The Spindles Stop: Lowell, Massachusetts, and Manchester, New Hampshire, Respond to the Collapse of the New England Textile Industry

by

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Submitted to the Doctoral Program in the History and Social Study of Science and Technology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the History of Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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ABSTRACT

In the decades before the Civil War, Boston investors created a series of textile-manufacturing cities along the middle reaches of the Merrimack River, including two cities devoted to the production of cotton cloth, Lowell, Mass., and Manchester, N.H. By the turn of the century, the burgeoning cotton industry of the South provided stiff competition to these two cotton textile centers. Early 20th century victories of labor unions and of Progressive candidates gave the two mill towns the promise of increased local control over their futures, but this hope was dashed in the middle 1920s. In those years, Southern competition closed factories in Lowell and put at hazard the great Amoskeag mill complex in Manchester. During the Great Depression, Lowell's industry remained largely in outsiders' hands, and its local leadership lacked unity. In contrast, Manchester leaders joined together after the Amoskeag complex closed in 1936 to ensure the massive mill properties were disposed off with the interests of the city in mind. This tradition of cooperation served Manchester well in the post-WWII decades, when the city proved able to take advantage of the high tech industry's expansion into the Merrimack Valley. By the 1970s private and public sectors in Lowell had learned how to work together, and that city also entered a new economic era.

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Merritt Roe Smith

Title: Cutten Professor of History of Technology
Dedicated to my parents, and to Elisabeth Lessard, Grande Dame of the Manchester Historic Association Library.
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INTRODUCTION

From 1979 to 1982, I taught at a small Jesuit college in the Upper Ohio Valley, a region long noted for its steelmaking. I found myself a close observer of the near-collapse of the regional steel industry, and of the havoc wreaked among Upper Ohio communities by the loss of their industrial base. Strangely, a sense of déjà vu came over me: strange because I had not personally observed a case of deindustrialization before. Then the explanation came to me. What I had experienced was my Massachusetts-born parents telling me of their childhood memories of the cruel years of the 20s and 30s in communities along New England’s Merrimack River when the local textile mills went out of business.

The linkages my psyche had made between the experience of the Upper Ohio Valley of the late 1970s and the Merrimack River after the mid-1920s was also made in the minds of chroniclers of the downfall of steel. Searching for a parallel for the death of the steel regime around Pittsburgh detailed in his And the Wolf Finally Came, Business Week labor editor John Hoerr turned to the decline of the textile regime along the Merrimack River from the 1920s to the 1950s.¹

Indeed, the comparison in many ways is apt. Enormous, rationally-integrated steelmaking mills erected by associates and imitators of Andrew Carnegie in the late 19th and early 20th century drew a steady flow of workers to communities along the Monongahela River and shaped a way of life for the region. Similarly, a network of huge, integrated textile mills created by Boston investors in the first half of the 19th century enticed workers from New England farms and Canada and Europe to populate cities along the Merrimack River. These cities themselves were planned and controlled by the Boston investors. As thousands upon thousands of steelworkers were thrown out of their jobs in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Monongahela industrial corridor replicated the Merrimack corridor’s earlier experience of the end of an industrial culture. The Merrimack experience thus serves as a sort of original model of massive American deindustrialization, the model of what

¹John P. Hoerr, And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988).
happens when dominant technological regimes decline and fall in the U.S.A.

Hoerr admits differences between the story of steel's collapse and the Merrimack model. The major portion of the steel regime collapsed within a five year period, and few new manufacturing jobs sprang up to replace the ones lost. In contrast, Hoerr sums up the Merrimack story as the "slow dying of one technology and the simultaneous growth of another."\(^2\) Hoerr indicates that over a fifty-year timespan, lost textile - and, it should be added, shoe - manufacturing jobs along the Merrimack were largely replaced by new opportunities in high tech industries. For Hoerr, the Merrimack model of deindustrialization is one of replacement of technological regimes.

This textile-to-high tech summation of the Merrimack story is often heard today, and it is certainly adequate for Hoerr's purposes (he merely wants to sketch a comparison, after all). However, its intimation of a happy outcome for those involved in the death of the textile regime scarcely does justice to the varied experiences of Merrimack communities during the mid-20th century. For those communities which did climb out of the depression caused by the decline of the New England textile industry, the routes out of chronic unemployment and dependence on low-wage industry were normally long and painful. They varied as the development of the Merrimack textile towns varied.

In the early 19th century, four cities - Lowell and Lawrence in Massachusetts, and Nashua and Manchester in New Hampshire - had been created, or redesigned, by the Boston Associates as settings for their textile mills.\(^3\) Over time, different towns focused on the production of different textile commodities. Lawrence's mills concentrated on woolen goods, while those of Nashua produced several specialized product lines, including blankets. Until the crisis of the 1920s, both Lowell and Manchester mills largely concentrated upon producing massive runs of staple cotton textiles. Differences between the characteristic products of different towns were reflected in differences between the course of decline in different towns. Nashua's crisis in textile manufacture occurred in the late 1940s. The wool

\(^2\) *ibid.*, p. 12.

\(^3\) Vera Shlakman coined this term to describe the network of Boston investors, interrelated by business and family ties, who created the Waltham/Lowell system of mills in the first half of the 19th century. See her *Economic History of a Factory Town: A Study of Chicopee, Massachusetts* (New York: Octagon, 1935).
industry of Lawrence declined slowly for decades and then collapsed in the 1950s. In the cases of Lowell and Manchester, the history of the decline of their textile manufacturing follows a parallel course: increasing collapse beginning in the 1920s ending in near extinction in the 1960s.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the differences in fortune among these four Merrimack cities had become stark. Nashua and Manchester by the late 1960s formed two apexes of the "Golden Triangle" of southern New Hampshire, exemplars of the prosperity engendered by the new electronics and computer industries. On the other hand, by the 1960s the two Massachusetts cities possessed high levels of unemployment and "corroded and outmoded" physical plants. Lawrence and Lowell were characterized by empty factory buildings along the incredibly polluted Merrimack. A disgusted resident of Lowell interviewed in 1974 described his city as "the only cemetery with electric lights."

However, right then, in the middle 1970s, Lowell's economy began to improve. By 1984, a new economic regime relying on high tech and services had lowered Lowell unemployment to 4.3%. Fifteen years after the economy of its sister city Manchester had diversified its economic base and had regained its health, Lowell seemed to have reached a similar epoch of high employment and an economic base diversified away from non-durable manufacturing.

For those unwilling to accept the fall and rise of industrial regimes as forordained results of the "perennial

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6The term is borrowed from political scientist Harvey Boulay, who included Lowell and Lawrence in his study The Twilight Cities: Political Conflict, Development, and Decay in Five Communities (Port Washington, N.Y.: Associated Faculty Press, 1983), examining public controversy in five old New England industrial cities between 1969 and 1979.
8In marked contrast to the experience of Lawrence.
gale of creative destruction" engendered by capitalism
local variations within the history of a region's
deindustrialization and reindustrialization prove of
interest. Perhaps the variations will reveal ways of
retarding the loss of the old industry, or of mitigating the
effects of that loss, or of expediting the arrival of a
replacement industry.

This dissertation will examine in some detail the
history of the two Merrimack cotton manufacturing centers of
Lowell and Manchester from the 19th century to the 1980s.
The history of the declines of Lowell and Manchester
comprises a large part of the history of the dissolution of
the textile regime along the Merrimack Corridor, a classic
case of deindustrialization in America, the full history of
which has yet to be written. The stories of responses to
economic decline in each city show differences which have
lessons for those communities facing plant shutdowns today.
These lessons concern effective civic patriotism and the
advantages geographical position can give a city in an
economic region when that region's economic base
deteriorates.

Geographic position is a given, but members of a
community can choose to do something about cooperating for
their homeplace's economic development. Scholars studying
Lowell's experience during the 1970s fasten upon networking
among public and private groups as crucial to the revival of
Lowell and other "rust belt" cities. They point to the

10Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and
p. 84.

11Anthony Giddens comments on "globalisation," the
vulnerability, so evident today, of localities to decisions
made far away not by any means preventing efforts towards
local development and self-determination by the members of
particular communities. See his The Consequences of
Modernity (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1990),
pp. 64-65. David Harvey analyzes the complicated mix of
actors and motivations involved in such efforts on behalf of
a community's economic betterment in the long, densely-
written Chapter 6, "The Place of Urban Politics in the
Geography of Uneven Capitalist Development," in his The
Urbanization of Capital. Studies in the History and Theory
of Capitalist Urbanization (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins

12Irene de Boo, and Mirelle Konar, Back to the
Future: Restoration, revitalization and high tech in Lowell
(Utrecht: Dept. of Human Geography, 1991), pp. 35 et seq., &
p. 85, and Ross J. Gittell, Remaking Cities (Princeton:
that Hoerr's Mon Valley cities had not achieved such really
effective cooperation by 1992. Ibid., pp. 181 ff. See also
Loretta A. Ryan, "The Remaking of Lowell and Its Histories,"
importance of a crisis situation instigating city leaders to facilitate multi-sector planning and cooperation. Lowell leaders recognized such a crisis around 1970 and moved to cooperate for the good of their city.

On the other hand, Manchester possessed a tradition of networking that existed from the shutdown of its major mills in 1936. The economic doldrums suffered by northern New England until the 1960s denied this cooperative tradition outstanding success in the 1940s and 1950s, but the activities during those decades of local economic development groups did help counteract the slow death of the city’s textile and shoe industries. The ability of Manchester’s public and private sectors to cooperate played a large part in the city’s revival after 1962. I argue that the fifteen year gap between the establishment of new regimes in Manchester and Lowell resulted to a great degree from the late initiation of a tradition of networking among the business and government groups of Lowell in comparison to the initiation of such a networking tradition in Manchester.

For the most part, my dissertation will only refer to Nashua and Lawrence when the experiences of these communities aid in understanding the stories of their sister cities along the Merrimack. Examining in any detail the experiences of the blanket city of Nashua and the wool city of Lawrence would make the already complicated story told in this dissertation incredibly complex. The similarity in textile production between Lowell and Manchester and a rough similarity in size of population (in 1920 Manchester’s population was 78,000 and Lowell’s 113,000) allows for some control of variables in considering differences between the two cotton cities.

No similar study of responses to deindustrialization along the Merrimack exists. Regional studies such as R.C. Estall’s New England: A Study in Industrial Adjustment conclude that the loss of old technological bases and the advent of new ones have enabled some New England communities


Manchester lacked the great good luck of Nashua, N.H., in the early 1950s. A national corporation closed the latter city’s mills, but an industrial development foundation along the general lines of Manchester’s Amoskeag Industries managed to lure a fast-expanding missile guidance firm into a corner of an empty mill. The firm became New Hampshire’s largest employer.

The 1920 population of Nashua was 28,000, and that of Lawrence was 94,000.
"to proceed towards new heights of material well-being, others to face stagnation and decline." However, such studies remain on such a general scale of analysis that the causes of success or failure for a particular community remain vague. Richard B. Gillett's "Industrial Diversification in the Merrimac Valley: An Analysis of Recent Community Efforts," explicitly compares reactions of Merrimack Valley communities to their economic situation, but only for the five years after World War II. Marc Scott Miller's The Irony of Victory: World War II and Lowell, Massachusetts provides detailed information for one community for the War years. The contrast in fortunes between Manchester and Lowell, however, did not become glaring until deep in the 1950s with the establishment of the high tech regime in eastern New England. By comparing two Merrimack cities over a number of decades, this dissertation will cover new territory - territory which may yield useful lessons to those living today in an industrial regions facing plant shutdowns and technological shifts.

A great deal of the content of the dissertation falls under Philip Scranton's rubric of "industrial history," that is to say, the telling of the story of an industrial regime in terms of business, labor, economic, and technological history. Scranton proclaims the "industrial historian" to

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18 See the depressing 1952 assessment of the two cities by Richard B. Gillett, "Industrial Diversification," pp. 61 & 65 and pp. 70 & 78.
be interested in assessing the evolution of manufacturing in an integrative fashion, encompassing value conflicts and value added, language and location, production technologies and distributive relations, organization and outputs, all in their shifting political, social, and cultural environments. This study will part with Scranton's industrial history approach to some degree: much of the dissertation's inquiry will deal not so much with manufacturing, but rather the thirst of the two communities for manufacturing.

The dissertation will add "ecological" to Scranton's list of "political, social, and cultural environments." In 1991, Theodore Steinberg published a fine study of the ecological history of the Merrimack Valley through the 19th century, *Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England*. (The "waters of New England" grandly proclaimed in the title in fact are mainly the waters of the Merrimack River.) Steinberg points the way for this sort of history, and a sensitivity to the natural (or perhaps we should say in this case "denatured") environment informs this study. Another dissertation remains to be written on the history of the waters of the Merrimack during this century; in this dissertation, the polluted 20th century waters of the Merrimack form, as much as the built industrial environment, the context of life of the actors and sufferers during the death of the textile regime.

Influenced by Scranton's approach to industrial history, the first chapter of the dissertation will describe the rise of the "Merrimack Corridor" in the 19th century. Drawing upon the insights of William Cronon concerning urban areas as the loci of economic systems spanning a geographical region and of John R. Stilgoe concerning built environments resulting from integrated networks of manufacture and transport, the dissertation will describe the central Merrimack Valley as forming a discrete region not only on account of its topography, but also on account of the human-made "second nature" of transportation, commercial, manufacturing, and residential systems. As Stilgoe's "Metropolitan Corridor" designates the built

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environment which arose along railroad rights of way, the "Merrimack Corridor" designates the built environment, and the route of population and product movement, which arose along the lengthy string of textile factories on the Merrimack River.

The Merrimack Corridor scarcely provided a model for all of American industrial development. John Cumbler presents the usual model of such development in his fascinating study, A Social History of Economic Decline, Business, Politics, and Work in Trenton. Cumbler describes the change in the economic underpinnings of the New Jersey city from a golden era of "civic capitalism" at the turn of the century, to one of decline under a regime of "national capitalism" as the century wore on. Under civic capitalism, networks of successful local entrepreneurs interacted with other loci of power in Trenton in a system which appeared to enable citizens of the city to be "masters of their own fate." However, as consolidation occurred, as local industrial concerns became branch plants of national corporations, and as more and more decisions impinging on local life were made by the federal bureaucracy, the power of local citizens over their destiny weakened markedly. This shift from civic to national capitalism has been going on across America, says Cumbler, and "to understand Trenton is to understand the United States."

Cumbler's words must be amended for at least one region of the United States, that of the Merrimack Corridor. Any golden era of civic capitalism in that region ended with the coming of the formidable organizing power of Boston investors in textiles in the decades after 1820. They, the so-called "Boston Associates," created the cities, transportation systems, manufacturing infrastructure, and work force of the Merrimack Corridor. Citizens of places like Manchester and Lowell might resent the situation, but long before the advent of national capitalism, they had no doubt that the shots were being called elsewhere, in the financial district of Boston. Twentieth century moves to national capitalism was but a variation on old Merrimack Corridor themes.

However, traditions of civic capitalism were not entirely absent in the rise of Manchester and Lowell: both cities contained enterprises fostered by local entrepreneurs. Also, by the turn of the century, the working classes of Merrimack Corridor communities were asserting claims for better treatment against owners, especially against the Boston Associates' Brahmin descendants.

The second chapter of the dissertation describes the weakening of the Boston Associate hegemony over the Corridor.

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24 Ibid., p. 3.
26 Ibid., pp. 5-7.
in the decades just before the First World War. Progressivism among Merrimack Valley voters, labor union activity, and increasing competition from Southern cotton mills loosened the Brahmins' hold over Lowell and Manchester. A "Second Industrial Revolution" characterized by mass production and mega-corporations servicing a national market had overtaken the world the Boston Associates made.  

27 By World War I, industrial developments elsewhere in the United States had considerably lessened the economic importance of the Merrimack Corridor, and Southern competition was threatening the prosperity of the cotton industry of Manchester and Lowell. However, within the Corridor, inhabitants of the two cities had some reason to hope for local economies diversified away from cotton textiles and a more equitable relationship between owners and operatives in the textile mills.

The third chapter describes the dashing of these hopes by the partial collapse of the New England cotton textile industry. In the 1920s, growing Southern competitive pressure took its toll in New England textile towns. In Lowell, the old corporations began to die. Some simply closed up shop, some closed up shop in Lowell and moved operations south, some, having become part of New England conglomerates, closed up the Lowell branch plant. In Manchester, the Boston owners of the great Amoskeag Manufacturing Co., rather than applying WWI profits to refitting their huge plant to face Southern pressure, protected their profits by means of a holding company. In both cities, the cotton textile depression negated gains by labor and cancelled economic growth in non-textile areas. In Manchester, however, forces of civic capitalism were aided by the importance of the city to New Hampshire and by certain developments arising from the Progressive movement and firms drawing upon the techniques of the Second Industrial Revolution.  

The fourth chapter discovers a modicum of civic capitalism among in the activities of certain Lowell textile

27 I should credit the use of this term to Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., and his excellent study of the social and economic genesis of the Merrimack Corridor, Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987).

28 As the chapter will describe, the tradition of Progressive government in New Hampshire set up the bases of effective economic planning for that state. Through the almost fortuitous intervention of the Insull interests in northern New England power networks, the area's electric system would enter the Depression years controlled by one corporation, a corporation rich enough to support economic development. One shoe concern in southern New Hampshire effectively utilized new production techniques and labor relations to avoid the industry's usual curses of seasonal employment and frequent bankruptcies.
clans during the 1930s. However, most of what Lowell could claim as economic victories during the 1930s resulted from the lobbying efforts of Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers on Capital Hill rather than from initiatives taken locally. The continued existence of some old Boston Associate firms, frequent lack of sympathy between city government and mill owners, and the continued control of Lowell’s hydro-electric potential and its industrial real estate by a variety of interests militated against a coherent civic response to the crises of the Great Depression. Lowell did not enter the 1940s with a tradition of networking among its local constituencies.

Such a tradition did develop in Manchester. The fifth chapter tells of the downfall of the great Amoskeag in 1936, and the amazingly quick response of local leaders, captained by ex-mayor Arthur E. Moreau, to the disaster. Manchester financial and governmental entities created a company, Amoskeag Industries, to control the disposition of the extensive mill holdings in machinery, real estate, and hydropower, and to strive to restart the more modern textile facilities. The Amoskeag Industries initiative benefitted from the active interest of the New Hampshire state government, and from the presence locally of a large, aggressively-managed electric utility, of a progressive, successful shoe firm, and of a noted philanthropist in the city. The efforts of Amoskeag Industries helped mitigate the effects of the 1936 shutdown on the citizens of Manchester. Amoskeag Industries also established a tradition of networking across governmental and business lines in the city.

The sixth chapter tells of Manchester after the creation of Amoskeag Industries, and of both Manchester and Lowell during the 1940s. Amoskeag Industries aided the Manchester economy, but it accomplished no miracles. What did foster an marked increase of employment in both cities was the military buildup for World War II. Textile mills and shoe shops ran full tilt, and the beginnings of an electronics industry emerged in Manchester. In Lowell, armaments corporations took over abandoned factories. However, the armaments factories closed with the end of the war, and, in the late 1940s, both cities found their fortunes still tied to the vagaries of a weak New England textile industry. The best efforts of Amoskeag Industries could not generate a new economic regime, for Manchester and other Merrimack Valley cities were not appealing to dynamic new industries. They were located in a section of the country not blessed with natural resources and not centrally located for a national market.

The seventh and final chapter of the dissertation follows the history of the two cities from the 1950s to the 1980s. Both cities remained in the economic doldrums until the 1960s. By that time, the high tech industries which had arisen around Boston since WWII were aggressively expanding into the Merrimack Valley. The networking tradition in
Manchester allowed the community to respond to the call for space and labor for the burgeoning new industries. New groups arose alongside Amoskeag Industries to create industrial parks and aid electronics firms in setting up local units. By the middle of the decade, a new economic order had arisen in Manchester, an order tied to durable goods and to services, rather than the textile and shoe industries of old. Sparked by the destruction of portions of the old Amoskeag mill yard in the name of urban renewal, a new appreciation of the city's built fabric and multiple traditions - Yankee, European ethnic, artistic - arose by the end of the decade.

In Lowell, by the 1970s, a new appreciation of the past acted as a springboard for effective cooperation among sectors of the community. At the beginning of the decade, key leaders decided that the local economic situation had reached a crisis point: the textile mills had nearly disappeared, and a downturn in defense spending closed many of Lowell's plants in other sectors, including electronics.

Local leaders listened to the arguments of educator Patrick Mogan and politician Paul Tsongas and worked toward the creation of a national park in Lowell to commemorate the city's place in industrial history. Out of the networking involved in the successful national park effort, alliances arose which expedited economic development, including the arrival of Wang Laboratories, which for a brief number of years served as an economic engine for Lowell.

In light of the high tech downturn of the late 1980s and the travails of the Wang Corporation, the jury remains out as to the longevity of Lowell's 1970s revival. However, there is no doubt that the economy of Lowell today, and also the economy of much more robust Manchester, are quite different from the old textile regime created by the Boston Associates.

For those interested in learning what communities can do to prepare for the possible loss of their economic base, the histories of Lowell and Manchester highlight the importance of public/private cooperation for the good of the community. No city, no region, can place its hopes on any sort of permanence of an economic regime. However, even in an era of not just national but of international capitalism, local cooperation can accomplish some good for the local community. The relative successes of the efforts of an Arthur Moreau in Manchester or a Pat Mogan in Lowell in rallying their compatriots to constructive common effort show that blind economic forces and soulless boards of directors miles away do not have total say in a city's life.

The research for this dissertation has drawn upon a mass of archival material on Manchester and Lowell. The library of the Manchester Historical Association and Lowell's Patrick J. Mogan Cultural Center collection house a

29 By 1976 Lowell unemployment had reached 12.3%.
wealth of company and city records, personal memorabilia, and, especially in the case of the Mogan Center (benefitting from activities sponsored by the National and State Heritage parks in Lowell), taped interviews with 20th century textile and shoe workers. These materials are reinforced by corporate records held in the archives of the Museum of American Textile History and Harvard Business School’s Baker Library, and by various government studies and student theses or dissertations dealing with the Merrimack Corridor.

A glance at the footnotes of the first chapter will show the wealth of published material dealing with Lowell and Manchester in the 19th century. Within the past 20 years, a number of volumes have been published which treat of Manchester or Lowell during the later period of textile decline. In 1978, Tamara K. Harevan and Randolph Langenbach garnered public interest in the life stories and family relationships of Manchester textile workers during this century by means of their *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City*, (a collection of interviews and photographs). The elegiac tone presented in much of *Amoskeag* was counterbalanced within a few years by the often bitter interviews of Lowell workers collected by Mary H. Blewett and others in *Surviving Hard Times: The Working People of Lowell*. In 1982, Harevan brought forth an exclusively scholarly work summarizing her Manchester researches, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The relationship between the family and work in a New England industrial community*. In 1990, Mary Blewett utilized a decade of interviewing of Lowell workers to create the excellent *The Last Generation: Work and Life in the Textile Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1910-1960*, recreating the ambiguous worlds of work and family during the decline of the textile regime.

Besides the researches of Blewett et al in family and community history during the decline of textiles, Lowell has

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been blessed by two studies following in large part Philip Scranton's definition of "industrial history." These are Marc Scott Miller's *The Irony of Victory*, referred to above, and Laurence F. Gross's *The Course of Industrial Decline: The Boott Cotton Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1835–1955* which investigates the decline of one of Lowell's last functioning cotton mills.

Not least among the sources for this dissertation were the walks and talks sponsored by the Lowell National Park and by the Manchester Historic Association. Much of the built world of the old textile regime still exists—although, say, a mill may now be a site for a university branch, and a canal may only be travelled by tourists—and still impresses. And the river below the Amoskeag and the Pawtucket dams still presents a picture of cascading beauty.

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PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter One, "The Merrimack Corridor," describes the creation by Boston investors of a discrete industrial region along the middle reaches of the Merrimack River and treats in particular of the creation of the cotton textile centers of Lowell, Mass., and Manchester, N.H. Time period: 1820-1900.

Chapter Two, "A Weakened Hegemony," describes the effects of general economic developments in the United States upon the power of Boston financiers over the Merrimack Corridor. The "Second Industrial Revolution" associated with assembly-line production and national corporations in many ways passed New England by, and the cotton mills owned by Boston interests were put at risk by the burgeoning cotton industry of the South. The Progressive movement and victories by organized labor gave more power to the citizens of Manchester and Lowell. Time period: 1900-1916.

Chapter 3, "The Cotton Recession Hits Lowell and Manchester," describes the high wages and high profits of the cotton industry during World War I plummeting in the early 1920s as Southern cotton mills crushed attempts to equalize wage rates north and south, and lower-priced Southern cloth captured more of the market. In Lowell, mills began to close. In Manchester, the owners of the great Amoskeag mill complex decided to adopt very conservative policies of reinvestment. In southern New Hampshire, some hope for the economy was given by the rise of a strong electric utility and a very successful shoe manufacturing firm. Time period: 1916-1929.

Chapter 4, "Lowell in the Depression," describes a city suffering from joblessness and fly-by-night shoe shops. Some textile mills were controlled by outside interests, some by local entrepreneurs, but all provided low pay and few amenities. In a situation in which economic and political power in Lowell remained fragmented, only the efforts of the local congresswoman and the 1936 flood resulted in notable job-creating projects. Time period: 1930-1940.
Chapter 5, "The City That Would Not Die," describes the downfall of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, and the efforts of local leaders to ensure the massive Amoskeag properties were disposed off with the interests of the city in mind. The state government and local companies helped in this effort, and to some degree the effects of the Amoskeag shutdown were counteracted. However, the entity working for the economic betterment of the city, Amoskeag Industries, accomplished no miracles. Time period: 1930-1937.

Chapter 6, "The Two Cities, the War, and After," describes the efforts of Amoskeag Industries to bring diversified industries to Manchester, and the difficulties of counteracting the Merrimack Valley's lack of natural resources and its peripheral location regarding the major markets of the U.S. World War II brought contracts and jobs to Manchester and Lowell, and an air base to the former city. Unfortunately, the end of war production found the two cities still tied to the troubled textile industry. Time period: 1938-1949.

Chapter 7, "Manchester and Lowell Enter a New Economic Era," describes the liquidation of the remaining Boston Associate firms in Lowell. Efforts at economic development in Manchester and Lowell were cancelled by the loss of textile employment. In the 1960s, a rejuvenated cooperative development effort in the New Hampshire city was able to take advantage of the high tech industry's expansion from the greater Boston area into the Merrimack Valley. Manchester's economy now depended on a variety of industries and services, and it broke the post-WWII legacy of chronic unemployment. Similar results were obtained in Lowell in the 1970s, as private and public sectors learned how to work together, and the city gained a National Park and Wang Labs. Time period: 1950-1980.
CHAPTER I

THE MERRIMACK CORRIDOR

Introduction

This river is nearly two hundred and sixty miles long by its course, and is peculiarly symmetrical in its entire extent; its waters are naturally incomparably pure and transparent; and its whole career, from the towering mountains where it takes its rise, to the boundless ocean, is a continual succession of silver cascades, sparkling ripples, broad, calm, mirror-like waters, or romantic, majestic, and useful waterfalls. The Merrimack River, J. W. Meader 1871

Written in 1871, this description of the Merrimack River hearkened back to the unspoiled waterway of a century earlier. The Merrimack of the 18th century delighted the eye with its cascades and fed the belly with its amazing runs of salmon and shad. It irrigated farming homesteads in southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts, and provided a pathway for timber selected for His Majesty's Navy.

Only the reference to "useful waterfalls" in the description above indicates that by 1871 the Merrimack Valley had been largely transformed to serve the needs of industrial production. By the time of the Civil War, the lower Valley had become an industrial corridor pouring miles of textiles, and not a few shoes, into the port of Boston.

The industrial transformation of the Merrimack began in the latter eighteenth century. At that time, virtually every fall of water on the Merrimack or its tributaries became the site of small grist and saw mills. In the 1790s, groups of investors began to dig canals around the rapids and falls of the Merrimack. Major projects included the Pawtucket Canal (built 1792-1796) circumventing falls in Chelmsford, Mass.; a canal (built 1793-1807) around the quarter mile of rapids at Amoskeag, N.H.; and the Middlesex

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Canal (built 1793-1803) from the Merrimack to Boston. (Each of these efforts drew, to one degree or another, upon the talents of pioneer American engineer Loammi Baldwin.) The Middlesex Canal entered the river just above the Pawtucket Canal and extended 27 miles southeast to Boston Harbor. After 1803, Merrimack commerce turned south along the Middlesex Canal to the Boston docks, rather than meeting seacraft at the river's mouth at Newburyport.

