1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **MULLANY, KATE, HOUSE**

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 350 8th Street Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Troy Vicinity: N/A

State: NY County: Rensselaer Code: 083 Zip Code: 12180

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	___	buildings
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
1	0	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on APR 1 1996 by the Secretary of the Interior

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic Sub: Multiple Dwelling

Current: Domestic Sub: Multiple Dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Italianate

MATERIALS:
Foundation: Brick
Walls: Brick
Roof: Asphalt
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Kate Mullany House[1] is the southern half (#350) of a three-story brick double row house, both sides of which are identical, located at 350-352 Eighth Street, Troy, Rensselaer County, New York. The structure is typical in design and construction of most urban working class residential buildings of the mid-nineteenth century and it exemplifies the residential opportunities for the working class immigrants that built American industry and populated American cities. Except for the Quik Lube garage and the heavily traveled Hoosick Street immediately to the south, the neighborhood of the Mullany House retains much of the working class character of the 1860s and 1870s when Kate Mullany lived and worked there. The neighborhood is largely comprised of modest residences in brick and frame, with a mixture of single family and multiple unit dwellings. The Mullany House and its twin are among the most substantial domestic structures in the area.

The most distinguished feature of the double house is its ornate brick cornice, with alternating long and short dentilation forming a brick tasseled fringe along the roofline. The tassel-like brickwork is painted white, while the house is painted a deep slate blue. The front of the house has rectangularly shaped windows; three six-over-six windows on each of the second and third stories and two six-over-six windows on the first floor. All of the windows on the front of the house have stone lintels and stone sills and are framed with white wood trim. The front entrance is a simple six-paneled white door, topped by a plain transom light and stone lintel. Three concrete steps and an iron banister form the exterior entrance. The south side of the house has two full size segmental-arched six-over-six windows on the first floor, one full size segmental-arched six-over-six window and one three-quarter size arched six-over-six window on the second floor, and one full size arched one-over-one window and one one-quarter size arched single window on the third floor. All windows on the south side of the house have stone sills and partly concealed lintels, which appear to be made of wood. The rear of the Mullany side of the building has one rectangularly shaped one-over-one window at the third story level, an arched six-over-six window at the second story, and an arched one-over-one window at the first floor. All of the rear windows have thin stone sills, with only the windows at the first and second stories having lintels, which appear to be made of wood. Each side of the double house has a private back yard, enclosed by an unpainted wood picket fence.

The Mullany House and its twin have always been three-unit apartment buildings, with one family unit per floor. Census records indicate that the family/owner consistently occupied the top floor unit which was larger than the others (an extra bedroom extended into the stair hall space at the front of the building.) The floorplan is essentially unchanged with the stairhall and stairs (original stairs, rails, and newel post) located on the north side. Each unit has a separate entrance off of the interior stair hall on each floor. Inside the units are roughly one

[1]There is much variation in the spelling of the family surname. Kate's official death certificate, her mother's will, and Surrogate Court records use the spelling of "Mullaney", as have all of the historians of her life in their published research to date. State and federal census records of the family, as well as city directory listings, church records, cemetery records, and most of the obituaries in local newspapers, however, omit the "e". Based on this recently documented evidence, we have chosen to use the spelling of Mullany throughout this nomination.

room and the hall wide, with the 2-3 bedrooms. All three floors have the same living configuration with a living room at the front of the apartment and the kitchen to the rear behind the stair hall. The second and third floors have bedrooms in the back next to the balconies while the first floor has a bath in that location next to the patio. All three floors have a bedroom off of the kitchen/living room space to the south side of the apartment and the second and third floors have their bath off of the kitchen to the rear of this bedroom. (The floorplan labels this same space on the first floor as a laundry but it could have been used as another bedroom during its historic period making all three apartments have at least two bedrooms.) Modern bathrooms and kitchens have been added within the original plans. On the rear of the house, the second and third story units have partially enclosed wood balconies, each with a rear entrance and a single-hung sash window. The first floor unit has a partially enclosed porch and rear door.

If Kate Mullany were to return to 350 8th Street today, she would recognize her home as it retains almost all of its original exterior features and much of the original streetscape. Although most of the interior woodwork and finishes, deteriorated over time, were replaced in renovations in the early 1960s, she would be able to find her way through the existing configuration to her own family kitchen.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:___ Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B X C___ D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: 1, 2

NHL Theme(s): V: Developing the American Economy
5. labor organizations and protests

Areas of Significance: Social History
Other: Labor History

Period(s) of Significance: 1869-1906

Significant Dates: 1869

Significant Person(s): Mullany, Kate

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

NHL Comparative Categories: XXXI: Social and Humanitarian Movements
H. Labor Organization

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

The Kate Mullany House, located at 350 Eighth Street, Troy, New York, is nationally significant as the residence of one of America's leading female labor leaders, the young Irish immigrant laundry worker who organized and led the all-female Collar Laundry Union in Troy, New York, in the 1860s. Her Collar Laundry Union was recognized by male unionists of the time as the only bona fide female union in the country for its success in bargaining with laundry owners for worker objectives, as well as its active support of other working unions and labor activity. Organized in February 1864, the Collar Laundry Union was officially the first continuously organized women's trade union in the nation. The 500-member union enabled its members to maintain wages higher than those of most working women (and near wage parity with working men) of the time, and it accumulated a treasury larger than that of many men's locals. Their generosity to other striking unions and benefits to their own were nationally noted, as was a militancy unmatched by most male trade unionists.

