meyner learned he was going to run for state senator, the Governor suggested, "Bill why

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[96] Newark Evening News, March 5, 1969, p. 49.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

don't you resign." Kelly reputedly responded: "Why don't you resign."[99]

Surprised by the bitterness of these attacks, Meyner categorized them as "pure unadulterated nonsense."[100] Having helped to save the Hudson Boss in 1957, the former Governor wondered why Kenny should now bring up the subject of loyalty and gratitude. But the old warrior offered no explanation and escalated his attack by heaping profanities and ridicule upon his opponent.[101]

While engaged in verbal warfare with Meyner, Kenny soon found himself with an even more serious problem. His plans to run Whelan for reelection did not meet with unanimity from within and outside his organization. The Mayor four years earlier ran as the taxpayer's friend and a man above reproach. During his first full term Whelan proved to be a strong executive, but his image as an efficient public servant started to be questioned. In 1965 the tax rate had been $110.69 per $1,000, but by 1969 it climbed to $159 per $1,000 with the budget increasing from $71.6 million to $92.5 million.[102] The rising costs brought criticism. In April,

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[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid. Some of the statements made by Kenny were unpublishable.

[102] New Jersey, Division of Local Government, Annual Reports (1965-69); Newark Evening News, April 7, 1968, p. 28.

1968, a group of taxpayers formed an organization called STAB (Stop the Adopted Budget). Although the movement failed to change anything, it did collect 35,000 signatures and indicated Whelan's candidacy would not go unchallenged.

One of the first was Michael Bell, a young lawyer. In January, 1969, the Mayor delivered his state of the city message, promising no new tax increases, yet promoting his building program and plans for a civic center near the New York Port Authority's transit complex. But his statements soon came under attack by Bell who claimed the "city is dying." Challenging Whelan to a debate, Bell wondered how the Mayor could talk about "taxes not going up; they've gone up $50 in the past year."[103]

Criticism of the Mayor was not confined to would-be mayoral candidates. The City Council proved to be less than cooperative in accepting his building programs and administrative changes. Frank Culloo and Anthony Altomonte, two organization councilmen, became openly critical. Only through the influence of Boss Kenny, who transferred Altomonte and quelled Culloo, was Whelan able to push forward with his programs.[104] One Councilman who could not be

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[103] Newark Evening News, Jan. 15, 1969, p. 26.

[104] For Kenny's control of the City Council see articles by Joseph Sullivan "On the Square," Newark Evening News, Oct. 17, 1965; March 6, 1965; March 13, 1966, p. 44 and Joseph Volz's same column on Jan. 7, 1968, p. 33; March 17, 1968, p. 34; Sept. 18, 1968, p. 53.

silenced, however, was the Hudson City spokesman, Thomas Maresca. Called the protector of city property owners and rentpayers, Maresca supported Whelan in 1965 but soon became disenchanted and by 1969 decided to run on his own for mayor. The Councilman attacked Whelan for taking too many trips abroad. Upon returning from the Iberian Peninsula, Whelan commented on how Madrid's City Hall was so much better than Jersey City's. Maresca suggested the travelling office holder use "some maintenance workers to improve City Hall." At City Council meetings, the angry Councilman wondered how much time the Mayor put into his $30,000 a year job. When Whelan and his travelling companion, City Council President Thomas Flaherty, took "another vacation to Ireland," Maresca urged them to resign.[105]

The criticism thrust at Whelan had been, in part, his own doing. No longer the conscientious public servant, he became less and less available and let his Business Administrator, John Moriarity, run City Hall. Driving a sports car, living like a king, the former telephone employee enjoyed the amenities of public office. Rumors even circulated that he was unhappy with his residence in Jersey City and was building a $90,000 mansion in Wayne, New Jersey.[106] Despite the attacks, the Mayor announced his

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[105] Ibid., May 22, 1968, p. 80; Sept. 28, 1968, p. C8.

[106] Ibid., April 30, 1967, p. 39.

intention to seek reelection:

> The burdens and pressure-particularly for a man raising a large family-are awesome and the pleasure of accomplishment always too infrequent. But these considerations have been outweighed by my belief that Jersey City needs continuity of leadership.[107]

Replying to critics, he said, "The national urban crisis affects taxes, crime, education, social ills and afflicts all cities. They cannot be solved by waving a magic wand. At this stage of the game, Jersey City needs continued hard work, no sloganeering."[108]

Although Whelan claimed he carried a burden by remaining in office, there were plenty of candidates willing to take it off his back. Besides Bell and Maresca, there was Julian Robinson, the young, energetic black director of the Health and Welfare Department and protégé of Councilman Fred Martin. With blacks making up over 20 percent of the city population and not having a proportional share of power, Robinson assumed he had a fighting chance. Running on a "Let's Be Honest" theme, he raised doubts about the integrity of the Whelan administration. In a startling speech, the Welfare Director charged the city had lost a 10 percent discount on the purchase of twelve portable swimming pools.

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[107] Ibid., Sept. 18, 1968, p. 53.

[108] Ibid.

Robinson claimed the supplier had never given the city its discount and delivered pools worth less than what had been paid for. He attacked Whelan and City Council President Thomas Flaherty, for their conniving and raised the issue of kickbacks by city contractors.[109]

The criticism expressed by Robinson and other Whelan opponents mounted. By March, 1969, a full scale revolt erupted, reflecting the antagonism between City Hall and the courthouse that had been seething since Whelan's first election. The City Hall or "Grove Street" faction consisted mostly of Irish politicians who had come to view themselves as the elite of the organization. Reading books on politics, attending seminars, and attempting to bring professional talent into the Whelan administration, men like Flaherty, Flanagan, Warren Murphy, and Bernard Murphy, expected to inherit the organization when the old Boss finally resigned or died. The courthouse gang and district workers had a different view of the situation, however. They disliked the Mayor's brash attitude and felt unappreciated for their work in the trenches.

Representing the county faction was John J. Kenny, the Boss's protégé. Working without his close advisor, Benjamin Schlossberg, Jack Kenny decided 1969 was to be the year of

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[109] Jersey Journal, March 27, 1969, pp. 1, 4; April 8, 1969, p. 4; For more details on the swimming pool scandal see George Amick's The American Way of Graft (Princeton:Center for Analysis of Public Issues, 1976), pp. 27-29.

decision. He had co-existed with Mayor Whelan for four years, but he could no longer stomach the "Slide Rule Caesar." And despite his loyalty to John V. Kenny, the man who had been like a father to him, Jack Kenny decided to lead a palace revolution. The County Chairman claimed his rebellion arose from a political dispute, but the real cause was money. Whelan had approached him at a political rally in 1964 and told him to shake down a local gambler, Christie (Lefty) Marchitto for a quarter of a million dollars. Marchitto had enjoyed Jack Kenny's protection, but Whelan now controlled the city. The Freeholder had no choice but to ask Marchitto for what the Mayor demanded. At a shoeshine parlor where he held court, the gambler listened to Jack Kenny's message and replied with a laugh.[110] But after some harrassment by the authorities Marchitto agreed to pay $15,000 which Jack Kenny passed on to the City Executive. When Whelan received more kickback money, he thanked the County Chairman and told him, "We should get together and we'd do well and we ought to get John V. Kenny out of the picture." The angry ward leader told the Mayor "to go to hell."[111]

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[110] A synopsis of Jack Kenny's testimony at the famous "Hudson County Eight" trial can be found in Paul Hoffman's Tiger in the Court, pp. 152-154; or see the original transcript of the trial United States vs. Kenny et. al 462 F.2d 1000-1300(1972); cert. denied 499 U.S. 914(1972). Docket Numbers 569-70; 570-70. Transcript can be found in Newark and Trenton.

[111] Ibid., Jersey Journal, May 27, 1971, pp. 1, 28.

Although despising Whelan, Jack Kenny refused to make his battle just a personal one. He tried to give some legitimacy to his bolting by claiming the Mayor failed to consult with him and the ward leaders before making up the city ticket. At a rump session attended by forty-eight zone leaders, the County Chairman asked for support. Michael Balsamo, the new County Real Estate Director and aide to Jack Kenny, seconded the motion by describing Whelan's choices for councilmen as "strangers."[112] He particularly singled out the Mayor's close friend, William Massa, a school board attorney and candidate in the Journal Square Ward. The courthouse faction also questioned the selection of Fred Martin for the Bergen-Lafayette Ward, Neil Pecoraro for Downtown, and another Whelan ally, Frank Quilty for Hudson City. They claimed the Mayor's running mates were unacceptable because they "will forget us after the election." Balsamo played upon the district workers unrewarded efforts by calling the rebellion a "grass roots movement."[113] To offer an alternative, to the Whelan ticket, Jack Kenny suggested a dedicated precinct captain, Thomas Brescia, for the Journal Square spot and assured his followers that more acceptable candidates could be found for all city council posts.

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[112] Newark Evening News, March 6, 1969, p. 21.

[113] Ibid.

The uprising in his organization took the Boss by surprise.[114] Approaching his twentieth year in power, the Hudson leader had made big plans for 1969. He now had to address himself to internal problems. On the very night of Jack Kenny's rump meeting, he got on the phone and called the dissident zone leaders for a meeting the next day. At a whip-cracking session in the Hudson County police building he warned district leaders, "anybody who doesn't support the ticket better look for a new job."[115] Speaking as a political entrepreneur, he explained, "when the president of a big corporation tells employees this must be done it must be done or someone gets hurt."[116] As for his protégé, Jack Kenny, the Boss said the County Chairman "acted foolishly" when he endorsed his own council candidate without "consulting me."[117] Demonstrating he was still the Boss, the elder Kenny fired Brescia from his $11,500 job as Secretary to the County Warden. The troops soon realized Jack Kenny had acted alone.

The ability of the "little leader" to regroup his army came from his role as the chief broker and coordinator of Hudson politics. Locally, John V. Kenny had enough resources--money and manpower--to win any dogfight. The Boss did not

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[114] Interviews with Raymond Quinn and John Longo.

[115] Newark Evening News, March 8, 1969, p. 11.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

need the mastery of city and county that Hague possessed. In Hudson's seething cauldron Kenny just needed a bigger ladle (and more skill in its use) than his opponents. Although Jack Kenny was the County Chairman and the Boss's viceroy, John V. Kenny still controlled the Board of Freeholders--only two out of nine freeholders supported the coup. Schlossberg and Jack Kenny thought when the showdown came the county would go with them. They had control of the campaign chest--which totalled $283,000--and had shifted many committeemen to Newark Avenue, but they failed to realize the organization remained a mercenary army with deep personal ties to the "little guy."

John V. Kenny never left the scene too long as to be forgotten. But more importantly he always kept the Board of Freeholders on his side. This gave him the added leverage of purging any dissident when necessary. With the committeemen holding mostly county jobs, they feared supporting any coup. Many also feared that without the little leader's maneuvering and manipulation the organization would fold like a paper tiger.[118] Thus, despite their dislike for Whelan and his council choices, the troops pulled back. Out of the forty-eight zone leaders only a handful remained with John J. Kenny. Those that stayed paid for their loyalty. Besides Brescia, the Boss fired six other defectors. Pasquale Pipi,

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[118] Newark Evening News, March 8, 1969, p. 11; This analysis was also obtained from interviews with ward leaders and committeemen.

an $8,000 a year county jobholder, received a pink slip from the head of the Motor Licence Division. When a reporter asked his supervisor why he had been fired, the reply was: "You need him until you get the order."[119] Along with Pipi went Balsamo and William Guarini, an assistant to the county roads superintendent. The firings were mostly of Italian supporters and this led John J. Kenny to complain about ethnic prejudice. "What are we getting into, a dictatorship? This is the 20th Century not the 1890's."[120] Some observers thought it was more like 1949 with John V. Kenny playing the role of Frank Hague and John J. Kenny trying to play Jack the Giant Killer.

But 1949 was not 1969. The County Chairman could not mobilize enough dissidents on his own and turned to Thomas Gangemi for support. The two former allies of the Boss announced on 17 March 1969--twenty years after John V. Kenny had announced his "Freedom Ticket"--that they would support insurgent city and county slates against the Regular Democratic Organization. The Freeholder promised to back Gangemi for Mayor in return for support of his county primary ticket. Running on the slogan, "Without Fear," John J. Kenny hoped the similarity between his rebellion and his mentor's would carry him to victory. But John V. Kenny was to demonstrate he still ran the show.[121]

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[119] Ibid., March 11, 1969, p. 19; March 13, 1969, p. 24.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Newark Evening News, March 21, 1969, p. 22.