The increasing commercial preeminence of Boston was marked by the shift, as the 19th century dawned, of the activities of a number of talented entrepreneurial families from the Merrimack watershed to the port of Boston. Appletons from New Ipswich, N.H., in the Souhegan Valley; Lawrences from Groton, Mass., in the Valley of the Nashua; Lowells and Jacksons from the Merrimack's mouth at Newburyport, Mass., joined the network of Boston merchants engaging in a lucrative trade with combatants in the Napoleonic Wars.

This network, including merchants from such clans as the Cabots, the Bootts, and the Storrows, has been named by historians "the Boston Associates." From the Associates emerged the Boston Brahmin caste later in the century. The wealth which paid for the Brahmins' world of townhouses, vacation villas, and cultural institutions derived in large part from the textile regime the Associates created along the Merrimack.

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The pioneer of the entrance of the Boston Associates into textile manufacturing, "the informing soul, which gave direction and form to the whole proceeding," was Francis Cabot Lowell. From 1810 to 1812, while in his mid-thirties, this merchant took his family to Great Britain for an extended vacation. While in Scotland and England, Lowell became fascinated by the new machinery of the thriving British textile industry. He had a fine mathematical mind which served him well as he memorized details of weaving machinery. Upon his return to Boston, he invited friends such as Nathan Appleton and relatives such as brother-in-law Patrick Tracy Jackson to join him in creating a new type of cotton textile manufacturing concern. This company would weave cotton yarn into cloth by means of powered looms, a novelty in America. The ongoing war between England and the United States had ruined Boston commerce, and friends and family were willing to put their money into Lowell's experiment.

During 1813, the project moved apace. The Boston Manufacturing Company was incorporated, a decision was taken not only to weave cloth but also to spin the yarn by machines, a mill site by a dam on the Charles River was procured by P. T. Jackson, and, a brilliant mechanic, Paul Moody, was recruited. Moody created an effective power loom based upon Lowell's memory of what he had seen in England, and began a career of improving all facets of Boston Manufacturing Company machinery.

\[5\] So F. C. Lowell was described by his ally Nathan Appleton in the latter's memoir of the Introduction of The Power Loom and Origin of Lowell (Lowell: 1858), p. 15.


Mailloux reports, on the basis of minutes of the meetings of the directors of the newly-formed Boston Manufacturing Company, that "by early September 1813, Jackson and Lowell had constructed a model of a loom which worked well enough to encourage them to begin subscription of capital for their company." Ibid., pp. 51-52. The perfection of their machine awaited the arrival of master mechanic Paul Moody at the Waltham millsite on Nov. 1, 1813. See David J. Jeremy, Transatlantic Industrial Revolution: The Diffusion of Textile Technologies Between Britain and America, 1790-1830s (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 95-99. Moody's work on a device for stopping the loom when threads broke (1814) and invention of the soapstone "dresser" for sizing warp threads (1818), and the adoption of Stimpson's self-acting "temple" to keep woven cloth properly stretched on the loom (1817) simplified considerably the work of textile
Lowell and his associates decided that the factory, in Waltham, Massachusetts, would differ from earlier American mills in that weaving as well as spinning would utilize waterpowered machinery - earlier mills had depended upon hand weaving - and that the work force would consist largely of unmarried daughters of New England farmers living in strictly regulated company-owned boarding houses. Previously, textile mills had typically employed entire families and single men. The use of these Yankee "mill girls" guaranteed "a fund of labor" at the relatively remote Charles River site, and moreover, "a fund of labor, well educated and virtuous," a far cry from the downtrodden textile proletariat Lowell had seen in Britain. Also, unlike the situation in most previous mills, the owners of the mill would not reside at the mill site, relying rather upon a local agent to run the factory.

During 1814-1816 Jackson supervised the building of the mill and raising of the dam at Waltham. In the autumn of 1814, F. C. Lowell invited Nathan Appleton to Waltham to see the loom operate. Appleton later wrote,

I well recollect the state of admiration and satisfaction with which we sat by the hour, watching the beautiful movement of this new and wonderful machine, destined as it evidently was, to change the character of all textile industry.


 10 Appleton, Origin of Lowell, p. 9. The loom was patented in 1814, but the patent description has been lost. From other evidence, it seems Lowell had replicated a Wiper wood frame loom, which beat up the weft by means of a lay powered by weights. Very soon the lay motion was changed to
In 1815 the company began manufacturing coarse cotton goods.

Despite an American market flooded by British textiles at the close of the War of 1812, the Waltham product sold extremely well. In 1817 a first dividend of 12.5% was declared and arrangements were made to put another mill into operation in Waltham. Francis Cabot Lowell died in 1817, at the age of 42. By that date, it had become clear that Waltham, with its powered machinery and virtuous workforce, constituted "the most thoroughly modern engine of industrial production in America."

Recent changes in the interpretation and application of laws regarding mill ponds and fishways ensured the smooth flow of this "engine's" motive power, water. Dams could now be built to regularize the flow of water to mill wheels and turbines, and farmers whose fields were flooded had to be satisfied with cash payments. Anyone who used to capture salmon on their annual spawning runs upriver, now did without.

Lowell's "engine" also turned to the corporate form of business organization in order to better tap the purses of the network of families composing the Boston Associates (and, it turned out, the better to shift invested capital from project to project). Eventually, they came to enjoy limited liability through incorporation: laws easing incorporation were passed in Massachusetts in 1830 and in New Hampshire in 1837. The Boston Manufacturing Company became a model not just for a technology for modern production, but also for business organization. The sort of rationalizing intelligence that went into the creation of the BMC continued to be manifested by the Boston Associates. During the 19th century, they transformed northern New England by building textile mills and developing networks of banks, insurance companies, and railroads.

The key to this industrial transformation remained textile-making. As the 1820s dawned, the owners of the Boston Manufacturing Company were more than delighted with the "engine" Lowell had pioneered. The Waltham system of

be powered by a crank, on the Horrocks loom principle.
Mailloux, "Boston Manufacturing," pp. 76-78.


production made money hand-over-fist for the Boston Associates: by 1822 they had received more than a 100% return on their original investment. The Associates wanted to expand their textile operations, but the flow of the Charles was uncertain during summer droughts and winter freezes.

In the fall of 1821, Paul Moody investigated the Pawtucket Falls around which Newburyport businessmen had built their canal two decades before. The 30 foot drop fulfilled the power requirements of Waltham-type mills, and it turned out that the canal, built for transportation, was utilizable as a channel to direct water power to turn mill wheels and turbines. The canal and the land around the Pawtucket Falls could be obtained on very favorable terms. Outside the winter, freezing months, the nearby Middlesex Canal could provide freight transportation to and from Boston. By the end of 1821, Appleton, Jackson, and friends had incorporated the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, and had chosen Kirk Boott, brother of a Boston merchant, to be the company’s Agent directing development at the Chelmsford site. Nathan Appleton wrote his brother, "We are building a large machine I hope at Chelmsford."

Boott presided over a re-creation of the Waltham system: its throughput processing of basic textile goods, its absentee ownership, and its use of Yankee farmgirls as operatives. In 1823, the owners of the Boston Manufacturing Company decided to transfer Paul Moody and most of the machinery-building operations in Waltham to Chelmsford.

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16 This decision proved easy to make, for the ownership of the BMC and that of the Merrimack overlapped considerably. The BMC did retain the use of any further inventions of Moody and did receive substantial sums for the liquidation of its machinery operation. The sums were distributed as dividends, masking for potential BMC investors the real loss to the worth of the company occasioned by the departure of Moody and the machine shop. This distribution was challenged in the Mass. Supreme
By the fall of 1823 the Merrimack mill and company-run boardinghouses for the "mill girls" were in operation.

The combination of careful planning and expertise made Merrimack Company stock very attractive to investors. It occurred to some of the Boston Associates that much money could be made in developing an entire series of mill sites by the Pawtucket Falls. In 1825 the Hamilton Manufacturing Company was incorporated and its stock immediately snapped up. During that same year Kirk Boott became the CEO of and Paul Moody the superintendent of "Proprietors of the Locks and Canals Company" which was thenceforth to control real estate, water power, and textile machinery manufacturing in the Pawtucket Falls area. All future development near the falls would be controlled by the "Proprietors." In 1826 this realm was incorporated as an independent township named after Francis Cabot Lowell. 17

Much to its founders' satisfaction, Lowell, Massachusetts, became a showplace for intelligent and humane industrialization. The textile corporations - six large concerns by 1834, including one applying throughput processing to wool cloth, organized into 19 mills running 110,000 spindles - made excellent profits. The mill girls were not only able to save some of their wages for dowries or to support folks at home, but they developed a varied social life which included attendance at lectures and the publication of their own journal, the Lowell Offering. By 1836 Lowell gained its charter as a city. With a population of 21,000, it rated as the second largest city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. 18 Notable visitors marveled at the decorum of the female operatives, the efficiency of the mills, the genius of Lowell engineers in developing turbine technology to take maximum advantage of canal-delivered waterpower. 19 The Boston Associates marveled at


18 Ware, Cotton Manufacture, p. 81; Bender, Urban Vision, p. 40 ff..

their profits, derived from not only from textile production, but also from the sale of real estate, textile machinery, and water power. They sought to replicate the Waltham-Lowell system elsewhere within the Merrimack Valley and also beyond it.

In western Massachusetts, Associates participated in the development of textile mills on the Chicopee River in 1823 and a replica of the big Lowell project on the Connecticut in 1847. (However, the latter effort ran into the mid-1850s recession, and the site, Holyoke, would gain its reputation as the "Paper City" rather than another "Spindle City." ) Associates supported the building of railroad links from Boston to Albany between 1831 and 1841; these constituted the major pre-1850 achievements in American railroad transportation and materially aided Associate manufacturing interests.20 To the north of the Merrimack, Associates took over failing textile plants at Dover (1827) and Somersworth (1844), N.H., and Biddeford, Me. (1844), and put them on a paying basis. In 1850, on the Saco River in Maine, Associates initiated one of the most successful of their operations with the reorganization of previous, non-Associate efforts to create a textile enterprise into the mighty Pepperell Manufacturing Company. To the south of the Merrimack, Associates gradually took over bankrupt textile activities in Taunton, Mass., beginning in 1833. Throughout these decades, the Associates invested in railroads to link their mills to ports, while simultaneously building up New England banking and insurance corporations to finance and protect their investments.21

As they constructed industrial regimes elsewhere on the Waltham/Lowell model, the Associates by no means ignored the waterpower potential of the Merrimack Valley. In 1830, Nathan Appleton brought in Abbot and Amos Lawrence, among others, to invest in a reorganization of failed textile factories utilizing the water power of the Nashua River. The Associates learned a sharp lesson in hydropower when, two years later, a heightening of the dam at Lowell backed water up to the wheels of the Nashua mills, impeding their operation.

Such lack of coordination and foresight did not mark the Boston Associates' entrance into the railroad industry. The creators of Lowell found the Middlesex Canal

unsatisfactory as a conduit for the miles of cloth issuing forth from the city's mills. The canal shut down during the winter months, and, when open, it moved goods by means of boats operated by not-always-dependable private owners. Searching for alternative means of transport, the Associates dispatched an investigator to England to observe the new railroads being pioneered there. The report from this reconnaissance prompted the Associates to underwrite the construction of a rail line to the port of Boston. The Boston and Lowell Railroad went into operation in 1835. The locomotives used on the new line were constructed at the Lowell Machine Shop under the direction of West Point trained engineer George Whistler (who was soon to take a key part in the creation of the Associate-backed Western Railroad between Worcester and Albany). By 1840, the Middlesex Canal was a bankrupt affair, and the Associates were actively involved in extending railroad tracks up the Merrimack beyond Nashua.22

Up the Merrimack lay the great waterpower prize of the valley: the 30 ft. descent of water at the Amoskeag Falls. The builder of the canal which circumvented the falls at the beginning of the century had prophesied that around the canal would arise the "Manchester of America." In 1810, the citizenry to the east of the falls had christened their township by that name. By the 1820s, Rhode Island interests, including Samuel Slater, had developed several modest spinning and weaving establishments across the river from the newly-christened Manchester. In 1831, the developers of the Amoskeag site changed their business organization from a partnership to a corporation, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company (AMC), in order to attract capital for a really grand utilization of local waterpower. By 1836, it had become clear that the great plans for the AMC would only be realized through a reorganization by real experts in large-scale textile operations, viz. members of the Boston Associates.23


Boston money gained control of the AMC that year, and Kirk Boott, Patrick Tracy Jackson, and Francis Cabot Lowell, Jr., began conferring on how best to utilize the new Boston Associate acquisition. The noted hydraulic engineer Loammi Baldwin, Jr., son of the engineer who built the Middlesex Canal, was brought in to survey the Amoskeag site. Baldwin urged that a canal be constructed on the east side of the falls, in Manchester, in order to make maximum use of the waterpower potential, and, incidentally, to make use of level land for both mill and boardinghouse developments.24

Baldwin's advice was taken, and a new canal and dam were built. The Manchester prophecy bid fair to being realized as surveyors laid out a new industrial city on the Lowell plan to the east of the falls. Waltham/Lowell type mills and boarding houses began operation by 1839, and a machine shop opened by 1840.

However, only excellent management by William Amory, who became Treasurer, that is to say CEO, of the AMC in 1837, saved the AMC from crisis in the 1839-1843 depression. Investors became increasingly loath to invest funds in totally new textile corporations in an era of falling cloth prices and overproduction.25 Reference has been made above to the many mills brought onto line in the 1830s and 40s by the Associates alone, and they were but a part of a burgeoning industry in New England and beyond. In the new competitive situation, the AMC did not replicate the experience of Lowell's Proprietors of Locks and Canals. Instead of simply selling off mill sites and waterpower to other corporations eagerly organized to rush into textile manufacturing, the AMC found itself building and managing mills itself.

Francis Cabot Lowell's "engine," his carefully calculated system uniting throughput mills with a willing female workforce had begun to break down. Overproduction and falling prices led to the end of the mill girl era. In the 1830s, speed ups of machinery, "stretch outs" in working hours, and drops in wages led the "girls" at Lowell to engage in several short, futile strikes. The economic problems of the 1840s rendered conditions in the mills even more stringent. As the Yankee female operatives found textile employment less and less attractive, the Lowell mill managers increasingly turned for laborers to the "Paddy


24 Steinberg, Nature Incorporated, pp. 89-90; Abbott, "Two Loammi Baldwins," pp. 215-216. Blodgett's Amoskeag Canal, planned by Loammi Blodgett, Sr., was already on the east side of Amoskeag Falls; the new waterpower canal was built virtually over it. Potter, History of Manchester, pp. 553-554.


Camps" of immigrant Irish across the canal from the mill girls' boarding houses. The shanties of the camps had been originally occupied by laborers who built the canals and mills and railroads. By the '40s, families escaping the Famine were moving in (foreign-born Irish were to compose 27.6% of Lowell's population in 1855). The penniless newcomers proved quite willing to take wages Yankees refused. Entire families entered the mills, and "by 1850 Lowell had changed from a Yankee mill village into an immigrant industrial city."26

The resident Yankee population of Lowell saw this conscious turning away from the ideal of a "well-educated and virtuous" labor force as a betrayal. The native-born Lowell population included by mid-century many merchants and professional persons not directly tied to Associate enterprises. These citizens had hoped to live in a neat, clean, truly American city fostered under the paternalistic wing of Boston investors. The utilization of the distrusted Irish as mill workers led the Yankees to the conclusion "that the Boston Associates had sacrificed Lowell to profit."27 In 1854, Lowell Yankees supported the Know-Nothing political sweep of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and elected an anti-Catholic mayor. Such explicitly bigoted politics receded quickly - their demise aided by the farcical antics of the 1855 Smelling Committee investigation of Lowell Catholic institutions.28 Yankee trust of the


27Mitchell, Paddy Camps, p. 105.

28The head of the investigative committee was discovered to have enjoyed the favors of a Mrs. Moody, aka Mrs. Patterson, during his Lowell stay, charging the cost of the escapade to the Commonwealth. The Irish of Lowell remembered an 1855 nativist-Irish riot as a defense of the newly-built St. Patrick's church from arson, although the contemporary Lowell newspapers denigrated the importance of
Boston Associates continued to be low, chilled by such
Associate policies as refusing to share with smaller, non-
textile enterprises any of their monopoly of waterpower. Up the river in Manchester, local reaction to Boston
Associate policies was not always positive. The original
Yankee residents of Manchester had been outraged in 1840
when the vote of newcomers lured by the expanding AMC had
shifted the location of the town hall. Rather than being
sited at an inland crossroads among farms, the hall would
now be near the river’s edge where the new city was being
laid out. However, the tensions between newcomers and old
settlers in Manchester did not echo the ethnic bitterness of
Lowell: the major part of the fast-expanding Manchester
workforce remained Yankee through the 1850s.
Manchester did have a nativist demonstration, and only
the timely intervention of a widely-respected Protestant
neighbor one night in 1854 prevented a nativist mob from
doing more than breaking the windows of St. Anne’s, the
Irish community’s church. An indication of a basic ethos of
fairness in the community can be seen in the immediate offer
of the embarrassed city government to repair the windows.
A further indication of basic community harmony, and of an
antipathy to the AMC’s absentee ownership, occurred the next
game. In 1855, the citizens of Manchester as a whole stood
with the city’s textile workers when they successfully
struck against the corporations’ lengthening of the work day
from 11 to 12 hours. The next year, the owners of the AMC appointed Ezekial
Straw to be the local operations chief, or "agent," of the
corporation. This choice proved inspired. Straw gained the
trust and goodwill of Manchester natives as he judiciously
exercised the immense power of "the Amoskeag." In contrast
to the policies of Lowell’s Proprietors of Locks and Canals,
Straw encouraged small industry to utilize the waterpower
owned by the AMC. Through such wise policies, Straw managed
to maintain good feelings between Manchester natives and the
textile companies for the next generation of urban and

the affair. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-140. The Irish interpretation
of events is given weight by what happened at St. Anne’s in
Manchester in 1854 (see below).

31 The pastor, Fr. William McDonald, declined the
offer. In future years his status in the Manchester
community was to be quite high. The action of John Maynard
in convincing the mob to disperse (he was equally known for
utter integrity and very colorful language) was not
forgotten by St. Anne’s parishioners, who tolled their
church’s bell during his funeral in 1908. A Sister of Mercy
[Sr. M. Camilla Lyons], *Memoir of Reverend William McDonald*
(Manchester, N.H.: Mount Saint Mary’s, 1909), pp. 34-35;
industrial development. By 1860, Manchester had grown to a city of 20,000 inhabitants, including 7,000 industrial workers.  

The final Boston Associate effort at city-building along the Merrimack did not share in Manchester’s ionic traditions. The project began promisingly. A series of drops in water level lay five miles downriver from Lowell. In 1845, Abbot Lawrence convinced Nathan Appleton, Patrick Tracy Jackson, and a number of other Associates to join him in turning the area surrounding Hunt’s Falls into an industrial center to rival Lowell. In order to guarantee a constant flow of water to this new development, as well as to other Boston Associate mills along the Merrimack, in 1846 the Boston Associates obtained control of the river’s source in Lake Winnipesaukee. Soon the new textile city of "Lawrence" boasted a huge dam and new mills and boardinghouses, along with a machine shop.  

The utter self-confidence exhibited in this endeavor prompted Ralph Waldo Emerson to write in his journal,  

An American in this ardent climate gets up early some morning & buys a river; & advertises for 12 of 1500 Irishmen; digs a new channel for it, brings it to his mills, and has a head of 24 feet of water: then, to give him an appetite for his breakfast, he raises a house; then carves out within doors a quarter township into streets & building lots, tavern, school, & methodist meeting house - sends up an engineer into New Hampshire, to see where his water comes from &; after advising with him sends a trusty man of business to buy of all the farmers such mill privileges as will serve him among their

34 Spalding, "Boston Mercantile Community," pp. 179-184; Steinberg, Nature Incorporated, pp. 108-112; Hunter, Waterpower, pp. 280-282. The rationalization of the flow of the Merrimack did not directly involve the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company; negotiations over what proportion of the effort the AMC should underwrite came to nothing until the 1870s. Steinberg, p. 109 & fn. In congruence with this rationalization, in 1845 the Proprietors of Locks and Canals sold off the Lowell Machine Shop and was reorganized as a waterpower company owned by the machine shop and the ten textile corporations (31 mills) utilizing the waterpower supplied by its canals. Between 1846 and 1848 the Lowell canal system was improved, and the huge Northern Canal built, under the direction of J. B. Francis. Pat Malone, "Canals and Industry: Engineering in Lowell, 1821-1880." in Cotton Was King. A History of Lowell Massachusetts, ed. by Arthur L. Eno, Jr. (Lowell Historical Society, 1976), pp. 144-146.
waste hill & pasture lots and comes home with great
glee announcing that he is now owner of the great
Lake Winnipesosee, as reservoir for his Lowell
mills at Midsummer. 35

Whatever the optimistic hopes of its founders,
Lawrence was to enjoy no golden age like the early years of
its sister city Lowell. Shanties for poor immigrants and
high rates of infection by typhoid fever and consumption
formed part of the Lawrence scene from the city's founding:
a Massachusetts Sanitary Commission investigation of
Lawrence in 1850 uncovered miserable housing and health
conditions which were to continue into the 20th century. 36

Lawrence began its life not only with obvious social
problems but also without financial security. The new mills
were plagued with constant financial difficulties from their
inception. Indeed, the Panic of 1857 caused the failure of
the Lawrence Machine Shop and the bankruptcy of two of the
city's four large textile corporations.

In Lowell, the panic caused the bankruptcy of the
Middlesex Corporation. The permanent industrial workforce
of the Valley had grown to such an extent that cities had to
mount major relief operations for the unemployed. 37 The
panic showed that after four decades the organizing
intelligence of Boston Associates was not surmounting every
challenge, or even providing stockholders with good
corporation management. F. C. Lowell's finely-tuned machine
of production now creaked and groaned.

Dr. James C. Ayer of Lowell had used profit from his
patent medicines to invest in various Lowell corporations.
In the late 1850s, he led a movement to combat nepotism and
mismangement in Boston-controlled textile enterprises. In
1859, he joined with Lowell lawyer Ben Butler on an
investigative committee to determine the cause of the
failure of the Middlesex woolen mill. The committee soon
discovered that the treasurer, one of the Lawrence family,
had hidden a $103,000 deficit and that part of the drain of
the company's finances was due to bribes for Congress.
Butler, then beginning his colorful political career, joined
the board of the Middlesex, and helped integrate its
production and sales operations. 38

35 Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Journals and Miscellaneous
Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume X, 1847-1848, ed.
by Merton M. Sealts, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard
36 Donald B. Cole, Immigrant City: Lawrence,
Massachusetts, 1845-1921 (Chapel Hill: University of North
37 Alexander Keyssar, Out of Work: The First Century
of Unemployment in Massachusetts (Cambridge, England:
38 Heidi Vernon-Wortzel, Lowell: The Corporations and
the City (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), pp. 97-
111; Fidelia O. Brown, "Decline and Fall: The End of the
Ayer discovered a number of cases of selling houses dumping textiles on the market at ruinous prices for the manufacturer. Nineteenth century textile corporations almost always sold their product through "commission houses." These concerns specializing in merchandizing gained their profits on the basis of volume of product sold rather than the amount of profit gained from the sales. Thus, the interests of corporation and commission house did not coincide. However, on most textile corporation boards, many directors were in the employ of the commission house selling the corporation's product. Such influence on the corporation board allowed commission houses such as that of Abbot and Amos Lawrence to continue as selling agents for the major part of Lowell cotton textile production. After the mid-1860s, constant criticism from Ayer, Butler, and other local investors forced the Lowell cotton firms to exercise closer supervision of the commission houses.

Such supervision had been customary in the case of Manchester's Amoskeag. In fact, from 1841 to 1859 a committee consisting of Treasurer William Amory and two directors handled the sales direct. From then until the 20th century, the selling of Amoskeag cloth was committed to the care of a series of commission houses, with careful attention paid to the amount of profit allowed the houses. Selling house abuses apparently did not affect the Amoskeag.

That corporation seems to have enjoyed a charmed life regarding its public image. The AMC does not seem to have suffered from major complaints from Manchester's citizens against the control of the company from Boston. Wise local management by Ezekial Straw played its part in this, with the Amoskeag continuing early Boston Associate practices of funding libraries, lyceums, Sunday Schools, and all sorts of civic improvements. The excellent Straw proved so popular in New Hampshire that its citizens voted him governor in 1872.

Control of corporations from Boston did raise the hackles of members of Lowell's growing middle class. In 1859, the representative from Lowell submitted a bill to the Massachusetts house to require that corporations capitalized at over $500,000 hold their annual stockholders' meeting in the locale in which manufacturing took place. The bill also forbade one person to serve on the directorates of more than two corporations and raised the rate of local taxation of

large corporations. Boston Associate pressure on the legislature caused the bill to be voted down. A generation later, during Lowell's semi-centennial celebration of 1876, Ben Butler would still be complaining bitterly against the absentee ownership of most of Lowell's mills, declaring that, "Our city has been a hive of industry, and, as a rule, the honey has been gathered by others."42

By the mid-1850s, with Waltham/Lowell mills failing, management of corporations proving lacking, and the dream of a non-proletariat workforce well-housed and healthy fading, the glorious era of Boston Associate expansion had come to an end. To say this is not to deny the magnitude of what Associate-backed industrialization had accomplished by that time.

Boston-based enterprise transformed the mid-Merrimack Valley from a bucolic landscape into a corridor of brick mills, granite bridge piers and embankments, and iron rails. To the north, Concord, N.H. manufactured coaches, to the south Haverhill, Mass., manufactured shoes, and in between textile mills wove miles and miles of cloth at Manchester, Nashua, Lowell, and Lawrence. After the Associates' capture of the waterpower of the upper Merrimack watershed in 1846, the Merrimack was in effect "one giant millstream" from Lake Winnipesaukee to the sea.43

Under the Associates' direction, the river's major functions became powering mill wheels and turbines, and carrying off industrial and human waste. The ancient role of the river as a larder for humans living in its valley ceased as the new dams, especially the one at Lawrence, prevented runs of salmon and other fish upstream. Save for annual log runs from the White Mountain lumber camps, the transportation function of the Merrimack was assumed by Associate-backed railroads. These made Boston rather than Newburyport the outlet for Lowell's engines of production along the Merrimack. A corridor of textile production now existed from Manchester to Lawrence to Boston.

In 1849 Henry David Thoreau captured the new, human-built nature of the Merrimack Valley in a memoir he published of a trip along that river. Thoreau bade his readers to place themselves at the mouth of the Merrimack

42 Fidelia Brown, "Decline and Fall," p. 145.
and look up its sparkling stream to its source, - a silver cascade which falls all the way from the White Mountains to the sea, - and behold a city on each successive plateau, a busy colony of human beaver around every fall. Not to mention Newburyport and Haverhill, see Lawrence, and Lowell, and Nashua and Manchester, and Concord, gleaming one above the other. When at length it has escaped from under the last of the factories, it has a level and unmolested passage to the sea, a mere waste water, as it were ... its real vessels are railroad cars, and its true and main stream, flowing by an iron channel farther south, may be traced by a long line of vapor amid the hill, which no morning wind ever disperses, to where it empties into the sea at Boston. This side is the louder murmur now. Instead of the scream of a fish hawk scaring the fishes, is heard the whistle of the steam-engine, arousing a country to its progress.\[44\]

The Merrimack Corridor to 1900

The Civil War marked a difference in the lines of development taken by Nashua and Lawrence, on one hand, and Lowell and Manchester on the other. Nashua mills benefitted from large army contracts for over a million pairs of flannel underwear, and, after the war, Nashua mills tended to cater to special niches in textile production, in particular the production of blankets. Lawrence turned decisively to woolen manufacture as orders for cloth for uniforms poured in to its woolen mills. Those Lawrence units which included cotton manufacturing capacity, notably the great Pacific Mills, kept going by purchasing cotton stocks sold off by mills further up the river.\[45\]

Counting on a short war, and enticed by high prices for cotton, the Treasurers of Lowell and Manchester cotton mills closed down operations in 1861 and sold off their stored bales. This selloff gave windfall profits to be spent on dividends and, especially in Lowell, much-needed renovations of aging mills. Unfortunately, the closure also put thousands of operatives out on the street. Many of the male operatives marched off to join the Union ranks, while many of the Yankee female operatives returned to family farms. After a period of privation, unemployed men and women eventually found work at the two cities' machine shops and woolen mills booming from war orders. The Amoskeag

\[45\]Nashua History Committee, Nashua Experience, p. 106
\[46\]Vernon-Wortzel, Corporations, p. 76 and 81.
machine shops, for instance, turned out thousands of weapons, including 25,000 Springfield rifles. 47

Veterans of the Civil War returned to a Valley dominated by textile mills, but also boasting of a variety of other manufacturing industries. These industries included shoemaking, locomotive-making, papermaking, metalworking, and patent-medicine manufacture. The new industries were welcomed by citizens of the textile corridor: rather than being controlled from Boston, they were usually locally-owned, and they freed river communities from utter dependence upon textile markets. The Merrimack textile industry did grow after the Civil War, but slowly.