Mullany achieved national recognition in 1868 when the National Labor Union convention commended her indefatigable efforts on behalf of female laborers and elected her second vice-president of the NLU. That action had to be annulled since the first vice-president was also from New York State, but the NLU president, William H. Sylvis, then appointed Mullany special assistant secretary to coordinate national efforts to form workingwomen's associations. This appointment was a significant milestone in the history of working women by making her the first female appointment to a national labor union office.

Like many working women in the nineteenth century, Mullany was a major source of her family's income. In the 1860s, she seems to have been the primary wage earner in a household that included a widowed mother and four siblings. The land on which 850 Eighth Street stands was purchased by Bridget Mullany, Kate's mother, in 1864, only six months after Kate Mullany and her fellow laundry workers organized the Collar Laundry Union and successfully struck for a 25% wage increase. The house, designed as an income-producing property, was completed and the family in residence by 1869, when the union once again went on a decisive strike against Troy's laundry owners. The collar manufacturers held firm and this strike eventually failed, but not before Kate Mullany and the laundry union had formed their own laundry cooperative and a cooperative to manufacture collars and cuffs.

The emergence of Mullany as a national leader in the labor movement came at a time when suffragists, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were becoming well established in the movement to gain the right to vote for women. While Mullany seems to have been more interested in women as workers with the right to be represented equally with men in the labor movement where they fought for shared worker issues, the leading suffragists focused on women bettering their lot by obtaining equal rights through the ballot. These differences provide a good historical perspective on the views of women at the time.

The acquisition of land and home ownership were primary goals for many immigrants, particularly the Irish, who also brought to this country a strong tradition of organized labor. The Kate Mullany House is emblematic of the stability and upward mobility made possible for workers by union activity, both the reward and the goal of all their actions.

The various known residences that Mullany occupied prior to this one and the Union Laundry Cooperative, located at the Union House block on Broadway Avenue in Troy, are no longer standing. Although the laundry facilities of the Union Cooperative continued under various laundry proprietors after the Union's downfall, the entire block was leveled and replaced by a parking garage in 1942. A careful review of the historical materials that are available turned up no particular laundry (with the exception of the Union Cooperative) linked to Kate Mullany. Because of the destruction of other relevant structures, 350 8th St. is the most appropriate choice for nomination.

HISTORY

Kate Mullany and her family immigrated to America from Ireland sometime before 1850, the year when Irish-born Kate turned 5 and her younger sister Ellen was born in New York State. The family first appeared in the Troy, New York city directory of 1852-53 with the listing of Dominick Mullony, laborer, then living at 61 North Third Street. In subsequent directories the surname was listed as "Mullany". The family moved frequently from 1852 -1868 but remained in the same central Troy neighborhood near to their church, St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church. In 1860 the family household consisted of the mother Bridget, 55, who peddled dry goods, Mary, 21, a seamstress, Catherine, 19, who "works out", and Bridget, 15, then still in school. Their father Dominick was still listed in the local directory at their address, but he was not living with the family. It is possible that as an unskilled laborer, he had moved elsewhere to find employment. He died sometime in 1864. A listing for Bridget Mullany, a widow, first appears in 1865 at 34 North 3rd Street. (The family is variously listed as living at 34 N. 1st, 34 N. 2nd, and 34 N. 3rd Streets in the years between 1861-1868.) (None of these buildings still stand.)

In September 1864, Bridget Mullany purchased the two lots on which the double rowhouse 350-352 Eighth Street stands, and by 1869 the family had moved into the top apartment of 350. A small cottage at 356 Eight Street was purchased in 1874. The double rowhouse was designed to be income-producing, with a rental unit on each floor and the family living in the larger top floor unit at 350 Eighth. At Bridget Mullany's death in 1876,
she willed the three houses to each of her three daughters. Catherine Agnes Mullany was given the premises and "the rents profits and income arising from the three story brick dwelling house and lot 25 by 100 ft No 350 on the east side of Eighth St Troy N.Y. during her lifetime." The U.S. Census of 1870 records six families in the double rowhouse at 350-352 Eighth Street. Kate Mullany, then 25 years old and a laundry worker, lived with her widowed mother Bridget, and an older sister Mary.[1] Members of the Mullany family were recorded as living

[1]The Federal Census of 1870 included three younger Mullanys in the household: Ellen, Alice and Frank, then ages 20, 16, and 10. These three are not listed, however, in any other census records of the Mullany households, nor in family wills or burial plots, and their exact relationships to Kate are still unknown. It is possible they were

there at various times until at least 1910, when Mary Mullany died at that address. The house at 350 8th Street continued to be Kate's residence off and on until her death in 1906.[2] Catherine Mullany Fogarty, by then a widow, was described in court records at the time of her death as "an aged woman engaged in no business" who "for a number of years past had lived upon her rents arising from said real property." The property was apparently mortgaged circa 1897-98 when the city sued for back taxes and assessments on the property. [Rensselaer County Deeds, 1897, 263/419 and 263/423.] The house is the only remaining structure associated with Kate Mullany during her period of leadership in the labor movement.