The municipal election proved to be typical of most Jersey City contests--filled with sound and fury. At the ballot drawing ceremony a donnybrook started. The Whelan followers had the Acting City Clerk, Dolores Meehan, draw the positions, and the Mayor gained the top spot. When she announced the results, the anti-Whelan candidates raised an uproar with John Yengo leaping over the railing and demanding to see the card. Shoving and pushing began, and the police had to calm things down. The Acting Clerk next drew the runner up spots and created more controversy when she contradicted herself by calling Bell's name first and then reversing to Gangemi's. With confusion rampant a Superior Court Judge, Peter Artaserse, decided Mrs. Meehan had not been fair in her selections and ordered a new drawing. This time Maresca gained the top spot followed by Gangemi, Whelan, Yengo, Robinson, and Bell. The new positioning suggested the possibility of a runoff since any candidate would find it most difficult to outdraw his opponents on the first ballot.[122]

Although not having the top spot, Whelan still remained the strongest candidate. Taxes had risen and the Mayor's image was no longer simon pure, but he still had strong

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[122] Ibid., April 4, 1969, p. 1. Under the state home rule statue, the Faulkner Act of 1950, if no mayoral candidate received a majority of the vote's cast then a run-off was required between the two leading candidates.

support for his hard line on law and order.[123] Whelan's appeal was enhanced by the opposition of the only black candidate, Julian K. Robinson. Whelan's followers portrayed the former city director as a radical and showed pictures of him coming out of a police station with Black Panthers.[124] Robinson tried to counter-attack by focusing the campaign on Boss Kenny who he said suffered from "creeping senility" but remained "the real mayor of Jersey City." The youthful campaigner criticized Whelan's administration for neglecting the black community and allowing social deterioration in the Lafayette area.[125] Despite vigorous efforts to gain a broad based following, Robinson never shook the image of an extremist and his campaign stagnated. The wily Boss, John V. Kenny, helped to deflate the former director's chances by having Whelan keep Councilman Fred Martin on the organization ticket thus depriving blacks of a united front.

Blacks were not the only ones divided, however. All the anti-Whelan candidates started criticizing one another.

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[123]Whelan's firm stand on law and order gained wide support in late 1968 and early 1969 when machine gun bullets riddled a Greenville police station's window and a bomb flew through the same precinct's window. See Newark Evening News, Nov. 30, 1968, p. 1; Dec. 19, 1968, p. 49; Jan. 2, 1969, p. 30; Dec. 2, 1968, p. 7; Jan. 15, 1969, p. 36.

[124]Interview with Julian K. Robinson.

[125]Newark Evening News, April 6, 1969, p. 30; Jersey Journal, April 21, 1969, p. 1.

Mike Bell, the reformer, attacked Julian Robinson and challenged him to a debate. Maresca criticized both Whelan and Gangemi and claimed he was the only independent candidate who could win. John Yengo, the wild man of Jersey City, criticized everybody and argued he was the city's last best hope. The disputes sounded like music to the Boss's ears. Things had been further complicated by a battle over the Democratic party's war chest.[126] As County Chairman, John J. Kenny, retained power over the party's finances, and he was expected to use the funds to help Gangemi. But Robinson inadvertently assisted the Boss by going to court and preventing John J. Kenny and the Regular Democrats from using $283,000 in party funds. Stating the election was non-partisan, Robinson argued all candidates had the right to use the money. The effect was to tie up the funds and weaken Gangemi's candidacy.[127]

The vituperativeness of the campaign, however, still could be heard from the bitter exchanges between Julian Robinson, Mayor Whelan, and City Council President, Thomas Flaherty. After the former Welfare Director raised the question of corruption at City Hall, Flaherty and Whelan launched a fierce rebuttal. The Mayor called Robinson a liar and promised to "rip the mask of hypocrisy" off his

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[126] Ibid., April 2, 1969, p. 1; Jersey Journal, April 2, 1969, p. 1; April 10, 1969, p. 1.

[127] Ibid.

face. Flaherty took out a full page advertisement in the Jersey Journal to deny the charges. The two city officials also filed a libel suit against their former colleague and promised to follow through with other legal action.[128] Besides fighting Robinson, Whelan also battled his prime challenger, former Mayor Thomas Gangemi, who called the incumbent a "newspaper tiger" who "looks good in print but folds up when the time comes to produce the record."[129]

But the record was what Boss Kenny and Mayor Whelan were banking on. They had become a winning team and expected to repeat their performance. Kenny predicted a first ballot victory. The seventy-six year old boss tried to insure it by hitting the campaign trail. He called on his committee women to put "Tom Whelan across."[130] Making fifteen to twenty stops a day, the chief showed he still was not ready to retire. The Mayor meanwhile continued to stick to his law and order theme by commenting on how crime had declined under his leadership and warning. "the roadshow of revolutionary thugs and goons is through in Jersey City."[131]

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[128] Ibid., April 8, 1969, pp. 1, 10; May 1, 1969, p. 1.

[129] Ibid., April 10, 1969, pp. 1, 10.

[130] Jersey Journal, May 10, 1969, p. 1; April 10, 1969, p. 1.

[131] Ibid., April 9, 1969, p. 15.

This strategy proved effective. When the votes were counted the personality politician and boss again came out on top. The Mayor defeated his opponent, Thomas Gangemi, by a two to one margin. Whelan received 42,697 votes to Gangemi's 21,166. Thomas Maresca, the independent candidate, ran a strong third with 12,113 followed by Robinson with 9,546, Bell with 6,934, and Yengo with 830. Although not winning an outright victory--since he gained less than 50 percent of the vote--Whelan was still elated with the results. He compared the contest to a "Pier 9 brawl." Mentioning he had been in all "kinds of scraps" including World War II, the Mayor said he never "enjoyed any victory like the one we had tonight."[132] Whelan had much to enjoy. The returns indicated Gangemi was no stronger than he had been in 1965 and Jack Kenny's revolt was only a minor rebellion. Licking their wounds, Whelan's opponents only consolation was the need for a runoff.

Boss Kenny found the victory less enjoyable, however. He now faced two elections--the June primary and mayoralty runoff. Commenting on his problems the pressured leader said, "We can push two ways."[133] Kenny started pushing Senator Kelly by opening his war chest and going back on the

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[132] Newark Evening News, May 14, 1969, p. 1.

[133] Ibid.

campaign trail.[134] The Boss urged city voters to support Kelly and predicted Hudson County would give their local favorite 60,000 votes. While bolstering his candidate, Kenny continued to spout venom towards Meyner and called the former Governor "an ingrate who doesn't know the meaning of loyalty."[135] Another former ally whom the Boss found lacking loyalty was John J. Kenny. Entering a primary ticket and supporting Meyner, Jack Kenny broke the final ties between him and his former sponsor. The Boss wanted no part of his ex-protégé and made plans to have a new aide, Walter Wolfe, take over as County Chairman. Wolfe became the Jersey City version of Ditto Boland (in Edwin O'Connor's Last Hurrah), and echoed the Boss's orders with the cheer, "We want Kelly."[136]

John V.Kenny may have wanted Kelly but New Jersey certainly did not. Hudson County delivered 54,684 votes for the State Senator compared to 21,267 for Meyner, but the former Governor proved to be too strong outside Kenny's fiefdom and easily beat the local boy with a state vote of

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[134] It has been suggested by one observer that Kenny feared the federal probes and to show where some of his money was going he poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into Kelly's campaign.

[135] Hudson Dispatch, June 1, 1969, p. 1.

[136] Newark Evening News, May 21, 1969, p. 18; Edwin O'Connor's Last Hurrah is a classic in capturing the ambiance of an urban machine and many of his characters could be found in Jersey City.

116,814 to 75,765.[137] The primary results showed the "little guy" unable to control state politics but was still the baron of Hudson. The old Boss crushed his rebellious County Chairman by sweeping the county with 59,000 votes compared to 21,000 for the Kenny-Gangemi ticket. The lop-sided results showed the rebellion had been limited to Jersey City since the John V. Kenny backed candidates rolled up an average of three-and-a-half to one majority in the other Hudson municipalities. They won by a two-and-a half to one total in Jersey City. The lack of strength by the rebels indicated Whelan's reelection chances for the June 17 runoff were quite good.[138]

With the primary concluded, the Boss turned his attention back to the city. Kelly's race had been a side affair with a bold grab for state power, but Whelan's reelection was essential for the continuance of power. The duel between the Mayor and Gangemi degenerated into a vicious name calling contest with each candidate calling the other a liar. Whelan accused his opponent of "always being uncomfortable with the truth," and "campaigning on a platform of make believe."[139] The Italian candidate retaliated by

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[137] Jersey Journal, June 4, 1969, p. 1.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Newark Evening News, June 12, 1969, p. 23.

accusing the Mayor of seeking reelection by setting "up a campaign of lies and misrepresentation."[140] Describing Whelan's administration as a do nothing one, Gangemi belittled the Mayor's contention of a lower crime rate by noting in the "winter time you can't find anyone on the streets because of fear of being raped, robbed, or embarrassed." Coming back at Gangemi, Whelan accused the former mayor of having demoralized the police while in office. Expressing irritation about Gangemi's question on how many poles he "climbed with the phone company," Whelan answered, "I can tell him it was a lot. But it was an honest living, and I have never been ashamed of working for a living. At least I wasn't masquerading as a millionaire and receiving no-show checks from the parks department."[141]

Although Whelan and Gangemi were the candidates, Boss Kenny still remained the center of Jersey City politics. At a Hudson County Democratic Committee meeting he demonstrated his power by removing John J. Kenny from his post as County Chairman. The new appointee, Wally Wolfe, exhibited the qualifications the Boss wanted by saying, "I'll never be disloyal to you, Mayor Kenny. I promise you that from the bottom of my heart."[142] The former Mayor accepted the pledge and turning to his troops, said "This is a solid Democratic

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[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid., June 18, 1969, p. 23.

[142] Newark Evening News, June 18, 1969, p. 23.

organization. It's going to get bigger, better, and stronger."[143]

Kenny's organization remained solid enough to win again. In the runoff, Whelan defeated Gangemi by a vote of 50,234 to 33,831. The victory resembled the 1965 race when the Mayor showed how the Kenny organization, with a personable candidate could do better in the uptown wards than in the river ones. Whelan only edged out Gangemi in the Bergen-Lafayette Ward and Downtown Ward, but the Mayor won handily in Hudson City, the West Side, Journal Square, and Greenville. Things had certainly changed since Kenny's 1949 win over Frank Hague, when the downtown vote had been the key to success.

TABLE 12

THE RUNOFF VOTE FOR MAYOR BY WARDS, 1969

WARD	GANGEMI	WHELAN
Greenville	5,792	6,933
West Side	6,933	11,186
Journal Square	6,863	9,464
Hudson City	5,997	10,066
Downtown	4,249	5,099
Bergen-Lafayette	3,997	4,946
TOTAL	33,831	50,234

Source: Jersey Journal, June 18, 1969

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[143] Ibid.

Whelan called his triumph an "overwhelming mandate of the people."[144] He forecast that the vote will "enable our administration to move our program forward more rapidly and effectively, and the unity of purpose shown today will give us added strength in Trenton and Washington."[145] The Boss echoed the Mayor's optimism and called his candidate "the best mayor Jersey City ever had."[146] Whelan's victory insured Kenny control of the county since the city represented half of Hudson's vote. Kenny was also delighted with the victory achieved by six of the organization councilmen in the runoff race. Even one of the losses, by Councilman, Fred Martin, brought satisfaction to the Boss. The Bergen-Lafayette Councilman had always annoyed Kenny, and he had surreptiously backed Martin's rival, William Thornton. Supplying money to district workers and advising his supporters to stay away from Martin, the old rascal let the Councilman have the facade of organization support while he was undercut in the trenches. Boss Kenny, who was himself seventy-six, commented on Martin's defeat, "Young people don't want to vote for an old man."[147] The Councilman was seventy-seven.

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[144] Newark Evening News, June 18, 1969, p. 1.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

Kenny then laid plans to even another score with Robert Meyner. On the night of the June primary, the former Governor asked those "who vied" with him "to join hands so we can have a great Democratic victory on November 4."[148] But John V. Kenny had no intention of joining hands. During the summer he became bold and brazen. Annoyed about comments on his possible retirement, he told the press corps: "I hope you got that straight, I'm not retiring gentlemen. I was born here. I'm gonna stay here (in Hudson) until I'm carried out in a box."[149] Becoming less and less tolerant of outsiders, he talked about how "Hudson County always delivered for New Jersey but New Jersey failed to deliver for Hudson."[150] He urged his followers to "forget about the state" and work for the county.[151]

Twenty years earlier Kenny had cut the Democratic nominee for governor, Elmer Wene, by covertly having his organization split the ticket. By October, 1969, the Boss decided to do openly what he did covertly in 1949. He instructed his County Chairman, Wally Wolfe, to tell the troops to vote for Congressman William Cahill, the Republican nominee, for governor. Louis De Pascale, the Hoboken Mayor and Kenny ally, used a pointer to show Hudson voters how to

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[148] Jersey Journal, June 4, 1969, p. 1.