Beginning in the 1850s, steam engines improved by George H. Corliss largely nullified the advantage afforded by locating mills near waterpower. Indeed, post-bellum textile expansion on the Merrimack was powered by steam rather than water. Utilizing powerful and efficient Corliss engines, new cotton textile centers on the south coast of New England now enjoyed the halcyon pace of expansion once associated with mills further north. A climate with a high humidity suitable for the production of cloth more fragile than the Merrimack product allowed Fall River and New Bedford in Massachusetts to become Massachusetts' new spindle cities. As early as 1870, Fall River possessed more spindles than Lowell.

The mushrooming mills of Fall River and New Bedford needed to employ skilled workers from Lancashire, England, to spin their finer yarns. These immigrants brought with them not only expertise on the tricky "mule-spinning" machines suitable to the production of fine fiber48, but an

49 The grade of yarn required for the relatively coarse cloth produced by pre-Civil War Waltham/Lowell mills
activist labor tradition. By the 1880s, the difference in strike activity between the textile operatives of Fall River and those of the Merrimack Valley became marked enough to attract the attention of the legislature of Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{50}

For their post-Civil War labor needs, the Merrimack manufacturers looked north of the border, sending recruiters to tap the labor pool waiting in the economically-depressed Province of Quebec. First by wagon, then by shining new

had been adequately supplied by "throttle" spinning machines which imparted twist to cotton fiber by running the fiber through rollers turning at different speeds. Workers tending these machines needed to know only how to repair broken yarn and how to replace filled bobbins. However, until the 1870s, finer yarn production depended upon mule-spinning, a process which required both physical strength — enough so that such spinning was the exclusive province of males — and fine judgment. As Carol Polizotti Webb carefully explains, the mule spinner had to move part of his large machine back and forth along a track, "putting just the right amount of tension on the yarn to produce very fine filling thread." By the 1870s, mill owners saw their chance to replace highly-paid and organized male spinners with low-pay female labor because of the increasing perfection of ring-spinning technology. "The ring-spinning machine, unlike the mule, was wholly stationary. The tension on the yarn which had been provided by the skilled operator was now determined by a series of weights. The mule spinner physically drove the mule along its track, thereby manually guiding the yarn as it was being spun. In the ring spinning machine, a small metal ring, or traveler, was attached to the bobbins on which the thread was wound. This small metal catch spun around rapidly and gave the thread extra twist while guiding it along the turning bobbin. The metal ring did the work of the skilled operator." Carol Polizotti Webb, "The Lowell Mule Spinners' Strike of 1875," in Surviving Hard Times, The Working People of Lowell, ed. by Mary H. Blewett (Lowell, Mass.: Lowell Museum, 1982), p. 12.

railroad tracks, thousands of habitants travelled south to work in the mills. An agricultural people used to hard working conditions, and untouched as yet by traditions of labor militancy, families of these French-speaking immigrants kept the Merrimack mills going through the hard times of the 1870s. They also created for themselves petites canadas in the mill towns of New England, ethnic enclaves of churches, schools, businesses, and banks conducting their affairs in French. Their presence in the Merrimack Corridor became formidable by 1880: "Franco-Americans" provided one fifth of Manchester's population of 32,600 that year, and one sixth of Lowell's population of 59,500.\footnote{Francois Weil, Les Franco-Américains, 1860-1980 (Tours, France: Editions Belin, 1989), p. 35 ff; Hanlan, Working Population, p. 21; Yves Roby, Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre (1776-1930) (Sillery, Quebec: Editions du Septentrion, 1990), p. 63; Margaret Terrell Parker, Lowell, A Study of Industrial Development (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 89.}

The new Franco-American workforce took the least skilled jobs in the textile mills, joining females from longer-settled immigrant groups. Yankee males and men from Ireland, Scotland, and England were usually to be found in the more skilled or in management positions. These divisions between skilled and unskilled, French-speaking and English, male and female, hindered united action among workers regarding their conditions of work.

Lowell labor did have a political champion in the colorful Gen. Benjamin Butler. Depending on a coalition of Yankee farmers and Irish workers, the Democratic Butler dismayed Republican industrialists by managing to obtain the rank of Governor of the Commonwealth in 1882 (a year which also saw the election of the first Irish Catholic mayor of Lowell). Butler's efforts on behalf of an eight-hour day came to nought, but he cleaned up the administration of state poor houses and prisons, and he encouraged the up-and-coming Irish by appointing the first Massachusetts judge to come from their number. Into the 20th century however, Irish-American politicians and labor leaders of any background found much opposition in a Massachusetts legislature dominated by Republican Brahmins. In Republican New Hampshire, much the same situation reigned.\footnote{Hans Louis Trefousse, Ben Butler: The South Called Him BEAST (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1957), pp. 244-249; Mary H. Blewett, "The Mills and the Multitudes: A Political History," in Eno, Cotton was King, pp. 174-175; Keyssar, Out of Work, pp. 258-259.}

Merrimack workers would have to strive at the local level to win their battles. The struggle went slowly. An abortive 1867 strike among the relatively few skilled mule spinners\footnote{See footnote 49 above.} of the Valley - the millowners had more fine...
goods on hand than they could sell - came to nothing. During 1875 labor agitation among the Lancashire-born skilled mule spinners of Fall River incited their confreres in Lowell to also go out on strike. Despite support of the English mule spinners in Lowell by less-skilled Irish ring-spinners, the affair ended badly. Over one hundred Lowell mule spinners left town in order to avoid blacklisting.  

Mill owners of that city began to utilize improved ring-spinning machines. These new model machines were simple enough to be run by green labor from Canada, yet able to spin the finer yarns once the monopoly of mule spinning machines and their skilled operatives. In 1881, a habitant wishing for plenty of work in the States would be advised to head for Lowell because "les greves n'étaient pas aussi fréquentes qu'à Fall River." Fear of unemployment during the economic depression of the 1890s helped keep labor unrest at a minimum in Lowell until the dawn of the new century.

Although skilled British woolen workers successfully struck for higher wages at the Pacific Mills worsted plant in 1882, in Lawrence labor peace was the rule into the 1890s. Then in 1894 immigrant workers of all stripes - Armenians, Italians, Germans (but not the French Canadians, many of whom returned home to Quebec) - struck the Washington Mills for higher wages. The strike failed, but the immigrant group unity presaged what was to come in Lawrence early in the next century.

Textile workers in Lowell and Lawrence did not join in the lively labor agitation that characterized the shoe town of Haverhill down the river. After much Knights of Labor activity following the Civil War, Haverhill by the early 1890s had become a stronghold of the AFL-affiliated Boot and Shoe Workers' Union. In an effort to escape the BSU, Massachusetts shoe manufacturers after 1880 began to move their operations up the Merrimack and into New Hampshire. Their ploy failed, and from Lawrence to Manchester, the

55 Ibid., p. 20.
union activities of shoe workers could be constantly observed by textile workers. 59

Doubtless shoe workers contributed to the Knights of Labor agitation in Manchester that prepared the ground for a strike of the majority of Amoskeag operatives in 1886. The strike failed in its immediate objective to raise wages, but the sight of workers of all backgrounds staying out of the mills for several weeks expedited a rejuvenated policy of paternalism at the Amoskeag works. In 1885, the son of Ezekial Straw, Herman Straw, had donned the mantle of company agent in Manchester, six years after his father had laid it down. After 1886, Herman proved to have the winning ways of his father with all constituencies in Manchester, and to be able to keep labor peace among Manchester textile workers until the second decade of the 20th century. 60

Characterized by labor peace or labor struggle, by good pay or bad, the industries of the Merrimack Valley continued to draw immigrants as the 19th century closed. Workers continued to flow back and forth across the Canadian border, while at the port of Boston, newer immigrant groups from southern and eastern Europe, and from the Levant, arrived on their way to join relatives in the mills and shops along the Merrimack. They would arrive in the Valley by train.

In the mid-1830s, the Boston Associates had joined the cutting edge of transportation with the construction of the Boston and Lowell Railroad for carrying Merrimack textiles to market. This very first manifestation of railroading along the Merrimack demonstrated the power of iron rails controlled by aggressive capitalists. The Boston Associates had not scrupled at utilizing the Middlesex Canal to transport materials for the construction of its successor. After fifteen years of railroad competition, the owners of the canal admitted complete defeat and filed for bankruptcy. 61 Empire building marked the history of Merrimack Valley railroads during the remainder of the century. By the dawn of the 20th century, Merrimack Valley railroading could be summed up by the title "The Boston and Maine."

The Boston and Maine Railroad began its existence in 1836 as a seven-mile spur connecting Andover, Mass. to the


Boston and Lowell tracks. During the rest of the century, the directors of the Boston and Maine became heavily involved in the maneuvers by various rings of New England speculators to control routes to and from Canada. Railroad capitalists proved none too scrupulous in the means used in these struggles. The extent of bribery of New Hampshire state legislators during an 1887 "railroad war" for control of rail lines along the Merrimack between Nashua and Concord became such a scandal that an investigative committee of the New Hampshire legislature felt constrained to call before it the president of the mighty Boston and Maine. In answer to a query concerning the Boston and Maine's lavish generosity to state officials regarding rail passes, the president stated,

Men are a good deal like hogs: they don't like to be driven, but you throw them down a little corn, and you can call them most anywhere. That is all there is to it. I supposed such a politician as you are would know that without asking me.  

By fair means or foul, by 1895 the Boston and Maine controlled the railroads of New Hampshire and southern and central Maine (save for the Canadian-owned Grand Trunk RR linking Montreal and Portland), that is to say 2,776 miles of track leased or directly owned. In the process, it had absorbed thirty other railroads, including the Boston and Lowell. In the process of effecting this combination, the directors of the Boston and Maine had become major powers in the politics of Maine and New Hampshire. The maps displaying Boston and Maine trackage were also maps displaying a network of influence and overlordship covering northern New England, and in particular alliances with and satrapies over economic and political units along the Merrimack River.

Railroad tracks transformed the lifeways and landscape of the Valley to such an extent that they came to be taken for granted. In collections of memoirs of life along the

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Merrimack, the massive rail networks scarcely merited comment. They had become part of "second nature," as obvious and "natural" as the river itself.  

Of course, industrialization was steadily undermining the linkage of Merrimack waters to any notion of pristine nature. As late as 1879 a Salisbury native could pen a happy memoir of a rowing trip with his sons up the river into New Hampshire - they were amazed and delighted to discover bears could still be found in the woods near Lawrence - but the journal of the trip mentions locks and bridges as often as sky and water.

Perhaps the 1870s were the last time Merrimack observers could hope for the possibility of natural river rhythms coexisting with industrial use. That decade saw the success of heroic efforts to restock salmon in the river, after their virtual disappearance in the 1850s. Alarm at the disappearance of the Merrimack shad, alewife, and salmon fisheries resulted in state-mandated fish ladders at the dams at Lawrence, Lowell, and Manchester. Year after year, the fish and game commissions of New Hampshire and Massachusetts released fry from Penobscot Bay in Maine into White Mountain pools. In 1877, the commissions reported the salmon fishery restored.

However, the optimism of the late 1870s was severely tested during the next decade. Intensive fishing of shad at the mouth of the Merrimack (shad did not need to ascend far up the Merrimack to propagate) involved the taking of salmon; salmon were illegally taken at the various fishways, and the parasitic lamprey eels which accompanied the salmon north did not help matters. Without doubt, the increasing pollution of the river by dyeworks and tanneries had its effect. The drought of 1880-1886 cut sharply into the ability of salmon to ascend the fishways around Merrimack dams: the canals bringing water to the factory turbines had first claim on the limited water flow. By the early 1890s, the salmon run was once again in trouble.

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Deforestation also contributed to the run's demise. After 1847, the forests of the northern Merrimack had been intensively exploited. With the spring freshet, logs felled over the winter were driven down to a boom above the Amoskeag Dam at Manchester. Citizens would gather along the bank to watch the lumberjacks, with great danger to life and limb, open the boom and guide millions of board feet of pine and spruce over the falls and on to the Lowell sawmills. However, even the forests of the western White Mountains could not last forever. The last log drive occurred in 1897. 68

The thinning of the forests of the northern Merrimack watershed seems to have affected the flow of water into the river. The year 1895 saw a flood damaging mills along the river. With the freshet of 1896 came a larger flood which washed away the fishway at the Lawrence dam. The salmon could no longer ascend to the White Mountain spawning pools. 69

Flood or no flood, perhaps the migratory fish were doomed. Industrial and human waste increasingly polluted the river. Also, mills proved so avaricious for water that during certain low water periods in the first decades of the 20th century the river below Lawrence nearly dried up. During the summer, the impounding of water behind the textile city dams on Sunday, when the millraces were not open, left the riverbed from Lawrence to the sea a stinking mud flat. 70

In the early 1890s, researchers led by Hiram Mills established the relationship of sewage-polluted river water and the annual outbreaks of typhoid along the Merrimack. In early fall Manchester would experience its peak in typhoid cases, then Nashua, then Lowell, and, by mid-winter, Lawrence. As a result of Mills' researches, Merrimack cities which drew drinking water from the river installed

69 Stolte, Forgotten Salmon, pp. 120-130.
70 Hunter, Waterpower, p. 291; Philip M. Marston and Myron Gordon, "Notes on Fish and Early Fishing in the Merrimack River System," in Biological Survey of the Merrimack Watershed (Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Dec, 1938), p. 196. Marston and Gordon's survey displays an ecological consciousness quite congruent with the 1980s and 90s. They end their account quoting the 1660 farewell speech of Chief Passaconaway of the Pennacooks - the authors apply the Algonquian's metaphor of an old oak trembling, splitting, falling in the onrush of White Men to the natural systems of the Merrimack watershed - and lamenting the disappearance of salmon, shad, alewives, and lamp-eels from the river. Ibid., p. 197.
filters at their drawpipes. However, the river itself grew more and more noisome.

Thoreau’s 1849 characterization of the Merrimack as but a flow of "waste water" had come to be all-too-accurate. No longer a fishery, no longer a means of transportation, the river’s utility consisted of the number of millpowers it could deliver to mill turbines, and the amount of industrial and human waste it could carry off to the sea.

By 1900, the river’s valley had become home to a string of industrial cities, whose polyglot inhabitants toiled at factories producing miles of textiles and thousands of shoes. Boston and Maine tracks linked the cities to the great metropolis of Boston - real locus of the economic control of the Valley - and to the world beyond. To that world would go the products of the Valley’s workers. From that world came exciting ideas about the place of workers in society, and also news of textile mills rising in the South. The citizens of Lowell, the "Spindle City," and of Manchester, the "Queen City," entered the new century aware of possibilities of change, but also proud of what had been built in their municipalities.

Two Cities

In 1902, the Manchester Guardian, the premier newspaper of the cotton-manufacturing area of England, sent a reporter to the United States to investigate the cotton textile industry there. The reporter, Thomas Young, concentrated upon American costs and technologies. However, as he travelled from textile center to textile center, the English journalist also sought to give some idea of the various textile towns and their social environments.

Today, one can find T.M. Young’s investigations published in a book hidden away in the stacks of college libraries. Young’s American Cotton Industry brings to life the departed worlds of the Southern mill village and the New England textile city. Several chapters of his book focus upon the two great cotton cities of the Merrimack Corridor, Manchester and Lowell.

Young passes over Lawrence, because its textile work force, equal in size to that of Lowell and surpassing that of Manchester, devotes most of its effort to the weaving of woolen and worsted fabrics. Young also passes over Nashua, despite its concentration on cotton manufacturing. Nashua’s small size - its 1900 population was less than half that of

72 T. M. Young, American Cotton Industry, A Study of Work and Workers Contributed to the Manchester Guardian (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1903).
Manchester and a fourth that of Lowell\textsuperscript{73} - probably justified this oversight. Further differences from its sister Merrimack cotton mill towns lay in its mills' constantly varied production and the preeminence of certain products in certain market niches. In limiting his exploration to Manchester and Lowell, Young concentrates upon mills producing long runs of staple types of cloth.\textsuperscript{74}

In his account of Manchester, N.H., the journalist delights in the physical appearance of the New Hampshire city, so unlike its English namesake. The American city, he notes, has clear air, clear waters, and sunny skies; almost every street is an avenue of noble trees ... And, as if all these green trees were nothing, the citizens have given themselves public parks or gardens upon a scale of unexampled generosity.\textsuperscript{75}

Young turns from the topic of parks, creations of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, to comment on the great mills of the city:

Perhaps the handsomest, certainly the most impressive, buildings in Manchester are the Amoskeag and Manchester Mills. They are not ornate - ornate mills are often hideous - but they are built of a warm red brick, beautifully weathered, and form a continuous curved facade (like the concave side of Regent Street in London), nearly half a mile long. Rising sheer out of a deep, clear, swift-flowing stream (the Merrimack), upon the other bank of which are grass and trees, they need little more than to

\textsuperscript{73} The 1900 census figures were 23,898 for Nashua, 56,987 for Manchester, and 94,969 for Lowell. The disproportion in population between Nashua and its sister cities only grew by 1910: Nashua 26,005; Manchester, 70,063; Lowell, 106,294. Dexter Philip Arnold, "A Row of Bricks": Worker Activism in the Merrimack Valley Textile Industry, 1912-1922 (Ph.D. dissertation University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1985), p. 854.

\textsuperscript{74} In 1900, the Nashua Manufacturing Company produced 120 kinds of cloth, including fine fabrics, flannels, and blankets. The city's other textile corporation, the Jackson Manufacturing Company, produced the very highly regarded "Indian Head" line of fabrics. Stephen Winship, A Testing Time, Crisis and Revival in Nashua (Nashua, N.H.: The Nashua-New Hampshire Foundation, 1989), p. 56. Frederic Amory, who served since the 1870s as treasurer of both companies, seems to have largely followed the "flexible batch production" strategy Philip Scranton describes as typical of Philadelphia's textile mills. See his Figured Tapestry. Production, markets, and power in Philadelphia textiles, 1885-1941 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 7-8.

\textsuperscript{75} Young, American Cotton Industry, p. 35.
be silent to masquerade successfully as ancient colleges.\textsuperscript{76}

Most of the mills so described still exist today. From the interstate highway following the west bank of the Merrimack, a driver can enjoy the sight of a series of stately red brick mills across the rushing river. The totality of mill buildings extends even further than the half-mile the Englishman focused upon, and today a driver would notice some large red-bricked factories on the west side of the river, mills erected during the decade after our journalist's visit.

Were the modern driver to cross a bridge into downtown Manchester, she would appreciate the many city parks (although blight long ago did away with the fine trees which gave the city's main thoroughfare, Elm Street, its name). Between the downtown commercial district centering on Elm Street and the mills along the river, the driver would observe certain blocks consisting of sturdily-built stone- and-brick housing developments. These were built by the Amoskeag as company housing just before World War I. Gazing back across the Merrimack at the hill forming the city's "west side," she would observe the red brick mass of the cathedral-like Sainte Marie's Church looming over a mass of working-class "triple deckers." At the turn of the century, "L'église Sainte Marie" served, with its surrounding schools, orphanage, and credit union (the first in the nation), as a monument to the values and hard work of the Queen City's Franco-American community, a companion piece to the "college" of Manchester mills showing forth the values and ingenuity of the Boston Associates.

To a remarkable degree, the social history of Manchester can be read in its architecture: textile mills by the river, company-planned commercial district and company-built housing near the mills, spires of ethnic churches rising over working-class enclaves, shoe factories built at the turn of the century beyond the older districts, and striking Victorian residences of the management class concentrated in the city's northern district. The vistas from the river and the clarity of the city's rectilinear design make Manchester quite as impressive today as it was during the visit of the English journalist nine decades ago.

Young of the \textit{Guardian}, did not dwell upon the physical aspect of the other great Merrimack cotton city, Lowell. Indeed, today the city does not present quite the grand vistas afforded by its sister to the north: the Merrimack curves at the Pawtucket Falls, in a sense hemming in the Boston Associate buildings fronting the river, and in any case most of the mills were built beside canals in the city's interior. The effect of the large L'église St. Jean Baptist, situated on level ground, does not match that of the hilltop St. Marie in Manchester. Since World War II, virtually all of the "little Canada" surrounding the Lowell

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid.
church has been swept away by urban renewal. However, in contrast to Manchester, the canals which once powered mills have not been filled in. Like Manchester, a mill district, a commercial district, and a tenement district are still discernable.

Spires and domes of ethnic churches still rise over Lowell's neighborhoods. Across the Merrimack from the downtown and the old mills, lie neighborhoods originally built to house the workers who poured into Lowell in the decades after the Civil War, along with the halls of the Lowell Textile School (now the University of Massachusetts at Lowell), begun in 1897 to foster the technical education of those working in the mills. Unlike Manchester, altitude, rather than latitude, denotes the upper-class district: the families of managers and professional persons dwelt in the highlands of Belvidere across the Concord River from the downtown plain. Along the Concord remain factories built after the preemption of sites along Lowell's canal system by Boston Associate mills.

Today, the National Park Service has many remnants of the past to show visitors in the National Historical Park district created in downtown Lowell. Visitors can take a boat along the old canals and through the old locks. In the basement of what used to be part of the Suffolk Mills, the park guides direct water from the canal through an old turbine which turns an enormous leather belt. Visitors can pass through a "mill girl exhibit" at one of the remaining corporation boarding houses. Tour groups walk through the old ethnic neighborhoods: the Acre, the Greek Triangle, Little Canada. Passing by the first floor of the Boott Mill Museum, the visitor can hear the roar of a roomful of looms.

In our time, this sound experience is uniquely tied to the Boott Museum. Buildings still stand in the old mill districts of Lowell and Manchester, but the sharp clack of looms, once omnipresent in the two cities, can be heard today only at the Boott. The busy soul has gone out of the industrial district, only a husk remains. The Amoskeag mill yard, the sites shown by the park guides of Lowell, are monuments to an industry and a way of life gone with the wind.

The wind which silenced the Merrimack looms and turned Lowell and Manchester mills into museums, came from the South.
CHAPTER II
A WEAKENED HEGEMONY

Introduction

In the last decade of the 19th century, the lower Merrimack Valley formed a discrete industrial region knit together by the rails of the Boston and Maine Railroad. Its largest cities had been planned by engineers in the employ of Boston Associates and peopled by immigrants attracted by jobs at Boston Associate textile mills. The descendants of the Boston Associates owned the Boston and Maine and most of the mills. The power of these "Brahmins" in the legislature and on the local level fended off successful organization of the workers.

However, with the turn of the century, the Brahmin hegemony over northern New England came under strong attack. In part, this weakening of their old power was due to the changing economy of the United States as a whole. In part, challenges to Brahmin hegemony arose from the inhabitants of the Merrimack Corridor, expressing their will in votes and strikes. This chapter will describe these national and local changes, setting the background for the time of troubles which would begin in Lowell and Manchester in the 1920s.

At the beginning of the 20th century, major shifts in the American economic landscape were beginning to affect the economic security not only of Merrimack textile enterprises but of industries throughout New England. Rising cotton cloth production in the Southern piedmont posed a threat to New England cotton textile production. Besides this, in the world of manufacturing, great improvements in organization and technique had been made, changes great enough to be denoted a "Second Industrial Revolution." This new stage of industrial progress in many ways passed New England by. New England textile interests strove to replicate the success achieved by mergers among industries using the new technologies, but what worked for the industries of the new era proved ill suited to industries of the old.

Local challenges to the Brahmin hegemony arose among the inhabitants of the Merrimack Corridor. In the late 19th century, non-textile, non-railroad sources of manufacturing wealth had grown in the Merrimack Corridor. Something of
the civic capitalist regime discussed by John Cumbler\textsuperscript{1} became energized in the Valley, and this had an effect politically. The Progressive Movement, distrustful of control from a distance and of bigness in corporations, influenced Merrimack Valley voters. Especially in New Hampshire, legislators passed laws bolstering local control of economic policy. As a new century dawned, it even seemed that the polyglot industrial workers of the Merrimack cities might be organizing into unions very effectively pressing the case for higher wages and better treatment.

In the decade before World War I, the huge brick mills and the granite railroad embankments of the Merrimack Corridor ceased to symbolize anything like complete social control by textile and transportation corporations. Unfortunately, whatever Progressive legislation was passed for the Valley and whatever victories were gained by organized workers, a general problem remained. Economic power was shifting from New England to other regions of the country. Huge production runs of cloth occasioned by the demands of the First World War would mask the relative weakness of the Merrimack cotton textile industry, but by the middle of the 1920s, the grim effects of Southern competition upon the cotton industry in Lowell and Manchester would become all too clear.

\textbf{New Industrial Regions Threaten New England}

Since the Civil War, entrepreneurs in the Southern Piedmont had set up cotton mills employing labor from the hardscrabble farms of the mountains. The new mills benefitted from financing and equipment provided by New England textile machinery firms eager to push their products. (See Appendix 1.) By the turn of the century, New England cotton mills were increasingly conceding production of coarser fabrics to the Southerners. The New Englanders concentrated on the harder-to-produce finer goods.\textsuperscript{2} However, the Southern mills were following right


along, as the table below demonstrates.

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This regional competition emerged as a major theme of the reports of British reporter Thomas M. Young in 1902. The Englishman could even discern a future in which the development of the Southern industry would render its mills "even more formidable competitors" not only to the fine-spinning industry of New England, but to the premier fine-spinning industry of the world, that of his native Lancashire.⁴

Certainly, in 1902 the threat of Southern competition figured in the worldview of every New England mill owner. As we shall see, some of the established mills of New England had already erected branches in the South in order to take advantage of favorable costs. From our vantage point nine decades later, Southern competition appears as a Damocles sword hanging over the post-1900 textile regime of the Merrimack Valley.

The early 20th century Brahmin bankers and corporation heads of Boston realized that not only had New England's textile industry lost its commanding lead over Southern competitors, but also its shoe and its shipping industries were slipping in importance. More and more of the shoe industry was now located in the Middle West, near the source of hides. New York City, already the absolutely preeminent port of the nation, was fast becoming the nation's preeminent financial center. The power of New York finance was demonstrated precisely in the realm of transatlantic trade when in 1902 the Morgan interests combined the remaining Boston-based shipping companies into the great International Mercantile Marine Company.


⁵Edwin J. Clapp, in his in-depth study of the problems of the port of Boston, freely admitted "There are two sorts of seaport along the Atlantic Coast: New York and all the others." *The Port of Boston* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), p. 25.
Venerable New England firms were losing market share to new factories built elsewhere, nearer fast-growing western population centers. Alarmed Massachusetts political and economic leaders focused their efforts on strengthening the Commonwealth's vulnerable economy. In the hope that Massachusetts could replace lost western and southern markets with new markets to the north, Henry Cabot Lodge and other Bay State national legislators strove to establish free trade with the Dominion of Canada. In 1911, these efforts came to naught when the Canadian Parliament refused to ratify a reciprocity treaty.

Not only were New England business leaders faced with an aged industrial plant and a location far from the center of U.S. population, but they found themselves largely bystanders in great new developments in American manufacturing. In the first two decades of the 20th century the United States had entered into a "Second Industrial Revolution."

New Ways of Organizing Industry Impact Lowell and Manchester

The "First Industrial Revolution" of the 19th century had consisted of the rationalized application of water and steam power to the production of goods within factories filled with workers tending specialized machinery. The achievements of the Boston Associates, both in manufacturing and railroads, had been archetypes for the rest of the nation of this first industrial development. The "Second Industrial Revolution" largely consisted in the application of internal combustion engines to transportation and electric power to industrial production. The factories of this second surge of industry utilized mass production and continuous process techniques to pour forth a sea of consumer goods into the economy. The archetypes of this second revolution were the new automobile and chemical industries, and also electric utilities.  

Symbolic of the shift in phases of American industrial development was the use made in 1894 of the remaining large waterpower site on the Merrimack River. The developers of this site, Sewalls Falls near Concord, N.H., chose to devote their dam to generating hydroelectric power rather than to turning the belts of an old type factory power train.  

