

THE DRIVE-IN THAT NEVER WAS

Leo R. Roy, W & W Associates, Inc., and the Land on Post Road

Norwood section of Warwick, Rhode Island · 1955–1959

Petition Asks Drive-In Theater On Post Road in Norwood

The Providence Journal, Saturday, March 5, 1955, page 2

A family history compiled from Rhode Island newspapers, obituaries,
and the 1959 Rhode Island Supreme Court decision *Judge v. Roy*

Compiled September 21, 2026 by Claude AI, edited by Patty Roy

A Story Hiding in the Newspapers

In 1955, your Leo R. Roy was 54 years old, a Warwick building contractor, and a well-known figure in the city's Democratic Party. He also owned a large piece of low, swampy land on Post Road in the Norwood section of Warwick, right beside his own house, across the street from the Hebrew Cemetery. It was mostly a peat bog and a duck pond. Nobody wanted to build houses on it.

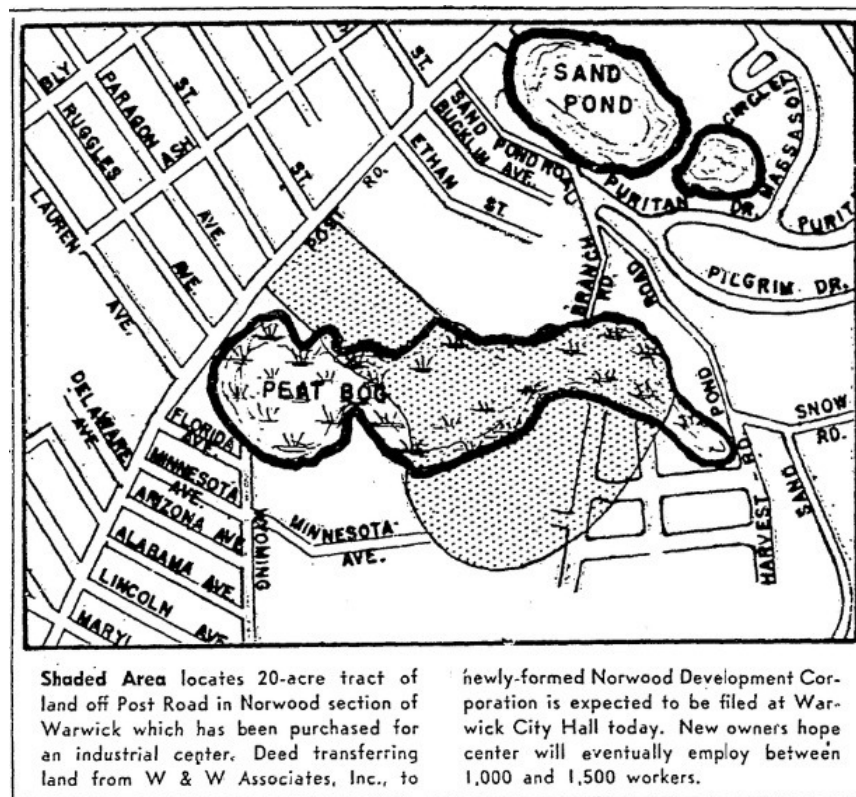
Over the next ten months, that bog became the center of a small local drama. A brand-new company called W & W Associates, Inc. tried to put a drive-in movie theater on it, and more than 260 neighbors signed petitions against it. The company pivoted to industry, got the land rezoned, and sold it to developers who promised a factory park with jobs for a thousand workers or more. Then a real estate broker sued Leo for his commission, and the case went all the way to the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

Through all of it, Leo told reporters he had "no interest" in the project. The court records say otherwise. His sister, his brother, and his son were all stockholders, and by the summer of 1955 Leo himself was the company's president. This is the story of what W & W Associates set out to do, who was behind it, and why Leo may have set it up the way he did.

The Land Next to Leo's House

The property was known in the city records as **Lot 62 on Assessor's Plat 309**, on the southeasterly side of Post Road. Together with a neighboring parcel (part of Lot 64), the whole tract ran to roughly 15 to 20 acres. It had about 238 feet of frontage on Post Road and stretched east across what locals called "the Peat Bog." Only a thin strip along Post Road was zoned for business. Everything behind it was zoned Residential B.

Leo had been trying to sell the land for years. Brokers Edward F. Judge and Mary L. Whalan later testified that he started coming into their office in 1951 or 1952 with a plat plan of the whole tract, asking them to find a buyer. Several prospects looked at it, but nothing came of them.