The admission of women into existing trade unions in the early 1860s was extremely limited. Of the thirty national trade unions existing at the time, only two, the printers and the cigar makers, were open to women.[3] Yet women made up one-quarter of the nonfarm labor force. In Lowell and elsewhere, women workers had successfully organized themselves in the 1840s to protest working conditions and win concessions from management, but these unions were often issue-specific, within a single factory, and only lasted as long as necessary to resolve the particular issue under debate. The Collar Laundry Union organized by Kate Mullany in 1864 was no different in its origins, but it continued to fight for union principles and actively supported labor causes beyond its own membership throughout the half-decade of its existence.

The Collar Laundry Union came into being in February 1864 largely as a result of Kate Mullany bringing together about two hundred of the collar laundry workers in Troy to protest low wages and the introduction of starching machines that were scalding hot to handle and cut prices for starching almost in half.[4] Laundry work had traditionally been one of the lowest-paying occupations for women. In the early 1860s Troy's laundry workers earned from two to three dollars a week, working twelve-to fourteen-hour days over washtubs and ironing tables in oppressive heat.[5] The Collar Laundry Union included washers, starchers and ironers, but was made up principally of ironers, the most highly skilled in the hierarchy of laundry workers. To understand the significance of the Collar Laundry Union, it is necessary to understand the pivotal role of their work in the overall process of manufacturing and marketing collars and cuffs.

The detachable shirt collar was first invented in Troy by Hannah Lord Montague, wife of Orlando Montague, a prosperous merchant and manufacturer of women's fine shoes. Tired of laundering her husband's shirts when only the collar needed cleaning, Mrs. Montague cut the

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cousins or perhaps just boarders mistakenly listed as family by the census taker.

[2]*Troy* (New York) *Record*, August 18, 1906. At some point Kate Mullany had married John Fogarty and her obituary was listed under "Fogarty."

[3]Susan Esterbrook Kennedy, *If All We Did Was to Weep at Home: A History of White Working-Class Women in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 5, 81.

[4]Philip S. Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement from Colonial Times to the Eve of World War I* (New York: The Free Press, 1979). p 124. Carole Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City: Gender, Class, and Community in Troy, New York, 1864-1866* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 112-13.

[5]Kennedy, *If All We Did Was to Weep at Home*, p. 80.

collars off and attached tapes to either end so that they could be washed, starched and ironed separately from the shirt. While Mrs. Montague was the first to create the detachable collar, it was the Reverend Ebenezer Brown, a retired Methodist minister and owner of a small dry goods store in Troy, who first made and sold the detachable collar in 1829. By 1834, Orlando Montague and his partner Austin Granger, had set up a business to manufacture detachable collars, as had Lyman Bennett. Other manufacturers soon followed. The nation's first commercial laundry was established in Troy in the 1830s to wash, starch, and iron products for local collar manufacturing firms.[6]

By the mid-nineteenth century, starched white shirts, collars, and cuffs had become the mainstay of the wardrobes of men from middle-class families involved in commercial occupations where personal appearance was an important ingredient in meeting the public. Thus the term "white collar worker" came into popular use. Detachable collars also created stylish variations for men and women to adapt a single shirt to the needs of different social occasions. The demand for these items increased to such an extent that by the 1860s Troy had become the producer of almost all of the nation's detachable collars and cuffs. Troy's shirt, collar, and cuff industry was seventh in capital investment of New York State's already vast clothing industry. The collar industry in Troy in the 1860s employed 3,700 women, almost half of Troy's female industrial workers, and was the single largest employer of women.[7] Thousands more women throughout the city and surrounding countryside worked in their own homes, hand-stitching and turning collars delivered daily on the "collar express." Fifteen collar manufacturers employed female machine operators in factories ranging in size from 25-550 employees, while the fourteen collar laundries operating in Troy at the same time employed only about six hundred women who worked in small shops in groups of 10-20.

Laundering was an essential part of the manufacturing process for shirts, blouses, and detachable collars and cuffs. This was especially true of collars and cuffs, easily soiled in manufacturing by the many processes done by hand, as well as by travel back and forth from home sewers. Washing, starching, and ironing these items after they were manufactured and before they were distributed were just as important as making them. The laundering process was quite involved: washing with soap; bleaching with chloride of soda; adding dilute of sulfuric acid to further bleach the collars; and again washing in suds; boiling; rubbing and rinsing; bluing and rolling; starching (with thin starch to be followed by a thick starch); drying; and finally ironing.[8] There was a great deal of interdependence among the laundry workers. Starchers, for example, could not properly starch the garment unless it had been thoroughly cleaned and ironers depended on starchers to apply the correct kind of starch as well as the right amount. Ironing was the most skilled process, requiring a knowledge of techniques, materials, and a combination of physical strength, endurance and manual dexterity.[9] An 1865 description of Troy laundry work vividly depicts the women standing

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[6]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, pp. 19-21.

[7]*Ibid*, pp. 21, 28, 43.

[8]Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, p. 1213.

[9]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, pp. 45, 51.

"over the washtub and over the ironing table with furnaces on either side, the thermometer averaging 100 degrees, for wages averaging $2.00 and $3.00 a week," for twelve to fourteen hour days.