The new electric utilities were becoming pace-setters in the application of scientific research to efficient production and distribution of a commodity in networks of

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enormous scale. In late 1894, Samuel Insull discovered the importance of load factors in the planning of electric utility networks. Insull's utility empire would soon exemplify the multi-layer, multi-unit concern run by professional management and utilizing the most advanced technology and most sophisticated merchandising techniques to get its product to consumers. In comparison, the old Merrimack Corridor textile firm, with its treasurer in Boston, its agent at the mill, and its usual dependence on commission house marketing, seemed as old-fashioned as its use of waterpower to drive leather belting. The new, Second Industrial Revolution firms of Ford and Du Pont would seek to echo the efficiency of the electric network in their managerial organization and their assembly-line or continuous process technologies.

Textile mills did share in the new electric technology. Increasingly mills were converting from a power system linking each machine in a room to a whirring belt dependant on steam or water power to a system linking electric motors on individual machines to an electric transmission network. This network could be tied to generators in the plant or many miles away. Electric motors allowed some rearrangement of machinery in the older mills, and more efficient arrangement of production in new mills (in most cases, this meant mills built in the South). However, textile production could not reach the smoothness and scale of assembly-line mass production of the new consumer goods industries.

The natural fibers utilized by the mills of the Merrimack Corridor did not readily lend themselves to the continuous flow techniques of the burgeoning petroleum, chemical, and metal industries or the clockwork efficiency of assembly lines. Each stage of converting cotton or wool into cloth - cleaning, carding, spinning, weaving, finishing - had its own unique set of machines and its special problems which called upon the judgment of worker or foreman. Textile production utilizing natural fibers and contemporary technology could never replicate the smoothness of the new mega-industries. By the time of the First World War, not only was New England becoming peripheral to the

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rest of the country as a manufacturing center, but in a sense the textile industry, so important to the region, had become peripheral to the main push of U.S. industry.

"Peripheral" is precisely the tag Thomas K. McCraw gives to firms of the early 20th century engaged in industries which were relatively labor intensive, present few barriers to entry, and were subject to a great deal of competition. The textile industry lies in this peripheral category. "Center firms," in McCraw’s nomenclature, refer to units of technologically advanced, capital intensive industries which presented major barriers to entry and benefit from economies of scale.  

The development of the elaborate management structure of multi-unit, vertically-integrated center firms has been the subject of Alfred Chandler’s famous studies of 20th century American industrial giants such as Standard Oil, Du Pont, General Motors, General Electric, etc. Chandler shows that a number of what became huge center firms by the 1920s had benefitted from the trust and merger movement of the late 19th and early 20th century. Utilizing the researches of Chandler, McCraw argues that by integrating horizontally by the turn of the century, such center firms as Standard Oil, U.S. Steel, Quaker Oats, and International Harvester discovered that they could achieve marked economies of scale and could produce long runs of low-cost product. When these center firms then integrated vertically, they increased efficiency and effectively blocked the rise of new competition. These center firms became especially effective in their integration forward into marketing and advertising.

Unfortunately, the startling economic success enjoyed by the integrating efforts of center firms was not shared by those firms in the peripheral industry of cotton textiles which participated in the merger movement. Strong interconnections among the directors of Boston-based banks and textile concerns expedited the formation of textile combines aping other turn-of-the-century industry trusts. Just as the House of Morgan made a success of U. S. Steel and International Harvester, banks such as Kidder, Peabody or Lee, Higginson sought profit from supposed greater


13 McCraw, Prophets, pp. 68-76, and p. 98.
efficiencies and/or monopoly power resulting from combinations of mills making certain textile products. Rarely did such textile combines work out.

Boston investment banks involved in such cotton textile combines, banks such as Kidder, Peabody and Lee, Higginson were perhaps overly impressed by the apparent success of the American Woolen Company combination negotiated in 1899. William Wood, Treasurer of the Washington woolen mills in Lawrence, instigated this merger of a number of woolen mills throughout New England. American Woolen actually achieved a quasi-monopoly of the lucrative menswear woolen and worsted markets. Wood extended the American Woolen empire by constructing the huge Ayer (named after his father-in-law Frederick Ayer) and Wood mills in Lawrence, and American Woolen showed strong balance sheets through a combination of investment in the latest technology and careful, in-house control of marketing.  

Kidder, Peabody began the consolidation of New England cotton mills in 1899 with the merger of yarn mills around New Bedford into the New England Cotton Yarn Company. In a pattern that was to become familiar, the expected profits from this combination of over half-a-million spindles did not materialize. To make a long story short, after a reorganization of the combination in 1904, again without making it profitable, a frustrated Kidder, Peabody sold off the properties during the First World War.  

Meanwhile, a combination of cotton duck mills originating out of Baltimore in 1899 also had fallen upon hard times. In an effort to control a large share of the prosperous duck market, the Baltimore syndicate had resorted to unwise borrowing in order to buy up duck mills. In 1901, this United States Cotton Duck Corp. purchased the fine duck mills of Manchester, New Hampshire, the Stark Mills (T. Jefferson Coolidge, Sr., Treasurer) the product of which bore the well-known "Stark" trade mark. Burdened by

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16"Duck" designates a spectrum of canvas-type fabrics, once devoted largely to sail cloth, but by the early 20th century supplying tire cloth for the automobile industry and cloth for hoses used in other industries.
large debt payments, U.S. Duck had to charge high prices for its product, principally sail-quality duck, which it thought it could demand because of the number of mills it controlled - 22 in 1910. Yet, the combine never seems to have controlled more than 78% of one type, sail, of duck product. In 1905, in order to save on commission costs, it absorbed a selling house and cut off several selling houses, including Wellington Sears, which had long served the duck industry.\footnote{Melvin Thomas Copeland, *The Cotton Manufacturing Industry of the United States* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1966 [reprint of 1917 edition]), p. 165; *Poor's Manual of Industrials, 1911* (New York: Poor's Railroad Manual Co., 1911), p. 2086. The 1911 Poor's reported on corporations through the fiscal year ending in July 1910.}

These spurned commission houses, anxious to secure sources of supply outside the syndicate, joined a number of entrepreneurs who had seen their chance and constructed mills manufacturing a low-priced duck fabric.\footnote{Arthur S. Dewing, *Corporate Promotions and Reorganizations.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914), pp. 334-70.} In the first decade of the 20th century these new mills taught U.S. Duck a sharp lesson about relative ease of entry into its market. The textile industry was too large and too competitive for any combine to effectively monopolize even one product segment. Also, the savings U.S. Duck may have hoped for from supposed efficiencies deriving from large-scale production never materialized. Indeed, a student of this and other cotton mill consolidations, Arthur S. Dewing, came to the conclusion in 1915 that, \[\ldots\]

There are no economics of large-scale production in the cotton manufacturing industry. The large group of mills can manufacture no more cheaply than the single mill, even under the best conditions.\footnote{Ibid., p. 374. Dewing's conclusion would seem to cast doubt on the ability of large congeries of mills like the Amoskeag to make money, and the Amoskeag did make money. However, as we shall see, that concern was blessed with very highly rated management, and Dewing indicates in a note on p. 374 that truly superior management could make a difference.} Conditions were scarcely of the best for U.S. Duck, since in its desperations to fund its debt, it had neglected replacement and repair at its many mills. This improvidence especially hurt the once-proud Stark operations in Manchester. Production costs rose, profits disappeared, and the syndicate underwent reorganizations in 1905 and 1910. Out of the second refinancing, it emerged with the name International Cotton Mills Corporation and a new management, including Myron Taylor, who brought into the combine mills in New York and Massachusetts (among them the Lowell Weaving Co.) dedicated to producing cloth for automobile tires.
Once he realized the sad shape of the combine, Taylor cashed out in 1912. Others had faith in International Cotton, with its mills now stretching from Alabama to Nova Scotia, and in 1913 it again underwent a reorganization, with Massachusetts interests taking command. Foremost among the Massachusetts players were the lawyer Robert Herrick, the engineer (and president of the Pacific) E. F. Greene, and the investment bank of Lee, Higginson, and Co. In 1913 Lockwood, Greene moved beyond mill construction to mill management when it took over the direction of the International Cotton empire. Lee, Higginson renegotiated the financing of the conglomerate, and Lockwood, Greene poured money into the re-equipment of the mills, just in time for the World War I boom. International Cotton began to make profits. However, the Lockwood, Greene empire was not destined to exist beyond the 1920s.

By the time of World War I, shifting certain production lines to southern branches had become an option for a number of Lowell mills. In 1894 a new company, "Massachusetts Mills in Georgia" had been set up, which came to share the same directorate as Lowell's Massachusetts Cotton Mills. In 1899, the directors of the Merrimack Mfg. Co. voted to construct a mill in Huntsville, Ala. The Appleton Company bought mills in South Carolina in the early years of the new century.

In Lowell, ties to units in other cities and regions were not limited to the cotton mill segment of the textile industry. In 1899, the Lowell Manufacturing Company, maker of carpets since 1838, merged with the Bigelow Carpet Company of Clinton, Mass., and formed a new concern bearing the Bigelow name. In 1901, Kidder, Peabody helped arrange a merger of New York and Connecticut carpet companies into the Hartford Carpet Corporation. (Robert Winsor of Kidder, Peabody became a Hartford director.) In 1914, the Bigelow and Hartford concerns, seeking greater efficiencies in a very competitive environment, merged into the Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Company, "the third largest concern incorporated in New England, following the American Woolen

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22 Kennedy, Profits and Losses, p. 23.
and Amoskeag in size." The venerable Lowell Manufacturing Company's plant had become but a part of a textile empire. The merger movement in the New England carpet industry was echoed in the region's textile machinery industry. By the turn of the century, industry leaders had tired of a fierce competition that had gone on for decades, and saw in mergers the possibility of efficient combination of product lines. In 1905 Robert Herrick, utilizing his wide circle of contacts among Boston banking circles and New England textile firm heads, arranged for a rationalizing arrangement which vested ownership of the Lowell Machine Shop in the hands of its erstwhile regional competitors. Under Herrick's leadership, the Lowell Machine Shop took over the small but quite profitable Kitson Machine Shop of Lowell. In 1911, Herrick purchased personal control of the Lowell Machine Shop. The next year he further rationalized the industry by negotiating the combination of the Lowell Shops with strong firms in Newton, Mass., and Saco, Me., into the Saco-Lowell Shops. The point of this merger lay in efficiencies to be gained by trimming redundant machinery lines and uniting similar functions. The Lowell Machine Shop properties were thus at the mercy of Herrick's judgment.

Thus, in the fourteen years before the First World War, the Lowell community saw concerns devoted to cotton and woolen production, to the making of carpets and textile machinery tied to units located in other cities and regions. During the two decades after 1914, every one of the linkages detailed above, with the exception of the Merrimack's Huntsville plant, was to prove a disaster for Lowell. Up the river in Manchester, takeovers were also the motif of the textile industry in the early part of the century. However, with the exception of the Stark Mills, this concentration of textile production remained untied to mill combines outside the city. Rather, under the rule of Dumaine, the Amoskeag absorbed in 1905 two of the three other textile companies existing in the city (the Stark was the third, for the moment unabsorbed, company). These two concerns, the Amory cotton and the Manchester woolen mills, gave the Amoskeag complex a total of 547,000 spindles and 17,000 looms.

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The new Manchester Mills division of the Amoskeag made great profits in worsted production, while the corporation's traditional strength in cotton gingham production continued. So successful were the Amoskeag ginghams that in 1909 the corporation constructed a 100,000 spindle cotton mill on the west (non-canal) side of the Merrimack. In honor of Dumaine's mentor, T. J. Coolidge, the new mill was named the Coolidge Mill. It boasted the latest in steam power, which generated electricity to drive 3,000 modern Draper looms. The Coolidge gamble paid off (a ten year tax abatement for the mill by the city of Manchester did not hurt), and the Amoskeag made massive profits.  


27Kenison, "Dumaine's Amoskeag," pp. 71-75. At the end of the 20th century's first decade, in order to protect themselves against what would today be called hostile raiders, and also to forestall danger from any new government taxation, certain other successful northern New England textile firms resorted to huge dividend payouts of profits to stockholders. This course was followed by the Pacific in Lawrence and the Pepperell in Maine. Dumaine had the same concerns about speculators and taxation, but he wanted to guard Amoskeag cash reserves so that the corporation would not have to go into debt at all when, say, money was needed to purchase cotton. In 1911 he arranged for the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company to shift from its status as a New Hampshire-chartered corporation to become a Massachusetts-chartered "voluntary association," or trust, the stock of which could not be taxed and the books of which would be guarded from government scrutiny. Amoskeag stockholders were shielded from temptation from raiders by seeing each share of their old AMC stock magically split into two shares of preferred and three shares of common new AMC stock. Dividends came pouring in to their coffers. See exchange of letters between T. Jefferson Coolidge, Sr., and F. C. Dumaine 6/19 and 6/20/11 in Dumaine Archives, Manchester Historical Association. The stock split gave stockholders $18.00 total dividends ($9.00 from two preferred shares and an equal amount for three common) in 1912 where they had received $12.00 for one share of the old stock in 1911. Kenison, "Dumaine's Amoskeag," p. 84. Pepperell followed the Amoskeag's lead and became a Massachusetts voluntary association in 1915. Evelyn H. Knowlton, Pepperell's Progress: The History of a Cotton Textile Company, 1844-1945 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 226.
Successful as the Amoskeag was, its directors were not tempted to partake in any textile combinations beyond the city of Manchester before WWI. In the 1880s, T. Jefferson Coolidge had investigated the possibility of building a branch mill in the South, but, in the event, Amoskeag expansion that decade came in the form of the construction of the large Jefferson Mill in Manchester. In Dumaine's time, an opportunity arose to purchase mills in Columbia, S.C., between 1912-1914, but the Amoskeag continued to tie its fate to the city of Manchester alone. 28

Happy as that decision was for the Queen City, its citizens were not totally dependent on the good will of Amoskeag executives in Boston. Both Manchester and Lowell had traditions of local entrepreneurship and local patriotism. In the early years of the new century, that patriotism would express itself in various ways, including supporting the Progressive Movement.

Civic Capitalism And Progressivism In Two Cities

Although the Merrimack Corridor's economy in the early 20th century remained tied to fortunes of the cotton textile industry, the cities of Manchester and Lowell had ceased to be merely company towns ruled from Boston. In Lowell, not all the mills were governed from afar. If economic crises were to come to the Spindle City, perhaps local owners of mills and other enterprises would provide leadership for their community. Manchester possessed some significant sources of non-textile economic power. The civic capitalism of its citizens was being demonstrated in the erection of striking new buildings.

The Census of 1910 shows the variety of economic activity in the two cities. In 1910, out of 25,700 manufacturing workers in the city of Manchester, over 17,000 were employed in the textile mills, 88% making cotton and, to a lesser degree, woolen textiles in the giant Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, and the remainder making coarse cotton textiles in the Stark Company. Some 5,327 operatives worked in the shoe factories, mainly at the Hoyt and W. H. McElwain shops; and 520 worked for the tobacco industry, most of them making cigars for the R. G. Sullivan Company. 29 The Queen City also benefited from the presence

28 Knowlton, Pepperell's Progress, pp. 232 & 339. The Pacific Mills of Lawrence later gained the Columbia property.

among its financial institutions of the headquarters of the New Hampshire Fire Insurance Company, with millions of dollars of assets. 30

In Lowell, out of 34,108 industrial workers, 14,000 were employed in manufacturing cotton textiles, mainly in the old Boston Associate firms dating back to before the Civil War. 31 Over 3,000 worked at making woolen and worsted goods, mainly at the venerable Middlesex Company, the Bigelow Carpet Company, and the Bay State Mills subsidiary of the huge American Woolen Company combine. Two thousand seven hundred workers labored in foundries and machine shops, mainly for the Lowell and Kitson textile machinery factories; one thousand three hundred operatives worked at shoe factories; and the remainder for a wide variety of other industries. These industries included the Boston and Maine's repair shops in neighboring Billerica and the United States Cartridge Company, a munitions firm that would mushroom to 9,000 employees during the First World War. 32

This last firm was one of a number of concerns begun by Benjamin Butler the control of which remained in the Lowell area. Alliance by marriage had vested ownership of these properties - U.S. Cartridge, U.S. Bunting, the Middlesex Co., the Wamesit Power Co. (supplying Concord River waterpower to non-Boston Associate firms) - in members of the Ames and Stevens clans socially equal to, but not members of, the Boston Brahmin caste which controlled nearly all the large Lowell mills. 33

The Ames and Stevens clans did fit the profile of the "civic capitalist" as described by historian John Cumbler in his study of the changing locus of economic power in Trenton, N.J. They lived locally, their business enterprises were local, and they showed loyalty to the community of Lowell. Butler Ames, grandson of Ben Butler, served as local representative to the Massachusetts legislature the last year of the 19th century and then the

31 The seven older, and larger, Lowell cotton mills were the Appleton Company, the Boot Mills, the Hamilton Manufacturing Company, the Lawrence Manufacturing Company (hosiery), the Massachusetts Cotton Mills, the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, and the Tremont and Suffolk Mills.
area’s representative to the U.S. Congress 1903-1913.\textsuperscript{34} C. Brooks Stevens, member of the Andover wool-milling clan who married Ben Butler’s granddaughter, served on the boards of not only Lowell textile firms, but also the local utility and a local bank.\textsuperscript{35} Perhaps in a time of local crisis, some of the feistiness of Lowell patriot Ben Butler, bane of the Boston Associates in the mid-19th century, would show up in his descendants.

Any hope of local patriotism on the part of the descendants of Ben Butler’s ally J. C. Ayer had departed by the mid-1920s. In the mid-nineteenth century, J. C. Ayer and his brother Frederick had lived in Lowell, instead of Boston, and made their considerable patent medicine fortune there. Lowell benefited from time and money they devoted to civic affairs. However, the Ayer descendants moved to Boston, New York, and beyond, and by the 20th century, the links to Lowell had weakened. J. C. Ayer’s son Frederick Fanning Ayer lived elsewhere, but kept up his father’s tradition of generosity to the city.\textsuperscript{36} However, he died in 1924, and the old tradition of Ayer philanthropy came to an end. Various cousins continued to include Lowell textile concerns among their many interests, but they were wedded to the worldview of the new "national capitalism": cosmopolitan centers of finance might draw their loyalty, but industrial towns were merely the location of plants in which they owned stock.\textsuperscript{37}

The the Ayer clan’s shift of attention away from Lowell boded ill for the future, because that city housed few large enterprises untied to the textile industry. The built fabric of Lowell reflected the continuing power of the Boston Associate firms: aside from churches and from civic buildings constructed at the end of the 19th century, the truly impressive architecture of the Spindle City consisted of textile industry millyards.

In Manchester, the textile industry remained for the most part the preserve of the Amoskeag. The city’s mills not under the sway of that corporation’s management in Boston came under the control of the Lockwood, Greene organization located in the Massachusetts capital. Boston

\textsuperscript{36}Frederick Fanning Ayer’s obituary in the \textit{Lowell Sun} lauded him as a "renowned philanthropist and benefactor extraordinary." It mentioned many benefactions to city institutions, including $166,000 to the Lowell Textile School, and gifts totalling $700,000 to the Lowell General Hospital. \textit{Lowell Sun}, 6/10/24, pp. 1 & 3.
executives still made the decisions for the Queen City textile industry. However, Manchester enjoyed some benefits of local civic capitalism. The city hosted significant locally-owned, non-textile firms in the shoe, banking and insurance businesses. By 1920 the architecture of the city reflected the pride of these local sources of power.

The New Hampshire Fire Insurance Company operated throughout the U.S. and Canada. In 1915 it built in Manchester's downtown a large granite headquarters in the classic style. An heiress of the fortune of a local manufacturer underwrote the construction of a new home for the Manchester Institute of Arts and Sciences. In 1916 the Institute opened across a park from the Fire Insurance Building. The Institute's noble edifice, granite on the outside, oak and marble on the inside, served as a shrine to the ideal of access for everyone to the improving power of the arts, fine and practical.

Between these two buildings, the grand old man of Manchester, Frank P. Carpenter, had dedicated the profits of half-a-century of enterprise in the city's paper-making, banking, and insurance endeavors to the construction of a library for the city. In 1914, the Carpenter Memorial Library, built of Vermont marble in the Italian Renaissance style, opened to the public. Carpenter, and other local benefactors, would continue to add buildings housing cultural institutions to the city they loved.

Local leadership sought the best for Manchester and Lowell, whatever the changes sweeping over the economic landscape of the country, whatever the policies of mill executives in Boston. On occasion, one could read in newspapers of Lowell and Manchester articles critical of policies of Brahmin mill owners.

The management of many old Boston Associate corporations in Lowell left much to be desired. By the turn

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39 Course offerings by the Manchester Institute included handicrafts, domestic science, fine arts, languages, and literature, to say nothing of endowed lectures on current social problems. Donahue, "America's 'Barbizon' at Manchester."

of the century, the suspicion was again alive that mill policies reflected less the interests of stockholders than those of the mill's commission houses. In too many cases, capital improvements had been deferred in order to keep up production rates - commission houses, still strongly represented on mill directorates, usually made profits on amounts sold rather than on price levels.

Such short-sighted policies led to predictable results. The profits of the Appleton Company became so abysmal that dividends had to be passed for the four years before 1898. In that year, the company was reorganized, and the capable Alexander G. Cumnock, agent at the Boott Mills since 1868, was hired away from the latter concern to become Treasurer of the new Appleton. Cumnock was delighted to finally receive a green light from directors of a corporation to fulfill a long-held dream to set up modernized and rationalized production facilities. Dividend rates rose in a year to 6%. In the first decade of the 20th century, the Tremont and Suffolk, the Merrimack, and the Massachusetts mills experienced major financial difficulties. In 1904, one Daniel John Sully cornered the cotton market. The resulting high cotton prices became the excuse for the directors of the run down Boott mills to sell out for ten cents on the dollar to "new" management. Actually, this was an inside trading deal among the largest stockholders, including the Wellington, Sears commission house.

A major stockholder of the old, and the new, Boott Mills, Lowell banker Jacob Rogers, arranged for his son-in-law to become Treasurer for the Boott. It took nine years for the new Treasurer, Frederick A. Flather, to take real control of the day-to-day workings of the Boott away from the management of Wellington, Sears. Even then, the major stockholders of the Boott never allowed Flather to follow Alexander Cumnock's example of devoting profits to the modernization of operations.

Such shortsighted business policy ran against the thinking of many Americans in the first decades of the 20th century. Following such leaders as Theodore Roosevelt, they wanted to battle waste and improve management in both

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43 Kennngott, Record of a City, p. 162.
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43 Kennngott, Record of a City, p. 162.
with the new progressive regime in the Granite State. Mellen was heavily involved in the massive effort by the Morgan interests of New York to control all of New England transportation, and political battles outside New Hampshire were taking up Mellen's attention.

The evaporation of Boston and Maine obstruction helped Bass to get a long list of progressive laws through the legislature: a public service commission, workmen's compensation and employer's liability laws, a corrupt practices act, a campaign disclosure law, a prohibition on corporate political activity, a factory inspection statute, strict controls on child labor, and acquisition by the state of the Crawford Notch scenic area. New Hampshire historian James Wright concludes that

By May 1911 New Hampshire probably stood as one of the half-dozen states that had achieved comprehensive reform goals. 50

Whatever their reticence concerning labor and liability legislation, the Amoskeag and other textile manufacturers actively supported the forestry provisions of the Bass program. The long-time Treasurer of the Amoskeag, Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, and others had strongly suspected that a series of floods on the Merrimack at the end of the 19th century were the result of clear-cutting of timber in the White Mountains. To stop the flooding of the lower floors of mills and the sweeping away of bridges, Coolidge wrote letters in support of the establishment of a National Forest reserve in New Hampshire. 51 After the establishment of the White Mountain National Forest in 1910, Coolidge's successor at the Amoskeag, Frederic C. Dumaine, continued the battle for flood control by constantly, if not very successfully, urging the construction of more dams in the Merrimack watershed. 52

50 Wright, Progressive Yankees, p. 121. After arriving at an agreement with the Bass administration during 1911 concerning tax charges on the Boston and Maine, Mellen withdrew opposition to Bass's public service commission legislation. Wright comments (again on p. 121) that "Perhaps it was only a coincidence, but when Charles Mellen accepted the progressive reforms, so did the New Hampshire state senate. The [Concord Evening] Monitor noted that 'the remarkable discipline of the senate in regard to Mr. Mellen's command is only equalled in history by Caesar's legions'."


52 Wayman manuscript notes, Dumaine file, Manchester Historical Association.
A strong Progressive movement had achieved marked success in New Hampshire. South of the Granite State border, the Progressive movement left a very uneven legacy. Many leaders in the Bay State made their choices less impressed by the ideals of local control than by New England's status as an older, and possibly declining, industrial region. In the realm of transportation policy, the political powers of Massachusetts submitted to the incorporation of the Boston and Maine into a grand empire of ships, trolleys, and trains under the direction of the Morgan interests in New York.

To the chagrin of those who wished to see the control of New England business kept in the hands of New Englanders, the Boston and Maine system in 1906 needed an infusion of money, and such an infusion was not to be found outside of New York. In 1907, the Morgan-directed New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad (the "New Haven") gained a controlling share of Boston and Maine securities.

Boston lawyer Louis D. Brandeis, determined foe of all such economic concentration53, led the fight against the New Haven-Boston and Maine merger. He received much support from progressive elements among his law practice clientele. They consisted of German Jewish merchants and Yankee paper and shoe manufacturers, including W. H. McElwain of Boston, owner of the major shoe factories in Manchester, N.H. The Brahmin railroad, banking, and textile concerns lined up with the Morgan forces, making the point that someone had to put a lot of money into the Boston and Maine, and better Morgan than some wild man like E. H.. Harriman. (Mellen used Harriman as a "bogey man" to stampede the Bostonians into his camp.) Brandeis and his progressive and

cantankerous conservative allies saw their efforts go down to defeat. Republican Governor Eben Draper, owner of the Draper textile manufacturing company in Hopedale, in 1910 signed into law the Boston Holding Company Act. This act allowed Mellen to utilize the holding company mechanism to control large amounts of Boston and Maine stock.54

The then Treasurer of the Amoskeag, Frederic C. Dumaine, served as president of the Boston Holding Company. Unfortunately, this association did not add to Dumaine's glory. Not only had the maneuvers of Mellen and the New Haven flown in the face of anti-monopoly legislation, but the Morgan transportation combine proved a financial disaster, and deferred maintenance caused a series of spectacular accidents on the railroad. The I.C.C. ordered the New Haven-owned Boston Railroad Holding Company to divest itself of Boston and Maine stock and the New Haven to break up its New England trolley and shipping line holdings. The Brahmin alliance with the House of Morgan had not corrected the weakness of New England's transportation system.55


55 The sense of betrayal on the part of New Englanders upon the revelation of Mellen's reckless management of the New Haven combine and upon the confirmation of long-held suspicions as to the methods used to obtain favors from the Massachusetts legislature shows forth in Harvard professor William Z. Ripley's 1915 summation of the New Haven fiasco. Ripley points out that Mellen had purchased the shipping, trolley, and railroad lines composing his New England empire "like a drunken millionaire," ignoring price and the effect of loan payments on keeping up service. (The New Haven suffered a series of spectacular accidents under Mellen's management.) Ripley goes on to declare that "Both the financial and the operating management of the New Haven under the Mellen-Morgan regime was more than unwise; it was corrupt. Nor did this corruption stop at secret profits to insiders. Despite the fairest promises of abstention from politics, every principle of political decency was violated down to the last moment of control. Wholesale bribery, veiled in various ways, of members of the legislature, of the press and of influential citizens [including Ripley might have pointed out, a Harvard 'expert'], was resorted to, in a vain endeavor to 'jam through' legislation and stem the rising tide of outraged public opinion. Corporate accounts were falsified; unearned dividends were declared; solemn engagements of every sort were broken. ... Lasting obloquy should attach to the name and reputation of every one, from the president down, responsible for the great
Despite the enmity towards him on the part of the Brahmin caste, Louis D. Brandeis, darling of American Progressives, entered the U.S. Supreme Court during the Wilson presidency. In the Bay State itself, progressivism was not without its victories. In 1910 Democrat Eugene Foss, an electrical machinery manufacturer and real estate speculator, won handily over Eben Draper. Foss remained in office till succeeded in 1914 by fellow Democrat David I. Walsh, Massachusetts' first Catholic governor. During the Foss regime, legislation was enacted which created direct primaries for the selection of state legislative candidates, a minimum wage commission to oversee wages for women and minors, a workmen's compensation system, and a maximum work week for women and minors of 54 hours.  

This last bit of legislation heavily affected the textile industry since it employed so many women, and the 54 hour law would be fraught with consequences for the Merrimack Valley. In the new century, the workers of the Merrimack Valley were asserting claims to the same pay for fewer hours.