The shaded area shows the tract, including the Peat Bog, between Post Road and Sand Pond Road. The Providence Journal, Monday, November 28, 1955, page 2

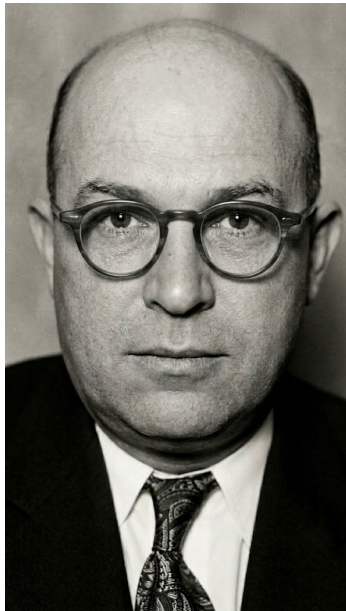
The People Behind the Two W's

The "W & W" in the name almost certainly stood for the two outside partners, Christopher Williams and Nathan Winer. Those were the only names that appeared in the newspapers. The Supreme Court decision, though, shows that the company was very much a Roy family affair.

Person	Relation to Leo	Role in W & W Associates	Life
Leo R. Roy	—	Sold the land to the company. President by July 1955 (per the court). Publicly denied any interest.	Born June 16, 1900, Warwick. Died February 25, 1989, at home at 3871 Post Road, age 88.
Dora M. Roy	Sister	Stockholder	Born July 20, 1895, Superior, Wisconsin. Died September 13, 1978, Palmetto, Florida, age 83.
Eugene E. Roy	Brother	Stockholder	Born June 27, 1909, Warwick. Died September 12, 1987, Bay Pines VA Hospital, Florida, age 78.
Alfred P. Roy	Son	Stockholder	Born September 28, 1928, Warwick. Died November 10, 2003, Providence, age 75.

Person	Relation to Leo	Role in W & W Associates	Life
Christopher D. Williams	Partner	President in March 1955. The company's address was his home, 105 Delwood Road, Hoxsie.	Born November 22, 1917, Haverhill, Massachusetts. Died August 28, 1968, age 50.
Nathan Winer	Partner	Partner and chief spokesman at the March 1955 council hearing.	Born about 1917, Three Rivers, Palmer, Massachusetts. Died December 24, 1994, Netanya, Israel, age 77.

Leo R. Roy



Leo Roy, The Evening Bulletin, Tuesday, December 6, 1955, page 5

Leo was the son of Alfred P. and Amanda (Beaudoin) Roy. He was a building contractor until he retired around 1969. He was deeply involved in politics as a member of the Third Ward Democratic Committee, the Warwick Democratic City Committee, and the Democratic State Committee. In the early 1930s he served as Warwick's highway commissioner under Mayor John O'Brien, and he was a member of the original Warwick Sewer Commission. In 1955 the newspapers described him as "prominent in city politics," a "strong administration supporter," and a man "prominent in Democratic circles." That reputation matters to this story.

When he died in 1989, he left his wife Eleanor A. (Howard) Roy; four sons, Leo R. Jr., Alfred P., Emil E., and Edward C.; a daughter, Marie Vasconcellos; his brother Napoleon; 26 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Dora M. Roy

Leo's older sister, "Miss Dora M. Roy," never married. She was born in Superior, Wisconsin. She moved to the Palmetto, Florida, area in 1969 and belonged to Holy Cross Catholic Church there.

Eugene E. Roy

Leo's younger brother was a carpenter who became a real estate broker and developer. He owned Yorktown Realty and R & O Realty in North Kingstown, developed the Bayberry housing community, and was the principal figure in building the Cowesett condominium complex in Warwick. He helped found Carpenters Union Local 94 and served as a notary public and justice of the peace. He moved to Palmetto, Florida, in 1968, just a year before his sister Dora.

Alfred P. Roy

Leo's son Alfred, the child of Leo and Bertha (Benson) Roy, was only 26 when he held stock in W & W. He became a hoisting engineer with Laborers' Union Local 57 for 50 years and helped build the Newport Bridge and the old Jamestown Bridge. He even came out of retirement to help build the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge. He was an Army veteran who loved photography, computers, gardening, and his grandchildren. In 1963 he built the house at 12 Westcott Road in Scituate where he would live for 41 years.

Christopher Williams

Williams and his brothers ran all the refreshment concessions and rides at Roger Williams Park, "except for the merry-go-round," as operators of Williams Bros. Concessions for 35 years. He was a sportsman who owned racehorses that ran under the brown and gold silks of the C. D. Williams Stable at New England and Florida tracks. He was a World War II Army veteran, an Elk, and a member of the Rhode Island Driving Club. He died suddenly in 1968 while dining at a Providence restaurant.

Nathan Winer

Winer (sometimes spelled "Weiner") had run the Wayside Farm Dairy in Cranston, and the 1952 Cranston city directory lists him there. He served in the Army from 1941 to 1945 with the engineers and the air corps and saw action in Europe. He was active in the Boy Scouts. He later worked in real estate in North Miami Beach, Florida, and retired to Netanya, Israel, where he died in 1994.

Plan A: A Drive-In Movie Theater

On **February 15, 1955**, Leo organized W & W Associates, Inc. as a Rhode Island corporation. The very next day, **February 16**, he signed a warranty deed transferring Lot 62 to the new company. The Evening Bulletin printed the deed in its "Warwick Records" column on February 24. That deed would matter later: *no federal revenue stamps were attached to it*. In the 1950s, stamps were required on a deed according to the price paid, so a deed with no stamps recorded no sale price at all.