Since ironing was the last stage in the manufacturing/laundering process before the goods were inspected, stamped with a style name, and packed in boxes by the dozen for shipping, the work of the ironers was regarded as the most crucial to producing a good product and the ironers were in a strategic position to control the availability of the finished product. Much of how the finished product looked when it reached the market depended upon the skill of the ironers, who had to use the appropriate amount of heat and pressure to produce and apply finishing touches to determine the final shape and style of the garment.[10] Laundry owners recognized the importance of the ironers by the wages they paid the respective laundry workers: washers earned the least, starchers earned somewhat more, and the ironers were paid wages which were considerably higher than that received by factory workers and public laundry workers.[11] Of all of the laundry workers, the ironers were in the best position to bargain with the laundry owners when labor issues arose.

When the Collar Laundry Union was formed in Troy, it was the ironers who took the initiative for they were predominant in the membership. The first demonstration of the strength of the new union came with a strike by all of the laundry workers against the city's fourteen commercial laundry establishments during late February 1864, at the busiest season for the industry. While the introduction of a new starching machine was one item of contention, the principal demand was for a twenty-five percent increase in wages. Up to this time, laundry work had been among the lowest paid jobs. One of the officers of the new union, Esther Keegan, reflecting on pre-union days, commented that when the Civil War broke out a week's wages could only buy a pair of shoes, and when the workers asked for higher wages, they were not listened to. Things changed with the union, however. When they struck in 1864 for a twenty-five percent increase, the laundry owners capitulated, giving the laundresses what they wanted in less than a week after they left their shops.[12]

The Collar Laundry Union credited Troy's Iron Molders' Union No. 2 with providing the inspiration for them to form a union and to strike for better wages. By the 1860s the iron and collar industries dominated the local economy. Troy's iron industry was a nationally important producer of both iron and iron products and employed approximately 2,000 men, a considerable proportion (17%) of the city's working class men. Collar laundering and iron work offered particularly attractive opportunities to Troy's Irish immigrants as relatively new, expanding industries with open access to employment and advancement. Iron molding, like commercial laundering, combined difficult physical labor at high temperatures, dangerously heavy implements, and potentially harmful substances with the advantages of relatively steady, well-paying industrial work making important, highly visible products. Iron molders and

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[10]*Ibid*, p. 28.

[11]*Ibid*, p. 52.

[12]*Ibid*, pp. 107-09.

laundry ironers held the most highly skilled positions within their field, both requiring long apprenticeships to learn the skills, endurance, and manual dexterity required. In Troy, most of the collar laundresses and iron molders were Irish immigrants. Their expertise was reflected in their earnings and their high status within the Irish working class community. The Iron Molders' Union No. 2 was the center of Troy's active labor movement in the 1860s. Founded on May 1, 1858, the local was the second to join the Iron Molder's International Union and Trojans were among the most prominent trade unionists in that major national union. The IMIU helped shape the strategies and policies of other unions, as well as the National Labor Union, the first national labor organization which met annually from 1868 to 1875. Early in February 1864, the Trojan molders successfully struck foundry owners for a 15% pay increase. Their example was emulated by Trojan laundry workers later that same month.

The Collar Laundry Union showed its appreciation to the molders at a picnic celebrating working class unity on July 18, 1864. Four thousand working people witnessed the Collar Laundry Union's presentation of an elaborately embroidered full-color banner with a picture of the interior of a furnace in full blast on one side and a picture of "Justice" surmounted by an eagle on the other side, along with ribbons bearing the inscription: "Presented by the Collar Laundry Union of Troy, to the Iron Molders' Association." Decorated with symbols of the common goals and values that the two unions held, the banner and its presentation were public statements of the Collar Laundry Union's legitimate and prominent place in Troy's well-organized labor movement, and its close alliance, based on mutual respect and reciprocity, with the city's most prominent male trade union.[13]

The strong alliance with the Iron Molders Union would become even stronger over the next few years, especially in April 1866, when the Collar Laundry Union donated the amazing amount of $1,000 to the molders after they had been locked out by the iron founders of Troy as a result of a labor dispute. By this time, the Collar Union had succeeded in raising their own wages to $8 to $14 per week, although they still worked 12-14 hour days. The contribution by the Collar Laundry Union received favorable attention in the press and brought them recognition from the Troy Trades' Assembly, who invited them to become affiliated and added a section of books relating to women to its Labor Free Library and Reading Room.[14] The lockout of the iron molders escalated into Troy's largest and most protracted labor dispute, with national attention. William H. Sylvis, the Philadelphia iron molder who transformed the Iron Molders' International Union into the largest and most effective trade union of the period after he became president in 1863, rallied national union support for the Trojan iron molders.[15] Sylvis was long acquainted with Troy. He had spoken at the "great picnic of the Troy Trades' Assembly to raise money for the library and reading room" in August 1864, crediting working women with the success of that library and reading room. He went on to say that he "hoped thereby to convince the 'old fogies' in other cities to begin

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[13]*Ibid*, p. 1.

[14]Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, p. 124.

[15]*Ibid*, p. 124.

making common cause with working women."[16] A special friend of Kate Mullany, Sylvis was one of the earliest supporters of women's trade unions.

