

NORTHVALE -

At least as early as 1876, Ambrose Girandat operated a business that manufactured lace, paper, and artificial flower materials. These materials were used in the millinery and garment industries. Girandat also owned a wax factory; the 1876 map of Neuvy (the previous name for the town) shows the "A. Girandat Wax Factory" on Railroad Avenue, a complex of five or six buildings. It is not clear if the wax production was tied to the production of artificial flowers, although it seems likely.

The artificial flower business dominated industry in Northvale in the late 1800s. An 1887 Railroad Guide Book listed four factories devoted to the manufacture of materials used in the construction of artificial flowers. (Older residents of Northvale refer to these businesses as "pip" factories, the pip being the center of an artificial flower.) Three of these early industries made the covered wire used in constructing stems. The Contini family, which had a large factory in Greenwich Village that made flower materials, opened such a factory at 169 Paris Avenue for making pips. Large, slat-sided wooden wheels hung from the walls. Spun firmly, they were used as fans to harden the glue used in construction of the pips.



A family assembling flowers at home

Also in the late 1880s, the Smith Clay Company, at a site near the present-day ShopRite on Livingston Street, was making bricks for customers in New York City. The clay pit, located just to the east of the Erie Railroad, remains to this day as Cooper's Pond, situated north of Hogan Field. Small factories using clay to make tiles for septic tanks and well liners also existed in this era.

The D'Amico Macaroni Factory at 192 Livingston Street was built in 1914. The D'Amico family sold the building during the Great Depression and it became a factory for the manufacture of blouses, known then as 'shirtwaists' or simply 'waists'. It was a source of periodic employment for many women in Northvale during the



192 Livingston Street

Depression. There were often gaps between orders and the workers would be laid off in the time between the completion of one order and the start of a new one. Very few residents had telephones in the '30s, and the owner of the waist factory would walk through town, personally notifying the women that a new order had come in and calling them back to work. The building still exists and is an auto parts store.



192 Livingston Street today

In the early part of the twentieth century, the Centofante family also had a small factory on Livingston Street. They made embroidered eyelet and other trimmings for the garment industry. The factory building was taken down in the 1960s.