Within days, the city published a legal notice. W & W Associates, Inc., of 105 Delwood Road, was asking the City Council to rezone Lots 62 and 64 from Residential B to Business D-2, and a public hearing was set for Thursday, March 17, 1955.

The reason was a drive-in theater. In the mid-1950s drive-ins were booming across America, and Warwick had none. W & W's would have been the fifth attempt in five years to build one in the city. The plan called for the screen and parking field to sit 700 feet back from Post Road, and the company estimated the investment at about \$150,000. Williams admitted the land was "submarginal." The bog and duck pond would need expensive fill.

Reporters asked Leo about it. His answer was careful:

Roy, prominent in city politics, said he has no interest in the proposed project, other than he would like to see it allowed because the area isn't suitable for residential purposes and should be turned over to business or industrial use.

— The Providence Journal, March 5, 1955

Behind the scenes, the Evening Bulletin noticed he was doing more than watching:

While Roy has said he has no interest, he has been very active in enlisting support for the proposal, claiming that the land is not much good for residential purposes.

— The Evening Bulletin, March 17, 1955

The city planning board was not persuaded. On March 10 it recommended against the petition. It agreed the site was "well suited for light industry and certain businesses," but a drive-in would pour "extremely heavy traffic" onto Post Road, which was already congested and had a high accident rate.

The Night of March 17, 1955

The Council was closely divided, five Democrats to four Republicans, and the Bulletin predicted the balance "may rest with one councilman." By custom, the motion belonged to Francis J. O'Neill, the Democrat whose Third Ward included the site. That was the same ward where Leo had served on the Democratic committee. Francis J. O'Neill was Leo's nephew, the son of Leo's sister Anna. The councilman whose ward took in the bog, and who would ordinarily make the motion on the petition, was family.

When the hearing opened, the council chamber was packed. The overflow crowd filled the balcony for the first time in years at a regular council session. Only two people spoke in favor, Williams and Winer, and Winer did most of the talking. He presented a petition with 18 names, which he said represented a majority of the abutting property owners. He also told the council that Police Chief Sprague and the state's chief traffic engineer, Philip S. Mancini, believed the traffic could be handled.

The opposition was loud. Seven speakers came forward against the plan, carrying three petitions with more than 260 names. At one point a speaker asked everyone opposed to stand. City Clerk John J. McCabe counted 62 people standing, half the room. People shouted from the audience, asking the partners how they would like an open-air theater in their front yard, until Mayor Mills had to remind the crowd to let the two men be heard. Republican councilman Walter F. Richardson Jr. said he had visited the Cranston Drive-In, where neighbors called it "a rat race" when the show let out.

O'Neill called a five-minute recess. When the council came back, Winer stood up and said that "in face of such opposition he would like to withdraw the petition without prejudice." The request was quickly granted. The drive-in was dead, at least for the moment.

Plan B: Rezone It for Industry

Behind the scenes, a new buyer had appeared. According to the brokers' later testimony, on June 27, 1955, a man named Jack Levitt walked into the Whalan & Judge office looking for land in Warwick. Levitt was treasurer of Natco Products Corporation of Providence, a manufacturer. The very next day, broker Edward Judge, Levitt, Leo, and one other man walked the property together.

On **July 8, 1955**, W & W Associates signed a 45-day option giving Arthur S. Galkin, Robert Galkin, and Jack Levitt the right to buy Lot 62 for \$25,000. The option was signed by *Leo R. Roy, President*. Only four months after he had told the newspaper he had "no interest," Leo was running the company.

On **July 21, 1955**, W & W went back to the City Council, this time asking for **Industrial E** zoning instead of business. An officer of Natco Products told the council his firm held an option on the land and was considering a light-manufacturing plant of 40,000 to 50,000 square feet. The planning board approved, and the council granted the change over the objection of Republican Harry Carter, who wanted to wait a month to see whether the firm would really take up its option. A member of the Massasoit Community Association asked for assurance that a drive-in could not be slipped in later if the factory fell through.

That turned out to be a very good question.

One More Try for the Drive-In

After the March fight, Councilman Raymond Stone had pushed through an ordinance in June putting drive-ins in a special-permit category that required a zoning board hearing. But City Solicitor Israel Moses, part of the Democratic administration, declared Stone's ordinance invalid on technical grounds. That left open a possibility: drive-ins were allowed in industrial zones, and the land was now zoned industrial.

Less than a month after the rezoning, W & W Associates applied to the Warwick Police Commission for a drive-in theater license. On Tuesday night, August 9, 1955, the commission discussed it at length and then tabled it indefinitely. The Bulletin called it the sixth attempt in six years to bring a drive-in to Warwick, and it ended its story with a pointed reminder: "W & W Associates acquired the land from Leo Roy, who has been prominent in Democratic circles."

Republicans were furious. Richardson and Stone said the Council and planning board had fallen for a "story" in July. Stone said his ordinance had been written "so nothing could come in the back door." On August 15, Council President Joseph P. McKeever announced that Mayor Joseph Mills had personally

assured him no drive-in would be permitted on the Lincoln Park land. That settled it. The drive-in idea was over for good.