Labor Makes Itself Heard

In 1900, Lowell's trades union council, "The Trades and Labor Council of Lowell, Mass.," published a 453 page volume, Lowell, A City of Spindles, replete with illustrations, recounting the history of the city and arguing for increased legislation for worker safety and shorter workdays. This handsome work serves as a monument to the pride of the labor union members who underwrote it. In measured phrases it details the rise of Lowell, the contributions of workers to the city, and reasons for new labor legislation. The authors of the book want reform, but clearly accept industrial capitalism: "There can be no uncertainty as to the large corporations being a benefit to the city."  

Lowell, A City of Spindles shows Lowell's turn-of-the-century trade organizations fitting the characteristics of American Federation of Labor member unions. Lowell's unions were composed largely of older immigrant groups, and they eschewed attempts at social revolution in favor of what  

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Abrams, Massachusetts Politics, pp. 259-260.  

Bruce Laurie has called "prudential unionism." The book does not bewail the sort of living conditions among newer immigrants from southern and eastern Europe which George Kennngott was to reveal twelve years later in his social survey, The Record of a City. Unskilled workers from the Near East and Europe beyond the Alps and the Oder were not included in labor unions. They also did not share in the accession of Irish Americans Democrats to political power in Lowell after 1902.

Indeed, the French Canadians were not allowed much participation in the new Irish-American political regime, and in pique many joined the Republican party. This did them little good in terms of political power, because a city charter reform of 1911 aimed at breaking the Irish-dominated ward system backfired. Even under the new charter, both Yankees and Franco-Americans saw themselves out-electioneered by the Irish who maintained hold of the city government, with few gaps, until after World War II. Lowell's daily Franco-American paper, L'Etoile, continued to support the Republicans. (The other two Lowell dailies, the Sun and the Courier-Citizen, catered to the interests of, respectively, the Irish Democrats and the Yankee Republicans.) Sharp ethnic divisions in the working class hindered the presentation of a united front against the policies of mill owners.

In 1910, the newer immigrants formed 7% of the population of Manchester and 9% of the population of Lowell. Indeed the Greek community of Lowell was exceeded in size that year only by Greek concentrations in New York and Chicago. In 1910, Manchester had a population of 70,063 and Lowell one of 106,299. In common with the other textile towns of the Merrimack Corridor, the proportion of these populations which fell into the native-born-of-native-
parents category was but a fifth or so. The 1910 census revealed the following percentages regarding nativity:

Percentage of 1910 population whose parents were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native born</th>
<th>Foreign born or mixed</th>
<th>Foreign born</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manch.</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowell</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
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The older Irish and French Canadian immigrant groups disliked the newer immigrants' willingness to work for low wages, while sharing many of the White Anglo-Saxon stereotypes of the uncivilized, violent Mediterranean or Slav peasant. The ire of the older groups grew out of their frustration at the cruel employment situation in the textile industry. Wages remained so low that, as in the 19th century, the families of workers only made ends meet when wives and teenage children worked at the mills alongside husbands and fathers. Besides receiving lower rates of pay than other manufacturing workers, textile operatives also lost time each year when mills closed down due to market conditions.

Possibilities of advancement in the mills were limited for immigrants and their descendants, even for members of long-established ethnic groups. In 1911, out of 170 overseers and clerical workers at the Amoskeag, 146 were "Americans," 15 were of Irish derivation, 5 of German, and 2 of French Canadian. Before WW I, the newer immigrants clustered in the lowest-paid, dirtiest textile jobs in Manchester and Lowell.

In Lowell, the old paternalistic regime was but a memory. The social researcher George Kennngott discovered that in the first decade of the new century the Lowell


64 The figures apply to the 99% of the cities' populations which were classified as "white." The missing 1% of population in each case were classified as "negro." Ibid.

65 In 1910, Fr. John J. Lyons of St. Anne's Church in Manchester complained against the Amoskeag management for ignoring the needs of Irish, French, and German workers and its "bringing the wild people of central Europe, without wives or children, with dirks concealed in their clothing, to Manchester to beat down the wage scale of the people who for generations have been their faithful employes." Nashua Telegraph, June 8, 1909, p. 2.


mills, with the exception of the Lowell Machine Shop, had pretty well sold off their old boarding house properties. The purchasers doubled and trebled the rents. In 1912, Kennegott discovered that immigrants crowded into this old, expensive housing stock:

the former tenants, who were largely American, have been supplanted by the foreigners, two or three families or more crowding in where one family used to live. Looking for the largest returns possible from the money invested, the present owners do not keep these houses in the excellent condition in which they were formerly kept by the corporations. 68

In Manchester in 1910, no more than 20% of the Amoskeag's 14,000 employees lived in the admittedly well-kept mill housing. 69 Much reporting about the New Hampshire city the early part of this century carries on the positive view of Thomas Young. Writers tell of a large, well-run corporation around which has arisen a handsome mill town with many obviously satisfied workers (there had been no textile strike since 1886). 70 But even a 1907 magazine article carrying the title "A City Without Strikes," with reference in its subtitle to the city 'where the lowest wage is kept above the cost of comfortable living,' cannot avoid hints of a darker side of its story of mutual respect between wise management and well-off workers. The author has this to say about worker housing:

The poor live in tenements, according to their means and choice - the Poles and Irish in pretty good, clean houses, the Greeks in seeming pleasure at the presence of dirt. 71

Whatever the pleasure new immigrants took in unclean surroundings, conditions in much worker housing in Manchester led to grim results. In Manchester's worst districts, mothers worked until the time of birth of their children; the infants were raised in dirty, crowded conditions; and babies died like flies in the heat of summer. 72 If anything, the situation in Lowell was worse. (See Appendix 2.)

68 Kennegott, Record of a City, p. 45.
71 Strother, "City Without Strikes," p. 9536.
72 Beatrice Sheets Duncan and Emma Duke, Infant Mortality, Results of a Field Study in Manchester, N.H.
Such conditions helped motivate unskilled workers from newer immigrant groups to join older-established populations of textile operatives in organized efforts to increase wages. In Lowell this happened in 1903, when the unionized skilled workers among the textile operatives (English-speaking and perhaps one-in-ten of the operatives), without consulting other work groups, threatened a strike for more pay. On March 28, the day the strike would have begun, management closed down the cotton mills of the city. The non-English-speaking, unskilled workers found themselves locked out in a dispute in which they had taken no part. However, the Greek, Polish, and Portuguese workers, themselves fed up with the wage rate, quickly organized themselves and wholeheartedly supported the unions. For two months, the unskilled workers, possessing meager resources and receiving little support from the AFL, endured privations. Unfortunately, the unions' leadership had seriously miscalculated the timing of the strike. The mills had been planning to curtail Spring production in any case because of a sharp rise in the price of cotton. In June, the directors of the mills decided business conditions had changed, and they opened the mill gates to the workers. The workers, having had enough suffering, went back to work.

However, Lowell had seen cotton workers of all stripes join together in a city wide labor action. Unskilled, unorganized workers could be upset enough at their conditions of work that they would, at the risk of hunger, join a labor protest. The stage had been set for a very different outcome in the next major Lowell dispute.

This battle came in March 1912, directly after the famous "Bread and Roses" strike in the neighboring wool center of Lawrence. The Lawrence strike had started when the textile corporations implemented the new law limiting employment of women workers to 54 hours a week (effectively limiting all the operations of the mills to 54 hours a week) and did so keeping the old wage rates per hour. In previous cases of implementing laws reducing hours of labor, the corporations had kept up the old weekly wage total by raising the hourly pay rates. Lawrence workers were outraged by the new policy, and in mid-January, they went on strike.

The strike leaders decided to call in assistance from the radical International Workers of the World (IWW) in organizing the tremendous walkout. The IWW organizers


worked brilliantly with all the ethnic groups and kept strikers enthused but non-violent. The strike leaders caught the attention of the country with their tactic of sending working class children out of Lawrence by train to be fed by comrades in other cities. Even though the grim living conditions in Lawrence could not be denied, the mill owners and local government reacted to the strike with incredible ineptness and brutality. By the end of March, the Lawrence employers, notably the giant American Woolen Company, caved in to the strikers and granted wage increases of five to twelve percent. The strike ended March 24.  

In Lowell, criticism of the behavior of the Lawrence mill owners was rife: even the Republican Courier Citizen spoke of the Lawrence strikers' "righteous cause." In mid-March, while the Lawrence strike was still proceeding, Lowell mill owners announced wage increases of six to eight percent. However, several hundred Portuguese and Lithuanian workers at the Appleton, members of the IWW chapter in Lowell, refused the wage rise on March 25, the day of its implementation. They went out on strike, and that same day the strike spread to all the cotton mills, except the Lawrence Manufacturing Company hosiery mill. The next day, the struck mills, seeking to minimize violence and sabotage, locked out their workers.

Although the strikers quickly sought aid from IWW organizers, thereby branding themselves as radicals, the city government of Lowell reacted to the situation with a patience in sharp contrast to the confrontational tactics of the Lawrence city fathers. Police quickly arrested those strikers who fought with scabs, but the Lowell authorities had had ample opportunity to observe the disastrous results of the Lawrence government's assumption of responsibility for strike-breaking. Mayor James O'Donnell proved extremely level-headed, refusing to echo the apocalyptic pronouncements of Lawrence officials and American Woolen's William Wood. The ethnic group in Lowell which was comparable to the recently-arrived Italian group in Lawrence, the Greeks, refused to adopt the Lawrence Italians' intense pro-IWW stand, and thereby did not play into native Americans' fears of wild-eyed foreigners.

75Courier Citizen, Jan. 26, 1912, p. 10.
In fact, the Greeks refused to allow anyone but their elected leader, Dr. George Demopoulos, to speak on their behalf. The doctor had little use for the IWW's radical politics, but he was convinced of the justice of the worker's demands, and he appreciated the shrewd leadership the IWW was giving to the other striking groups. Under Demopoulos' strong leadership, some 1,500 Greek operatives formed a de facto alliance with the IWW.

The AFL-affiliated, conservative United Textile Workers union, the fierce competitor of the IWW, had been largely discredited among workers for its timid behavior during the Lawrence strike. Nevertheless, the UTW president John Golden came to Lowell and, while joining the IWW in its 15% wage increase demand, sought to gain official recognition by the corporations of his union as the representative of the Lowell workers. Skilled operatives speaking English as their first language followed Golden rather than the IWW.

The IWW, however, led the mass of the strikers. Speeches, picketing, and marches, one to the Cumnock and Flatter homes in Belvidere, kept enthusiasm up into April. On the third day of that month, word came that the great Amoskeag in Manchester had granted its workers a 10% wage increase. On April 6, the New England Association of Textile Manufacturers announced a general 10% increase and put pressure on the Lowell mill owners to follow suit. The IWW wanted to hold out for a 15% increase in Lowell, but the majority of the strikers waited in anticipation for the Lowell owners' acceptance of the 10% figure.

The corporations' capitulation came April 13 with an announcement that on the 23rd, the mills would reopen at a 10% higher wage scale. On the 14th, at a mass meeting, the operatives voted to accept this figure. On Saturday, April 20, Lowell saw a preview of the Socialist Millennium as 10,000 deliriously happy citizens marched in a parade featuring red sashes, IWW flags, posters demanding an 8-hour day, and music played by bands from every ethnic group. (The Greeks kept their independent stance pristine by

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77 The Greeks were extremely jealous of their good name. This was proved when the Courier Citizen published news of a young Syrian female striker, protesting her innocence, refusing to pay a fine for illegal picketing and suffering imprisonment. The paper accompanied the story with a photo of the Syrian standing in front of a Greek bakery. The Greeks, realizing most readers would remember only the Hellenic script on the store window, immediately paid all expenses and got the young Syrian out of jail and any further tales of "that Greek girl in prison" out of the daily press. Mulligan, "1912 Strike in Lowell," p. 96.

78 Ibid., pp. 90-91 & 99.

positioning their band and several thousand marchers behind
the main procession.)

The dreams of the IWW turned to ashes, however, as
Lowell corporations stonewalled the demands of IWW locals
during the next few years. Efforts to organize workers at
various New England textile sites, such as the Draper works
in Hopedale, came to nothing, and major IWW strikes in New
Jersey were soundly defeated. Despite all this, Lowell
workers entered the World War I period with great confidence
in their powers.

The sentiments of other Lowell citizens may well have
been summed up by the statements of the Courier Citizen
complimenting the strikers on the orderliness of their
behavior, and castigating the corporations for their
reluctance to meet the wage rates set in Lawrence. The
paper echoed the long standing grievance against outside
control of the city’s economy when it wrote on April 15,
Entirely apart from the justice or injustice of this
strike, or the ability or inability of the mills to
give what they were asked to give and eventually
have promised, we criticize and criticize severely
the attitude of management of the greater part of
these factories with their obvious intentions that
this matter of vital importance to every mill
operative and every merchant in Lowell should be
treated as if it were nobody’s business but their
own.

Up in Manchester, such a critical attitude appeared in
the press but rarely. In June of 1914, the Amoskeag
effectively vetoed the building of a new bridge over the
Merrimack to facilitate West Side workers’ travel to a new,
huge W. H. McElwain shoe plant on the east side of the
river. The bridge would be too far south to help Amoskeag
operatives, and the city’s main corporation and taxpayer
objected to Manchester’s government spending any more on
capital improvements. Perhaps we can see in this exerting
of influence in the Manchester city council an echo of
battles in Boston’s executive district between Brahmin
railroad/ textile interests and the interests of progressive
paper or shoe manufacturers like McElwain. In any case, the
blockage allowed Progressive editor Frank Knox of the
Manchester Union Leader to deliver himself of sentiments
more often heard in Lowell:

Does not Mr. Dumaine see that he has, by his action,
raised the issue of home rule in this city? ... Will
the citizens of Manchester submit to OUTSIDE
DICTATION in the management of their internal
affairs?

Richards, "Lowell, 1912," p. 275; Courier Citizen,
Apr. 15, p. 6.
Union Leader, June 29, 1914, p. 4.
The answer in this case was yes, they would. However, the Amoskeag management usually evidenced more of the velvet glove in its dealings with the city. Under the local Agent, Herman Straw, the corporation worked at keeping up its image of beneficent patriarch of the community. Indeed the Amoskeag was in the middle of a effort to foster a corporate culture marked by programs explicitly directed to the welfare of employees.

After 1911, an Amoskeag School of Instruction conducted courses for employees interested in mechanical drawing, weaving, and loomfixing. Visiting nurses looked in on ailing family members of operatives. An Amoskeag Textile Club offered sports activities, dances, outings, and the services of a Women's Recreation House (dining, shower, and reading rooms). Free dental care was offered to those under fourteen. Stock and house lot ownership programs were tied to length of service.83

High labor turnover concerned the Amoskeag. Its welfare programs were in part motivated by a desire to keep workers longer. At the same time the Amoskeag Textile Club began, the corporation adopted a rationalized personnel policy. No longer would foremen have authority over employee hiring and firing; after 1911 an employment office conducted these functions and kept employee records on file. The record-keeping turned out to be considerable because labor turnover continued to be considerable: in its first fifteen months of operation the employment bureau hired 20,000 workers.84

The labor trouble down the Valley in early 1912 concerned Dumaine so much that he hired a detective agency to spy on the workers. The detectives unearthed a number of unflattering comments about rigor of work at the Amoskeag. However, in fact, labor troubles in Lowell or Lawrence or among other industrial workers in Manchester never did spill over into the Amoskeag before the First World War. Of course, once the ability of Merrimack workers of various ethnic groups to cooperate in job actions had been established by the beginning of April 1912, Dumaine was quick to raise wages in Manchester.85

83 Most of those who availed themselves of the services of the Amoskeag Textile Club were from the older, Irish and French, ethnic groups. The split between generations of immigrants was general in the Merrimack Valley. Arnold, "Row of Bricks," p. 184. Only about 200 workers took advantage of the house lot ownership plan which tied the cost of the mortgage to length of service. (Ten years service would result in the waiving of all mortgages.) Hareven, Family Time, p. 48.
85 Arnold, "Row of Bricks," p. 191.
In 1913, in response to a speech critical of the New England textile industry's treatment of its workers delivered on the floor of Congress by that *bête noire* of the Amoskeag, Sen. Henry Hollis, a Manchester newspaper issued a rejoinder crowing over the Amoskeag's "Over 15,000 contented employees and no strike troubles."86 This followed the Amoskeag party line. However, we may doubt the contentment of the employees in light of the detective agency reports to Dumaine, and in light of high labor turnover at the corporation.

Perhaps, though, the workers were in fact relatively satisfied during the years just before the war. The recorded memoirs of this era do emphasize the happy side of life in New Hampshire's premier textile city. The oral interviews of Amoskeag employees collected in Hareven and Langenbach's Amoskeag87 convey an image of life in the corporation before the First World War as hard work, but peaceful.

Those years are remembered as the calm before the storm.

**Conclusion**

In 1916, the Lowell city directory included a page supplied by the city's Board of Trade entitled "Lowell is a Great City." The page touted the city's location, beauty, patriotism, industrious labor force (interestingly, it asserted that "Its workers seldom strike"), and varied manufactures. The page proclaimed the city "The Workshop of the World," welcoming "new people, new industries, new development." Five years later, the successor to the Lowell Board of Trade, the "Chamber of Commerce," brought the same page to directory readers, but with one difference: Lowell is now "The City of Diversified Interests" open to new people, industries, etc. Clearly, Lowell businessmen well understood the dangers of linking the fortunes of the city to cotton textiles only.88

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86 W.P.A. scrapbook of articles, New Hampshire Room, Manchester Public Library.
The decade of the 1920s would bear out the wisdom of the goal of divorcing the fates of Manchester and Lowell from those of the cities' Boston Associate mills. The full brunt of Southern competition would fall upon the textile cities of New England as cotton mills North and South emerged from WWI with much more productive capacity than needed by civilian demand.

In their quest for diversification, however, Merrimack Valley businessmen would have to deal with the grim truth that northern New England possessed few natural resources and was located relatively far from major national markets. Civic capitalists in Lowell or Manchester would usually find low wage rates to be the primary enticement for new industry. However, the economic and political developments of the beginning of the century would be of some aid to civic capitalists, at least in Manchester. As the next chapter will show, some elements of the Progressive Movement and the Second Industrial Revolution would prove beneficial to the Queen City.

In the first two decades of the century, Lowell cotton workers showed an ability to transcend ethnic differences and to band together against the power of the millowners. In the great strike of 1922, Manchester workers would replicate the achievement of their brothers and sisters downstream in uniting to confront the mills' economic power. Control of their lives from Boston was being effectively challenged.

However, from the vantage point of the century's end, these momentous struggles of Merrimack Valley workers carry an air of tragedy about them. In the 1920s, the local struggles between management and labor would be overwhelmed by the struggle between Northern and Southern mills over the national cotton textile market. In reading the accounts of confrontations between Merrimack mill owner and mill worker before the First World War, one is reminded of a vignette which occurs often in world history: two empires locked in mortal struggle, unaware that beyond their borders an irresistible nomad horde is on the march.

p. 18, in "Chamber of Commerce File," Lowell Collection, Mogan Center.
CHAPTER III

THE COTTON RECESSION HITS LOWELL AND MANCHESTER

Introduction

During the First World War, the Southern advantage in hours worked per week temporarily disappeared as both Northern and Southern mills went on double shifts. Northern limits on night work by female operatives were loosened to allow the two shifts at work while the war emergency lasted. After the war, the South continued the wartime two shift practice, but the Northern mills' legal limits resumed, forcing a return to one shift of work. ¹

Under the umbrella of federal government interest in maintaining production at all costs during the war, the U.T.W. found itself able to enter many Southern mills without fear of management utilizing its lockout weapon. Thousands of Southern textile workers flocked into the U.T.W. during the war, and as labor unions confronted the managements of both regions, this influx seemed to promise an eventual evening of wages and hours North and South. However, a bitter strike in the summer of 1921 broke the power of the union in the Southern Piedmont. A writer on textile labor reports, "from this time until early in 1929 the U.T.W. practically disappeared from the South."²

This failure of the U.T.W. to establish itself in the Southern textile industry was to have cruel consequences in the North. In a market surfeited with cotton cloth, the competitive advantage enjoyed by Southern mills in wage rates and allowable hours of work would tell painfully against the Northern industry. From the middle years of the 1920s on, the cotton textile industry in Lowell and Manchester began to die.

¹Jack Blicksilver, Cotton Manufacturing in the Southeast, an Historical Analysis (Bulletin Number 5 of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, School of Business Administration, Georgia State College of Business Administration, Atlanta, Georgia, July 1959), pp. 67-73.
This chapter will follow the course of events in Lowell and Manchester from the years of World War I to the beginning of the Great Depression. It will also describe the resources, such as they were, which leaders in the two cities could bring to bear on their growing economic problems. These included the new information-gathering and planning expertise arising out of elements of the Progressive agenda and the practice of corporations associated with the Second Industrial Revolution. In the case of Manchester, the new industrial order of carefully-integrated systems of power and of assembly-line production was incarnated in an electric utility network and a shoe-manufacturing company which would play positive roles in the city’s battle for economic health.

Wartime Hopes And Peacetime Fears

By the time the First World War began in Europe, the potency of Southern competition was being felt along the Merrimack. The year began well for workers in the Queen City. In January 1914, a New Hampshire law reducing the work week from 58 to 55 hours came into effect. Despite the shortened hours, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company elected to continue the same weekly paychecks. This act of generosity was rather vitiated, however, by mill shutdowns due to slack business. In the summer, the mills in Manchester closed for several weeks. Meanwhile, down the river in Lowell, shutdowns were so frequent that the earnings of mill operatives declined 12½ between 1913 and 1914.

The outbreak of war in Europe did not immediately increase profits in the American cotton textile industry. In fact, the cut-off of aniline dyestuffs from Germany made the production of gingham and print goods, items of special importance to the Amoskeag, all the more difficult. The effect of the textile recession upon the Lowell workforce was lessened by the enormous expansion of Benjamin Butler’s

3 Arthur M. Kenison, "Dumaine’s Amoskeag, The Unpublished History of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in the Twentieth Century" (unpublished manuscript, 1992), pp. 91-92. A "Boston Globe" article of the time concerning the Amoskeag, while generally quite adulatory concerning the corporation’s management, did caution readers against investing in Amoskeag common stock. The article pointed out that in recent years, after the preferred stock had been covered, little profit had been left over for common stock dividends. See Stories of Certain Massachusetts Investments (Boston: Boston Globe, 1915), pp. 90-91.

old United States Cartridge Company. By 1916, however, the textile industry of the Merrimack Valley began to benefit from increased consumption fueled by profits from overseas war orders in other industries.

As the flow of immigrants from overseas ceased and alternatives to textile employment opened up in war industries, textile workers in the Merrimack Valley found themselves in a strong bargaining position. Steady worker pressure, and the recognition by owners of an inflation in living expenses, led to mill operatives' wages rising 85 to 95% between January, 1916, and July 1918. Despite a lackluster performance in the bloody Oct. 1915 – March 1916 strike in nearby Nashua, the United Textile Workers’ Union gained increased influence in Manchester and Lowell.

The 1915–1916 strike sobered Nashua mill managers sufficiently so that they immediately acceded to a June 1918 UTW demand that all New England textile firms grant a wage increase of 15%. The Lowell Cotton Manufacturers Association, however, decided to limit their offer to operatives in that city to 10%. The Amoskeag and the Stark mills of Manchester followed the lead of the Lowell treasurers, and in July of 1918, the U.T.W. led skilled and unskilled operatives in both cities out on strike. This was the first full strike against the Amoskeag since 1886.

In the mind of Frederic C. Dumaine, perhaps this was not quite an earth-shaking breech in labor peace. The tone of explanatory letters to T. J. Coolidge is one of worldly-wise resignation to, on the one hand, the foolish temerity of the Lowell treasurers, and, on the other, to the power of labor under war conditions. Dumaine had little patience for

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5 From 1914 to 1915, U.S. Cartridge employment expanded from 400 to 3,000. Ibid., p. 522.
6 Ibid., p. 566.
7 Ibid., pp. 536–543. A strikebreaker died from a beating and dozens of people were injured in clashes between striking families and members of the police and the national guard. See Nashua History Committee, The Nashua Experience, History in the Making (Canaan, N.H.: Phoenix Publishing, 1978), pp. 217–221. Polish and Lithuanian workers had formed the hard core of the strikers, and they had invited in some IWW activists. This was not forgotten by the authorities and in January 1920 federal agents arrested "more than one hundred Nashua Poles and Lithuanians in New England’s largest 'red raid.'" Arnold, "Row of Bricks," p. 546.
the rejoicing of the Lowell treasurers at the resolution of the week-long walkout: the UTW gained all its demands in exchange for a pledge to the Massachusetts state arbiter that arbitration rather than strikes would settle any further disputes before the end of the war. Dumaine wrote Coolidge, "It is a little amusing to see the Lowell crowd hurrah for the decision after being so cock sure they could win." 9

The 1918 victory enabled the UTW to solidify its position in Lowell and to sign up 5,000 members in Manchester. In the 1919 Manchester Directory, the section for labor organizations listed UTW locals for the first time. That year Merrimack Valley textile workers joined in UTW agitation for a 48 hour week and higher wages. 10 This campaign was effectively crowned with success for textile workers in Massachusetts (nearly half of them women) when in May of 1919 the General Court limited the workweek for female operatives to 48 hours. 11 New Hampshire's failure to enact a similar law gave textile workers in the Granite State a ready grievance. Operatives everywhere could with justice claim they deserved a larger share of the mills' massive profits.

Workers in Manchester and Lowell observed with fascination mill profits so large that boards of directors distributed them in part by splitting stocks in various ways: e.g. a 25% stock dividend for Boott Mill owners in 1917 and a 100% stock dividend for Amoskeag owners in 1920. 12 As returning soldiers bought civilian clothes, the

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9 Letters from F. C. Dumaine to T. J. Coolidge, July 1, 1918, and undated [July] 1918 ("It ..."), Box 10, Dumaine Collection, Manchester History Association Archives.


12 Laurence F. Gos's, The Course of Industrial Decline: The Boot Cotton Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1835-1955 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1993), p. 162, and Kenison, "Dumaine's Amoskeag," p. 154. In 1920, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that such stock dividends were not subject to income tax, and over 150 textile mills rewarded their owners with splits in stock. See Stephen Jay Kennedy, Profits and Losses in Textiles, Cotton Textile Financing Since the War (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1936), pp. 131 &232-234. The highly idiosyncratic accounting methods of the era make comparisons between companies very difficult, but war profits were enormous. On an initial investment of $300,000 at the time of the firm's reorganization in 1905, the owners of the
flow of cash into the New England textile industry seemed assured to both operative and owner. Operatives wanted higher wages and fewer hours, while owners wanted to break the power of unions in the workplace. Self-confident workers and wealthy stockholders girded for a confrontation.

In Lowell, the prosperity of the war years masked two losses to the city's industrial fabric. By 1918, the looms of the old Boston Associate firms of the Lowell Manufacturing Company (est. 1828, cotton and carpets) and the Middlesex Company (est. 1830, woolens) fell silent.

The Lowell Manufacturing Co., it will be recalled, had become part of the Bigelow Hartford carpet combination at the turn of the century. At first, the merger seemed to promise well for the future: in 1911 the Lowell facilities of the Bigelow Carpet Co. reach a high in employment of 2,400. However, the board of Bigelow-Hartford knew that production of the combination had to be further rationalized. In a pattern which would become all too common in the case of Lowell firms merged with outside concerns, it was the unit in the Spindle City which closed. The decision was taken at the end of 1915, and soon carpet looms were moved out of Lowell to the corporation's facility in Thompsonville, Connecticut. The space-hungry U.S. Cartridge Company quickly leased the vacated facilities and also provided employment for discharged carpet workers.

After 1920, a Boston investor bought the old Lowell Manufacturing mill yard and began to sell it off piecemeal.

That year another Boston Associate mill yard was on the block. Before the First World War, the old woolen manufacturer, the Middlesex Company, had begun to lease space in its mill yard to smaller concerns in one of several strategies to increase profits. In 1912 the Middlesex management, descendants of Benjamin Butler, decided to concentrate upon the production of woolen hosiery, but this锅炉 figured they made a profit of $674,183 in 1919 alone. The net income figured for the Amoskeag for the 1918-19 fiscal year was $7,945,000. Gross, Boot Cotton Mills, pp. 162-163; Kenison, "Dumaine's Amoskeag," p. 126.