[149] Newark Evening News, June 27, 1969, p. 18.

[150] Hudson Dispatch, July 17, 1969, p. 1.

[151] Ibid., Oct. 7, 1969, p. 17; Newark Evening News, Sept. 8, 1969, p. 8.

split their ballots.[152]

With the "Gibraltar of Democracy" against him and labelled a political retread, Robert Meyner's chances for election seemed slim. Realizing there was no chance of changing Kenny's mind, he began to attack bossism and appealed to the independent voters. He accused Cahill and the State Republican Chairman, Nelson Gross, of making a deal for Hudson's support. Specifically charging the Republicans and Kenny with bargaining for the prosecutor's office and a possible race track, the Democratic nominee remarked: "There had to be a price for that support."[153] Keeping up his attack Meyner said the reason Kenny was against him was because of his own independence in squelching the race track deal in the 1950s.[154]

Denying Meyner's charges of a deal, Kenny seemed to take enjoyment in denigrating the former Governor while backing a Republican. When the Democratic candidate and Governor Hughes visited Hudson County not even a motorcycle escort was provided. The state's leading Democrats were reduced to walking Kennedy Boulevard and pleading for support. But when William Cahill came to the "Gibraltar of Democracy"

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[152] Jersey Journal, Oct. 31, 1969, p. 1.

[153] New York Times, Oct. 27, 1969, p. 49.

[154] Ibid., Oct. 31, 1969, p. 10.

he received a resounding welcome with banners and party officials greeting him.[155] To the end of the campaign Kenny carried on his vendetta against Meyner. Speaking at the Hudson County Democrats annual $100 a plate dinner, the Boss told 3,000 cheering supporters that he made no deals, but Meyner attempted to make a deal at the 1960 National Democratic Convention. The Hudson Chief claimed the former Governor offered him "five big state jobs" in return for support as a favorite son. Kenny said he replied to Meyner that there would be a caucus of the state delegation to decide who New Jersey's candidate would be. In caucus Kenny said Meyner voted for Kennedy, but on the convention floor changed his mind. The Hudson Boss speculated that Lyndon B. Johnson promised the Governor a job in the cigarette industry to change his vote.[156] With his followers agreeing with everything he said and waving a banner "Victory After 20 Years," the old warrior concluded his remarks by urging everyone to vote for those who showed loyalty and gratitude.

In November, 1969, revenge came. Meyner's campaign never gained momentum, and after sixteen years of Democratic rule the Republicans--thanks in part to the Hudson machine--regained the state house. Cahill overwhelmed his opponent

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[155] Newark Evening News, Oct. 31, 1969, p. 10.

[156] Ibid.

by 500,000 votes--the worst defeat suffered by any Democratic candidate for governor in New Jersey history. The Republican nominee carried Hudson County by 30,502 votes. Jersey City gave him 55 percent of its vote and only the black ward, Bergen-Lafayette, remained loyal to Meyner. Following the Boss's wishes, the voters split their ticket and elected all Democratic candidates for state and county office. Reaching another plateau in his political career, John V. Kenny called the defeat of Meyner "his second greatest victory."[157] Ironically, it would be one of his last.

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[157] Jersey Journal, Nov. 5, 1969, p. 1.

TABLE 13

ETHNIC AND RACIAL BACKGROUNDS OF
DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEEMEN IN 1962

WARD	IRISH	ITALIAN	POLISH	GERMAN	BLACK	JEWISH	OTHER	NUMBER
A	47.5%	12.5%	5%	5%	-	-	30%	80
B	49	21.5	4.5	11	-	-	14	88
C	52.5	20	2.5	7.5	-	1	16.5	80
D	35	15	7.5	26	-	2.5	14	80
E	39.5	36.5	15	4.5	-	-	4.5	66
F	25	12	9	9	37	1	7	68
City Wide	42	19	7	11	5	0.5	15	462

TABLE 14

PERCENT OF DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEEMEN ON PAYROLL IN 1962

JOB	WARD A	WARD D	WARD E	WARD F	CITY WIDE
City	44.7%	35%	40%	27%	36.5%
County	44.7	55	50	54	52
State	-	-	-	-	-
Federal	-	-	-	4	1.
Private	2.6	10	10	15	7.5
Unknown	8	-	-	-	3.
Number	38	20	20	26	104
Percentage on Payroll	89.4	90	90	85	89.4

Source: Jersey City, City Clerk's Office; Hudson County Board of Elections; Obituaries in Jersey Journal and Hudson Dispatch; Interviews with ward leaders, committeemen, and letters to committeemen's families; phone calls to district workers. See also article, "Jersey City Ward Leaders," Jersey Journal, Dec. 27, 1955, p. 1, and article on zone leaders in Jersey Journal, Aug. 19, 1964, p. 1.

Note: Table 13 through Table 25 are compiled from the above source.

TABLE 15

RELIGION OF DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEEMEN IN 1962

RELIGION	WARD A	WARD D	WARD E	WARD F	CITY WIDE
Catholic	78%	75%	90%	57.6%	76%
Protestant	6	20	-	38.4	15
Jewish	-	5	5	4	1
Unknown	16	-	5	-	8
Number	38	20	20	26	104

TABLE 16

PERCENTAGE OF DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEEMEN ON PAYROLL IN 1967

JOB	WARD A	WARD D	WARD E	WARD F	CITY WIDE
City	24.7%	20%	10%	12%	16.5%
County	64.7	70	85	69	72
State	-	-		-	-
Federal	-	-		4	1.
Private	2.6	10	5	15	7.5
Unknown	8			-	3
Number	38	20	20	26	104
Percentage on Payroll	89.4	90	90	85	89.4

TABLE 17

AGES OF DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEEMEN IN 1962

AGE	WARD A	WARD D	WARD E	WARD F	CITY WIDE
20-29	2.5%	-		4%	2%
30-39	5	10		19	9
40-49	45.	55	60	38	48
50-59	31.5	30	35	30	31.5
60-69	10.5	5	5	8	7.5
70	5.5				2.
Total Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(Number)	38	20	20	26	104

TABLE 18

AGE OF DEMOCRATIC WARD LEADERS IN 1955 AND 1962

AGES	1955 Percent	1962 Percent
20-29	-	-
30-39	6.3%	23.7%
40-49	31.2	33.3
50-59	50.	38.
60-69	12.5	5.
70	-	
Total Percentage	100%	100%
Number	16	21
Average Age	44	47

TABLE 19

ETHNIC BACKGROUND ON WARD LEADERS IN 1955 AND 1962

ETHNIC BACKGROUND	1955	1962
Irish	75%	57%
Italian	18.8	28
Polish	6.2	5.
German	-	-
Black	-	5.
Jewish	-	5.
Total Percentage	100%	100%
Number	16	21

TABLE 20

RELIGION OF WARD LEADERS

RELIGION	1955	1962
Catholic	100%	93.5%
Protestant		3.25
Jewish		3.25
Other		-
Total Percentage	100%	100%
Number	16	21

TABLE 21

PERCENTAGE OF WARD LEADERS ON PUBLIC PAYROLL

JOB	1955	1962
City	25%	28.5%
County	68.7	57.
Private	6.3	14.5
Unknown		
Total Percentage	100%	100%
Number	16	21
Percentage on Payroll	93.7	85.7

TABLE 22

AGES OF WOMEN WARD LEADERS IN 1962

AGES	PERCENTAGE
20-29	-
30-39	17%
40-49	50
50-59	22
60-69	-
70	-
Unknown	11
Total Percentage	100%
Number	18

TABLE 23

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WARD LEADERS ON PAYROLL IN 1962

JOB	PERCENTAGE
City	22.5%
County	55.5
State	5.5
Federal	-
Private	-
Unknown	16.5
Total on Payroll	83.3
Total Percentage	100%
Number	18

TABLE 24

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF WOMEN WARD LEADERS

Irish	Italian	Polish	Other	Total	Number
44.5%	11%	22.25%	22.25%	100%	18

TABLE 25

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WARD LEADERS WITH
MORE THAN TEN YEARS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Year	1962
Percent	55.5%
Number	18

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE LINE

After twenty years in power John V. Kenny seemed certain to die while still boss. Reaping the spoils of office, he had built a small empire in Hudson County. But his political career would soon come to an end, and it would not be a graceful one. Elected in a tumultuous rebellion against Frank Hague, Kenny won power with a bang; he would lose it with a whimper. His "last hurrah" came quietly when his followers abandoned him, and he made a meek plea of guilty to income tax evasion charges. Ironically, the last years of his political career were not fought in the districts or wards but in a federal courthouse. His greatest enemy was not to be found in the streets of Jersey City but in Washington. For although Kenny defied many of the changes brought about by the New Deal and the federal government, he was to lose power to the very forces he seemed to elude. His machine would be smashed by a crusading U.S. Attorney, who used all the weapons of the federal government to expose corruption in Hudson County. The "little guy" would die a prisoner of his past, locked away in a nursing home outside Jersey City.

Kenny might have had a foreboding that time was running against him because in December, 1969, he announced his third retirement. Having been on the campaign trail for most of the year, the old boss said he was "tired." At a pre-Christmas rally of the Democratic Freeholders he announced:

> I've been in this game 55 years and I am bowing out today. There's such a thing as frailty of age and it's not my intention to let it kill me.[1]

Despite his rhetoric about "getting out," the Boss refused to name a successor and told his followers to "stay together."[2] Pointing to the new County Chairman, Kenny said: "It's up to Wally Wolfe to work out plans to carry on the organization."[3] But Wolfe was no leader and the Boss's followers begged him to stay on. When the aging chieftain told them he must "make way for the young generation that has time to devote to our program," one of his minions asked, "Can we call on you?" The little guy replied "anytime he could be of service to call him." Humorously replying to

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[1] Hudson Dispatch, Dec. 5, 1969, pp. 1, 6. While making his announcement the seventy-seven year old leader reflected on his career and remarked, "I never aspired to be mayor of Jersey City or county leader, but Hague picked a fight with me," Newark Evening News, Dec. 5, 1969, p. 19.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., Inverview with John Longo.

a demand that he be made leader for life, Kenny said the party could make him the "Grand Sachem."[4]

Indeed, Kenny was still the Grand Sachem. His retirement was another hoax. He had quit in 1953 and 1957 only to resume command shortly afterwards. He returned to battle again in 1969. The Boss had called the freeholders and county organization to announce his retirement and to thank them for their loyalty. He told his county legislators, "I wanted you to be present especiallly to hear what I have to say. You freeholders are the backbone of the Democratic Party in Hudson County."[5] The freeholders had saved the Boss after the rebellion by John J. Kenny. Their loyalty would be needed if the "little guy" intended to stay in power. The Hudson leader had good reasons for his pretense of retirement, however. In 1968 the Republicans had captured the White House. President Richard M. Nixon was no friend of Hudson County nor was New Jersey's U.S. Senator, Clifford Case. The next U.S. Attorney for New Jersey would be their choice.

Fredrick B. Lacey became the new U.S. Attorney. A suburban Republican with an outstanding record as a trial lawyer, Lacey represented a serious threat to the Kenny organization. Assuming office in September, 1969, Lacey

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[4] Ibid.; Interview with John Longo.

[5] Hudson Dispatch, Dec. 5, 1969, p. 1.

declared his first priority would be a war on "organized crime and official corruption in New Jersey."[6] Realizing the U.S. Attorney's office had been used as a political stepping stone and patronage plum, Lacey--before assuming office--had demanded no political interference in choosing his staff.

To bring some new blood to his office, Lacey chose young lawyers from New Jersey's major law firms and individuals of known talent. One of these was his chief assistant, Herbert Stern. Stern had earlier opposed Lacey during litigation involving a kickback case. The U.S. Attorney realized his opponent was an outstanding lawyer and recruited him as chief of staff.[7] Expanding the personnel in his office and increasing his budget, Lacey prepared for a campaign against crime and corruption in New Jersey. With the new U.S. Attorney promising to clean up corruption, Boss Kenny had chosen a good time to retire.

Lacey went on speaking tours to enlist public support. In his speeches he warned, "Organized crime is taking over the state of New Jersey."[8] A demonstration that New Jersey

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[6]For background on Lacey's role see Paul Hoffman's Tiger in the Court (Chicago:Playboy Press, 1973), pp. 59-72, and Fred J. Cook's "The People v. the Mob; Or, Who Rules New Jersey?" New York Times Magazine, Feb. 1, 1970, p. 11.