A family footnote: the lawyer who later defended Leo in the broker's lawsuit was an **Israel Moses of Warwick**. That is the same name as the city solicitor whose ruling briefly reopened the door for the drive-in.

The Sale: "New Industrial Center Planned for Warwick"

In August 1955, W & W Associates, with Leo signing as president, agreed to sell about 18 acres to the Galkins and Levitt: Lot 62 plus part of Lot 64. The closing was set for September 19. When the papers were about to pass at a title company, broker Edward Judge showed up, having learned about the deal on his own, and demanded his commission. The closing was put off for a few days.

The deeds were finally dated **October 18, 1955**. On that same day Leo signed a "curative deed" to W & W to repair his February deed, and W & W deeded the land to the newly formed **Norwood Development Corporation**. This time the deed carried \$35.20 in revenue stamps. At the 1950s rate of 55 cents per \$500, that works out to a price of \$32,000. The city records printed in the Bulletin on December 2 also show a separate quitclaim deed from Leo R. Roy to W & W Associates for the Post Road land, one more piece of title cleanup.

On Sunday, November 27, 1955, the story made the front page of the Providence Sunday Journal:

A 20-acre tract of land off Post Road in the Norwood section of Warwick has been purchased for development of an industrial center which the new owners hope will eventually employ between 1,000 and 1,500 workers.

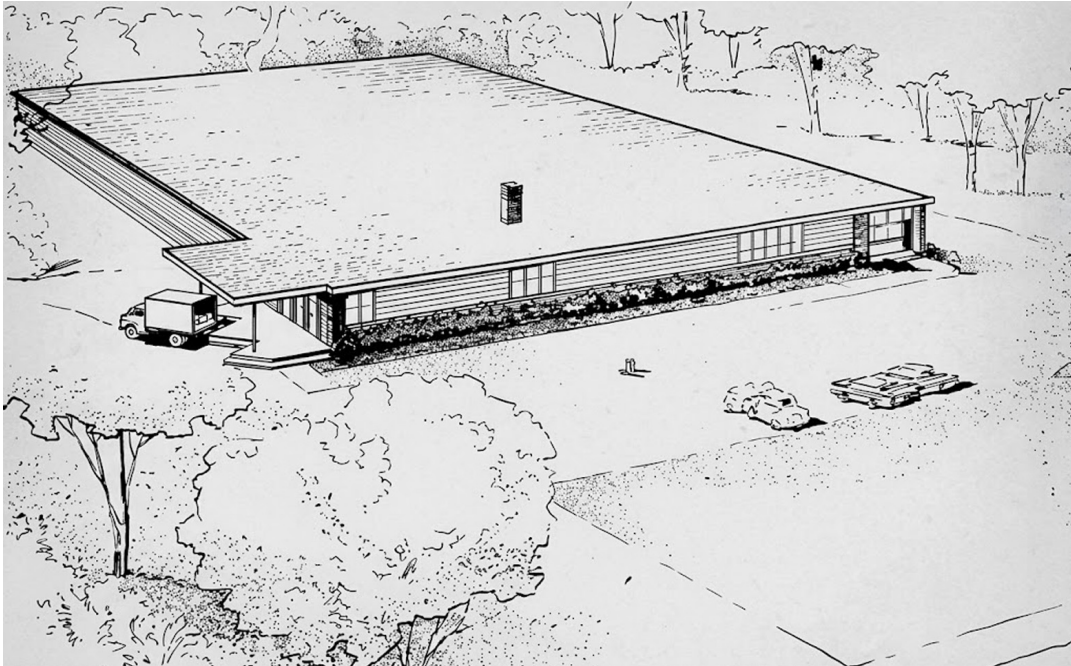
— The Providence Sunday Journal, November 27, 1955, page 1

The officers of Norwood Development were Arthur S. Galkin, president; Jack Levitt, treasurer; Robert Galkin, secretary; and Warren B. Galkin, vice president. They planned modern, landscaped buildings with ample parking for medium-sized manufacturers, many of them being forced out of Providence by construction of the new Freeway. The design would copy the famous industrial development on Route 128 in Massachusetts, with a main entrance on Post Road. It would be Warwick's second industrial park.

One detail in the article doesn't match the court testimony. The new owners said "negotiations were started about a year ago" and that "rezoning was at their suggestion." A year before November 1955 would be late 1954, before W & W Associates even existed. In court, Levitt said his first contact came through the brokers in June 1955. Either the developers were rounding off, or talks with Leo began earlier than the brokers knew.

What Got Built: The Norwood Industrial Center

This time the plan was real. On the night of December 1, 1955, four days after the sale made the front page, the developers announced their first building: a 50,000-square-foot, one-story brick plant for Natco Products Corporation, costing as much as \$250,000, designed by Samuel I. Lerner Associates of Providence and built by Alton Builders Inc. of Warwick, with completion promised by May 1. The whole tract was to follow the style of the industrial park on Route 128 in Massachusetts, with roads, off-street parking, and extensive landscaping.