Today, the old Lowell Company mill yard houses the National Park Service Visitors' Center in Lowell.
initiative does not seem to have paid off. One year later, the Middlesex leased its hosiery mill to the Boston-based Ipswich Mills. At the close of the war, the Middlesex Company ceased manufacturing entirely and remained in existence only to rent or sell its properties. In 1920, the Ipswich Company bought the mill it had been utilizing and became the major occupant of the old Middlesex mill yard.17

Rather than ruminate on these selloffs, optimists in Lowell in 1920 could concentrate their attention on the construction of a modern, reinforced concrete mill in a city hitherto host only to the old brick mills. The Bay State Cotton Mills of Lowell, a subsidiary of Stephen F. Greene’s International Cotton Mills conglomerate, built the three million dollar mill to take advantage of the roaring tire cord market of 1919.18

Meanwhile, in Manchester, the future of the Amoskeag seemed very positive indeed. Not only had the corporation given its stockholders a 100% stock dividend in 1920, but in the fall of 1919 the firm had begun work on a one-and-a-half million dollar hydroelectric plant below the Amoskeag Bridge.19 In 1919 and the first half of 1920, the Amoskeag gave to its workers a series of wage increases which exceeded the rise in the cost of living.20

However, by the second half of 1920, a slowing American economy included a downturn in the market for both cotton and woolen textiles. Merrimack mills began to run on a part-time basis. Workers at the Amoskeag complained of a

19Kenison, "Dumaine’s Amoskeag," pp. 136-137; "The Amoskeag Hydro-Electric Development," Textile World, March 3, 1923, pp. 73-74 & 149. At one point, the Amoskeag planned to include a fish ladder for migrating fish in the new dam construction so that salmon being stocked in the Merrimack tributary through Andover, Mass., the Shawsheen River, could migrate north to the White Mountains. Manchester Leader, 2/4/20. Judging from photos of construction of the dam (in the MHA collection), however, the fishway was never built.
speed up of operations during 1920. Experts in the textile industry recognized that many New England mills were continuing to pay dividends not because of great profits but because a rise in the price of cotton giving extra value to older raw material inventories held by those mills.

Slowly, a changed environment for the textile industry was becoming evident. The percentage of income spent for clothing per capita began to slide (from 13.1% in 1919 to 10.7% in 1926 to 8.8% in 1929), and in any case, dresses began to use less material. Interest in new fashions began to rise among all classes. This latter development boded ill for the old Amoskeag mainstay of gingham cloth, which did not lend itself to restyling. Rayon began to displace silk in hosiery, and the huge chemical corporations producing them put their research labs to work developing other areas ripe for substitution of synthetic for natural fibers. Among shifts in industrial fabrics, the market for tire fabric abruptly changed, and International Cotton Mills found itself with a white elephant in its new Lowell mill.

21Daniel Creamer, and Charles W. Coulter, Labor and the Shutdown of the Amoskeag Textile Mills (Philadelphia: Works Progress Administration, November 1939), pp. 190-192. A rise in cotton prices before 1923 allowed many New England mills to gain profits merely from inventory markups. The loss of this source of profit after that year brought the weak condition of these mills to light. Kennedy, Profits and Losses, pp. 128 & 133. An outstanding example of profits gained from a rise in inventory values occurred in May 1918 when the Amoskeag benefited from the wartime inflation of wool values to such an extent that it could add $4,939,299 to its cash reserve. In November 1918 another $1,285,518 was added to the reserve account. Creamer & Coulter, Shutdown, p. 48. However, the Amoskeag’s account books did not normally treat inventory gains as realized profits. Kenison, "Dumaine’s Amoskeag," p. 202.

22H. E. Michl, The Textile Industries, An Economic Analysis (Washington, D.C.: The Textile Foundation, 1938), p. 58. Even with consumer spending rising from $72,902,000,000 in 1919 to $106,101,000,000 in 1929, the absolute decline in spending for apparel was nearly one-and-a-half billion dollars that decade. Ibid.

23Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown, p. 12.


During the 1920s, with a shift in tire construction allowing the use of coarser yarns, tire fabric production would become more and more a Southern preserve. In fact, the Southern industry in that decade began a steady advance in many niches of textile production previously Northern preserves. Not only did the traditional Merrimack Valley large-batch, staple fabrics (ginghams, print cloth, denims) come under heavier Southern competition after WWI, but the fine goods production of such places as New Bedford and the seamless hosiery industry of Philadelphia also lost market share to Southern competitors.27

As an expanding industry, Southern cotton manufacturing benefited from the latest in factory construction and mechanical innovations. The competition between the two great gingham producers, the Amoskeag in New Hampshire and the Riverside and Jan River Mills of Virginia, clearly displayed the common Southern advantage. The Amoskeag had constructed its latest gingham mill, the Coolidge with its 3,000 looms housed in four storeys built in brick, in 1909. Twelve years later, the "Dan River" contracted with Lockwood, Greene to construct a reinforced concrete, single storey mill. This mill contained 5,040 looms, over one third of them brand new and all the rest reconditioned. Dan River also had Lockwood, Greene reorganize all its production lines at this time, and the Virginia company poured millions of dollars into modernization of buildings and the purchase of new machinery.28 In the years just after the war, the mighty Amoskeag expanded more quickly than the Dan River only in the development of electric power sources.29

Clearly, the Southern mill owners were proving stiff competitors as the American economy shifted from a war footing. Northern producers began to demand a more level

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29 Smith, Dan River Mills, p. 126; Kenison, "Dumaine’s Amoskeag," pp. 136-137; Everett B. Smith, Fifty Years of Service. A History of Public Service Co. Of New Hampshire (Manchester, N.H.: PSNH, 1976), p. 37. In 1915, the Amoskeag constructed the New Bag Mill, a brick, three storey structure, but this facility carried on the low-grade processes of spinning waste yarn and weaving cotton bags. This was the last mill built, as opposed to purchased, by the Amoskeag. Kenison, "Dumaine’s Amoskeag," p. 90.
playing field in the struggle. They perceived two aspects of the contest over which they had some direct control: levels of taxation and wage rates.

As the postwar competition began to heat up, Northern executives complained bitterly to tax boards of Northern mill towns concerning the tax advantage of mills located in the South. Not only were general tax levels lower in the South, but many Southern communities had enticed mill owners to set up manufacturing in their communities by promising tax abatements. Although taxes usually contributed only one to two-and-a-half per cent to manufacturing costs, the straitened Merrimack Valley mill owners pushed constantly for lower tax assessments during the 1920s. When late in the decade failed mills realized in liquidation less than a tenth of their assessed valuation, these demands began to be heeded by towns desperate to keep industry. 30

Many Southern executives claimed that their companies' subsidies to the mill villages housing the workers employed at their concerns equalled Northern taxes. This is doubtful, and in any case, Southern mills' contributions to worker housing and education could be considered not as a sort of tax given to the community but as a supplement to the low wages paid to the region's workers. 31 The differential in wages remained the great source of advantage to Southern mills. The failure of organized labor to equalize Northern and Southern wage rates in the early 1920s would redound to the benefit of the Southern mills.

In 1921, a general recession hit the U.S. economy. In recognition of depressed conditions in the industry, New England cotton workers agreed to a 22 & 1/2% reduction in wages. This reduction was more than matched by the Southern mills, so the North gained no comparative advantage from the


31 Jack Blicksilver, Cotton Manufacturing in the Southeast, an Historical Analysis (Bulletin Number 5 of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, School of Business Administration, Georgia State College of Business Administration, Atlanta, Georgia, July 1959), pp. 75-81.
wage decrease. The failure of the UTW Southern organizing drive in 1921, and with that failure the end of any hopes for equalization of wage rates throughout the national industry, ensured that Merrimack mill owners would insist on further concessions from their workers. The stage was set for a major confrontation.

The 1922 Strike And After

The UTW entered 1922 stung by the failure of its Southern strike and aware of the immense profits still being posted by Northern mills. The union was determined to maintain gains made by New England textile workers during the War. The year began with New England mill owners, citing Southern competition, not only demanding a further 20% reduction but also longer hours. In response, tens of thousands of operatives struck the mills in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. Frustrated by the whittling away of their purchasing power since 1919, both older and newer immigrant groups joined together in these stoppages.

In Lowell, the strike did not take the form, assumed elsewhere in the Valley, of massive shutdowns. By the beginning of February, 1922, two of the large mills, the Bay State Mill, suffering from the collapse of the tire fabric market, and the Hamilton, already embarked on a slide to oblivion (see below), announced 20% cuts in pay. The workers refused the wage reductions and struck the two plants.

The mayor and the police chief proved sympathetic to the strike, and even the conservative Courier Citizen chided the mill owners for the arrogant way they proceeded. However, underemployment among the millworkers undercut strikers’ morale. In the previous half year only 13,000 out of a possible 18,000 cotton workers had found employment. A dispirited UTW membership in Lowell did not press the strike aggressively.

32 On the futility of the 1921 22 1/2% wage cut, see Arnold, "Row of Bricks," p. 750.
33 Lahne, Cotton Mill Worker, pp. 208-209. In Rhode Island and New Hampshire, the owners wanted the work week lengthened from around 48 to 54 hours. In Massachusetts, where the 48 hour week was written into law, the strikers’ grievances were limited to the wage issue.
34 Arnold, "Row of Bricks," p. 764. However, the U.T.W., leading the strikes in Manchester and Lowell, did not bring members of the newer immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe into the leadership of the strike. Ibid.
36 Lowell Courier Citizen, Feb. 6, 1922, p. 6; Feb. 14, 1922, p. 6; Feb. 15, 1922, p. 1; Feb. 16, 1922, p. 1;
In Manchester, the strike proved much more dramatic. After the First World War, the son of the redoubtable Herman Straw, William Parker Straw, had taken over his father's duties as Amoskeag agent. He made no bones about his desire to roll back labor's gains, and in 1922 he had his chance. The Amoskeag operatives, totally casting off their image as docile workers, voted overwhelmingly to reject the 20% reduction and Straw's demand that the work week be extended to 54 hours. The Stark Mills joined the Amoskeag in its demands. In response, the majority of workers at the two concerns voted to refuse the new orders, and, on Feb. 13, 17,000 Manchester textile workers went on strike. For nine months, Manchester was to echo with the sound of huge parades, open-air meetings of strikers and friends, the tramp of pickets.

The strikers remained quite orderly, although police chief Michael Healy, no friend of unions, had his men strictly enforce injunctions limiting pickets. The good order among the workers, and the grim prospect of facing a further decrease in buying power of operatives after the 22 & 1/2% decrease of November of 1920, made the Manchester community as a whole well disposed toward the strike during its initial months. To counter the Amoskeag case for lowering wages and raising hours worked, the UTW produced some impressive newspaper fact sheets. Certainly, the Amoskeag's purchase of the Stark facility from the ailing International Cotton Mills for $2,600,000 in June of 1922 thoroughly obfuscated Amoskeag claims to impoverishment due to Southern competition.

As the strikes at Manchester, Nashua, Lowell, and Lawrence dragged on into the summer, the goal of Merrimack civic leaders became the reopening of the factories. Various leaders, including the Catholic Bishop of Manchester and the governor of New Hampshire, proposed compromise formulae for a settlement. These the UTW refused, and, judging from a letter of F. C. Dumaine, perhaps some mill managements were not too disappointed at the refusals: Dumaine wrote a correspondent at the end of June that to have many looms running "on a large scale would be most dangerous and probably very expensive marketwise."

As summer came to an end, Treasurer E. F. Greene at the Pacific in Lawrence gave in to the strikers' demands that wages not be dropped. Meanwhile, more and more workers began drifting back to Merrimack Corridor mills. The reopening of the Pacific put pressure on treasurers of other mills: on Sept. 10, Agent Straw of the Amoskeag announced that the 20% wage reduction would be rescinded, although the corporation would not agree to a 48 hour work week. The need of union members for wages put pressure on the leaders of labor unions. Also, Democratic Party victories in the New Hampshire elections in the Fall of 1922 gave some hope that the 48 hour demand could become the law of the state. In November, the New Hampshire union members joined their Massachusetts brethren in returning to work.41

In Manchester, the 1922 strike was remembered as marking the end of an era.42 In the decades before the strike, the Amoskeag's immense sales allowed workers' wages to match or even exceed the rise in living costs, and the wise regime of Agent Herman Straw covered the steel hard power of the corporation with a velvet glove of geniality and welfare programs. After the nine month strike, the workers' hope that the state legislature would pass a 48 hour law was disappointed. The operatives saw the UTW ignored by agent W. P. Straw, and a company union set up in 1923. This union served as a forum for complaints concerning speed ups and stretch outs, but the complainants received little satisfaction. When the Amoskeag's competitive position weakened in the Fall of 1924, the company union found itself powerless to prevent wage cuts and further speed ups imposed by an increasingly more desperate management.43 Not only were Amoskeag workers frustrated two years after the close of the big strike, but, as will be seen, the Amoskeag owners were losing faith in their mills.

The 1922 strike in Lowell, affecting only two of the seven large cotton mills in the city, did not prove a watershed in memory. The failure of New England mill treasurers to obtain the 20% cut just added to their general frustration. They were hard-pressed to obtain orders for old lines of product and to discover new lines which could compete against Southern mills. In 1924, members of the board of directors of the Tremont and Suffolk Mills mounted

Desperate New England textile machinery firms offered their wares at attractive rates to the Southern mills during the New England shutdown: the Dan River, for instance, received valuable discounts on its half million dollar order placed with the Saco-Lowell Shops in August of 1922. Smith, Dan River Mills, p. 178.

a successful coup against the President of the corporation. The insurgents put in a management dedicated to increasing manufacturing efficiency and to finding a profitable mill product. The next year, the collapse in the Lowell cotton industry clearly began. It began in the two mills struck in 1922.

The Bay State Mills, the modern tire fabric facility owned by E. F. Greene's International Cotton Mills conglomerate, had joined Greene's Pacific Mills in Lawrence in seeking to lower wages 20% in 1922. The failure of this effort did not help the Bay State in its attempts to meet the vicious competition in the tire cord market. In 1925, International Cotton Mills reorganized itself yet again. The new entity, the New England Southern Mills, admitted defeat in the tire cord business. The nearly new Lowell facility started manufacturing wide cotton sheeting. This endeavor was not to outlast the collapse of E. F. Greene's enterprises at the end of the decade.

In the summer of 1925, the Hamilton, the other Lowell mill which had attempted to lower wages in 1922, suddenly

44Box 15, 1925 File, Flather Archives, Mogan Center; Lowell Courier Citizen, Feb. 27, 1924. Perhaps contributing to the coup was a long-standing feud between branches of the Ayer family, whose fortune had originated in J. C. Ayer of Lowell's 19th century patent medicines. The widow of J. C. Ayer broke with her brother-in-law Frederick. In the coup, the sons of Frederick Ayer, Charles Ayer and his younger half-brother Frederick, ousted the son of J. C. Ayer, Frederick Fanning Ayer, from the presidency of the Tremont & Suffolk. See Scott C. Steward, The Sarsaparilla Kings: A Biography of Dr. James Cook Ayer and Frederick Ayer (Cambridge, Mass.: Scott C. Steward, 1993), pp. 26-28. Frederick A. Flather was brought in to make a survey of the T&S mill. His notebook of this survey indicates a very bleak prospect for the mill. Box 15, 1925 File, Flather Collection, Mogan Center Archives.

45The leading textile center of New England, Fall River, saw its precipitous decline begin at this time. In late 1924, the Borden family interests of that city announced the removal of 100,000 spindles and 2,000 looms to Kingsport, Tenn. By 1932 the spinning capacity of Fall River had been halved, employment had dropped to a third of its 1923 level, and the city government was in receivership. Thomas Russell Smith, The Cotton Industry of Fall River, Massachusetts: A Study of Industrial Localizations (New York: King's Crown Press, 1944), pp. 123-124; John T. Cumbler, Working-Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure, and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities, 1880-1930 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 139.

proved to be at death's door. F. C. Dumaine had endorsed some major loans to the Hamilton earlier in the decade, with Hamilton goods in inventory serving as collateral. Perhaps his faith in the probity of the Treasurer of the Hamilton, Arthur R. Sharp, was shaken when in November of 1924 that gentleman was forced to resign as treasurer of the Sharp Manufacturing Company, a mill producing fine yarn which Sharp himself had started in New Bedford, Mass. There were intimations at the time that Sharp had run the business for the benefit of the company's commission house rather than for the benefit of the stockholders.47 In any event, F. C. Dumaine put in his eldest son, F. C. Dumaine, Jr., into the mill office in Lowell, ostensibly to learn the textile trade.

Frank P. Bennett, 3rd, the son of the publisher of the American Wool and Cotton Reporter, was also serving an apprenticeship in Lowell, at the Massachusetts Mills, working in that corporation's huge new warehouse. The two young men would occasionally meet for lunch, and at some point the younger Dumaine mentioned that the Hamilton held a great deal of its inventory at the Massachusetts warehouse. The younger Bennett informed his luncheon partner that this simply was not true, and, as he reminisced in the ANCW twenty-two years later, this report probably "opened the door to the investigation by the lenders employing certified public accountants which proved the falsifications."48 Dumaine had been keeping his eye on the Hamilton in any case. In February 1925, he had Sharp transfer the selling account of the Hamilton from the commission house of Catlin and Co., of which Sharp was a partner, to the tightly controlled Amoskeag selling agents in New York.49 By the summertime, Dumaine's suspicions had been quite aroused. He sent trusted lieutenant, Henry Rauch, up to Lowell to find out whether collateral actually existed for the loans Dumaine had endorsed. It did not.

It turned out that the books had been padded since 1920, leaving the Hamilton with unsecured loans of $580,686. In August, F. C. Dumaine, Jr., took over the duties of Treasurer from Arthur Sharp. A statement that month by the President of the Hamilton, Felix Rackemann, absolved Treasurer Sharp of direct embezzlement, but the AWCR later pointed out that Sharp's partnership in the Hamilton's Catlin and Co. commission house had provided him a healthy cash flow. As long as the deeply indebted Hamilton kept

47 American Wool and Cotton Reporter, Nov. 6, 1924, pp. 40-41; Nov. 24, 1924, p. 66a. At this point in Sharp's history, the AWCR supported him: see editorial comment in AWCR, Nov. 13, 1924, pp. 38-40.
49 AWCR, Feb. 5, 1925, p. 61.
producing cloth to sell, the commission house made profits.\textsuperscript{50}

After a series of stockholder meetings seeking to put the Hamilton on a paying footing, in early 1926 President Rackemann rang the death knell of the Hamilton. He had to report that F. C. Dumaine had no faith in reorganization plans: "the Dumeines do not want the property. They want their money."\textsuperscript{51} On Oct. 27, 1926, the Hamilton finally closed, and the Dumeine interests liquidated the corporation's assets.\textsuperscript{52} The old Boston Associate cotton mills of Lowell had begun to disappear from the increasingly vicious game of manufacturing cotton cloth.

Up in Manchester, the owners of the Amoskeag began calling in their chips. The 1924 sales of gingham had been miserable, and dividend payments on common stock were passed for the second half of the year. This constituted the first time in living memory Amoskeag dividends had been suspended. Common stock dividends would never be paid again, and dividends on preferred stock were discontinued after Feb., 1926. (Down in Virginia, the Dan River management also seriously considered passing a dividend in 1925 due to gingham losses, but ended up cutting the previous dividend rate in half.) In any case, in the years since the stock split of 1920, Amoskeag dividends had been paid only by dipping into the firm's surplus accounts.\textsuperscript{53}

These accounts were considerable. After a 1911 conversion of the corporation into a trust, "the reserve for shareholders was entered on the books as $11,310,000, presumably representing the accumulated surplus over 80 years of operation."\textsuperscript{54} By May 1925, even with withdrawals to cover dividends in the early years of the decade, the surplus had grown to $24,539,000. Besides this hoard, the

\textsuperscript{50}Lowell Courier Citizen, Aug. 20, 1925, p. 30; AWCR, Jan. 28, 1926, p. 93. (See also AWCR, July 7, 1949.) The attitude of the AWCR toward Sharp changed markedly from its apologies on his behalf during the Fall of 1924.
\textsuperscript{51}AWCR, Jan. 28, 1926, p. 93. For earlier meetings, see Lowell Courier Citizen, Aug. 22, 1925, p. 16; AWCR, Sept., 24, 1925, p. 47; Jan. 21, 1926, pp. 38-39. Frederick A. Flather had little confidence in the prospects of the Hamilton, for he refused to serve on a Lowell Chamber of Commerce committee striving to save the mill, mentioning in his refusal the mill's inability to pay the high local taxes and the absolute need to rationalize production there. See his telegram of March 29, 1926 to Wilmore I. Macphie, President of the Lowell C of C in Box 15, Flather Collection, Mogan Center Archives.
\textsuperscript{52}Lowell Courier Citizen, Oct. 29, 1926, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{54}Creamer & Coulter, Shutdown, p. 48.
company possessed perhaps $25,500,000 in Liberty war bonds with their tax-exempt interest payments. 55

With this treasure chest, the Treasurer and trustees of the Amoskeag might have proceeded aggressively in dealing with the changed conditions of the textile industry. Up in Saco and Biddeford, Maine, the Pepperell Manufacturing Company, another old Boston Associate firm, proceeded to do just this. The trustees of the Pepperell, dissatisfied at the level of dividends, enlisted Russell H. Leonard as Treasurer in 1924. Leonard had been doing an impressive job as Treasurer of Ipswich Mills - this company's locations included the old Middlesex mill yard in Lowell - switching its production from traditional cotton hosiery to the full-fashioned hosiery demanded by women after WWI. Leonard was to transform Pepperell from a producer of bolts of coarse sheeting cloth to a purveyor of lines of brand name, prepackaged sheets and blankets calculated to appeal to every income level. 56

Leonard gathered around him a group of skilled lieutenants who guided the company into the realms of market analysis and advertising. Production practices were reorganized. Beginning in 1925, the Pepperell took over the sales of its product from its old commission house. In 1926, after consumer surveys and careful advertising, the new "Lady Pepperell" sheets appeared and became market

55 Ibid., p. 49.
56 Evelyn H. Knowlton, Pepperell's Progress: The History of a Cotton Textile Company, 1844-1945 (Cambridge, Mass.: 1948), pp. 237 & 244. After WWI the knit tubes of seamless, and shapeless, cotton hosiery lost market share to "full-fashioned" hosiery in which knit flat fabric was cut and seamed to fit the shape of a woman's leg. For the travails of the large Philadelphia hosiery industry in changing over from seamless to full-fashioned production see Scranton, Figure Tapestry, pp. 367 ff & 427 ff.
57 These lieutenants included the very capable Amory Coolidge, second son of Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, Jr. Amory's father had died in 1912 at the age of 42, and his grandfather, the great Amoskeag Treasurer and original T. J. Coolidge, died in 1920, about the time Amory, graduate of Harvard and veteran of WWI, began training for the textile trade at the Amoskeag. Within a few years, Dumaine had turned the grandson of his mentor out. Amory, who did extremely well at Pepperell, later had this to say about his abortive career at the Amoskeag: "Imagine my surprise, after having prepared myself for any position (up to and including leadership in the management) to find that the boss had a dramatically opposite viewpoint of my value, informing me that my talents might be appreciated more elsewhere." "Amory Coolidge" in Harvard Class of 1917, Twenty-fifth Annual Report (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 221. One would love to know more about this personality conflict with Dumaine.
leaders. As will be seen, the Pepperell soon began to acquire mills outside of Maine to diversify its product lines. Leonard's leadership proved most successful. Today, cloth production in Saco-Biddeford continues as part of the "West Point-Stevens" textile empire.\(^{58}\)

Today, no cloth is manufactured in Manchester, and the Amoskeag name endures only in the title of a Boston investment trust. The beginning of the end for Amoskeag textile manufacturing arrived in the mid-1920s.

Those years, the Amoskeag trustees did not choose to devote their treasure to a Pepperell-like campaign to make use of the best modern business practice to ensure the corporation remained competitive. On the other hand, they did not take their money and run, either. Faced with a choice of "risking their money" or "taking their money," in the words of Raleigh News and Observer editor Jonathan Daniels,

With maybe a surplus of shrewdness, the gentlemen and trustees of Amoskeag under Mr. Dumaine's leadership decided to do both.\(^{59}\)

Carrying out this policy, on Aug. 25, 1925, the trustees of the old Amoskeag split it into two trusts. One, created to carry on manufacturing operations, retained the old name of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company (hereafter, AMC). The other, a holding company carrying on the identity of the old Amoskeag and owning the AMC, assumed the title the "Amoskeag Company."

The manufacturing trust, the AMC, retained the mills of Manchester, inventories, accounts receivable, and $6,000,000 in cash and government bonds. Also, in a maneuver hard to understand except as a friendly gesture to the Lowe family interests of Fitchburg, Mass., the AMC acquired the assets of the Parkhill Manufacturing Company of that city, in return for AMC stock. That is to say, in a

\(^{58}\) Knowlton, Pepperell's Progress, pp. 238, 242 ff, 253 ff, and 282.

\(^{59}\) Jonathan Daniels, A Southerner Discovers New England (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), p. 86. See also Sweezy, "Amoskeag Manufacturing Company," p. 489. As they looked at the collapse of such huge, heavily-funded textile combines as that of E. F. Greene, the Amoskeag directors probably congratulated themselves on their conservative policies. It does seem that in a situation of general decline for an industrial region, concerns of the industry that successfully compete must rely on a revision of business practices far beyond that of investing in new machines. The example of the Pepperell in 1920s New England bears this out, as does the experience of Lancashire concerns in the hard years after WWII. See Caroline Miles, Lancashire Textiles, A Case Study of Industrial Change (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 20-22.
time of collapse in the gingham market, it acquired mills
dedicated to that product.  

The holding trust, the Amoskeag Company, retained all
the cash and bonds of the old Amoskeag in excess of
$6,000,000, and also owned the vast majority of shares of
new AMC stock. The bulk of a surplus built up over the life
of the old Amoskeag was thus insulated against the risks of
manufacturing. The public stance of the trustees was that
the AMC had been left with a world-famous mill system and
enough cash to make a fight for the continuation of its
operations in Manchester. In the judgment of scholars
investigating years later the failure of the AMC, by their
1925 division of the Amoskeag assets, the trustees
had definitely embarked on a course of liquidation.
Thereafter, their policy, whether deliberately
conceived or not, was one of administering temporary
stimulants to keep the company in operation.

One innovation by the management of the AMC was the
opening of a small but successful rayon unit in 1926. The
AMC also looked into producing sheeting and blankets, like
the Pepperell, and it prevailed upon the Manchester
authorities to lower taxes on the corporation. However,
nothing the AMC did improved profits enough to entice the
Amoskeag Company to be truly optimistic about its future in
the summer of 1927.

That summer, New York interests attempted to take over
and liquidate the assets of the AMC. The trustees of the
Amoskeag Company refused to part with their AMC shares.
Among the reasons for refusal advanced by the trustees was
that

It has never been their intention to abandon
operations in Manchester and bring to the City the
disasters such a move would entail.

However, the raid pushed them to take further action to
protect the capital invested in the Manchester mills. To
this end, $8,000,000 was withdrawn from the AMC by means of
a conversion of shares of the Amoskeag Company into cash,
AMC stock, and AMC bonds. The withdrawing of $8,000,000 in
capital (with an assured annual drain of $680,000 to cover

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60Sweezy, "Amoskeag Manufacturing Company," pp. 489-
491; Creamer & Coulter, Shutdown pp. 51-53.
61Creamer & Coulter, Shutdown p. 54.
62Kenison, "Dumaine's Amoskeag," pp. 219-222; Creamer &
Coulter, p. 55; Alan M. Schwartz, "Rayon Production in New
England," (Unpublished seminar paper, Harvard University,
1991). The prospects for the Amoskeag were considered so
poor that in the middle 1920s a series of rumors arose that
the Amoskeag was going to merge with its rival, the Dan
River mills of Virginia, in an attempt to control the
shrinking market for ginghams. Smith, Dan River Mills, p.
221.
63Report to the Amoskeag Company stockholders quoted
in Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown p. 56.
interest on the bonds: bonds, unlike common stock, require annual payments), it turned out that the fate of the Amoskeag operations in Manchester had been sealed.  

The city leaders of Manchester were well aware of the increasing weakness of the Amoskeag. City fathers could look with some relief upon the diversity of local industry as a buffer against the erratic employment trends of textile manufacture. In the information it supplied to the publishers of the Manchester Directory of 1929, the Chamber of Commerce stressed that cotton and wool cloth by no means exhausted the list of products emanating from "The Queen City" of the Merrimack. Manchester had become America's tenth largest producer of shoes, and "the home of the largest two-for-a-quarter cigar shop [R. G. Sullivan Co.] in the United States, with an annual production of 75,000,000 cigars," to say nothing of factories producing brushes, boxes, caskets, lasts, note books, sausages, underwear, etc. However, the facts remained that these employments were rather low-paying, and that the ailing Amoskeag remained the employer for over half of the city's industrial workers. The Queen City continued to be terribly exposed to the vagaries of cotton textile economics.

Down in Lowell, the 1920s were proving a disaster for old cotton mills.