[7]Hoffman, Tiger in the Court, pp. 68-72.

[8]New York Times, Nov. 30, 1969, p. 1; Hoffman, Tiger in the Court, p. 69.

was heavily influenced by criminal elements had come earlier when the U.S. Attorney's office started proceedings against a mafia leader, Simone Rizzo DeCalvacante, known as "Sam the Plumber." DeCalvacante's case had no direct bearing on Kenny, but it set the tone for what was to happen. During litigation the U.S. Government revealed it had conducted electronic surveillance of the mobster and made public 2,000 pages of DeCalvacante's conversations. The DeCalvcante tapes hinted of close ties between the mafia and politicians as well as brutal murders of opponents of the mob. Besides DeCalvalcante, the F.B.I. had taped conversations by another mobster, Angelo (Gyp) DeCarlo. The DeCarlo tapes were also released by the court, and this time John V.Kenny's name was mentioned.[9] Hudson County's Boss purportedly had conversations with DeCarlo to give the mobster clearance to run gambling in Secaucus and assist in keeping Kearny from being raided by the local police. Other discussions centered on Pollak Hospital, Kenny's political headquarters, with topics allegedly ranging from abortion, to campaign contributions, gambling arrests, and election bets.[10]

The DeCarlo tapes raised questions about Kenny and his dealings with underworld figures, but they were still hearsay evidence. Predictably, the Hudson leader grew angry at the

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[9] Newark Evening News, Jan. 8, 1970, p. 11.

[10] Ibid.

exposure. He accused the press of trying to persecute him and attacked reporters. "You fellows print all kinds of things about me. You're trying to crucify me and besmirch my name."[11]

Fear of being crucified was not just John V. Kenny's worry. Many politicians had been mentioned in the DeCarlo tapes, and they started to be concerned as Lacey and his federal strike force probed further. The early digging proved so rich that Attorney General,John Mitchell,used crime in New Jersey as a topic when addressing a banker's convention in Boca Raton, Florida. In December, 1969, Mitchell talked about the Garden State:

> . . . In this state, within the next week or ten days, there is going to be a massive indictment of public officials on the local level; and also in this state, through the activities we have carried on, we're going to break up probably the largest gambling syndicate that's ever been broken up in this country.[12]

The local area Mitchell had been talking about was Newark. The same month Mayor Hugh Addonizio of Newark and fourteen other persons were indicted on charges of extortion. With Essex County under scrutiny the U.S. Attorney of New Jersey promised the investigation would be expanded to include Hudson and other counties.[13] In June, 1970, Addonizio went on

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[11] Newark Evening News, Jan. 9, 1970, p. 8.

[12] New York Times, Dec. 11, 1969, p. 1.

[13] Ibid., Dec. 24, 1969, p. 1.

trial, in July he was found guilty, and in September he was sentenced. Convicted of extortion, Newark's Mayor received ten years in jail and was fined $25,000. The convictions in Newark proved the federal government meant business. Through tedious and deligent investigations by Lacey, Stern, and their assistants a pattern of kickbacks, extortion, and mob influence emerged that shocked many of New Jersey's inhabitants.

In May, 1970, the federal government subpoenaed records from Jersey City Hall and the Hudson County Administration building. Lacey and Stern had shown in the Newark case that to expose corruption they had to have the records of the businessmen who were successful in receiving city contracts. If they could find any trace of cash "coming out" through illegal payments, then they knew they had a case.[14] In Hudson County cash flowed like water.

When the U.S. government started its probe, Boss Kenny was still the political boss of Hudson County. Despite statements about retirement, he continued to run the organization by telephone. Having humiliated Meyner in 1969, Kenny continued to complain about the neglect of his county by New Jersey Democratic leaders. At a luncheon for county heads he once said: "We can stand alone and we don't need

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[14] Hoffman, Tiger in the Court, p. 40.

the state to elect our candidates."[15] Trying to prove his point, Kenny challenged the Democratic U.S. Senator, Harrison Williams, in the 1970 primary. The Boss backed his State Senator, Frank Guarini, and provided plenty of campaign money. But Guarini, like Kelly, could not win outside Hudson County. In the primary Williams overcame Hudson's opposition, but the primary loss meant little to Kenny, because his Hudson organization came through unchallenged for control of the county government.

Throughout the year probers found Hudson County to be more than the home of machine politicians. In May, 1970, Mayor Thomas Whelan and seven top city officials were subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury probing municipal corruption. Mayor Whelan appeared for ninety minutes but refused to comment on his testimony. State and county officials also started their own probes. A state grand jury indicted the West New York Mayor,John R. Armellino, and three reputed mafia figures for bribery and conspiracy. At the same time the Hudson County Republican Chairman, John Beier Theurer, and reputed mafia leader, Joseph Zicarelli, were indicted on charges of conspiring to gain appointment of a county prosecutor who would not move against gambling indictments. Another state probe was launched against the Executive Director of the Hudson County Mosquito Commission

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[15] Newark Evening News, Nov. 16, 1969, p. 5.

and Kenny ward leader, Harry Callari.[16] The grand jury questioned Callari about his connections with a land fill company involved in the use of county park land as a dump for private scavengers. Chester J. Wojtycha, a county freeholder, was indicted for conspiring to violate the law in connection with a contract for surgical supplies awarded by the board of freeholders.[17] Everywhere city and county officials turned, they found investigators. Even the Boss's personal finances were probed. The federal government in June, 1970, obtained a court order restraining John V. Kenny and his family from gaining access to a safe deposit box in the Hudson City Savings Bank in Jersey City. The box was rented in the name of the 228 Corporation--a nominal firm with Kenny as president, his daughter, Catherine Hanly, as Vice-President, and other family members as officers.

Questions about the safe deposit box caused Kenny's son-in-law, Paul Hanly, to resign from his county position and gain a pension before he had to make an appearance before a federal grand jury in Newark. Under state law an official who refused to answer grand jury questions could be dismissed. Hanly did little talking and invoked the fifth amendment eighty-nine times during questioning.[18] The interrogation of

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[16] Newark Evening News, May 9, 1970, p. 1.

[17] New York Times, June 9, 1970, p. 82; May 7, 1970, p. 45; May 10, 1970, p. 1; May 21, 1970, p. 45.

[18] Newark Evening News, June 28, 1970, p. 1.

Hanly and other Hudson officials gave further indications the federal government knew more than most people had suspected. Corruption and abuse of public office had been talked about in Hudson County for half-a-century, but nothing had ever been proved. Jersey City's residents waited. When more contractors who did business with the city and county were called to testify, interest grew.[19]

With the federal government getting closer to the source of the Boss's wealth more trouble came from the State of New Jersey. On 9 September 1970, the State Attorney General subpoenaed John V. Kenny and other county officials to testify before a grand jury probing organized crime and corruption. On 16 September 1970, John J. Kenny, the former County Chairman, was indicted by the state for extorting $50,000 in 1966 from two land companies. The indictment charged the former freeholder with demanding and receiving the money and misusing his office to get fellow Democratic freeholders to change land use restrictions for a thirteen acre tract in Secaucus. The county official allegedly used his office to change the land use restriction to permit warehousing and offices. The land had been restricted to truck terminal usage.[20]

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[19] Ibid., June 11, 1970, p. 20.

[20] Newark Evening News, Sept. 16, 1970, p. 1.

The indictment of Jack Kenny caused added concern for the Boss and his followers. The former County Chairman was an enemy of the organization. He knew the inner workings of the machine and could present a deadly threat. But the state probe soon became overshadowed by the federal investigation.[21] The U.S. government pressed on, and the Internal Revenue Service started an intensive examination of the income tax records of thousands of employees and officials in Hudson County. Lacey called John V. Kenny's granddaughter, Mrs. Margo Hanly Hermann,and after granting her immunity, asked about $700,000 in bonds her grandfather had bought. The U.S. Attorney's findings caused him to remark that "the plunder" by officials in Hudson county "is unmatched by anything in my experience. Everything has a price on it. No contracts are let without placing a squeeze on contractors, and even suppliers of food to hospitals." To draw an historical comparison the U.S. Attorney added: "one would have to go back to William Marcy Tweed and the Tweed ring a century ago."[22]

Now under direct attack, John V. Kenny countered by hurling invective at his critics. While attending a political rally at the Beaumont Democratic Club in Jersey City the Boss spoke out. "I'm not afraid if they say 'You're

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[21] New York Times, Oct. 8, 1969, p. 53; Newark Evening News, Oct. 8, 1970, p. 1.

[22] New York Times, Oct. 8, 1970, p. 53.

going to get indicted.' What's an indictment? It just means somebody lies about you." Commenting on the many probes, he defied "anyone in national or state government to come in here with their fancy pleas of corruption in Hudson County. I say it doesn't exist."[23] The Boss received support from Congressman Cornelius Gallagher, who criticized the U.S. Attorney for seizing funds from the Hudson County Democratic organization. Gallagher said when the "awesome power of the U.S. government is used to go after a political dinner. . . the forces of repression are at work and right here is the testing ground."[24] Kenny picked up the attack by blasting Lacey and said the people of Hudson "are as good or better than the ones in Glen Ridge" where Lacey lived. Referring to the jury probe the Boss said Washington was trying to "destroy Chicago and Hudson County. Well, they're going to have a hell of a fight in Hudson County." The former mayor continued, "I say to you we have never done a wrong thing in the political life of Jersey City." And "Nobody in New Jersey or the United States of America ever paid me five cents for any favor or appointment." Addressing the central question of his dealings with contractors, Kenny said he had made millions with his own firm so he would "stand aloof." "I don't know a contractor

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[23] Newark Evening News, Oct. 29, 1970, p. 1.

[24] Ibid.

I met and sat down with; I always kept them at arm's length."[25] Before leaving the rally the spritely leader told a reporter he would continue to speak out against the investigation and stated, "There isn't a S.O.B. in this world's got anything on me."[26]

Kenny's speech proved to be only the beginning of his counter-attack. At another gathering he wished the U.S. Assistant Attorney, Herbert Stern, was present so he could "spit in his eye."[27] Stern had taken over much of the Hudson investigation and became the center of the Irish leader's ire. Another Assistant Attorney, Donald Williamson, was accused by the Boss of having stolen football equipment from St. Peter's Prep when he was a student there. Lashing out in his home county, Kenny looked to the November election for vindication. Forgetting about his primary loss to Senator Harrison Williams, Kenny urged Hudson County Democrats to support the incumbent. At a $100-A-Plate Democratic dinner in Jersey City attended by Senator Williams and former Governor Hughes, the Boss told his organization they should reelect Williams in a show of voting strength that would end "Russian government" by the U.S. Attorney's Office

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Newark Evening News, Nov. 1, 1970, p. 42; Hoffman, Tiger in the Court, pp. 143-145.

in New Jersey.[28] Discussing the grand jury probe the white-haired, seventy-seven year old leader, said he had given $300,000 in bonds to his grandson, John Hanly, and $400,000 to his granddaughter, Mrs. Elmer Hermann. The public admission caused Kenny to explain his actions. "I never knew that when you want to take care of your daughter and children it was an offense against the U.S. government." After defending his use of such a large amount of money, Kenny added, "If that displeases Lacey or that great Jewish lawyer (Assistant U.S. Attorney Herbert) Stern, that's just too bad. I'm going to provide for the welfare of my children."[29] The Hudson's leader's comments embarrassed Williams and caused the Senator to express "deep regret" over Kenny's language. The Newark News became incensed and charged Kenny with reaching the "depths of personal and religious villification."[30]

But the Boss didn't care about what the press had to say. He had already told his followers not "to believe what you read in the papers, especially the ones from Newark."[31] When the November election results were tabulated, Kenny

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[28]Newark Evening News, Oct. 30, 1970, p. 1.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., Oct. 31, 1970, p. 4.