Sketch of first building project for Norwood Industrial Center—that of Natco Products Corporation. Architect is Samuel I. Lerner Associates of Providence.

Sketch of Natco Products Corporation, The Providence Journal, Friday, December 2, 1955, page 3

Natco was a real manufacturer, not a paper company. Incorporated about 1923 and then located at 464 Dexter Street in Providence in the former Braid Mill, it was the largest maker of beach bags, rubber door mats, rubber stair treads, and rubber matting, and it supplied the leading domestic and international airlines with their flight bags. Arthur S. Galkin was president and secretary; Jack Levitt, the man the brokers had walked across the bog in June, was vice president and treasurer. The same two men ran the development company.

Two Companies, Two Men

It is worth pausing on how the buyers were organized, because a descendant reading the 1962 papers will notice something odd: the Norwood Development Corporation gives its address as 33 Factory Street in West Warwick, which is Natco's plant. That does not mean Natco owned the development company. The two were sister corporations run by the same people.

Norwood Development's officers in 1955 were Arthur S. Galkin, president; Jack Levitt, treasurer; Robert Galkin, secretary; and Warren B. Galkin, vice president. Natco's were Arthur S. Galkin, president and secretary, and Jack Levitt, vice president and treasurer. The Journal said it plainly at the groundbreaking: "Galkin and Levitt also head the development company." One corporation manufactured beach bags and flight bags; the other bought, rezoned, and developed land. The same two men signed for both.

That also explains the wandering address. Norwood Development had no premises of its own. In November 1955 the purchase was announced from the Providence office of the buyers' attorney, Saul Hodosh, and the property itself was still a bog. A corporation like that is wherever its principals happen to be working, so when Natco moved to the old American Luggage plant in 1960, the development company's mail moved with it.

There is a family lesson in that, and it cuts both ways. This is precisely the structure Leo used. A separate corporation with no office, formed to hold and develop one parcel, run by men whose real business was something else. Leo was not doing anything exotic in February 1955. He was doing, on a small scale and for a single bog, what the men who bought the land from him did on a larger one. The difference is that W & W Associates made one sale and dissolved within three years, while Norwood Development was still before the zoning board seven years later.

The building permit that showed up in the Sunday Journal's construction roundup on December 18 was more modest than the announcement: Norwood Development Corp., 1396 Post Road, a manufacturing building at an estimated cost of \$100,000, one story, 45,000 square feet. Leo's house stood at 1380 Post Road. The factory went up next door.

Groundbreaking, Saturday, December 10, 1955

Ground was broken on the morning of Saturday, December 10, 1955, and the ceremony drew the whole local establishment: Thomas F. Monahan, director of the Rhode Island Development Council; State Senator Ralph T. Lewis of Warwick; Mayor Joseph Mills; Council President Joseph P. McKeever; Councilman Francis J. O'Neill of Ward 3; C. Albert Selinder, chairman of the Warwick Industrial Commission; and Galkin and Levitt. Natco employed 100 people at the time and expected nearly 200 in the new quarters. The newspaper noted that "the area, known by many as the peat bog, will be landscaped."



Breaking Ground for Norwood Industrial Center and its first tenant, Natco Products of Providence, are l-r, Warwick Councilman Francis J. O'Neill, Ward 3; Thomas F. Monahan, president of the

Rhode Island Development Council; Mayor Joseph Mills, Jack Levitt and Arthur S. Galkin, officers of Natco and the center, and Warwick Council President Joseph P. McKeever. —State Staff Photo

Ground breaking for Norwood Industrial Center: Francis J. O'Neill, Thomas F. Monahan, Joseph Mills, Jack Levitt, Arthur S. Galkin and Joseph P. McKeever, The Providence Sunday Journal, December 11, 1955, page 54

Two details in that story belong to the family. The Ward 3 councilman in the photograph, Francis J. O'Neill, was Leo's nephew. And the reception afterward was held at **Joe's Tavern**, which stood at the rear of 1380 Post Road, the same address as Leo's home. Joe Wagner had bought that property for his tavern in 1952. So when the officials finished turning over the first shovel of the old peat bog, they walked back to a tavern in Leo Roy's own back yard to drink to it.

Nine months earlier, a shouting crowd had packed the council chamber to stop this land from being developed. Now the mayor, the council president, and the state development director were standing on it with shovels.

Natco comes and goes

In July 1956, Natco said it was aiming to move that same month from its old three-story Providence factory into the new one-story plant. It would occupy five of the 22 acres, bringing about 125 employees. Galkin said the remaining 17 acres would be given over to light manufacturing suited to the

residential area the park adjoined, and predicted full development within five years and close to 2,000 jobs for the area.

That larger vision never arrived, and Natco itself stayed only about four years. In the summer of 1960 it outgrew the building and moved to the former American Luggage Works plant at 33 Factory Street in West Warwick, going from 45,000 to 150,000 square feet. On November 24, 1960, the papers reported that the Post Road plant had been leased to the Nyanza Co. of Woonsocket as a retail outlet employing about 100 people. The mayor who called the lease "another indication of the commercial potential which exists in Warwick" was Raymond E. Stone, who served from 1957 to 1960. Stone was the same councilman who in 1955 had written the anti-drive-in ordinance "so nothing could come in the back door," and who accused the council of falling for a "story" about a factory. Five years later, as mayor, he was welcoming a store onto the same land.