Lowell Continues To Slide

After the midpoint of the 1920s, an utter ruthlessness became the open policy of the remaining Boston Associate mills in Lowell. Profits were to be wrung from unimproved plants and machinery. Workers should be happy with whatever work and whatever wages they received. In response to complaints, mill owners constantly referred to overcapacity.

Ibid., pp. 56-59. In detail, the conversion of 1927 consisted of the trading in of each Amoskeag Company share for $52.00 in cash, $40.00 in bonds issued by the AMC, and a share of the AMC. As will be seen in the next chapter, the inclusion, by Boston investors connected with the Shawmut Bank, of the financier Frederick Prince in a syndicate to invest in 1927 Amoskeag Manufacturing Company bonds did the AMC no good during Dumaine's efforts to save the company in the middle 1930s. Prince, who controlled the Chicago Stock Yards and who had been one of the founders of the American Woolen combine, would insist on getting full value from his bonds. See Wayman notes, 1/20/36 excerpt from Dumaine Diary, File 10, Box 20, Dumaine Collection, MHA, and "Prince, Frederick Henry," The National Cyclopaedia, Vol.XLV (New York: James T. White and Co., 1962), p. 393.

in the textile industry and to the dangers of competition from the South.

In the latter years of the decade, the textile depression in Lowell deepened, and old Boston Associate firms continue to close. One cotton mill simply sold out, one moved south to a subsidiary unit, and one found itself acquired by the expanding Pepperell, acquired not for the sake of operations in Lowell, but for a southern unit owned by the Lowell firm. Before the Depression, textile machinery making also left the Merrimack city, a victim of decisions made in boardrooms elsewhere.

The management installed over the Tremont and Suffolk by the coup of 1924 threw in the sponge two years later. In 1926, they sold the Suffolk mill, producing blankets, to the very successful blanket-producing Nashua Manufacturing Company. The Merrimack took over the Tremont property, not to continue production but to add the Tremont's waterpower to its own. By the end of the decade, the Merrimack began to raze most of the Tremont property.

Any links Lowell firms had with larger corporations or with sister plants down South began to tell against the city's economic health. Again and again, in dealing with lowered profits, directors assembled in board rooms located outside the Merrimack Corridor chose to close down Lowell plants. This pattern was not limited to textile plants - in late 1926, the U. S. Cartridge Co. was closed down by its corporate parent and its machinery shipped elsewhere. Soon the machinery of many Lowell cotton firms began to leave the city.

The stockholders of the Appleton owned a mill in Anderson, S. C., a mill which was consistently profitable. In a report to the stockholders at the end of October 1927, the management of the Appleton pointed out that over the previous three years the concern had lost $2,000,000, despite the profits made in South Carolina. The problem lay in the Lowell operation. The next month, the stockholders voted to end manufacturing in Lowell, move the machinery south, and dispose of the buildings.

After the First World War, the Massachusetts Cotton Mills sought desperately for a profitable line of products. By 1926 it was putting out 300 types of cloth in Lowell, from blankets to draperies to ginghams. Its mills in Lindale, Ga., proved consistently profitable in turning out cloth suitable for work clothing. Enticed by the Lindale


68 AWCR, Oct. 31, 1927, p. 48; Nov. 3, 1927, p. 73.
operation, at the end of 1926 the Pepperell of Maine, under the dynamic leadership of Treasurer Leonard, arranged a merger with the Massachusetts Mills.

For a year and a half, the Pepperell tried to develop profitable product lines in Lowell. By the summer of 1928, however, it was decided to close the old Boston Associate mill, and to transfer the blanket-making capacity to Maine. By the end of the year, the machinery was sold off, some of it to the Amoskeag. After 88 years, the Massachusetts Cotton Mills continued to exist only in their Georgia incarnation.

The year 1928 also saw the demise of the old Lowell Machine Shop. The pre-WWI amalgamation of the Lowell concern with other venerable textile machine producers in Newton, Mass., and Saco/Biddeford, Me., had worked out rather well. However, the Lowell Machine Shop unit did prove the weak link in the merged combine. In 1923, the instigator of the Saco-Lowell merger, Robert Herrick, put his son in charge of the prosperous enterprise. That year Robert Herrick, Jr., poured $1,000,000 into the Lowell plant.

This investment was soon rued by the directors of the Saco-Lowell Machine Shops, for the downturn in the textile industry also affected the textile machinery producers. In 1925 Saco-Lowell found itself unable to pay off several million dollars in loans from Boston and New York banks. In 1926, at the insistence of the banks, Robert Herrick, Jr., was replaced by a new executive. It was clear that Saco-Lowell would have to be downsized, and that the closures would come in either Biddeford or Lowell. The two city governments found themselves caught in a cruel competition of offering tax abatements to Saco-Lowell in order to keep

70 Ibid., pp. 276, 291-292, & 294.
72 The new executive was David F. Edwards, a forty-five year old who came to Saco-Lowell with a rich background, including five years as a lieutenant of James J. Storrow during the latter's reorganization of General Motors and stints teaching about business. In fact, it was while serving as a professor at Harvard Business School that Edwards accepted the invitation to run Saco-Lowell offered by Lee, Higginson (Storrow's firm and itself heavily involved in the Saco-Lowell reorganization). Ibid., pp. 521-523.
the local shops open. Lowell did not promise to lower taxes as much as its sister city in Maine, and this may have helped motivate the decision in Spring of 1928 to close Saco-Lowell operations along the Merrimack.73

Before the Depression began in the rest of the United States, the old Boston Associate firms of Lowell had nearly disappeared. C. Brooks Stevens, who had married into the clan descended from Ben Butler, stepped in to take over the Lawrence Manufacturing Company in 1926, and fought to find profitable product lines for it. The Merrimack survived the 1920s, aided by its unit down in Huntsville, Alabama; by sales of corduroy for seat covers to Chevrolet; and by the spoils of the downfall of its sister firms. The Boott also continued, despite its old machinery and crumbling buildings.74

At the Boott, Treasurer Frederick A. Flather refused to heed the constant advice of consultants to repair the buildings and to markedly upgrade the machines. He admitted to his board of directors that "any large expenditure for equipment of a general nature would better be expended in the South." The directors agreed, and they must have been very gratified when the hard-working and parsimonious F. A. Flather kept the Boott going another three decades.75

Lowell's textile losses were not confined to the Boston Associate firms gathered along the canals drawing from the Merrimack. In the industrial development area along the Concord River, an old Lowell concern had been incorporated in 1899 into the American Woolen trust under the name "Bay State Woolen Mills." In 1927, American Woolen closed this Lowell division. In 1929, another old Lowell woolen mill, the Belvidere Woolen Company, closed. On the Merrimack above the Pawtucket Dam, the large 1921 Bay State

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74 Ames Stevens, Hither and Yon With Spindle and Loom (Privately Printed, 1976), p. 26 ff.
75 Gross, Boott Cotton Mills, pp. 164-169. The reports of the consultants called in over the years highlighted Frederick A. Flather's frustrating situation. These consultants consistently, in 1916, in 1928, in 1944, pointed out what Flather already knew, the poor condition of both physical plant and machinery. However, Flather could not convince his directors to increase capital investment in the Boott to any great extent. Judging from his own comments about the money being better invested in the South, Flather probably proved a poor advocate for markedly increased expenditures in Lowell. Ibid., pp. 114-115, 134-138, & 180-182. His son Frederick Flather, in charge of Boott manufacturing from the 1920s, was very willing to start a unit in Arkansas or Oklahoma, but the Bemis and Ayer interests on the Boott Board of Directors ignored the young Flather's plans. Frederick Flather, Interview #86.12, pp. 15 & 22, Oral History Collection, Mogan Center.
(Cotton) Mills was closed by the New England Southern Mills in 1928. This last closure was part of a major New England disaster, the collapse of the textile conglomerate overseen by E. F. Greene, of which more below. 76

The Lowell Chamber of Commerce strove mightily to replace jobs lost in the textile industry. In 1928, it sponsored a $300,000 fund dedicated to loans to growing industries. 77 In common with other major cotton textile cities of New England, however, 20% of Lowell's 1920 population migrated away during rest of the decade. 78 (As will be discussed in the next chapter, Manchester lost 13.5% to out-migration during the decade.) Some success could be claimed by local boosters. A brochure published at the beginning of 1930, "Your Chamber of Commerce, What It Has Done and What It Plans to Do for Lowell," lists 30 firms established since 1926, and boasts of the $4,000,000 they have added to the city's industrial payrolls. 79

The brochure also lists the products of these firms, and here the reader may well sense trouble. Nearly all the manufactures are of a low-paying nature: shoes, hosiery, underwear, mops, tinsel, etc. One large firm, the Newmarket Manufacturing Co., brought silk manufacture to Lowell at the turn of the decade, but it had relocated from Newmarket, N.H. specifically to escape union wage demands. 80

Lowell leaders had to deal with the fact that the Merrimack Corridor's major attraction for new enterprises was its surplus pool of labor and the low wage rate resulting from its labor surplus. 81 Financial and business leaders in Boston were being forced to realize that large

78 Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown, pp. 298-299. Of course, births and in-migration negated some of this loss. Other Massachusetts textile towns suffering an out-migration during the same decade of "about twenty percent of the 1920 population" were Lawrence, Fall River, and New Bedford. C. Warren Thornthwaite, Internal Migration in the United States (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1934), p. 38.
sections of New England, including its northern reaches, were simply not sharing in the prosperity of other industrialized areas of the nation. Longstanding networks between finance and the cotton textile industry were beginning to crumble.

With the aid of Lee, Higginson and other Boston financial organizations, Edwin Farnum Greene had led his family's mill-constructing firm of Lockwood, Greene into the business of mill-managing and mill-owning. By the 1920s, Lockwood, Greene operated mills in New England (including Lowell), Nova Scotia, South Carolina, and Georgia, most of them organized into the International Cotton Mills system. This system, as was true of most horizontal combinations in the textile industry, never really generated profits. Even the sale of its Stark Mills unit in Manchester to the Amoskeag in 1922 did not solve its money problems, and the next year it was reorganized into the New England Southern Mills. Financial problems continued to plague the mills operated by Lockwood, Greene, and in 1928, the entire empire came tumbling down. (In the liquidation process, E. F. Greene also resigned as Treasurer of the important Pacific Mills of Lawrence.) The Boston engineering firm E. F. Greene had inherited died in 1928, and it then resurrected as the New York-based Lockwood Greene Engineers, Inc., sans any members of the Greene family. In the debacle, note-holders, banks, and stockholders lost at least $12,000,000, to say nothing of the losses of E. F. Greene and the other Lockwood, Greene partners.  

The crash of Lockwood, Greene did nothing good for the Boston investment bank of Lee, Higginson so closely connected with the engineering company's financing. A series of wretched investment decisions led to the death of Lee, Higginson in 1932. A new Lee, Higginson Corporation appeared in New York that year, featuring many of the old partners. Unlike the previous, Boston-based firm, it eschewed banking functions and dealt only in securities.  

Even after the failure of its 1899 New England Cotton Yarn trust, the Boston investment bank Kidder, Peabody had remained heavily involved in the textile industry. Robert

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82 Lincoln, Lockwood Greene, pp. 540-579; Kennedy, Profits and Losses, pp. 20-43. E. F. Greene spent the next two decades as a consultant to various textile firms. Lincoln, Lockwood Greene, p. 580.

83 Pre-eminent, the choice to believe in the charming "Swedish Match King" Ivar Krueger in the late 1920s and to promote his companies' securities. With the suicide of the Krueger in March 1932 and the subsequent revelation of his brazen lies to his backers, the partners in Lee, Higginson realized their reputation was destroyed, and they decided to liquidate. Vincent P. Carosso, Investment Banking in America, A History (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 317-318.

84 Ibid., pp. 318-319.
Winsor, the grand old man of Kidder, Peabody, was a confidant of Frederic C. Dumaine. It may well have been he who suggested to Dumaine the advisability of putting WWI profits into non-taxed Liberty Bonds. Upon the death of George Von L. Meyer, Winsor took the place of that diplomat and cabinet officer on the Amoskeag board. He participated in the reorganizations of the Amoskeag. That Manchester involvement did not harm Kidder, Peabody, but Winsor’s insistence throughout the 1920s upon his bank’s continued investment in non-productive New England textile mill stocks helped weaken its financial position.

Winsor died in 1930, before Kidder, Peabody’s situation became desperate. (His death, withdrawing from the bank his partner’s portion, contributed to the debacle.) In 1931, Kidder, Peabody was saved from utter failure by millions of dollars in aid from its allies, including the House of Morgan, and a group of investors led by F. C. Dumaine. It did have to reorganize, and, under new leadership, it moved its center of operations to New York City.

The decline of the New England textile industry had played its part in the utter eclipsing of Boston finance by that of New York. The world the Boston Associates made entered the Depression very worn, partially disassembled, and certainly on the periphery of recent dynamic developments in America. The heart of the cotton textile industry lay now in the South, financial power was monopolized by New York, the cultural and charitable institutions of Boston were echoed and even bettered in dozens of other cities. Bitter workers and frustrated managers now populated mill towns constructed a century earlier by optimistic Bostonians. The Merrimack Corridor was already depressed economically and disenchanted morally before the Great Depression began for the rest of the nation.

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86 Ibid., p. 494 fn. 4; Kenison, "Dumaine’s Amoskeag," p. 167; numerous entries in excerpts from F. C. Dumaine’s diary in Dumaine Collection, MHA.
88 Ibid., pp. 71-75.
89 In a conversation on 3/5/94, Dr. Thomas Ferguson of U. Mass. Boston explained to the author of this dissertation that the reason one does not read of "George Apleys" committing suicide at the news of the collapse of textile combines or Boston investment banks was due to the wide disbursement of Brahmin funds among many investments, some of them, e.g. General Electric, which did very well indeed during the 20th century.
However, three developments linked to the new, progressive, corporate industrialism would have positive impacts on the Merrimack Corridor during the dark decades ahead. The first was an electric utility generating and distributing electric power throughout a wide region. The second was the rise of regional and state planning agencies, gathering information and dispensing advice, even facilitating the attraction of manufacturing concerns to cities hungry for their payrolls. The third was a corporation which utilized the new marketing and manufacturing techniques to create one of the few stories of industrial growth in the Merrimack Valley of the '20s and '30s.

The Second Industrial Revolution And The Merrimack Valley: Electricity

Tucked in the far northeast corner of the nation, saddled with industrial traditions from the previous century, and experiencing more and more mill closings, the Merrimack Valley seemed to have been left behind by the expanding progressive industrialism of the new century. The great new corporations were marked by integrated mass production manufacturing and marketing; by careful application of research to problem-solving; and by more generous treatment of workers in the hope not only of forestalling strikes but also of adding to the pool of consumers. However, the Merrimack region did not remain untouched by the techniques of progressive managers in business and government. To begin with, it participated in the new power networks of that monument to science applied on a large scale, the electric utility.

In common with the rest of urban America of the late 19th century, electric generation in the Valley had begun as a marriage of generators, street lights, and public transit. The year 1881 had seen the creation of electric Light Companies in both Manchester and Lowell. Although much of the growing electric power needs of the mills along the Merrimack were supplied by the steam and hydropower plants of the mills themselves, lighting and public transportation allowed the electric companies of the two cities to prosper. To guarantee financing and to ensure power supplies during peak demand, by the mid-1920s the companies had joined networks united under holding companies. The Lowell Electric Light Corporation was held by the International Paper Company system (soon to be called the New England Power Association). In 1926, the Manchester Traction Light and Power Company found itself included in a branch of Samuel Insull's utility empire. 90

In a complicated series of maneuvers in the middle 1920s, Insull's Middle West Utilities Company formed an alliance with Walter S. Wyman and his Central Maine Power Company, and gained control of Central Maine and other utilities throughout northern New England. The electric systems of much of the Merrimack watershed in N.H., including Manchester, in 1926 became part of the Public Service Company of New Hampshire, Walter Wyman, president. PSNH was held by the New England Public Service Company, Walter Wyman, president, and NEPSCO was ultimately held by Insull's Middle West company.\textsuperscript{91} Insull and Wyman urged the management of PSNH to extend its power network and to aggressively foster consumption of its product.

Under the direction of Wyman, Avery Schiller, manager of the PSNH expanded its hydropower system by purchasing failed Boston Associate textile mills for the sake of the waterpower sites associated with them. In the late 1920s, Wyman and Schiller arranged for the divorce of textile mills from their dams and electric turbines at Great Falls and Salmon Falls in eastern N.H., and the sale of the mills to businessmen experienced in textile operations.\textsuperscript{92}

In Maine, Wyman decided to maintain control of mills purchased in 1929-1930 along the Kennebec, Androscoggin, and Saco rivers. A student of electric power development in Maine thinks this decision was somewhat impulsive, but congruent with Insull policies in the Middle West:

Since all these mills were large users of power, it was typical of Insull methods to acquire them and put money into them to assure their continued operation.

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\textsuperscript{91}In a 1927 address to a banquet of the National Association of Manufacturers in Boston, the grand old financial journalist C. W. Barron reflected the fears of his fellow New Englanders regarding this invasion of outside interests. He judged the purchase of Maine's great hydropower potential by the Insull system as one of the two great concerns of New England businessmen. (The other was the attempted raid by New York financiers on the Amoskeag—one is left with the image of the Amoskeag as a sort of natural resource of New England.) \textit{AWCR}, Nov. 3, 1927, p. 90. If my interpretation is correct, Insull's xenophobia was ill founded, for the type of energetic rationalization promoted by the Insull organization served Manchester well in its time of need.

operation and purchase of power. The argument was that prosperous mills meant prosperous communities which, in turn, made prosperous power companies possible. For instance, the timely purchase of the Androscoggin mill enabled it to continue operation and certainly proved to be a great boon to Lewiston and vicinity.  

In 1930, New England Industries, Inc., was created to run the textile mills and certain paper-making concerns controlled by the Insull interests in Maine.  

Down in Lowell, substantial aid from electric utilities could not be hoped for during times of economic crisis. Merrimack waterpower in the city remained divided among various millowners. The power plants of that city's failed mills fell into the hands of other mill owners. The New England Power Association, owner of the city utility, had developed no tradition of taking over mills for the sake of hydropower rights they owned.

Up in Manchester, the PSNH stood ready to offer assistance in economic development efforts. The tradition of proactive action by Insull utilities to foster industry would be supported in the 1930s by the creation of a state agency in N.H. dedicated to economic development. This agency was the fruit of a tradition of expert planning which had grown up earlier in the century.

The Second Industrial Revolution And The Merrimack Valley: Regional And State Planning

That part of the Progressive movement which distrusted concentrations of financial and industrial power could not have been pleased with the rise of the huge new corporations of the Second Industrial Revolution. However, part of the secret of these corporations' success lay in the professionalization of their management and in their application of "scientific management" systems to the work process. Even such an enemy of bigness in business as Louis D. Brandeis harbored in his Progressive soul a love of rationalized order. Much of the modus operandi of the huge new center firms appealed to an elitist, let's-turn-to-the-experts sentiment among Progressives.

Democracy was not perceived by Progressives as in opposition to efficient planning. Alongside their drive to increase popular control over government, the Progressives

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engaged in an "equally important campaign to carve out an inviolable realm of altruistic expertism in American government." In New Hampshire, for instance, Progressive leader Robert Bass, his protege John Winant, and Manchester publisher Frank Knox founded in 1923 the New Hampshire Foundation, dedicated to gathering and disseminating information about the state's problems.

Winant was governor of the Granite State in 1925. That year, motivated by the economic travails of New England, Winant and the region's other governors called for a "New England Conference" as a means of fostering cooperation in addressing New England-wide concerns. The governors of the region also hoped such a group would counteract negative views of New England arising from the decline of its industry. Under the aegis of the governors, an invitation was extended to agricultural, commercial and industrial organizations throughout New England to attend a "Town Meeting of New England Business" in Worcester November 12-13, 1925.

Six hundred delegates attended this meeting, which decided to divide power in the new organization equally among six state councils, from which a general New England Council (N.E.C.) was to be elected. The N.E.C. was to maintain research and other efforts sanctioned by an annual New England Conference of the member organizations. A spirited debate at Worcester resulted in the inclusion of labor organizations among the membership of the Conference. The Reader's Digest was later to term the New England Council "the most conspicuous and most successful example of regional cooperation we have in the United States." The organization soon set up a Research Department which explored the competitive position of New England vis à vis the rest of the nation.

By the time of the New England Conference of 1928, held in Portland, Maine, the N.E.C. could produce a handsome sixty-page booklet on "A Year of Progress, New England Council." The booklet included sections on Marketing, Recreation, Farm Marketing, Power, Transportation, and Research. The booklet also included a section on "Community Development," which covers nine pages. Among the conclusions

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96 "New Hampshire Foundation" file, Box 116, Winant Collection, F.D.R. Library, Hyde Park N.Y.
98 Quoted in ibid., p. 7.
of this section was that
by far the greater part of the migration of industry
is from one community in New England to another,
frequently only a few miles away. This demonstrates
again the community's responsibility, and the
necessity for individual communities setting their
houses in order and providing conditions favorable
to existing industrial enterprise.\textsuperscript{100}

Along with this strong hint for low taxes, this
section presses for communities to engage in surveying their
industrial potential, in setting up industrial development
committees, in building up industrial development funds, and
in advertising themselves. In short, virtually all the
arsenal of weapons available today for communities seeking
to combat deindustrialization were known to the New England
communities of 1928.

As will be seen in the fifth chapter of this
dissertation, the tradition of economic research and
planning in New Hampshire would benefit Manchester during
the Depression. In Massachusetts, without noted patrons
like Bass, and Winant, and Knox, this strand of
Progressivism would not bring much succor to struggling
cities like Lowell.

Careful planning would mark the genesis of an
enterprise in the early 1920s which would provide southern
New Hampshire one of its few outstanding industrial
successes of the interwar period.

\textbf{The Second Industrial Revolution And The Merrimack Valley:}
\textbf{The J. F. McElwain Company}

If textile concerns, as opposed to units of the new
center industries of automobiles or chemicals, could be set
up with relatively little difficulty, shoe manufacturing
units proved amazingly easy to start. The United Shoe
Machinery Corporation held the patents for the equipment
needed for a shoe factory. Instead of utilizing its
monopoly position to limit supplies of shoe machinery to the
highest bidders, it adopted a policy of leasing machines at
moderate rates to manufacturers big and small. Many a
budding entrepreneur in the Merrimack Valley leased some
machines, put them into a garret, and hired at small wages
immigrant women and men to feed leather into the shoemaking
technology. If the entrepreneur guessed correctly the
styles for the next year, the small concern might grow,
adding more machines and more operatives. If the shoes
proved non-sellers, the entrepreneur returned the machinery
and turned out the workforce. In any case, shoemaking was a
notoriously seasonal industry, and its laborers joined
textile workers far down the scale of levels of pay for
manufacturing labor.

\textsuperscript{100}Ibid., p. 19.
At the beginning of the 20th century, a Bridgewater, Mass., shoe manufacturer, W. H. McElwain, sought, on the one hand, to supply his workers with steady pay and steady work, and, on the other hand, to rationalize the manufacture of shoes and to more efficiently respond to consumer demand. In this, McElwain was heavily influenced by the thinking of his attorney, Louis D. Brandeis.\footnote{See Henry Greenleaf Pearson, William Howe McElwain 1867-1908 (Boston: Privately printed, 1917), passim. Brandeis was so impressed with W. H. McElwain’s combination of fair-mindedness toward workers (which stopped short of accepting unions) and efficiency in business that he used McElwain as an example in talks before university students. The published version of this lecture appears in Louis D. Brandeis’ Business - A Profession (Boston: Small, Maynard and company, 1914).} McElwain’s enterprise succeeded to such a degree that he could soon expand operations into large plants in Manchester, N.H. (Before World War One, many Massachusetts shoe manufacturers moved into New Hampshire to escape the strong Massachusetts shoe unions.) Then, at the age of 41, W. H. McElwain suddenly died in 1908.

His brother J. F. McElwain took over his enterprises, and supervised their complete transfer to New Hampshire. The McElwain organization maintained the twin goals of business efficiency and fairness to labor. In fact, a 1917 issue of The New Republic featured an article lauding the company for its pioneering treatment of workers.\footnote{Mary D. Hopkins, "An Experiment in Hours," The New Republic Vol.XI, No.136 (June 9, 1917), pp. 157-158.} However, the general business recession of 1921 hit the McElwain enterprises hard, and J. F. McElwain accepted a merger offer with the much larger International Shoe Company of St. Louis. Whatever it did for the fortunes of the W. H. McElwain Co., the merger did not work out well for J. F. McElwain himself. He resigned from the company at the beginning of 1922.\footnote{See 1921 letters of J.F. McElwain in Box 1, Folder 1, McElwain Archives, Manchester Historical Association.}

He might be without a job, but his years in the shoe industry had left him with a vision of just how efficient and fair a shoe factory could be. Hides of leather, unlike sheets of metal or batches of chemicals, did not lend themselves utterly to continuous process or assembly line treatment. However, McElwain thought he could come close to the practice of the center industry firms so prominent in the 1920s. He could also echo their carefully-considered treatment of labor (especially as they, like the McElwain clan, had a marked aversion that decade to dealing with independent labor unions). J. F. McElwain enlisted some of the most talented executives of the W. H. McElwain Co. to help him plan a new McElwain factory.
The new factory was conceived in terms of automobile assembly lines. The new facility would have a single story in a U-shape and would be devoted to the manufacture of one type of shoe. Machines would be positioned for maximum ease of transport of work-in-progress, with no provision made for storing stalled work. The system was to be utterly efficient.\(^{104}\) Ideally, the mass-produced McElwain product would have the success among shoe-buyers of Ford's mass-produced "Model T" among car-buyers. "Our game," McElwain wrote, "is to do, if we can, what Ford has done in the automobile industry."\(^{105}\)

J. F. McElwain had been impressed with his elder brother's desire to closely link shoe types produced to what was actually selling. McElwain decided to integrate his enterprise forward by forming a tight relationship with a large shoe retailer. Over the years, he had come to know well Frank Melville, Jr., owner of several shoe retail chains. He knew that the retailer shared an appreciation of the importance of the sharing of information between manufacturer and distributor. Years later, McElwain recalled for Melville's biographer that during 1920 at the Nashua country Club, after a game of golf, as we were sitting under the trees he stated that something must be done to give the public greater value and thought that plans could be evolved that would reduce manufacturing and distributing costs through closer relationship between manufacturer and distributor. We agreed the theory was correct but under the conditions [viz. a depression in the shoe industry] it seemed extremely difficult to work it out in practice.\(^{106}\)

By the summer of 1922, McElwain felt confident that such a close manufacturer/retailer link was practicable. He had observed that low material costs for shoes had not resulted in commensurate reductions in the cost of shoes to the consumer. He decided the cost inelasticity resulted from inefficiencies in both manufacture and distribution. He thought his new factory could eliminate the manufacturing inefficiencies, and he anticipated that the Melville


\(^{105}\) Letter to Frank Melville, Jr. from J.F. McElwain, Oct. 21, 1922, quoted in letter to Melville's biographer, Mr. Ray Dowell, from JFM Jan. 3, 1936, (Box 1 Folder 46, McElwain Archives, Manchester Historical Association).

\(^{106}\) J. Franklin McElwain, "Notes written by JFM relative to a discussion with Mr. Dowell in Boston on December 17, 1935," (Box 1, Folder 40, McElwain Archives, Manchester Historical Association), pp. 1-3.
organization could set up distribution outlets able to eliminate retailing inefficiencies.107

He sold Melville on the vision of the new, assembly-line factory linked to retail stores which would be attractive but operate with low overhead. At a meeting at Melville's New York home, it was decided that the factory should produce a high quality calf man's shoe in a few different styles at $4.00 a pair, a dollar under the standard price.108 A series of new retail outlets would sell this shoe under the name of "Thom McAn."109 The Melville interests would get the retail chain off the ground; McElwain and his lieutenants would set up the factory.110

McElwain learned that Nashua, N.H., boosters were looking for new industry in their city, hitherto so closely linked to the textile manufacturing. The locals welcomed McElwain's initiative, and they set up a realty company which acquired land and broke ground for the factory on October 9, 1922. The enterprise got off to a fast start. The first shoes were cut January 15, 1923, even before the building was completed.111

The new factory fulfilled its creators' fondest expectations. In its first year, 1923, it obtained an annual production per square foot double the standard of other facilities producing men's welt dress shoes. The 559,000 pairs shoes produced in 1923 were retailed through the newly established Thom McAn outlets, and most of the millions of pairs to follow in the 1920s and 1930s were released through the same chain, which was constantly growing. (By 1930 there were over 400 Thom McAn outlets.) The meteoric increase in sales and production prevented the McElwain staff from spending time in arranging for the erection of new plants. Rather they purchased unoccupied textile and shoe factories in Nashua and Manchester and installed in these multi-storied buildings a manufacturing layout as close as possible to that used in the first plant.112

Up and down the Merrimack Corridor many multi-storied mills lay empty or only partially in use by the Fall of

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110 J. Franklin McElwain, "Notes...," p. 4.
1929. With the onset of the Great Depression, the city of Manchester would become more and more appreciative of the success of the J.F. McElwain Co. The moment of crisis for Manchester’s textile industry would soon arrive.