[31]Ibid., Nov. 1, 1970, p. 42.

used them to show that he and his followers had been acquitted by the people. Hudson County turned out a big vote for the organization and Senator Harrison Williams received 120,838 votes (in Hudson) to his opponent, Nelson Gross', 51,405. The county organization rolled over the Republicans with a 105,000 to 47,000 vote.[32] Kenny spoke on the outcome:

> . . . any other result I would have considered a conviction by the greatest and best jury in the world and the only real jury-the people.[33]

Calling the victory a "repudiation of the Nixon policies," the Boss predicted "If this trend is mounted properly, we'll have a Democratic president in 1972 and a Democratic U.S. Attorney in New Jersey."[34]

Although savoring his win and believing he had been vindicated, Kenny still had to face the federal investigators. The day after the election he was summoned to appear before a U.S. grand jury in Newark. Accompanied by his lawyer, Walter D. Van Riper--a former New Jersey state attorney who had fought Hague in the 1940s--Kenny tried to avoid answering any questions. He refused to sign a waiver of immunity and asked permission to read a statement. But before he could make a defense, he became embroiled with

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[32]Newark Evening News, Nov. 4, 1970, p. 25; Jersey Journal, Nov. 4, 1970, p. 1.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Stern in an exchange over where he obtained the money to pay for the $700,000 in bonds. When pressed to explain how he could pay for the bonds, Kenny snapped, "With cash-cash that I had saved for forty years." The "little guy" said he accumulated the money from his earnings over a forty year period as partner in Terminal Industries and the Joseph Sheridan Company which were under contract to the Pennsylvania Railroad to clean cars. When asked where he stored the money, Kenny explained his wife kept the money in a basement clothes closet.[35] After a few more ripostes with Stern, Kenny finally did read his statement but declined to answer any more questions on grounds that to do so might incriminate him.

With the jury probe concluded, Hudson County residents waited for the next development. On 16 November 1970 Kenny, Mayor Whelan, and ten other city and county officials were indicted by the grand jury in Newark on thirty-four counts of bribery and extortion. The indictment centered on kickbacks from contractors--specifically Gerard Engineering for $98,000; Warren George, Inc. for $68,282; and Ashland Oil for $15,000. The other defendants included Thomas Flaherty,

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[35]For the testimony of Kenny before the grand jury see the court records on the famous "Hudson County Eight Trial," U.S. v. Kenny, 462 F.2d. 1205 (1972); cert. denied 409 U.S. 914 (1972); U.S. v. Kenny 463 F.2d (3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, 1972). The pretrial testimony and thirty-four volumes of the trial testimony can be found in Trenton and Newark. See also Newark Evening News, Nov. 5, 1970, p. 16; Dec. 31, 1970, p. 1.

President of the City Council; Fred J. Kropke, Hudson County Police Chief; Walter Wolfe, Hudson County Freeholder and Democratic Chairman; John J. Kenny, the former County Chairman; William Sternkopf, Jr., a Commissioner on the Port of New York Authority; Frank G. Manning, Hudson County Engineer; Joseph Stapleton, Hudson County Treasurer; Philip Kunz, City Business Administrator; Bernard Murphy, City Purchasing Agent; and James R. Corrado, Secretary to the Superintendent of Pollak Hospital. Income tax evasion charges were also brought against John V. Kenny, Whelan, and Flaherty. All defendants pleaded not guilty.[36]

The indictments brought little surprise, however, to observers of Hudson politics. Kenny had been in trouble before, as had Hague, but no one ever went to jail. The Boss appeared in court to have his picture taken and to be fingerprinted along with Whelan and the others. Talking about old times with his cronies, Kenny showed no signs of fear. When questioned on what he was going to do, he replied: "I plan to take it easy. I plan to live rich and die poor."[37] The other defendants also exhibited little concern about chances for conviction. City Council President Flaherty remarked, "It is a historical fact that indictments

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[36] Ibid., Nov. 16, 1970, p. 1.

[37] Newark Evening News, Nov. 19, 1970, pp. 1, 13.

are used as a political tool."[38] Whelan followed Flaherty by noting, "You're not a political pro until you've been indicted at least once. I guess I now qualify."[39] Although the Kenny organization did not show great concern, U.S. Attorney, Frederick Lacey, and his Assistant U.S. Attorney Herbert Stern looked upon the indictments as serious business. Lacey at a press conference following the grand jury action said:

> . . . It has been my philosophy that the federal prosecutor should not sit back and await cases to be brought to them by the federal investigative agencies, but that we in this office should in fact initiate investigations in cooperation with the grand jury utilizing federal investigative assistants as required. During my tenure we have demonstrated that this philosophy is an effective one and one desperately required in these times.[39]

The legal problems facing the Kenny organization did not go unnoticed by their political opponents. With the mayor under a cloud, a recall movement started. A new reform group, the Community Action Council, demanded Whelan's resignation. Thomas Gangemi, Jr., the son of the former mayor also joined the chorus for recall.[40] With the city facing a $18 million deficit and the threat of increased taxes, Whelan seemed particularly vulnerable.

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., Nov. 16, 1970, p. 1.

[40] Newark Evening News, June 19, 1970, p. 20; Jersey Journal, Jan. 30, 1971, p. 3.

But the recall movement remained a secondary issue, pushed into the background by more dramatic developments. The U.S. government, with Stern heading the investigation after Lacey was nominated for a federal judgeship, continued to question contractors who did business in Hudson County. Frank Manning, the County Engineer and an important gear in the organization, then decided to turn state's evidence. As a former Jersey City Engineer who moved to the county level, Manning knew many of the inner workings of the Kenny machine. Another knowledgeable member, John J. Kenny, also broke the code of Irish loyalty by "Going to the Law."[41] Six weeks before the trial opened, Jack Kenny decided to cooperate with federal officials. Already facing state charges, he assumed his former allies had plotted to have him indicted as revenge for his revolt. To get even, Jack Kenny secured immunity from the federal government and became an informer. With these men cooperating with the government, all the grease and grime in the Kenny machine was about to be unplugged. On 17 May 1971, when the trial opened, John V. Kenny pleaded for a postponement on grounds of ill health. At age seventy-eight, the Boss had just undergone a hernia operation. But Judge Robert Shaw (called old "Iron Fist") wanted no delay and made the former mayor appear. Kenny came to court in a wheel chair accompanied by

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[41] Levine, Irish and Irish Politicians, p. 176.

a nurse.[42] The Hudson Chieftain sat in the court room and listened as Herbert Stern opened his argument.

The Prosecutor attempted to show how the Irish plutocracy of John V. Kenny, Flaherty, Whelan, John J. Kenny, et al. accumulated fortunes while the city and county decayed. The Kenny organization had put everything on the auction bloc with the highest bidder receiving each contract. Focusing on the ringleader, the U.S. Attorney categorized the Boss as the "mastermind" of a multi-million dollar extortion scheme that stretched to projects involving the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and Port of New York Authority. Stern portrayed Kenny as a man who loved money, used people to get it, and helped make corruption a way of life in Jersey City. The Prosecutor accused Kenny and his co-defendants of netting "hundreds of thousands of dollars" and alleged that the Boss even cheated his fellow conspirators. Stern contended the Boss and Mayor Whelan had used "fear" and the power of their political positions to shake down businessmen and contributors for "10 per cent for the boys downtown."[43]

Stern outlined the role of other defendants in the conspiracy. He described Bernard Murphy, Thomas Flaherty, and Wally Wolfe as "bagmen" for the Boss. Stapleton was the "bookkeeper," Kropke the "messenger," and Corrado the

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[42] Jersey Journal, May 20, 1971, p. 1.

[43] U.S. v. Kenny, 462 F.2d 20-290; New York Times, May 21, 1971, p. 1; Hoffman, Tiger in Court, pp. 145-70.

"mail drop."[44] The defendants, Stern argued, "knew what they were doing was wrong . . . they knew what they were doing was immoral and . . . they knew what they were doing was criminal."[45] The Prosecutor maintained the Boss used Pollak Hospital as the center for his tribute collection.

Stern's opening caused divisions with the defense. In a surprise move, James Corrado, Secretary to the Superintendant of Pollak Hospital, pleaded guilty to one conspiracy charge in the thirty-four count indictment. Corrado's admission only added to the belief that the Boss and his gang were in deep trouble. Another sign came when Wally Wolfe's lawyer, John Noonan, portrayed his client as a dupe. Noonan argued Wolfe had a "diminished responsibility" because of injuries suffered as a marine on Saipan in World War II. He had caught a shell fragment in his skull and was incapable of knowingly participating in the conspiracy. "To Wally Wolfe," the attorney said, "Interstate commerce means taking the tubes over to New York to see a Knick's basketball game."[46]

Although Corrado gave in and Wolfe played the role of the naïve office holder, the other defendants stood firm. John V. Kenny's lawyer described his client as an "honorable

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[44] Ibid., Stapleton was under heavy pressure from the U.S. government to tell all and help put John V. Kenny behind bars, but the Treasurer never gave in.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., pp. 338-40; See also Hoffman, pp. 150-52.

businessman," and Whelan's counsel said the Mayor had no knowledge of what was charged. But U.S. Attorney Stern rejected all arguments about the defendants' innocence. The Prosecutor called his first witness, a representative of C. J. Langenfelder Sons, heavy construction contractors from Baltimore, Maryland. The witness, (project manager) James P. Crawford, explained his company had been interested in work on a $40 million reservoir project. The U.S. Attorney elicited testimony that showed Jersey City's Purchasing Agent, Bernard Murphy, asked to meet with an important Langenfelder official before any bids were submitted. The company's project manager flew to Newark Airport in a company plane. Murphy boarded and after some cocktails demanded a 7 percent kickback in cash. On the $40 million contract this would have been $2.8 million. Stern said it was the largest shakedown attempt of which he ever heard. The company refused to bid and the project was finally abandoned, but Crawford's testimony showed how bold and brazen the Kenny gang was in demanding kickbacks.[47]

Following the Langenfelder official, other contractors testified and all had the same story. To gain any business in Jersey City a company had to take care of the politicians. Ten percent was the going rate, but it could vary depending on the size of the contract. The city kickback scheme centered on Bernard Murphy. The brother-in-law of

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[47] Ibid., pp. 250-350.

Jack Kelaher, a councilman from the Journal Square Ward, Murphy had received his city appointment in 1957. Surviving many changes at City Hall, Murphy saw how money was made by city officials and had inside knowledge about how to handle city contracts. As the Purchasing Agent and liason between Whelan and John V. Kenny, Murphy could prevent companies from being paid or deny them access to bids. Contractors who called at the public works director's office or chief engineer's division "to bid on municipal jobs were routinely sent to" Murphy. The City Official informed contractors how the system worked. "Jersey City is a political town," the Purchasing Agent told one contractor. "We have certain rules and regulations here . . . If you want to bid on this job and you are the low bidder, you'll have to pay us $100,000."[48] With the city council and mayor under the Boss's control few companies could afford not to pay.

On the county level things worked much the same way. The Boss controlled the freeholders and used John J. Kenny and Frank Manning to handle kickbacks. Corruption was so flagrant that contractors lined up in Jack Kenny's office to discuss arrangements. The former County Chairman gave testimony that shocked even the hardened citizens of Hudson. In explaining how the system worked he said he would hold up checks on county projects until the contractors kicked back.

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[48] Ibid., pp. 200-500; George Amick, The American Way of Graft (Princeton, N. J.:Center for Analysis of Public Issues, 1976) pp. 17-19.

Then he would pass the payoff to Stapleton, the County Treasurer.[49] The number of payoffs became so numerous that Jack Kenny could not keep track of them. He told of receiving $30,000, $50,000, and even $225,000 in exchange for obtaining work for contractors. In one case the son of a Hudson County freeholder, Dominick Galano of J. Rich Steers Construction, asked for work. After discussing an agreement at Pollak Hospital the County Chairman promised the Steers Company a contract with the New Jersey Turnpike Authority in exchange for $50,000. Kenny collected and said he gave the money to Sternkopf and Stapleton. Other kickbacks included one for $225,000 from the Sarubbi Construction Company, headed by Angelo Sarubbi, the Mayor of North Bergen and ally of John V. Kenny. The company did work on Pollak Hospital and the County Mental Disease Hospital (Meadowview). When the last installment of $35,000 was paid Jack Kenny had already broken with his mentor and pocketed the money. But the kickbacks had only been one source of revenue. In describing how he and Mayor Whelan clashed over protection money from the gambler, Christie "Lefty" Marchitto, Jack Kenny admitted to receiving $200,000 from the numbers runner in return for his assistance. The gambling revenue started in 1957 and continued until Marchitto's death in 1967.[50]

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[49]U.S. v. Kenny 462 F 2d. pp. 990-1890.

[50]Ibid., pp. 1685-2000; Hoffman, p. 154.

Indeed, politics paid well in Hudson County.

Throughout his testimony Jack Kenny never said he gave money to John V. Kenny, but he did admit to one transaction that shocked the court and citizens of Jersey City. Shortly after the federal indictment Jack Kenny said he approached the Boss at Newark Airport and asked for $50,000 to discredit Manning. John V. Kenny delivered the money through a messenger. Stern used the testimony about the $50,000 for corroborating evidence. The Prosecutor had Jack Kenny mark the bills before the trial. During the trial Stern had his witness identify the money. After having the former freeholder identify the money, Stern dumped the large horde on the defense table. But this was only part of the drama.[51] Where did Jack Kenny keep all the money he collected? Under cross examination by Whelan's attorney, Raymond Brown, the witness told an incredible story of putting the booty in an ashcan in his basement. As the money kept rolling in Jack Kenny just tossed it into the ashcan and took no precautions. The cash flowed so fast that he was able to turn over to the federal government the $50,000 that John V. Kenny gave him. The image of an "ashcan full of money" shocked many Jersey City residents. Few could imagine how much money this could be.