1962: The Store Comes for the House

The retail outlet did well, and in June 1962 it came back for more land. The Nyanza Discount Department Store petitioned the Warwick Zoning Board of Review for permission to add 31,000 square feet to its existing 47,000, a hearing being set for Thursday, June 28, 1962, at eight o'clock in the Council Chamber. The addition would go on the northerly side of the building, adding 240 feet of frontage for a total of 375 feet facing Post Road. A street serving as the entrance to the store parking lot would be moved north, and, as the Evening Bulletin put it, "a house at the corner of the street would be taken down and the store parking lot would be expanded."

The petition named the land as Lots 97 and 98 and a portion of Lot 62, plus parts of Lots 48 and 52. Lot 62 was Leo's original bog. Seven years after he deeded it away, the same assessor's lot number was back in a zoning notice, this time so a discount store could grow.

The petition was brought by the Norwood Development Corp. of 33 Factory Street, West Warwick, which was Natco's own address by then, together with four neighbors on Post Road: Pasquale V. Confreda and his wife Anna M. at 1370, Alfred P. Roy at 1380, Josef Wagner at 1390, and Anthony C. Rocchio. By 1962 the house at 1380 Post Road, the house the peat bog had sat beside, was in the name of Leo's son Alfred, the same Alfred who had been a stockholder in W & W Associates at 26.

The store expanded into the ground where the house at 1380 Post Road stood. Josef Wagner's tavern, listed in the petition at 1390, stayed where it was until 1976.

1963: Two New Houses

The following year, both men built again. Leo, then 63, put up a new house farther down the same road at 3871 Post Road, where he would live for the rest of his life, and where he died in 1989. Alfred left Warwick altogether and built at 12 Westcott Road in Scituate. His obituary says he lived on Westcott Road for 41 years, which counts back almost exactly to that move.

There is a neat symmetry in it. Leo had spent 1955 trying to turn the worthless land beside his house into something valuable. By 1963 it had become valuable enough that the commerce he helped start bought out the house itself, and father and son took their money and built somewhere else.

The Supreme Court, writing in 1959, had described the land simply as "now occupied by Natco Products Corporation." Whatever else the story was, the land did get built on, and it kept on changing, from bog to factory to discount store to parking lot, in less than a decade.

The Broker Who Wanted His Commission

Edward F. Judge and Mary L. Whalan, doing business as Whalan & Judge, real estate brokers and insurance agents, sued Leo personally for a 5 percent commission. Their argument was simple: Leo had hired them years earlier to sell the land, they found the buyer, and the land was sold to that buyer.

Leo's defense is the most revealing part of the whole story. He argued that he could not owe any commission because he was not the owner. He had deeded the land to W & W Associates back in February, and the corporation had made the sale. He also claimed the brokers had only been authorized to sell the Post Road frontage, and that they had given up on the deal.

The brokers testified that Leo had never told them he had transferred the land, and they had never seen the option or the sales agreement. The trial judge found that Leo "purposely did not acquaint plaintiffs with what was being done." In the spring of 1958 the Superior Court awarded the brokers \$1,822.30. By then, W & W Associates had already gone out of existence.

Leo appealed. On July 24, 1959, the Rhode Island Supreme Court ruled against him in *Judge v. Roy*, 90 R.I. 29, 153 A.2d 522. Justice Frost wrote:

There is strong evidence that after defendant's conveyance of lot 62 to W & W Associates, Inc. he was still the real party in interest. There is no merit in defendant's contention that if a commission were due to plaintiffs it was not due from him.

— *Judge v. Roy*, Rhode Island Supreme Court, July 24, 1959

All of Leo's exceptions were overruled. The case lives on in legal databases today, cited for the rule that a person who hires a broker owes the commission even if someone else holds the title.

Why Create W & W Associates? Weighing the Evidence

W & W Associates may have been formed to avoid taxes on the sale of the land. The documents can't settle that question on their own, but they show plenty of signs that the corporation served Leo's purposes. Here is what the record shows.

Clues that point to a paper company built around Leo

- **Timing.** The corporation was organized on February 15, 1955, and Leo deeded it the land the next day.
- **No price on the deed.** The February deed carried no revenue stamps, meaning no purchase price was recorded. The land most likely went into the company in exchange for stock, not cash.
- **A family company.** The stockholders included Leo's sister, brother, and son. By July, Leo was president and personally signed the option and sales agreement.
- **Title cleanup.** Leo had to sign a "curative deed" on the day of the sale and a separate quitclaim deed, which suggests the original transfer was loosely handled.
- **One job, then gone.** W & W made exactly one sale and had dissolved by spring 1958.
- **The court's view.** The Supreme Court found "strong evidence" that Leo remained "the real party in interest" all along.