Sylvis had the opportunity to further the cause of working women when he called a congress of national labor leaders to meet in Baltimore on August 26, 1866. The National Labor Union grew out of this meeting, part of Sylvis' dream to have a nationwide association that would represent all workers, including women.[17] At the National Labor Union congress in New York City in September 1868, Sylvis was chosen president. With Sylvis at its head, "this new organization for the first time created a national labor leadership" for he was the "first truly national labor leader in the United States." As president of the Iron Molders' International Union, Sylvis had traveled the country urging iron molders to organize, and in doing so had "made himself a true spokesman for labor, and his words commanded attention and respect." So highly regarded was he that the *New York Sun's* account of his selection as NLU president noted that his name was as "familiar as a household word."[18]

Knowing the high esteem in which Sylvis was held, the action that the members of the National Labor Union took in September 1868, electing Kate Mullany to a position of leadership, makes her selection that much more important. She was initially elected to be second vice president, but that action had to be annulled because the first vice president was from New York and it was not considered appropriate to have two vice presidents from the same state. Delegates to the congress praised Mullany for "having shown great business ability in organizing and rendering prosperous the establishment of which she is head," and for the Collar Laundry Union's recent contribution of $500 to sustain the New York City bricklayers' strike.[19]

Sylvis instead appointed Mullany assistant secretary, responsible for corresponding with working women and coordinating national efforts to form working women's associations. In his closing remarks, Sylvis told his colleagues: "We now have a recognized officer from the female side of the house--one of the smartest and most energetic women in America; and from the great work which she has already done, I think it not unlikely that we may in the future have delegates representing 300,000 working women." Women delegates attending the congress were impressed on two counts: first, that they were allowed to attend as delegates, and second, because the appointment of Mullany to organize working women proved that "the recognition of woman [was] to be future policy of the National Labor Congress."[20] Mullany's

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[16]*Ibid*, p. 126, Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, p. 112.

[17]Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, p. 125; Paul S. Boyer, et. al. *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1990), pp. 629-30.

[18]Foster Rhea Dulles and Melvyn Dubofsky, *Labor in America: A History* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 4th edition, 1984), pp. 95-100.

[19]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, p. 113.

[20]Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, p. 134.

appointment was a milestone in the history of working women; "she was the first female appointment to a national labor union office."[21]

The selection of Kate Mullany to an important position within the National Labor Union reflected Sylvis' opinion about the presence of women in the labor market. Women were in the industrial life to stay, he said, and "if the wage standards of the mechanics were to be defended, all women workers ... had to be organized into unions and their wage standards equalized with those of men." He argued that if labor were to achieve its goals, it was necessary for working women to be included: "How can we hope to reach the social elevation for which we all aim without making women the companion of our advancement?" Commitment on the part of the National Labor Union to work toward achieving those goals was demonstrated by the report of the Committee on Female Labor which was adopted by the 1868 National Labor Congress. That report urged the extension of eight-hour demands to women workers, equal pay for equal work, and trade unions for working women. It also encouraged women "to learn trades, engage in business, join our labor unions, or form protective unions of their own." In adopting this report, the National Labor Union became "the first labor federation in world history to vote for equal pay for equal work."[22] It was obvious that Sylvis saw in Kate Mullany someone who could do much to advance the goals of the National Labor Union and working women in America.

Mullany used her Collar Laundry Union to financially assist other unions, such as the Iron Molders' Union in Troy and the Bricklayers' Union in New York City, and to help in the organization of women. The union was able to do this because it had accumulated a treasury larger than that of most men's locals. At the time of the bricklayers' strike in September 1868, Mullany praised the "ladies connected with the laundry union who were just as competent as gentlemen." When a reporter from the New York Sun interviewed Kate Mullany in September 1868, he suggested that the organization of working women in New York City lagged because women weren't capable of being officers in trade union. Mullany defended women's leadership abilities, responding that "there are numbers of ladies connected with the laundry union who were just as competent as any gentlemen." She then offered to send Trojan women to New York and to pay their expenses in training local women as trade unionists.[23] It was this sort of response that led to the national recognition of Mullany's unionizing abilities, and her subsequent election as National Labor Union vice-president.

As already noted, male unionists cited the Collar Laundry Union as an example of self-sufficiency that should be used as a model for other women in organizing. Alexander

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[21]Charles P. Neill, *Women and Child Wage-Earners in the United States*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1911), vol. 10; *History of Women in Trade Unions*, by W.D.P. Bliss and John B. Andrews, 107. as cited in Page Putnam Miller et. al., "Draft, National Historic Landmark Nomination, Mullaney, Kate, House," Section 8, p. 3.

[22]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, p. 113; Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, p. 133; Kennedy, *If All We Did Was to Weep at Home*, p. 85.

[23]Turbin in Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, *Women of America: A History*, (New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979), pp. 210.

Troup of New York City's typographers recommended that the women compositors organize, using as an example "the great power of the Troy Collar Union .... When they strike they compel the manufacturers to accede to them." On October 8, 1868, less than two weeks from the time Troup made this suggestion, the Women's Typographical Union No. 1 was formed under the leadership of Augusta Lewis.[24] Particularly impressive was the fact that by the beginning of 1866 the Collar Laundry Union had succeeded in increasing their wages from $2-3 a week to $8-12 or occasionally to fourteen dollars a week, an amount that was higher than most working women and almost on parity with some men's wages.[25] By the time of Mullany's selection as an officer in the National Labor Union, the Collar Laundry Union had grown to over five hundred members.