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[51] Ibid., 1685-2000.

After Jack Kenny's appearance, more testimony on kickbacks was heard from contractors. Philip Schuster, of Warren Brothers (a division of Ashland Oil) explained how even a powerful corporation paid. Warren Brothers had contracted to widen Kennedy Boulevard in Hudson County in the 1960s, but residents protested the destruction of trees along the route. The project was terminated, but Schuster's firm filed a claim for more than $400,000 and settled in January, 1969, for $208,000. But Schuster could not collect because the Board of Freeholders failed to approve the appropriation. County Engineer, Frank Manning, met Schuster in the corridor of the Hudson County Administration building and told him to "come up with some money." Manning told the company official he would need $22,000 for the "little guy" and $2,000 for himself. "This is Hudson County and this is the way things are done," remarked the engineer. "The Little Guy says if you don't want to pay you can sue to get your resolution."[52] Schuster paid. Not $22,000 but $15,000. As more and more testimony unfolded, it became evident John V. Kenny was indeed the robber baron of Hudson. But during the trial he appeared to be anything but a baron. Dozing off from time to time in his wheelchair, he had to request frequent recesses so he could rest. Kenny was a sick man. On 7 June 1971, the seventy-eight year old leader was

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[52] Ibid., 2406-2413; 4021-4225; See also Amick, American Way of Graft, p. 38.

hospitalized with a distended bladder, complicated by a prostrate condition, heart disease, and hardening of the arteries. But his pursuer, Herbert Stern, would not give up. The Prosecutor suggested Kenny hear testimony from a hospital bed by way of closed circuit television at Pollak Hospital, but the judge refused. The Boss was lucky again. Severed from the trial, he remained in the hospital while the remaining eight defendants faced the wrath of the U.S. Attorney.[53]

Kenny's severance was one more turn in a strange drama. The defense attornies called for a mistrial, but Judge Shaw denied the request. When the trial resumed, it moved at a faster pace with the defendants now reduced to the "Hudson County Eight." Stern called his star witness, Frank Manning, who gave more damaging details on the Kenny machine. As city and county engineer, Manning had participated in numerous kickback arrangements. The ambitious engineer had even set up his own company, Gerard Engineering, but had to withdraw from ownership when a possible conflict of interest loomed. When Manning removed himself from the company, the Boss decided to use the engineer as a collector. Manning had to tell his colleagues at Gerard that the contracts they received required a hefty twenty percent kickback to Kenny. Although his former

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[53]Newark Star Ledger, June 11, 1971, p. 1.

company had to pay, the engineer remained exempt and told of some honor among thieves when he admitted he did not have to pay any kickbacks on other work he obtained for himself which totalled $80,000, nor the usual three percent of his salary to the party.[54]

The knowledgeable engineer gave additional testimony on the running of Kenny's organization. In explaining how he became a bagman, Manning gave intimate details on the secrecy, confusion, and divisions within the organization. He characterized John V. Kenny as suspicious by nature, particularly when it came to money. "He always had someone checking on someone else. He didn't trust his clients," remarked the bagman. Kenny's suspicious character and desire to keep in control of everything caused him to change his collectors. The Boss had Bernard Murphy collecting from the city but distrusted the City Purchasing Agent. Kenny told Manning, "Murphy's been playing cute with the cash. I want to cut him down to size." The "little guy" allegedly "chewed" Whelan out and told him to let Manning do all the collecting. In picking up the money the County Engineer saw the looseness and confusion in Kenny's system. The bagman said he usually gave the cash to the "little guy" divided into two separate envelopes. Kenny would give one to Flaherty--if it was a city contract--but conceal the second

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[54]U.S. v. Kenny et al 462 F.26, 3940-4000. See also Hoffman's Tiger in Court, pp. 160-164.

envelope. The Boss pocketed half the booty and cracked, "I'm not going to give the city all the money." Divide and rule had been the Hudson leader's key to success, even in the collection of spoils. Manning told how the City Hall faction ridiculed the county wing. Flaherty once told him the county organization thought City Hall the "stupid ones," but the City Council President explained, "They've got their cash stashed in local banks. We put ours in a bank owned by a friend of mine outside the state."[55]

Flaherty may have kept his money out of state, but he still collected it in New Jersey. Manning further testified about the sloppiness of Kenny's method of collecting when he told of meeting the Boss and City Council President at a hotel at Avon by the Sea in Central, New Jersey. Carrying the ever present envelope into the hotel lobby, the bagman was embarrassed and uncertain as what to do. Kenny and Flaherty waited in the lobby and laughed at him. The Boss told his agent to hand it over, and in broad daylight the money changed hands. But Kenny never worried. He and his fellow politicians doubted they would get caught or that they were doing anything unusual. Corruption was a way of life to them. "Graft was part of the operating compromise between the formal rules of the political system and the

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[55] Ibid., 3955-4000; See also Newark Star Ledger, June 18, 1971, p. 1; and Hoffman, Tiger in the Court, p. 161.

facts of life as it actually was."[56] Although part of the ruling class, Kenny and his followers retained the views of a client group. They expected to make money out of their offices. Politics was a profession not a public service. Like every other profession it was expected to pay.

The Boss often practiced his profession by working through intermediaries. He used architects, engineers, designers, or anyone else who knew how to deal with contractors. Manning was a prime example. Kenny grew to like the engineer so much that he made him his top bagman. Working close to the Boss, Manning devised a code to inform his patron of a payment. If the kickback was from the city it was called a "city resolution," if from the county a "county resolution," and if it was big money, a "lengthy resolution."[57] But Kenny never stayed too long with any collector. Besides Manning, Flaherty collected, Jack Kenny collected, and even Wally Wolfe was pressed into service. In Hague's day nobody saw a dime except the Boss and his confidants, but the "little guy" brought freedom to Jersey City and the money was spread around. Envelopes went in and out of people's hands. Money was lost, stuck in magazines, some diverted by thieves, and some later returned to

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[56]See William Shannon's The American Irish, pp. 64-66 for a perceptive view of corruption and the Irish.

[57]U.S. v. Kenny et al 462 F.26, 3900-4556.

contractors. Although collecting grease from every wheel in his machine, the Boss had grown old and could not keep up with the flow. Whelan and Flaherty had their own system, and Jack Kenny had taken money without the leader's knowledge. But despite his slipping control, John V. Kenny collected most of the loot. All these disclosures at the ongoing trial served to keep Boss Kenny in the public light and center stage as he languished in exile in the hospital. It was no wonder that Manning likened him to "Napoleon" when he tried to diminish his own responsibility, characterizing his actions as motivated by "a sense of loyalty" to Kenny. It was this "loyalty" that kept him on the job as bagman even though he found it "repugnant."[58]

Two officials who had not found their positions as repugnant were Mayor Thomas Whelan and City Council President Thomas Flaherty. After Manning's blood letting, Stern made another dramatic disclosure about money. Whelan, the "slide rule caesar," who publicly demanded "morality in government" and talked about "spineless leaders," was exposed as a charlatan.[59] Through vigorous work by the IRS and Stern's staff, a small fortune was discovered in a Florida bank account in the names of Whelan and Flaherty. A bank official testified that the Mayor and Councilman in February, 1968,

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[58] Ibid.

[59] New York Times, July 7, 1971, p. 22.

had set up a custodial account and deposited $1.2 million in cash and negotiable bonds. The two officials had flown down to Florida and arranged their account so either could draw upon it. When the federal government began to delve into Hudson County, Whelan sent a police sergeant to Miami, Florida with a large suitcase to collect the money.[60] The revelation about Whelan and Flaherty's cache sent another shock wave through Jersey City. The Mayor proved to be no better than the rest of Kenny's gang.

Stern uncovered another cache, $700,000 in bonds belonging to John V. Kenny. A banker testified the former mayor had "sometimes on his own and sometimes using an agent," laid out $700,000 in cold cash in four installments to purchase securities. The prosecutor pulled the $700,000 worth of "good as cash" securities out of a black attaché case and had the banker identify them as the bonds Kenny bought.

John V. Kenny's $700,000 in bonds, Jack Kenny's ashcan full of money, and Whelan and Flaherty's $1.2 million bank accounts symbolized the free wheeling methods of making money in Hudson County. In summing up, Stern said he had conclusively proved that "anybody who wanted to do business in Hudson County and Jersey City was required to pay tribute

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[60] U.S. v. Kenny et al 462 F.26, 4556-4800. According to testimony at the trial Flaherty withdrew $614,000 and Whelan $577,000. The money to this date had not been accounted for and over $84,000 in checks were never cashed.

to Boss Kenny. If we put on the witness stand all the contractors who were shaken down, we'd be here until next July." Explaining how the system worked, the dogged prosecutor noted, "The most shocking thing about this trial is that not a single contractor took the stand and was able to say 'I did business with Jersey City, and I didn't have to kick back.'"[61]

Facing the prosecutor's awesome evidence the defense could offer no more than a weak rebuttal. Wolfe, Kropke, Sternkopf, and Stapleton, testified on their own behalf, but Whelan and Flaherty refused to take the stand. After seven weeks the trial ended. On a scorching July day the jury returned the verdict that was to start the destruction of the Kenny machine. Seven of the eight defendants were found guilty on all twenty-nine counts (five counts were dismissed during the course of the trial). One defendant, Philip Kunz, the Business Administrator, was acquitted on seventeen counts. The verdict sent a shiver through the court room. For the first time in over fifty years, the corruption everybody had talked about in Hudson County had been proven. Herbert Stern did what Samuel Larner had failed to do fifteen years earlier--put the Kenny organization out of business. Whelan and Flaherty were sentenced to fifteen years in jail and later pleaded guilty to income tax evasion charges.

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[61] U.S. v. Kenny 462 F.2d 6635-6671 (1972); See also Newark Star Ledger, July 14, 1971, p. 1.

Sternkopf and Kropke received stiff sentences of ten and five years. Stapleton and Kunz got lighter sentences of six months. Wolfe and Corrado received five-year suspended sentences.[62]

At the sentencing Judge Shaw remarked, "It really taxes the imagination to speculate on the amount of money involved in ten percent of all public contracts by Jersey City and Hudson County . . ."[63] Estimates of the amount ranged from $3 million to $42 million, but nobody knows the true total. The trial proved, however, that millions had been made and the people in Jersey City and Hudson County paid for it.

One man, John V. Kenny, still had not paid for his crime. While his underlings faced the jury Kenny continued politicking from his hospital bed at Pollak Hospital. Stern tried to get the "mastermind" into court but illness still saved him. To prevent public criticism, the Boss had his lawyer read a statement on his retirement:

> . . . As of this date, I am definitely, fully, and completely retiring from any and all political activity, including such leadership as I may have exercised in the past. . . I have attempted in the past to give up political activity, but always at

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[62] Ibid., Newark Star Ledger, August 11, 1971, p. 1.

[63] Hoffman, Tiger in the Court, p. 169.

> the urging of friends and associates, I have yielded to their requests. This time it is different. I am taking this action at the insistence of my doctors.[64]

Kenny had good reasons to issue another retirement statement. Still facing the first extortion indictment, the "little guy" was indicted again in August, 1971, by federal officials who charged him and former North Bergen Mayor, Angelo Sarubbi, with taking part in a multi-million dollar extortion plot. The charges grew out of an alleged fraud and shakedown conspiracy involving construction of the $40 million North Jersey Postal Center in Kearny--the largest mechanized post office in the world. Besides facing personal court appearances, Kenny saw his organization being pressured by legal authorities. On 11 June 1971 the Hudson County grand jury indicted members of the County Pension Commission and the County Medical Examiner on charges of handling over $392,000 in fraudulent disability pensions to one hundred officials. The indictment created further political problems because it eliminated an old Kenny ally, County Supervisor John Deegan, as a possible mayoral candidate.[65] Indicted with other officials, Deegan had little chance of succeeding the

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[64] New York Times, July 13, 1971, p. 17.