How a corporation could have helped with taxes

As a building contractor, Leo could have been treated by the IRS as a "dealer" in real estate. That would have made his profit on the land ordinary income, taxed at his regular rate, rather than a lower-taxed capital gain. In the 1950s, one well-known strategy was to put property into a corporation, have the corporation improve or rezone and sell it, and then dissolve the corporation so the owners reported their payout as a capital gain. The practice was common enough that Congress wrote special "collapsible corporation" rules to fight it. Spreading the stock among family members could also have divided the income among several people. Rezoning the bog from residential to industrial clearly raised its value.

Other reasons that fit the facts

- **Political cover.** Leo was a prominent Democrat. The Democrats controlled the council 5 to 4, the proposal sat in a Democratic ward, and drive-ins were very unpopular with voters. Putting the petition under Williams and Winer, with Williams's home address, kept Leo's name off it, and the newspapers still connected him to it.
- **Outside money.** A \$150,000 theater needed investors. Williams, a concessions operator, and Winer, a businessman, brought experience and capital.
- **Protection.** A corporation limited personal liability and, as Leo tried to argue in court, could be used to deflect claims like the broker's commission.

The most likely answer may be "all of the above." For a contractor-politician with a hard-to-sell bog next to his house, a small family corporation fronted by two outside partners offered a way to seek a controversial rezoning, raise money, keep his name out of the headlines, and possibly handle the profit more favorably.

Timeline

Date	Event
1951–1952	Leo engages brokers Whalan & Judge to sell his Post Road land.
Feb 15, 1955	W & W Associates, Inc. is organized.
Feb 16, 1955	Leo deeds Lot 62, Plat 309, to W & W. No revenue stamps are attached.
Feb 25, 1955	Legal notice: W & W seeks to rezone Lots 62 and 64 from Residential B to Business D-2.
Mar 5, 1955	Drive-in plan made public. Williams is named president. Leo says he has "no interest."
Mar 10, 1955	Planning board recommends disapproval, citing Post Road traffic.
Mar 17, 1955	Packed council hearing with more than 260 names opposed. W & W withdraws the petition.
June 1955	Stone ordinance places drive-ins in a special-permit category. The city solicitor later calls it invalid.
June 27–28, 1955	Jack Levitt of Natco Products contacts the brokers and tours the land with Leo.
July 8, 1955	W & W, signed by "Leo R. Roy, President," gives the Galkins and Levitt a 45-day, \$25,000 option.
July 21, 1955	City Council rezones the tract to Industrial E.
Aug 9, 1955	W & W applies to the Police Commission for a drive-in license. It is tabled indefinitely.
Aug 15, 1955	Council president says Mayor Mills assured him no drive-in would be allowed.
Aug 1955	Sales agreement signed for about 18 acres. Closing is delayed when broker Judge demands his commission.
Oct 18, 1955	Leo signs a curative deed. W & W deeds the land to Norwood Development Corp. (\$35.20 in stamps, about \$32,000).
Nov 27, 1955	Front page: "New Industrial Center Planned for Warwick."
Dec 1, 1955	First building announced: a \$250,000, 50,000-square-foot plant for Natco Products.
Dec 10, 1955	Groundbreaking at the 18-acre site, with Councilman Francis J. O'Neill (Leo's nephew) present. Reception at Joe's Tavern, rear of 1380 Post Road.
Dec 18, 1955	The building permit appears in print: 45,000 square feet at 1396 Post Road, next to Leo's house at 1380.
July 1956	Natco aims to move in that month, with about 125 employees on five of the 22 acres.
Spring 1958	W & W has dissolved. Superior Court awards the brokers \$1,822.30.
July 24, 1959	Rhode Island Supreme Court upholds the award in Judge v. Roy.
Summer 1960	Natco outgrows the plant and moves to the former American Luggage Works in West Warwick.
Nov 24, 1960	The Post Road plant is leased to the Nyanza Co. of Woonsocket as a retail outlet.
June 1962	Nyanza petitions to add 31,000 square feet, taking in part of Lot 62. Petitioners include Alfred P. Roy of 1380 Post Road. A house at the corner is to come down for parking.

Date	Event
1963	Leo builds a new house at 3871 Post Road. Alfred builds at 12 Westcott Road, Scituate.
1976-1977	Josef Wagner's tavern, at 1390 Post Road, ceases to exist.
Feb 25, 1989	Leo dies at home on Post Road, age 88.