Until 1869 Mullany and her union were successful in getting the laundry operators to meet their demands, especially for wage increases, because of the strategic position the ironers held in the laundering process. As the last people to work on the garments before they were prepared for marketing, ironers were able to apply coercive tactics like withholding their labor. Since the individual laundry owners ran relatively small operations without a lot of capital to sustain them if they were not producing for the manufacturers, they gave in to the laundresses' demands by raising the price they charged the manufacturers. It was different in 1869, however. When the Collar Laundry Union went on strike on May 28, asking for higher wages, proprietors refused the union's demand. This time, the collar manufacturers took the initiative, forming an association to further their business interests and combining with the laundry proprietors to kill the union. The manufacturers insisted that laundry owners unite with them against the union rather than dealing with employees' demands in the usual way by asking manufacturers to absorb increases. The manufacturers pressured laundry owners into holding out indefinitely against the union by refusing to send new collars and cuffs to any laundry employing union ironers. Collar manufacturers also helped laundry owners obtain a new non-union workforce by helping to recruit and train new workers.[26]

All parties to the dispute continued to hold out despite hardships because the stakes were high. For workers it was a test of their union's ability to survive; for the manufacturers and laundry owners it was a question of living with reduced production. The ironers were determined not to return to work without their union's protection. As union official Esther Keegan addressed the New York State Workingmen's Assembly in July 1869: "Since the union protected their rights as workers for six years, they were 'not willing to go back into that state of slavery in which they were six years ago.'" Assuming that the working men shared with laundresses an understanding of trade unionism, Keegan told her listeners: "You know what a union is; you know full well the value of cooperation." Expressing pride in her union's determination and unity, Keegan eloquently continued: "We have been out of money six weeks and but two of our number have given in.... I fancy but there are few men's organizations that can show such a record, and we are nothing but women." Their unity was the "mother of success" and the

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[24]Kennedy, *If All We Did Was to Weep at Home*, p. 86.

[25]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, p. 114.

[26]*Ibid*, p. 158.

Collar Laundry Union's success was the "mother of their commitment to trade unionism." Keegan's reference to the laundresses as "nothing but women" suggests that "collar laundresses considered themselves to be not only freeborn women with equal rights but also working-class women who were subordinate" yet men's equals as trade unionists. While "identifying themselves squarely within the labor movement, collar laundresses were concerned with women's issues that were directly related to working-class families' daily life and economic goals, not with rights or identities shared by all women."[27]

Clearly, the objectives of suffragists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and those of women trade unionists, particularly Kate Mullany and Esther Keegan, were not the same. This was made plain to Mullany during a visit she made with Keegan in July 1869 to the Working Women's Association, founded by Stanton and Anthony. Mullany and Keegan visited the New York City office of the association hoping to secure badly needed funds to support the strike, but as Mullany observed, "they were not the working-women whom she had been accustomed to see. She had to work all day in the shop, and this she did not think, judging from their appearance, they did." The association responded in a lukewarm manner with a thirty dollar donation to the laundresses of Troy. The level of the association's contribution suggested to Mullany that the interests of Stanton's and Anthony's Working Women's Association were much more with women gaining the right to vote than with advancing the cause of working women.[28]

While the Working Women's Association's contribution to the Collar Laundry Union's strike fund was less than expected, almost every union in New York City responded generously.[29] Back in Troy there was also widespread support. Most noteworthy was the contribution of the molders, who resolved only a few days after the strike began: "We will to a man support our fellow workingwomen who are now struggling for their just dues and independence. Our hand is in theirs and the purse in it." The molders agreed to open Molders' Hall to the ironers' meetings and to donate $500 per week to the ironers "as long as the strike shall last." In late July there was a picnic, at which five to six thousand people donated $1,200 to assist the ironers. At the picnic, local labor leader Dugald Campbell read a letter from William Sylvis in which the president of the National Labor Union praised "the Troy Girls for working hard, doing what they could in a practical way to work out their own salvation." Continuing his praise, Sylvis noted, "They have acted out the old saying, 'Who would be free must themselves strike the [first] blow.'"[30] A few days after this letter of support was read, Sylvis died after a short and sudden illness. The labor movement had lost a great leader and the National Labor Union never recovered from his death. Kate Mullany and the Collar Laundry Union had also lost a great friend, and never at a more inopportune time. In the ensuing tailspin in NLU headquarters, union financial aid was temporarily suspended.

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[27]Ibid, pp. 124-127.

[28]Ibid. pp. 142-43.

[29]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, p.162.

[30]*Ibid*, p. 162.

Although contributions continued to come in ($4,510 had been received by September 1869) Kate Mullany and her fellow officers decided to have the union establish its own cooperative laundry. This proved unsuccessful when local manufacturers prevented out-of-town collar makers from supplying the cooperative with newly made collars. The next entrepreneurial endeavor was to start a cooperative collar and cuff factory of their own. Establishing such a cooperative was proposed by Mullany as a means of allowing wage earners to escape the wage system by becoming small entrepreneurs.[31] Also, it was very much in keeping with the trade unionists' belief that a cooperative allowed its operators to benefit directly from their own labor, thereby eventually eliminating the wage system, considered to be at the core of workers' difficulties.[32]