[65] Ibid., June 11, 1971, p. 1; Jersey Journal, June 11, 1971, p. 1.

disgraced Whelan.[66]

After Whelan's removal, Charles Krieger, a stock broker and friend of Kenny, was appointed interim mayor by the City Council. A new election was scheduled for November, 1971. Kenny wanted Krieger to run, but the city's first Jewish Mayor refused when he could not gain the endorsement of his own Rabbi, Samuel Berman. Lacking a candidate for mayor, Kenny focused on the county race. While the Boss maneuvered behind the scenes, two strong anti-Kenny candidates emerged--Dr. Paul Jordan and Thomas Gangemi, Jr. Jordan, a young physician involved in drug rehabilitation programs, announced his candidacy first. Supported by a group of reformers organized into the Community Action Council, Jordan tried to symbolize a new direction for Jersey City politics.

Representing the past was Thomas Gangemi, Jr., the son of the former mayor. Gangemi announced his candidacy shortly after Jordan and tried to mobilize Italian voters and defectors from Kenny's organization. By accepting support from Kenny's ward leaders, Gangemi lost his image as an anti-Kennyite and made Jordan more appealing to independent voters. As for Kenny, he never trusted the younger Gangemi and refused to support him. When no

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[66]Not only was the Pension Board indicted but Paul and John Hanly, the Boss's son-in-law and grandson were also indicted for using hospital employees in their Florida winter home. See Jersey Journal, Dec. 24, 1971, p. 1.

candidate could be found within his own organization, Kenny finally had his followers back Morris Longo ,the Acting Public Works Director. The "little guy" assumed with a divided vote even his ramshackle organization could gain one more victory. But not this time. The damage done by U.S. Attorney, Herbert Stern, proved too great. Using the sensational exposures to arouse the city, Jordan urged voters to break with the past and end the fifty years of corruption by "kicking the Kenny habit."[67] The people of Jersey City started to get the message and an "active sense of outrage" gripped the voters.[68] Even the Roman Catholic Church, one of the Boss's long standing allies, turned against him with priests and nuns actively supporting Paul Jordan. Fifty clergymen took out a political advertisement in the Jersey Journal saying Dr. Jordan "would provide the kind of moral leadership it (Jersey City) has long needed."[69] When the election neared, it was apparent Kenny's organization was through. His followers remained splintered with

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[67] Ibid., Oct. 24, 1971, p. 1; New York Times, Oct. 24, 1971, p. 71.

[68] See Arnold A. Rogow and Harold D. Laswell's Power, Corruption, and Rectitude (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963), and John Gardiner's and David Olson's, eds., Theft of the City (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973) for a discussion of corruption and its impact on local government.

[69] Jersey Journal, Oct. 19, 1971; New York Times, Oct. 19, 1971; See also "Jersey City Catholics Break with Machine," Christian Century, Nov. 3, 1971, 1287; Roger Harris and Lawrence Hall, "Dr. Jordan Breaks Grip of Jersey City Machine," Newark Star Ledger, Nov. 3, 1971, pp. 1, 8.

some backing Longo and others Gangemi. On 2 November 1971 Jersey City elected its first reform mayor since the days of Mark Fagan and the Progressive Era.[70]

With the city lost, Kenny's days as Boss were numbered. He would not be able to do what he did in 1957 when he survived the loss of the city. Kenny's county ticket had won reelection, but the convictions of July still kept the organization in a state of fear. The prosecutor's office was now in Republican hands and more investigations were conducted. Everybody was going to jail except John V. Kenny. The "little guy" remained at Pollak Hospital in a stark room on the fifteenth floor. Receiving visitors and still talking politics, he did not know how to quit. When interviewed by a reporter, he commented on the trial and remarked he "was surprised at that guy Whelan." "Imagine," Kenny said, "a million dollars. He never gave a cent to the organization and that is an absolute fact. He was trying to build his own organization."[71] Kenny was asked about Frank Hague, who

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[70]Whether Kenny could have won the 1971 city election is still debated by Journal Square scholars. Despite the numerous revelations about corruption in Hudson County the Boss's county ticket carried the city by a larger margin than Jordan. In 1973 Jordan won a clear cut victory by using his eighteen months in office to build a good reputation as city executive, but in 1977 many of the Kennyites came back by defeating Jordan's candidate. As Richard J. Connors has noted in his study of Frank Hague, politics in Jersey City is often a "Cycle of Power."

[71]John T. McGowan, "Hospitalized Kenny Insists His Political Role is Ended," Ashbury Park Press, Nov. 14, 1971, pp. 1, 8.

lived to boast "I have lived up to every obligation, and there never was a breath of scandal on my actions."[72] Kenny doubted the old Boss could have made that comment "today." "He'd be in jail, I think."[73] Bewildered by the collapse of his fiefdom, the Hudson leader could only find consolation in talking about all the favors he had done and the jobs he obtained for his people. But U.S. Attorney, Herbert Stern, reminded the public of the Boss's misdeeds and accused Kenny of malingering in the hospital because he "had nowhere to go."[74]

With the U.S. government pressuring him, his organization in shambles, and his ailments multiplying, the old Boss faced his "last hurrah." His county freeholders remained his last bastion of support, but they abandoned him. Word had come back from the ward leaders and precinct captains that voters wanted no part of Kenny. In March, 1972 led by Robert Slade--the first elected black county legislator--the freeholders started an "economy" move. They fired Kenny's staunch ally, Joseph Soriero, eliminating his position as Director of Plants and Structures. County Supervisor, John Deegan, had personnel eliminated from his department. Personal friends of John V. Kenny, the man who made every

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[72] Hudson Dispatch, June 18, 1947, p. 1.

[73] Ashbury Park Press, Nov. 14, 1971, p. 1.

[74] Newark Star Ledger, March 17, 1972, p. 1.

freeholder, began to be dismissed. Kenny pleaded with his former allies, but the county board no longer listened to him. The once mighty Boss had indeed fallen. As he lay on his back in a hospital bed, the freeholders cut the budget and ended his political career. The Jersey Journal wrote his political obituary:

> Some day when the political history of the last 20 years in Hudson County is written, the last hurrah of the organization which John V. Kenny put together in 1949 may be dated as of Wednesday, March 29, 1972.
>
> The exact moment was when Supervisor John M. Deegan so many years a top figure in the Kenny organization was reduced to yelling: "You yellow bum!" at Freeholder Robert Slade . . . That was all the organization had left futile and puerile name calling.[75]

Defeated for the last time, Kenny finally surrendered to the man who had beaten him without casting a single ballot, Herbert Stern. In May, 1972, the wily Boss pleaded guilty to income tax evasion charges. Abandoned by all, the "little guy" faced Judge Robert Shaw (a man the Boss claimed he helped get appointed).[76] Shaw fined Kenny $30,000 and

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[75]Editorial, Jersey Journal, March 30, 1972, p. 18.

[76]The weakness of Kenny's position could be seen from the betrayal of some of his former allies. David Friedland, a Hudson County Assemblyman, and two other legislators submitted affidavits complaining about Kenny's "continued interference" in legislative matters. Friedland even suggested to Stern that a government tap on a telephone in the State House be used to trap Kenny. Friedland's affidavit can be found in the court records. U.S. v. Kenny et al 462 F.26 (1972); cert. denied 409 U.S. (1972) U.S. v. Kenny 463 F.2d. (1972); see also Hoffman's Tiger in the Court, pp. 171-172.

sentenced him to eighteen years in jail, pending a review.[77] After receiving medical reports, Shaw indicated he would reduce the term. Kenny went to a federal prison hospital in Springfield, Missouri, where his health continued to deteriorate. While in prison he underwent a heart operation and had a pacemaker inserted. His personal life reached its nadir.

Kenny's son-in-law, Paul Hanly, and his grandson, John K. Hanly, were convicted on charges of misusing their public office and went to jail also. Numerous other Hudson officials faced jail sentences. Things were so bad even Kenny's home at 22 West Hamilton Place was sold for back taxes.[78] The place the Boss said they would have to carry him out of was no longer his. Disgraced and defeated, Kenny had lived beyond his time. He came out of jail in March, 1973, and lived out his remaining days in a nursing home in Paramus, New Jersey. The baron of Hudson died there on 2 June 1975--at eighty-two years of age.[79]

His wake and funeral represented a poignant epilogue. His family ruled out public visitation. The man who had attended thousands of wakes over so many years was to have only a few select people at his. But Kenny's funeral was

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[77] Ibid.

[78] New York Times, Dec. 24, 1971, p. 44; Nov. 22, 1972, p. 74.

[79] Jersey Journal, June 3, 1975, p. 1.

only a minor tragedy. The greater tragedy was the legacy he left to Jersey City. Elected on a wave of reform in 1949, he never had the vision or ideals to make his victory anything more than a self-serving triumph. For more than twenty years, Kenny kept the populace in a state of confusion. He never was able to go beyond the ward level to understand the city and county's problems. The "little guy" was a "victim as well as the protagonist" of his tragedy.[80] He remained a product of the Hague machine--a provincial leader who practiced politics by doing favors, making friends, and lining his own pockets. Unfortunately for Jersey City, he left a hollow legacy.

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[80]Shannon, The American Irish, p. 231.

CONCLUSION

In May, 1949, John V. Kenny defeated Boss Frank Hague in a bitter political contest. The defeat of Hague seemed to symbolize the end of an era not only in Jersey City but throughout the nation. Since the advent of the New Deal, political analysts had been writing the "Last Hurrah" of city bosses.[1] First Pendergast, then Crump and Curley, and finally Hague fell. Had the Boss been destroyed? In Jersey City it appeared not. Kenny, far from ending many of the practices of the Hague machine, continued them. Serving a needy clientele, the "little guy" appointed his friends to government positions, did numerous favors, and collected the booty of public office. Though Kenny appeared only to be a successor of Boss Hague, a closer look at Kenny's method of operation reveals the Boss of the post-New Deal era was quite different. The new boss would never be able to boast: "I Am The Law"--as (did) Hague.

The nature of Kenny's victory indicated what kind of boss he would be. Using the politics of resentment to gain power, the former ward leader had no intention of building a highly disciplined ward-and-precinct machine with all the

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[1]"Spring House Cleaning," The New Republic, CXX(May 23, 1949), 7.

nuts and bolts tightened and in place. Kenny, realizing his victory had been partly achieved because of the dictatorial attitude of Hague, neither had the desire nor drive to make the city "Kennyville." Instead Kenny assumed the role of the broker/boss.

To be a broker in politics requires an artful performance of balancing competing groups. Kenny realized numerous factions always engaged in continuous warfare inside and outside the party. He ruled by dividing and conquering. His greatest weapons were improvisation and adaptation. Facing certain defeat on several occasions, the broker/boss bounced back by making deals with the opposition and using his mercenary forces to deliver enough of the vote to carry him through. The Hudson "baron" showed a boss need not depend on an organization alone to survive. Guile and shrewdness can enable a politician to overcome many difficulties. With astutue political judgment and more than a little luck, Kenny made himself the center of politics in Jersey City and Hudson County for over two decades.[2]

Throughout his political career he showed how a broker can master his political environment. In forming a coalition to challenge Hague in 1949, the ward leader offered diverse groups an opportunity to share governmental

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[2]See Alexander's Callow's, The City Boss in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 180, and Richard C. Wade's "The Democratic Party 1960-1972," in History of U.S. Political Parties by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1974).

power. When in office he continued to show astuteness by keeping ahead of any challengers. In 1951, he divided the city government by stripping two rebellious commissioners of their powers. Two years later, in 1953, he co-opted his former Republican opponent, Joshu Ringle. By obtaining Ringle's key vote on the city commission, Kenny was able to retire from public office and work behind the scenes. But the "little guy's" most skillful job as a broker came in 1957, when he made a deal with Thomas Gangemi. Having little political capital to work with, Kenny shrewdly won over his former enemy with the promise of public office. Gangemi's support allowed Kenny to remain in business. The "little guy" demonstrated how a broker/boss can turn adversity to his advantage.

Kenny showed his abilities as a broker by not only negotiating with his enemies but also with his allies. He acted as a mediator when dealing with City Hall and Courthouse rivals. Mayor Whelan and Freeholder John J. Kenny bickered about their importance in the organization, but they needed the bargaining skills of John V. Kenny to survive. In return for giving these local "services" Kenny reaped the booty of public office. On every level of government he demanded a fee for his services. When endorsing a gubernatorial candidate, he expected valuable state patronage--especially the prosecutor's office. The same held true on

the national level. Kenny did not make large donations to the Democratic Party or endorse Presidential candidates for the sake of party unity. He wanted federal judgeships, non-probing law enforcers, federal contracts, and other forms of repayment. The Hudson leader knew politics demanded serving his own interest and making a commission on every transaction.