Sources

Court decision

- Judge v. Roy, 90 R.I. 29, 153 A.2d 522 (R.I. 1959), decided July 24, 1959. Justice Frost writing for the court. https://app.vlex.com/search/jurisdiction:US+country_jurisdiction:RI/roy/p4/vid/891941453

Newspaper clippings

- "Warwick Records" (warranty deed, Leo R. Roy to W & W Associates). The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Thursday, February 24, 1955, p. 7.
- Legal notice of the zoning petition and March 17 hearing. "City of Warwick Public Hearing Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance," The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, February 25, 1955, p. 34.
- "Petition Asks Drive-In Theater On Post Road in Norwood." The Providence Journal, Saturday, March 5, 1955, p. 2.
- Drive-in petition report. "Petition Asks For Drive-in Theater," The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Saturday, March 5, 1955, p. 3.
- Drive-in petition brief. The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Monday, March 7, 1955, p. 3.
- Planning board recommends disapproval. "Warwick Unit Disapproves 5th Drive-In Zone Petition," The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, March 11, 1955, p. 2.
- Plan board rejects the theater zone. "Plan Board Rejects Plea For Drive-in," The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, March 11, 1955, p. 5.
- Preview of the council hearing. "Warwick Council to Air Drive-in Petition Tonight," The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Thursday, March 17, 1955, p. 2.
- Hearing coverage, part 1. "Drive-In Zoning Plea Withdrawn," The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, March 18, 1955, p. 1.
- Hearing coverage, part 2. "Warwick Drive-in Move Withdrawn By Two Backers Continued From Page One," The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, March 18, 1955, p. 21.
- "Warwick Drive-in Move Withdrawn By Two Backers," The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, March 18, 1955, p. 35.
- "Council Faces Heavy Docket At Warwick." The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Thursday, July 21, 1955, p. 5.
- "Industry Zone OKd for Firm." The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, July 22, 1955, p. 2.
- Rezoning to Industrial E. "Post Rd. Site Rezoned for Industry," The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, July 22, 1955, p. 5.
- "Police Board Shelves Request for Drive-In Theater at Warwick." The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Thursday, August 11, 1955, p. 5.
- "Drive-In Shelved." The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Thursday, August 11, 1955, p. 12.
- "Mills 'Assures' No Drive-In." The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Tuesday, August 16, 1955, p. 2.
- "New Industrial Center Planned for Warwick," part 1. The Providence Sunday Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Sunday, November 27, 1955, p. 1.
- "New Industrial Center Planned for Warwick, Continued From Page One" part 2. The Providence Sunday Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Sunday, November 27, 1955, p. 47.
- Map of the 20-acre tract. The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Monday, November 28, 1955, p. 2.
- "Warranty Deeds," W & W Associates to Norwood Development Corp., recorded November 23, 1955. The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, December 2, 1955.

- "Quitclaim Deed," Leo R. Roy to W & W Associates. The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, December 2, 1955, p. 5.
- "Industry Park Bldg. OKd / Natco Products Plans \$250,000 Norwood Plant," with architect's sketch. The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, December 2, 1955, p. 3.
- "Ground Broken For Industry Ctr.: Ceremonies Are Held At the 18-Acre Site Off Post Rd., Norwood," with photograph of the groundbreaking. The Providence Sunday Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Sunday, December 11, 1955, p. 54.
- "Factory, School Top New Construction" (building permit: Norwood Development Corp., 1396 Post Road, 45,000 square feet, \$100,000). The Providence Sunday Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Sunday, December 18, 1955, p. 127.
- "Norwood" (Natco aims to move in July; five of 22 acres; about 125 employees). The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Thursday, July 12, 1956, p. 20.
- "Woonsocket Retail Concern Leases Warwick Building" (Nyanza Co. leases the Natco plant; Natco moves to West Warwick). The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Thursday, November 24, 1960, p. 3.
- Warwick Zoning Board of Review, legal notice of the June 28, 1962 special session (Norwood Development Corp., Confreda, Alfred P. Roy, Wagner and Rocchio; Lots 97, 98 and a portion of 62). The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, June 22, 1962, p. 49.
- "Store Seeks Permit For Addition" (Nyanza Discount Department Store, 31,000 square feet added to 47,000; a house at the corner to be taken down). The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Monday, June 25, 1962, p. 3.

Obituaries

- Christopher D. Williams obituary. The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Friday, August 30, 1968, p. 38.
- Dora M. Roy obituary. Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Sarasota, Florida, Friday, September 18, 1978, p. 4A.
- Eugene E. Roy obituary. The Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, Tuesday, September 15, 1987, p. 8.
- Leo R. Roy obituary. The Providence Sunday Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Sunday, February 26, 1989, p. 42.
- Nathan Winer obituary. The Republican Union-News, Springfield, Massachusetts, Monday, December 26, 1994, p. 31.
- Alfred P. Roy obituary. The Providence Journal, Providence, Rhode Island, Wednesday, November 12, 2003, p. 101.

Other sources

- Notes on the partners and the family, including the 1952 Cranston City Directory entry for Nathan Winer (p. 319; Ancestry.com, U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995).
- Family research for the Roy and O'Neill relationship; Leo's address at 1380 Post Road and his new house at 3871 Post Road in 1963; Alfred's house at 12 Westcott Road, Scituate, in 1963; Josef Wagner's purchase of the tavern property in 1952 and the tavern's survival until 1976.
- Dates of the Warwick mayors, including Raymond E. Stone (1957–1960), from the List of Mayors of Warwick, Rhode Island (Wikipedia).
- A search of Rhode Island newspapers for "Norwood Industrial Center" and "Norwood Industrial Park," 1955–1965, turned up nothing beyond the clippings listed here from September 2026.