Plans for the cooperative were announced by union vice president Keegan in her July 3 presentation to the New York Workingmen's Assembly: "We are determined as the last resort to buy the materials and manufacture for ourselves, and put the union label upon our work; and we look confidently to you that you will not buy a collar or a shirt that does not have the union brand on it." Keegan was confident that "every Union man" would buy their "work, and also every fair man in the country."[33] Keegan's presentation won for the union the unqualified support of William Jessup, the assembly's president, whose job was to investigate conflicts to determine those worthy of contributions. During 1868-69, only two conflicts in New York State qualified: the ironers' strike and the New York City bricklayers' strike. The assembly's support included the issuance of a circular explaining the cause of the strike and asking for broader support: "Workingmen, will you stand idly by and see this without lending a hand to their support? This is the first time in the annals of our history that you have been appealed to for aid and support in behalf of a female labor organization." Jessup explained that the ironers' strike was an effort for them to maintain their right to protect themselves from employers and manufacturers who were trying to destroy the union by starving its members into subjection to accept the employers' terms. He went on to point out that the Collar Laundry Union shared trade unionists' goal of avoiding coercive strategies like strikes in favor of producers' cooperatives. The collar laundresses were taking the "higher step" of attaining self-sufficiency by establishing a producers' cooperative. "The object is feasible," he said, so "let us all contribute with a willing heart and an open hand."[34]

The cooperative collar and cuff factory was formed with Kate Mullany as president and Dugald Campbell, one of the founders of the iron molders' cooperative of Troy and one of the most ardent supporters of the laundresses, as the first agent. He encouraged prospective investors to purchase shares of stock and located retailers who would market the cooperative's product. Things looked promising for the cooperative when "the merchant prince of New

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[31]Ibid., p. 143.

[32]Ibid., p. 163.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., pp. 121-22.

York, A.T. Stewart," agreed "to take all the goods manufactured by the laundry girls' cooperative and place them immediately on the market."[35]

Despite the ironers' strong determination to save their union and the generous support of the labor movement, the manufacturers and laundry owners eventually won the battle. The union was dissolved in early September 1869 and, with the exception of the leaders who were refused employment, ironers went back to work at the old wages.[36] The cooperative collar factory and laundry continued in existence, however, until at least the spring of 1870, and possibly until 1872.[37]

Susan B. Anthony had the opportunity to see the cooperative in operation during a visit in February 1870 with Kate Mullany and three of her associates (most likely Ann Tellers, formerly the union's secretary, Sarah McQuillan, former treasurer, and Esther Keegan, former vice president.) This appears to have been Mullany's first meeting with Anthony, since Anthony was away on a speaking engagement when Mullany and Keegan had visited the Workingwomen's Association in New York in the summer of 1869. Although Mullany and Anthony disagreed on matters pertaining to the suffragist movement as they related to working women's rights, Anthony expressed considerable appreciation for the work Mullany and her associates had done while the union was active, calling the union the best organized women's union she had known. She was equally complimentary of what Mullany was trying to do with the cooperative. Describing Mullany as a "bright young Irish girl," Anthony reported on her visit to Troy in a speech at Cooper Institute in New York City. Mullany and "several other young Irish women," were working in "an upper room of a large building," and were dressed in "the simplest calico." Although they earned "barely enough to cover their rent...they were trying to establish the fact, that women can be employers." Anthony expressed deep sympathy for "this working-women's venture." "I have not had my heart [so] stirred for long years with the terrible fact of the struggle that women have to get a place and position beside men in business, as by the story and efforts of these three girls." On questioning, Mullany attributed the failure of the strike not to the laundresses' gender but to their inability as workers to control the middle class press, which allied itself with the employers. Anthony concluded nevertheless that "If those collar laundry women had been voters, they would have held, in that little city of Troy, the 'balance of political power'.... The condition of those collar laundry women but represents the utter helplessness of disenfranchisement."[38]

In considering how Mullany related to suffragists such as Anthony, one needs to keep in mind that Mullany identified primarily as a worker rather than a woman, and the interests she shared with suffragists "were related less to what they had in common as women, than to trade

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[35]Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, p. 156.

[36]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, p. 163.

[37]Miller, "Draft National Historic Landmark Nomination Kate Mullaney House, Section 8, p. 4.

[38]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, pp. 143-144.

unionists' and some suffragists' shared concerns about wage earners."[39] Mullany kept in touch with suffragists who agreed with trade unionists that "women wage earners could escape wage slavery by transforming themselves into small entrepreneurs who were not dependent on wages for their livelihood." She wrote to Anthony's publication, *The Revolution*, in April 1870, to report on the cooperative factory, saying that the "girls" hoped "to proceed on a purely business basis, by doing the work...themselves," and that they planned to "buy up all the stock." The "girls," she reported, had made good progress in securing the needed capital, $10,000. Additional support for the cooperative was given by the newly formed Workingwomen's State Labor Union of New York, who commended "our working girls of Troy" and pledged to do all they could to help "both in subscribing for stock in their enterprise and advocating the sale of their goods, which we believe to be the best and cheapest manufactured."

That same month, *The Workingman's Advocate* reported that Alexander Troup of the typographers' union in New York City, had gone "to Troy to reside" to "devote himself to the interests of the women's cooperative." Since this represented a major change for Troup, it is believed that he and Mullany fully expected the cooperative to continue for some time. The 1870 city directory for Troy lists the cooperative as "Union Co-operative Collar Manuf., Union House block, Broadway." (The building no longer stands.) The directory also lists Alexander Troup as superintendent and Kate Mullany as a cooperative collar manufacturer. No further listings of the factory exist in directories, and the exact date of the closing of the cooperative is not known.[40] It, like the National Labor Union, certainly did not survive the national panic of 1873 and probably closed before then.