Even when he rendered services to the Church, the destitute,and the unfortunate the Boss received some form of payment. Intangible repayments can be as important as tangible ones. From the Church he received quiescent acceptance, from the unfortunate and the poor he became a broker in friendship and an ambassador of good will.[3] In all of his transactions Kenny exacted his brokerage fee whether it be a kickback on a contract, the promise of patronage, a bloc of votes, or a kind word from a friend.

By acting as a broker/boss, Kenny and his organization provided many of the traditional services that other bosses and machines gave. Robert Merton, a noted sociologist, observed that a boss and his machines have several "latent functions."[4] Kenny's key structural function was to organize, centralize, and maintain in good working condition "scattered fragments of power."[5] Kenny, the broker/boss, served the

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[3]See Callow, City Boss in America, p. 54.

[4]Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (rev. ed.; N. Y.: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 71-81.

[5]Ibid.

needs of an inner city by humanizing and personalizing assistance to those in need. Giving out a job, providing money, transferring a child in public school, or relocating a family in a housing project without the bureaucratic red tape helped Kenny control these "fragments" and stay in business. While his services required a fee, few knew when and how he was repaid. Thus he became what Jane Addams called "a stalking survival of village kindness."[6]

Besides satisfying the needs of deprived groups, Kenny and his organization provided alternative channels of social mobility. During his rule the Irish no longer monopolized power. An Italian circle of politicians emerged at the Courthouse, a black nucleus at City Hall, and Polish power moved into several layers of government. The "little guy" realized he had to let these emerging groups climb, but while he accepted them into his organization, he played the role of the broker by demanding their voting support in return for his services. Thus, the Irish Boss made sure these groups never united nor became aware of their own strength. He did the same thing with Republicans. Providing them with some patronage and city and county contracts, the Democratic leader kept his competitors from interfering with his business.

Kenny's role as a broker/boss was probably most vividly shown, however, in his dealings with businessmen. The Boss

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[6]Callow, City Boss, p. 54.

would offer special political privileges, such as a city contract or a zoning variance in exchange for a party contribution or a kickback. Acting as a broker between the business community and the formal government, Kenny could eliminate the unpredictability of honest bidding and the confusion and delay of going through normal legal channels.[7] In addition to receiving cash from legitimate businessmen, he also received income from illegitimate ones. As Robert Merton stated: "Just as the political machine performs services for 'legitimate' business, so it operates to perform not dissimilar services for 'illegitimate' business: vice, crime, and rackets."[8] In Jersey City and Hudson County, gamblers provided a service for which there was an economic and social need. Kenny and his underlings helped protect gamblers and collected their commission. The Boss never liked to spend his own money in politics and the lucrative opportunites in serving the business community assured him he never would.

Another role he performed as a broker/boss was as an employer for the city and county. He placed his followers on the public payroll, and they in turn were expected to contribute 3 percent of their salary to the organization.

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[7]Joel Tarr discusses the role of the political entrepreneur in A Study of Politics: William Lorimer of Chicago (Urbana, Illinois, 1971). See also Eric McKitrick's article, "The Study of Corruption," Political Science Quarterly LXXII (December, 1957), 502-614.

[8]Merton, Social Theory, p. 78.

This usually took the form of an innocuous purchase of dance tickets in a fund raising event. Job holders knew Kenny's services required payment, and many were glad to pay so long as he kept them on the payroll. Everybody was a client of the Boss, and they all helped to defray the cost of running his political firm.

Politics to John V. Kenny was mostly a business. Anthony Downs, an economist, has presented a theory of politics that reflected the Boss's approach:

> Our main thesis is that parties in democratic politics are analoguous to entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy. So as to attain their private ends, they formulate whatever policies they believe will gain the most votes, just as entrepreneurs produce whatever products they believe will gain the profits for the same reason.[9]

Boss Richard Croker expressed the same idea more simply, "Like a business man in business, I work for my pocket all the time."[10] This was Kenny. Born the son of a saloon keeper and growing up in an Irish slum, he followed the advice of another Tammanyite, George Washington Plunkitt: "When a man works in politics he should get something out

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[9]Anthony Down, An Economic Theory of Democracy (N.Y.:Harper and Row, 1957), p. 295.

[10]Joel A. Tarr, "The Urban Politician as Entrepreneur," in Bruce M. Stave's Urban Bosses, Machines, and Progressive Reformers (Lexington, Mass.:D.C. Heath and Co., 1972), pp. 62-63.

of it."[11] A brief examination of Jersey City's and Hudson County's economic setting helps explain how Kenny was able to get so much out of politics and run the biggest brokerage firm in his domain.

Despite the decline of Northern New Jersey's urban economy in the 1950s and 1960s, there were still plenty of ways to make money in politics. Construction of a massive sewerage plant, several redevelopment projects, federal housing programs, new schools, a huge postal facility, a transportation complex, renovation of buildings, and numerous city and county contracts provided means for a political entrepreneur to aid himself and his organization. Every city has its opportunites and there are coteries of interlocking alliances of politicians, political lawyers, contractors, franchise businessmen, and public relations men, and fixers and hangers on of various kinds waiting to make money. "They patrol the corridors of power and want a cut on a contract."[12] Every city has a man to see, and in Jersey City it was John V. Kenny.

Why Kenny could function so well as a broker had much to do with his awareness of how the game was played. He survived not by arbitrary exercise of power but from his

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[11] Ibid.

[12] William V. Shannon, The Heir Apparent (N.Y.:Macmillan Publishers, 1967), p. 159.

knowledge of its limitations. His power base shifted more than once and to survive he had to find new means of support. His staying power was related to his willpower, his political skill, and his long range hold on a reasonably good resource mix. He never allowed anyone to build a better mix. He was the arbiter of who got what, when, and at what price.

Although different than Hague (I Am The Law) in his strategy, Kenny, the broker, used many of the same resources as the old boss. Money, manpower, and patronage remained the prime prerequisites for running an organization. Money talked in local politics and the political leader with the most money was often the most convincing. Hague had millions and so did Kenny. Both had a coterie of workers spread throughout the city and county. But during Kenny's era the importance of this resource declined as committeemen and ward leaders lost influence. The new Boss recognized this and improvised by relying more on his female workers and turning to personality politicians like Whelan. Kenny also understood the importance of patronage to party strength and sought to maintain it. He manipulated the civil service system by locking in his followers with desk audits or creating new departments to evade state regulations. Once someone received a job, Kenny made him part of the organization and never let him forget that he expected loyalty. Committeemen were always on the payroll and this resource proved extremely valuable in a primary.

Control of the Democratic Party was one of the most important resources for the Boss in Hudson County. It was through control of the party that Kenny remained in power. He never held public office after 1953 and only by maintaining the leadership of the party could he control congressmen, assemblymen, mayors, councilmen, and freeholders. During Hague's time whoever ruled the Jersey City Democratic organization ruled Hudson County. Kenny broke this tradition by surviving the loss of his city base. Only an adaptable politician like Kenny could have managed to weather the chaos and fragmentation that followed the 1957 loss of the city. When Hague lost Jersey City, he never could come back, but Kenny by shrewdly serving as a broker between the city and county factions endured.

The "little guy's" success also came from his ability to know when not to be too shrewd in dealing with people. In some instances he had to appear as a benefactor. In his relations with the Catholic Church he assumed this role. Although the Church declined in influence during Kenny's rule, it still was an important force in the community. Kenny probably firmly believed he was a devouted Catholic and had no intention of using the Church for political gain, but he still had to deal with it as a social institution.[13] He handled this resource differently than Hague. The

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[13]For Hague's approach to the Church see Connors,"Frank Hague," pp. 131-137.

broker/boss never tried to have the Church actively join him in a crusade against communism, crime, or the klan. Instead, he used subtle influence to stay in its good graces.

He acted similarly when dealing with labor unions. Labor gained prominence after the New Deal, but it never proved to be the important resource in politics that some observers expected. Nevertheless, Kenny feared alienating unions and kept labor leaders friendly by putting them on the payroll.

A far more important resource capable of giving the Boss a great deal of trouble was the press. While television and radio never played a critical role in New Jersey's local politics, the newspapers certainly did.[14] Kenny never won over the state's leading newspaper, the Newark Evening News, but he did not care since few people in Hudson County read it. The Jersey Journal was the key publication. The Hudson leader had no great difficulty in gaining their support or at least keeping them neutral. Except for the charter change in 1960-1961, the Jersey Journal never attempted to challenge or expose the Boss. Part of the Newhouse chain of papers, the Journal deferred to the party in power. Hudson County's other important newspaper, the Hudson Dispatch, was never much more than an

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[14]For a commentary on the sorry state of the media in New Jersey politics see Theodore M. White's, The Making of the President 1972 (N.Y.:Antheneum Publisher, 1973), p. 252.

echo of the Democratic Party. As long as Kenny had control of the party he had few problems with the press.

Kenny's ability to retain control of the Hudson County Democratic Party for so many years raises questions about the theory that the Boss faced his demise with the coming of the New Deal. Political commentators were perhaps too quick to count out the Boss with such requiems as "The Political Boss, Going, Going--" and "Exit the Boss, Enter the Leader."[15] But the opposing argument that the boss who endured after the New Deal is the same as the boss of an earlier era is also an overstatement.[16] There can be little arguing that the changes in the city since World War II have had an impact on machine politics. As Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson have noted:

> While the value to the voter of what the machine offers has declined, the value to him of what he has to give--his vote--has increased. This has happened because in the inner parts of the larger central cities the proportion of middle-class people is greater than it was. Machine style politics

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[15]See Leo Egan's article, "The Political Boss, Going, Going-," in the New York Times Magazine, Jan. 8, 1961, pp. 16-22, and Warren Moscow's article, "Exit the Boss, Enter the Leader," New York Times Magazine, June 22, 1949, pp. 16-17, and his study of Carmine DeSapio, The Last of the Big Time Bosses (N.Y.:Stein and Day, 1971).

[16]See Bruce Stave, The New Deal and the Last Hurrah (Pittsburgh:University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970); Lyle Dorsett, The Pendergast Machine (N.Y.:Oxford University Press, 1968). Stave and Dorsett argue that the New Deal did not destroy the bosses and their machines, but in several cities strengthened them.

> has rarely worked in predominantly middle class districts....Middle class people do not want the precinct captain's 'friendship' or the ward leader's help.
>
> Meanwhile there remain enclaves that are heavily lower-class in all of the central cities and many of the older suburbs. In these, machine politics is as popular as ever.[17]

One such enclave was Jersey City.

Another possible explanation why the machine and boss survived in a city like Jersey City has been given by John M. Allswang in Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters. Although writing about Chicago, Allswang's argument can be applied to Jersey City:

> One reason the machine survives in Chicago, although it has declined elsewhere, has to do with the legal milieu in which a city exists. New York and other states have gradually changed their laws governing civil service, the power of the parties, the primaries, and so on. But Illinois has done little of this... Little change in the patronage system or in other built in advantages to the existing parties, has come about over the years. The legal structure does not guarantee the politics in Chicago will maintain the structure it currently has, but it does make that structure possible, whereas this no longer happens in many other places.[18]

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[17]Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (N.Y.:Vintage Books, 1963), pp. 122-123.

[18]John M. Allswang, Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters (N.Y.:Kennikat Press, 1977), pp. 149-150.

In New Jersey a similar legal milieu existed. The political and economic fragmentation in the state helped Kenny and several other county barons to survive. Not until the 1970s did New Jersey start to overcome some of its localism. Adopting a broad based tax, receiving more media coverage, and re-apportioning its congressional and legislative districts, New Jersey started to shift more of its power from the county to state level.

Kenny-at least-illustrated how a post-New Deal boss reigned in a changing society. He was not a carbon copy of Hague who followed the mold of a dictatorial leader. They were of a kind but different. Kenny was a go-between, a mediator, a broker for the people. He was a bridge connecting the professional politicians with the economic and social segments of the community. Hague organized power into himself by maintaining absolute control. When he lost control he lost power. Kenny was more resourceful. He juggled the competing interests to his own advantage, first on the local level and then on the county-state level. Blessed with a different personality, less prone to commanding and more inclined to manipulation, he built a power-brokerage based on neutralizing the opposition inside and outside his party and marshalled some non-traditional party members. Thankless party members were "read out" of the corridors of power but never destroyed. The political opposition was accommodated while rising minorities were

protectively taken into the organization and thereby effectively silenced. The business community was appeased and recruited in a self-serving conspiracy of pay-offs and kick-backs. When an institution was incorruptible, it was mollified into passive acceptance.

Whether Kenny will have a successor and whether he will continue to endure as Kenny did is pure speculation. But he must be a master of the immediate political realities like Kenny. He must find new resources like Kenny and exploit any situation. The "little guy" showed the boss can thrive as a broker among a multitude of interest and delay his "last hurrah" for a long time.

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