Little definitive information is known about Kate Mullany's life after 1870, the only time she is mentioned in the city directories with that name. Because she was a union officer, she had long been thought to have been "blackballed" by local laundries and unable to obtain employment after 1872. Interestingly, the New York State census of 1875 does seem to indicate that Kate was still in Troy working as a laundress in that year, but by 1880 she was no longer living with her sisters.[41]

Kate Mullany married John Fogarty sometime after 1882 and seems to have remained in the Troy area. In 1903 Catherine (Kate) Fogarty moved back to 350 Eighth Street to live with her sister Mary Mullaney. Catharine Fogarty "widow of John" first appears in Troy directories in 1903 and is listed annually at 350 8th street until her death is noted in 1906. Catherine Mullany Fogarty died at 350 8th Street at the age of 65, on August 17, 1906. Interestingly, the property at 350-352 Eighth Street is noted in deed records in 1897 as being last taxed or assessed to Mary

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[39]*Ibid*, p. 143.

[40]*Ibid*, pp. 164, 170.

[41]A Mullany daughter of Kate's age and occupation is listed by a census enumerator as "Bridget", while the true sister Bridget, by then married to John McMahon, is also listed in a separate household at the same address. Bridget McMahon's married name was rewritten by the enumerator over his first entry of "Bridget Mullany". (New York State Census, 1875, 10th Ward, p.1.)

E. Mullany and "Catherine A. Mullany," a full name for a formal document that could have been shortened among family to "Kate."

Although Kate Mullany and members of the Collar Laundry Union had to dissolve the union after their unsuccessful three months strike in the summer of 1869, the militant spirit that characterized the union of the 1860s was not totally extinguished. Union organization all over America declined significantly during the economic depressions of the 1870s, but increased again in the following decade. In the spring of 1886 the collar laundresses of Troy, some of them veterans of the earlier Collar Laundry Union, formed the four-thousand member Joan of Arc Assembly of the Knights of Labor. It was the largest of Troy's thirty-eight Knights of Labor locals, and the largest assembly of women knights in the nation.[42] Troy's collar laundresses were again a significant part of the national labor movement. Their long but ultimately unsuccessful strike in 1886 was closely tied with the story of the influence and decline of the national Knights of Labor movement, as were later affiliations and activities by collar women of Troy in AFL-affiliated locals.

A last nationally-publicized strike was organized by Trojan collar starchers in 1905 with the support of the local Central Labor Federation and Iron Worker's Union, the Women's Trade Union League of New York City, Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and the International Shirt, Waist, and Laundry Workers Union. The ten-month strike was a failure, however, in the face of a united Collar Manufacturers Association, the opposition of the local press, and the lack of support from other collar workers. By 1906 labor unions had ceased to exist in the largely female work force of the collar industry.

Research has yet to confirm, but it seems quite possible that Kate Mullany continued to be active in organizing local women workers throughout her lifetime. Her death certificate lists her occupation as that of starcher, and one of the most prominent floral tributes at her funeral in 1906 was sent by members of Starchers Union No. 2 [43] In addition, at least two of the leaders of that starchers' strike, Rose Byron and Katie Fitzgerald, lived less than one block away on Ninth Street.

As the leader and organizer of Troy's first successful "bonafide" women's union, Kate Mullany was directly responsible for this strong tradition of women's union activity. Augusta Lewis, president of the Women's Typographical Union No. 1, travelled with Mullany on her fundraising trip to New York City in the summer of 1869. Biographical information strongly suggests that she was the author of a widely reprinted article in the New York Sun, July 5, 1869, by "A Working Woman." In that article she called the Troy Collar Laundry Union "a real working women's association", which acted to free itself rather than theorized. She pointed to the union as a national example of working women uniting for a common cause. "Others will be encouraged by their success, and be stimulated by their example to see to elevate their own

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[42]Turbin, *Working Women of Collar City*, p. 3; Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, p. 207.

[43]*Troy Record*, August 21, 1906, p. 8; *Troy* (New York) *Times*, August 20, 1906.

condition, as the female cap makers of this city are now doing. ... In thus elevating one class of workingwomen, the good results will be felt by every other...."[44]

Her recognition on a national level for the accomplishments of the Troy Collar Laundry Union, as well as the position she held in her own right as the National Labor Union's first female assistant secretary, mark Kate Mullany as one of early American labor history's most important women. Her home at 350 Eighth Street, Troy, New York, the only surviving structure associated with her life and the physical embodiment of the true meaning of union activities, is truly deserving of National Historic Landmark status.

[44]Turbin in Berkin/Norton, *Women of America: A History*, pp. 221-222.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):
___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre.

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	607900	4732560

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property comprises the southern half of lot 30 in block 5, section 101.23, in the City of Troy, Rensselaer County, New York.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the southern half of lot 30 in block 5, section 101.23, that was historically used off and on by labor leader, Kate Mullany, her mother, three sisters, and one brother from 1869 until at least 1910. This is the only extant residence of this nationally significant labor leader and her place of residence during her period of nationally significant leadership in the labor movement.

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