**Conclusion**

The cotton textile regime along the Merrimack began to fail well before 1929 and the Depression. The hegemony over the Merrimack Corridor of the descendants of the Boston Associates had been weakened in the years before the First World War. In the decade after the war, the built environment of the Corridor became increasingly only the shell of a once prosperous industrial area. The reality was that the region was in deep economic trouble, and that the communities in the region had begun to battle one another for firms promising employment for local citizens.

Business leaders in each community knew of strategies aimed toward counteracting the effects of mill shutdowns—e.g., tax breaks to corporations, inviting companies in which would diversify the economic base, etc. Since all communities employed such stratagems to some degree, true success in the hunt for jobs would depend upon pure luck or some special characteristic of the successful community. In the context of New England recession and deindustrialization, any relative advantage one city had over another in the suffering textile regions became an important advantage.

In the Merrimack Corridor, it turned out that Manchester’s increased distance from Boston compared to Lowell enabled it to become a local economic center in a way not open to its sister city down the river. Also, in New Hampshire the Progressive Movement and the Second Industrial Revolution would have the beneficial results referred to above. Lowell, tied closely to the economic orbit of Boston and passed by in important ways by the Second Industrial Revolution and Progressivism, would have few resources to offer any local leaders interested in counteracting the grim economic situation after 1929.
CHAPTER IV

LOWELL IN DECLINE

Introduction

This chapter deals with the travails of a textile city in decline. It describes the efforts of its entrepreneurs to keep their factories going, and the efforts of its workers to organize for some sort of defense of their wage rates. In the 1930s, the downfall of the old cotton mill regime, long controlled by Boston capitalists, did not lead to local control of its economic destiny, an era of Cumbler's "civic capitalism." The mill properties, and the hydropower rights associated with them, remained divided among a number of companies, the major portion of which depended upon non-Lowell boards of directors. Most of the firms enticed into the vacant mill buildings were very small scale. Large-sized firms which moved into the millyards almost always proved to be subsidiaries of national concerns, with board rooms far away from the Merrimack.

Lowell entered the Depression era with an economy devoted to low-cost manufacturing, and with the direction of its industries divided between absentee owners and local owners. The major interest of the owners was to keep wages low. Political figures in Lowell might want to effect some change for the better, but creative ideas were lacking, and the old grudges between Yankee businessmen and Irish politicos endured. In any case, high unemployment and a collapsing tax base (even a collapsing base for potential taxes: a number of closed mills had been razed) "paralyzed the city government." In the decade of the 30s, only the great flood of 1936 would unite divided business interests, factionalized political interests, and struggling labor groups into a common effort for the city.

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With the exception of the city's representative to the U.S. Congress, Edith Nourse Rogers, the record shows no political figure who did much more than make sure the city received the relief it was entitled to from state and federal coffers. Representative Rogers garnered federal contracts for construction projects. However, there would be no echo of the Tennessee Valley Authority along the Merrimack (although a bill to establish a Merrimack River Authority was submitted to the 74th Congress). The decision on the national level that would have markedly aided the Lowell economy was never taken: the N.R.A. Code for the cotton industry would not bring parity to Northern and Southern wage scales.

Some local clans might have offered some signal examples of civic capitalist leadership or philanthropy to Lowell. However, their members seem to have spent most of their time garnering scarce orders for their mills. Labor leaders had their hands full just trying to get their fellow workers organized. This chapter will record the decade for Lowell as an era lacking heroes, or even much effective common action.

Lowell lacked heroes; it had also lost old advantages its position had given it in terms of the American market. Before the Civil War, it had been at the northern end of the new railway networks linking it to the country's major population centers in the northeastern United States. In the 20th century, Lowell possessed little locational advantage in terms of the transcontinental national market. It perched on the edge of the northern, impoverished part of New England, a region itself tucked in a corner of the United States.

Robert W. Eisenmenger has written that New England as a whole became an important center of population and manufacturing due to "historical accident" rather than to obvious geographic causes. Indeed, the fact that Boston investors wished to be near their early 19th century experiments in creation of industrial cities explains the development of hydropower sites along the Merrimack. In theory, they could have developed mills by waterfalls nearer the cotton croplands. With the development of steam power, hydropower sources themselves became less important. With the development of business controls, proximity of investor to investment became a non-issue. Once the forests of the White Mountains were harvested and the waters of the Merrimack had been fully harnessed in

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the late 19th century, Merrimack cities could claim no special natural endowments to attract new enterprises. In the early 20th century, no capital-intensive, high-wage industries had seen fit to locate in Merrimack communities. The wage depression occasioned by the travails of the local textile industry would only entice other labor intensive, low wage industries to move in. Lowell and her sister cities remained, and would continue to remain, loci of low-wage, labor-intensive industries. 5

Lowell possessed not only manufacturing plants, but it also served as a retail and wholesale center. However, in an era of widespread railroad and highway links, Lowell's proximity to Boston became a liability for the development of its retail and wholesale commerce. According to a U.S. Dept. of Commerce study undertaken during the late 1920s, the entire Merrimack Corridor lay well within the economic orbit of Boston. However, the location of Lowell made it a less important subsidiary than Manchester up the river. Lowell's retail service region and wholesale service region largely coincided. They were hemmed into a section of densely populated Middlesex County not served by Lawrence, Woburn, Waltham, or Boston. The retail area of Manchester extended from the Massachusetts border up to Concord, N.H., and its wholesale area extended from the southern state border to deep into the White Mountains, 120 miles north of the city. The population of Manchester's retail area nearly equalled that of the Lowell retail area, while the population of Manchester's wholesale area more than doubled that of Lowell's wholesale region. 6

Already in a weak economic position before the onset of the Great Depression, Lowell, in the words of journalist Louis Adamic, remained for the next decade a city of "misery among workers, desperation among small tradespeople ... and general bewilderment." 7

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6Retail and wholesale region maps appended to Edward F. Gerish, Market Data Handbook of New England (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1929). The estimated 1927 populations of the retail service areas of Lowell and Manchester respectively were 200,592 and 183,532. Ibid., p. 142 & p. 164. The estimated population of Lowell's wholesale area in 1927 was 151,197, that of Manchester 380,522. Ibid., p. 60 & p. 80.
The Depression Hits Lowell

In the city directory of 1930, the Lowell Chamber of Commerce rechristened their homepage "The City of Diversified Industries." The wisdom of developing manufacturing outside of cotton textiles had been amply demonstrated in the previous five years, during which the city's active cotton spindles had decreased from 1,200,000 to 344,628. The Chamber of Commerce devoted one of its three pages of statistics in the 1930 directory to merely listing Lowell's many manufactures, from "Airplanes" to "Zip-on' Products." A brochure published at the beginning of 1930, "Your Chamber of Commerce, What It Has Done and What It Plans to Do for Lowell," listed 30 firms established since 1926, and boasted of the $4,000,000 they added to the city's industrial payrolls. The brochure also listed the products of these firms, and the list would send danger signals to the careful reader. Nearly all the manufactures are of a low-paying nature: shoes, hosiery, underwear, mops, tinsel, etc. One large firm, the Newmarket Manufacturing Co., brought silk manufacture to Lowell at the turn of the decade, but it had relocated from Newmarket, N.H. specifically to escape union wage demands.

The one firm listed which gives promise of further growth and high paid labor is the Moth Aircraft Company. This concern, holder of the U.S. license for production of the De Haviland light "D. H. Moth" airplane, set up shop next to the brand new Lowell Airport in 1928. The concern became part of the expanding Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical Corporation. As late as the first week of January, 1930, an officer of the Moth company told an audience of Lowell businessmen that with further development of the city's

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12 "Your Chamber of Commerce."
13 Stone, Massachusetts Industries, p. 768-769.
airport, "Lowell could take a primary position in the airplane field."  

Within two days, the Moth management announced that its parent company, hard-pressed by the economic crisis since October, 1929, would be combining the Moth operation with other subsidiaries in St. Louis. So much for hopes of Lowell as a center of the new technology, and, for that matter, for any hope that the Lowell Airport would help in economic development of the area. 

The onset of the Depression put finis to the momentum toward Lowell revitalization. Textile and shoe workers were back to short work weeks. Abandoned mills and factories, instead of housing new firms, now more frequently fell victim to the wrecker’s ball as owners avoided real estate taxes. Lowellians working at the Boston and Maine repair facility in nearby Billerica saw it transferred in the late Fall of 1930 to Concord, N.H. By the end of the Depression’s first year, another venerable Lowell firm, the Lowell Bleachery (founded in 1833) closed its doors, erasing jobs for 450 workers.

This last closing was yet another example of Lowell losing jobs because of corporate decisions made elsewhere. In 1924, the Lowell Bleachery, historically making dividends of 8 and 10%, and its subsidiaries in St. Louis and Georgia, became units in an amalgamation of cloth finishing firms, the National Fabric and Finishing Co. On Dec. 3, 1930, the hard-pressed Boston-based corporation voted to close operations in Lowell, although four years later it - in a desperate attempt to cash in on an historic tradition? - changed its own corporate name to "Lowell Bleachery Co."

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14 Lowell Courier-Citizen, 1/8/30, p. 2.
15 Lowell Courier-Citizen, 1/10/30, p. 1 and p. 10.
16 In March of 1934, the city of Lowell began leasing the 116 acre airport property for 5 years for one dollar a year. Lowell Leader article in papers of Edith Nourse Rogers. In 1937, the Lowell air facilities rated only as a "landing field" suitable for emergency use by planes on the Boston to Burlington run. In contrast, Manchester’s airfield was considered a full airport worthy of regular service on the service northwest of Boston. See A Plan for New England Airways (Boston: New England Regional Planning Commission, 1937), p. 20.
17 For example, the Merrimack Manufacturing Co., having taken over the Tremont mills and their quota of Merrimack waterpower, began in 1929 to knock the buildings down, a process completed by 1933. Peter M. Molloy, ed., The Lower Merrimack River Valley: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites, 2nd edition (North Andover, Mass.: Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, 1978), p. 28.
18 Lowell Courier-Citizen, 11/7/30, p. 10. Stone, Massachusetts Industries, p. 738; Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, "Lowell Bleachery," in her The Lowell...
The suspicion did exist that the remaining mill managements in the city worked against the recruitment of industry into Lowell which would outbid the textile concerns for labor. Roger Kane, a city councilor in the early '40s, remembered that the groups controlling the remaining mills also controlled the Proprietors of Locks and Canals organization and other power-generating firms. They set rates calculated to dissuade high-paying firms from location in Lowell. Kane admitted that I don't remember any specific [examples] - it never got that far, because the people that were looking, they knew the set-up and they were discouraged before any kind of negotiations could take place. [Lowell] had that reputation.19 Other members of the city government, and union organizer James Ellis, also reported the same perception.20

Such an implicit conspiracy could only have added to Lowell's substantial miseries. Unemployment spread through the ranks of the "diversified" industries of the city: a 1930 government survey counted 1,464 cotton workers looking for work or on unpaid lay-off out of 5,274; 523 woolen workers out of 2,268; 454 foundry workers out of 1,969; 372 shoe workers out of 2,880; the totals mounted to 4,749 fully jobless or layed-off manufacturing and mechanical workers out of 24,083.21 If a study of unemployment in selected cities (not including Lowell) done by the Bureau of the Census in January of 1931 is any guide, unemployment in Lowell probably doubled by that winter.22

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In the fall of 1930, the author Louis Adamic visited Lowell and reported the ghastly effects of the Great Depression on a city already hit hard by the textile depression of the mid 1920s:

I had a creepy feeling as I walked through some of the streets. There were rows of old wooden houses, unoccupied, uncared-for, their window panes broken. Many of the tenanted houses in the working people's districts, evidently, have not been painted for years. I saw broken window panes pasted over with paper, the residents, apparently, being too poor to replace them. . . . In Lowell I saw shabby men leaning against walls and lamp-posts, and standing on street corners singly or in twos or threes; pathetic, silent, middle-aged men in torn, frayed overcoats or even without overcoats, broken shoes on their feet (in a town manufacturing shoes!), slumped in postures of hopeless discontent, their faces sunken and their eyes shifty and bewildered - men who winced and jerked queerly when they noticed me looking at them, and shuffled off uncertainly, wringing their hands in a mingling of vague desperation and of resentment at my gaze.  

Some solace was brought to Lowell's struggling families by the representative for the Fifth Congressional District, Edith Nourse Rogers. After growing up in the Spindle City, Edith Nourse had married into the Rogers clan, a Lowell family heavily involved in the cotton textile industry (e.g. Congresswoman Rogers' sister-in-law was the wife of Frederick A. Flather). Her husband John Jacob Rogers represented Lowell's district in the U.S. Congress from 1913 until his death in 1925. In a special election that year, his widow, already well-known for her work for war veterans ("The Angel of Walter Reed"), gained his congressional seat, which she was to hold until her death in

Lowell cotton manufacturing in 1929 was 4,135, in 1931 2,391; in woolen manufacturing in 1929, 2,102, in 1931 1,751. A little of the decline was offset by employment rises in the knit goods industry (1929 1,926; 1931 2,126) and in shoe manufacturing (1929 2,710; 1931 2,992). Massachusetts Dept. of Labor and Industries, "Lowell," Census of Manufactures, 1934 (Boston: 1935), pp. 3-4. A 1934 census of unemployment in Massachusetts put the percentage of Lowell's employable workers lacking employment at 24.4% (15,248 unemployed out of 45,051 employable); among males 24.5% (7,426 unemployed out of 30,263 employable), among females 24% (3,545 unemployed out of 14,788 employable). Massachusetts Dept. of Labor and Industries, Report on the Census of Unemployment in Massachusetts as of January 2, 1934 (Part II of the Annual Report on the Statistics of Labor for the Year Ending November 30, 1934), p. 101.  

1960. She kept the seat because of her attention to the needs of constituents. A mill worker during the '30s remembered in the '70s that the representative was a tremendous woman. ... The whole time she was in office, nobody went to anyone else except Mrs. Rogers.

She had much to do with one of the few positive developments for the Lowell economy during 1930. Largely through the hard work of the congresswoman, the Hoover administration allocated $500,000 for the construction of a new Post Office building on part of the old Massachusetts millyard along the Concord River. Not only had the government decided to build the facility, but, after intense lobbying by Mrs. Rogers, an initial contract for a St. Louis firm to construct the building out of limestone had been set aside in favor of a Lowell firm which would utilize granite from neighboring Chelmsford and provide much work for Lowell area subcontractors. Construction began in August, 1930. With the opening of the new Post Office at the beginning of 1932, Lowell greeted its only large civic construction in a decade, that is, since 1922 and the completion of the striking granite edifice of the Civic Arena looming just across the Concord River from the new government building.

Lowell's troubles continued. During 1931, several hundred wool workers in Lowell joined 23,000 peers in neighboring Lawrence, and stayed out of work six weeks to protest a 10% wage reduction. The Spindle City of old avoided other major strikes, but the Depression took further hold. Even the area's amusement park, at the northern end of the trolley line at Canobie Lake, New Hampshire, went to the auction block. On December 13, 1931, an impending deficit of half a million dollars in the Lowell city budget attracted comment on the editorial page of the Boston Sunday Herald.

On December 14, 1931, one of Lowell's commercial banks, the Middlesex National Bank, closed its doors, caught


25 Alice Swanton, quoted in Miller, Irony of Victory, p. 74.

26 Lowell Courier-Citizen, 1/16/32, pp. 1 & 4.

27 Lowell Sun, 10/20/31, p. 1; The Lawrence strike featured some violence between picketers and police. Lowell Courier-Citizen, 11/5/31, p. 1; 11/6/31, p. 1; 11/7/31, p. 1; 11/10/31, p. 1. The auction was part of the settlement of the Massachusetts Northeastern Street Railway Co. bankruptcy.

in the downfall of the Boston bank which controlled it. Some 10,000 depositors had $4,000,000 in the bank; by the beginning of 1935 they would have received only 50 cents on the dollar.  

Panic-stricken Lowellians withdrew so many funds from another commercial bank, the Lowell Trust Company, that it closed the afternoon of Dec. 16. Three thousand depositors had $2,100,000 in the savings department; by the beginning of 1935, they would receive 30 cents on the dollar. To protect themselves, seven Lowell savings banks announced on Dec. 17 that they would demand a waiting period of 90 days for withdrawals over $100. The two remaining commercial banks of Lowell reported themselves in no danger. In fact, the Appleton National Bank offered to loan money to holders of passbooks from the savings banks which had imposed the withdrawal limits. The crisis passed, but the Christmas of 1931 was rendered grimmer than ever for thousands of Lowellians.

Government employment took up some of the slack in the Lowell economy. The construction of the new Post Office provided some jobs, and new agencies such as the Works Progress Administration gave jobs of all sorts to Lowell men and women. By the beginning of 1934, over 1,800 Lowellians were employed in government programs. The U.S. Army upgraded nearby Camp Devens from a training facility to the base for several regiments. During the 1930s, construction projects at Ft. Devens gave some employment to citizens of Lowell. In 1933, three hundred Lowellians helped on major improvements at the fort. The next year, citizens of the city, and congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers, raised

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32 Census of Unemployment in Massachusetts, p. 101.  
33 Fort Devens Massachusetts (San Diego: MARCOA Publishing Inc., 1990), p. 11. In May of 1917, 10,000 acres in Ayer, Harvard, and nearby communities had been acquired by the federal government to construct a training camp for Army recruits and draftees. By 1918, the camp, Ft. Devens, contained 4,000 buildings of all sorts which could hold 50,000 men, a total nearly reached during that year. Report of the Commission on Massachusetts’ Part in the World War - History, ed. by Eben Putnam (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1931), pp. 199, 200, and 204.
successfully protests against the transferral of some of the functions of Ft. Devens to facilities on Cape Cod. 34

Some old Lowell firms kept up employment. In 1899 a Lowell tannery had become a unit in the American Hide and Leather combine. In the 1930s, that tannery had become the world’s largest producer of "upper leather" for shoes, 30,000,000 feet annually, keeping 500 workers busy. 35 A similar number of workers kept busy at the Massachusetts Mohair Plush Company, which since 1891 had been manufacturing the plush upholstery found on passenger seats on railroad lines across the U.S. 36 The Courier Citizen Company, sister company of the publisher of one of the city’s newspapers, had taken over some of the old Hamilton mill buildings for its lucrative printing operations. Several hundred Courier Citizen workers put out all the telephone directories of New England, along with such items as telegraph forms. 37

With the dissolution of Prohibition under the new Roosevelt regime, brewing returned to Lowell. In March of 1933, the Harvard Brewery, originally founded in the 1870s and covering ten acres, reopened, providing employment for over one hundred workers. 38

Beneficial as the revival of brewing was for the Lowell boosters’ desire to make their home the "City of Diversified Industries," the fact remained that the city’s economy was intimately tied to the textile industry. Cotton manufacturing may have declined, but the major employers of the city were in textile categories, including rayon. 39

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34 Lowell Etoile, 12/10/33; Lowell Courier-Citizen, 2/24/34, articles in papers of Edith Nourse Rogers.
36 Stone, Massachusetts Industries, p. 755; Parker, Lowell, p. 82.
37 Lowell Courier-Citizen, centennial edition, 6/30/36, p. 3; Stone, Massachusetts Industries, pp. 757-758; List of Manufacturing Firms ... 1937, p. 20.
38 Lowell Sun, 3/18/33; Massachusetts Dept. of Labor and Industry, Division of Statistics, List of Manufacturing Firms in Massachusetts Employing 100 Wage earners and over, 1937 (Mass. Dept. of Labor and Industry, 1937), p. 20; Molloy, Industrial Sites, p. 48; COURIER-CITIZEN, centennial edition, 6/30/36, p. 32.
39 Parker, Lowell, pp. 32-33.
Textile Firms

Among the members of the boards of directors of the remaining old textile mills were representatives of two old Lowell family groups, the Ayers - beneficiaries of the massive profits of the J. C. Ayer Co. - and the Ames/Stevens clan - inheritors of the interests begun by Ben Butler. However, any hopes for special involvement of members of these clans and their allies in the affairs of Lowell were not to be borne out in the 1930s.

In the nineteenth century, the local philanthropies of the original Ayer brothers, J. C. and Frederick, had been quite noteworthy. (A nearby town cannily changed its name to "Ayer" in a successful attempt to garner some of the family largess.) In the 20th century, however, the family had moved to the wealthy sections of metropolises throughout the United States, and, after the death of J. C. Ayer's son Frederick Fanning Ayer in 1924, any loyalty among the clan to the old home town vanished. By the third decade of the century, the original Ayer medicine company had become inconsequential, and, in 1939, it disappeared into the Stirling drug empire.\(^4^0\) In the 1930s, C. F. Ayer and the younger Frederick Ayer did continue to include Lowell textile concerns among their many interests. (See next page.) However, their efforts on behalf of those concerns were devoted exclusively to keeping up dividends.

A little more in the way of civic capitalism marked the attitude of many heirs of the industrial activities of Lowell lawyer Benjamin Butler. The members of the Ames and Stevens clans who came to control Butler's industrial developments along the Concord River began the century as mainly local entrepreneurs. They kept up a tradition of sitting on the boards of local banks.\(^4^1\) However, as the century wore on, the extended family saw its Lowell enterprises either cease to exist or become units in larger

\(^{4^0}\) Moody's Industrial Manual, 1940 (Moody's Investors' Services 1940), p. 3222.

\(^{4^1}\) Charles Brooks Stevens and his son C. Brooks Stevens, Jr., heavily involved in the Butler textile legacy, sat on the boards of Lowell banks through the 1930s, as is evidenced by Lowell Directories of those years. However, as residents of nearby Tewksbury, they could not run for Lowell civic offices.
OLD MONEY, 1910 AND 1930

Ayer Manufacturing Interests, 1910
J. C. Ayer, Co. (patent medicine)
Tremont and Suffolk Mills
Merrimack Mill
Boott Mill
American Woolen Co.

Ayer Manufacturing Interests, 1930
Merrimack Mill
Boott Mill
American Woolen

Butler/Stevens Manufacturing Interests, 1910
Middlesex Co.
U.S. Bunting Co.
U.S. Cartridge Co.
Heinze Electric Co.

Butler/Stevens Manufacturing Interests, 1930
U.S. Bunting Co.
Lawrence Manufacturing Co.
Ames Worsted Mill
corporations. Certain Lowell properties, e.g. the U. S. Cartridge Co. in 1923, were sold off to national concerns which had no compunction about closing them. Other initiatives, e.g. the Lowell Airport Co. in the late 1920s, simply never worked out. Still other attempts at putting the Concord River land and water to use in manufacturing, e.g. the Ames Worsted Co. in 1936, gradually became part of national textile networks by no means particularly tied to Lowell.  

However, the remnants of the civic capitalist legacy of Ben Butler and J.C. Ayer did live on among the extended clan of Jacob Rogers, Lowell banker and executor of the J. C. Ayer estate. Edith Nourse Rogers carried on a legacy of political service connected with the family of her deceased husband, the son of Jacob. In some ways, the family of her sister-in-law, the Flathers, strove to carry on the Rogers tradition of contributing to the good of the city. They served as trustees of the Lowell Textile School, local banks, hospitals, etc. However, the power of Frederick A. Flather and his sons was none too great: they merely ran the Boott mills on behalf of absentee owners.

In contrast to Manchester, where, in the 1930s, local families and enterprises were erecting striking new buildings, often dedicated to cultural pursuits, the local clans of Lowell could not claim to have added to the city fabric (unless Edith Nourse Rogers' successful lobbying for a federal post office be counted). Such civic capitalism as existed in Lowell proved to be of an anemic strain.

Firms founded a century before by investors from Boston continued to operate. Old Boston Associate firms


kept thousands on their payroll, albeit, often on short time. The Boott, the Merrimack, and the Lawrence mill complexes each employed over a thousand workers in 1937.\footnote{List of Manufacturing Firms ... 1937, p. 20.} However, business had become a constant scramble for the managers of these old firms.

Frederick A. Flather had brought his two sons, Frederick, Jr., and John Rogers, into the Boott Mills firm in the 1920s, the former to supervise manufacturing, the latter to help in marketing.\footnote{Frederick Flather, Interview Transcript #86.12, pp. 4 & 8, Oral History Collection, Mogan Center.} Despite very limited investment in new machinery or in renovating the mill buildings, the Flatthers made it a point of honor to keep the Boott making a profit. (They often seem to have often lost sight of the fact that the mill belonged to the penny-pinching board of directors, not to them.) The run-down condition of the plant did not allow for fine fabric production, so the Flatthers concentrated on towels, duck, grain bagging, corduroy, and other rather coarse fabrics which they aggressive sold.\footnote{Laurence F. Gross, The Course of Industrial Decline: The Boott Cotton Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1835-1955 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1993), p. 174.}

From his base as CEO of one of the few remaining Boston Associate mills in Lowell, F. A. Flather gathered other positions of power in the city. From 1927, he was president of the old Proprietors of Locks and Canals organization, still supervising the distribution of the millpowers\footnote{Each "millpower" was defined by the Proprietors of Locks and Canals from the earliest days of Lowell as the amount of water drawn from a canal during a 15 hour workday which delivered power equivalent to 25 cubic feet of water per second going over the Pawtucket Falls when the head was 30 ft. A millpower so defined equalled about 60 horsepower. Parker, Lowell, pp. 118-119.} of the city's canal system to whomever would take them. After 1932, F. A. Flather became increasingly involved in the affairs of another old Boston Associate firm, the Merrimack Manufacturing Co.\footnote{Directors' Records, 4/29/32 & seq., Merrimack Manufacturing Co. Archives, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.}

The Merrimack had weathered the decade of the 1920s in fine style, its mills in Lowell and in Huntsville, Ala., benefitting from lucrative contracts for upholstery fabric for automobiles. Profits were not entirely distributed in dividends: from 1922 through 1930 some $4 million were expended for plant improvements in Lowell, $1,266,000 in Alabama. Unfortunately, the Merrimack's good fortune did not lead its directors, among whom were bearers of the surnames venerable in the annals of textile history.
(Lawrence, Lyman, Ayer), to insist on up-to-date business practice. A consultants' report of early 1932 faulted the firm's policies of maintaining large inventories, stubbornly keeping to high prices, continuing uneconomical in-house machinery manufacture and repair, and refusing to downsize the Lowell plant to conform with actual market needs. With the Depression came cancelation of the automobile fabric contracts and massive deficits: $2,231,544 in 1930, $1,838,166 in the first nine months of 1931. Dividends came to a screeching halt after the first quarter of 1931 (not before outrunning earnings, the consultants note; this must have been a case of dipping into cash reserves built up since the first World War.)

Charles Fanning Ayer and Frederick Ayer were directors of both the Merrimack and the Boott mills. They knew Frederick A. Flather of the Boott well, and that this stern old Yankee was willing to work long days to keep a mill put in his charge profitable. In April of 1932, Flather was brought in as an advisor to the Merrimack board and negotiator with the Merrimack's creditor banks. Within two months, the old Treasurer of the Merrimack had been replaced by board member Herbert Lyman, and F. A. Flather had been voted in as both a director and President of the Merrimack.

Frederick A. Flather had become enmeshed in the fortunes of the Merrimack in 1930, when the Boott and the Merrimack had underwritten the creation of the Lowell Industrial Development Company. This entity controlled the

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Ibid., 4/12/32, show the Merrimack's board including Herbert Lyman (A.B. Harvard 1886), his nephew Arthur Lyman (Harvard 1916), Charles Fanning Ayer (Harvard 1887), his half-brother Frederick Ayer (Harvard 1911), and John Silsbee Lawrence (Harvard 1901, son of Amory Appleton Lawrence (Harvard 1870 owner of the important textile selling house Lawrence & Co.).


"Total dividends paid in the nine years and nine months ended September 30, 1931, were in excess of net earnings for that period." Ibid., p. 19.

In 1924, Flather had been brought in to advise the board of the Tremont and Suffolk mills during the Ayer brothers ill-fated attempt to save that firm.

Directors' Records, 4/12/32, 4/29/32, 5/25/32 & 6/14/32. Merrimack Manufacturing Co. Archives, Baker Library, Harvard Business School. Apparently, it was after this appointment that F. A. Flather sent his engineer son Frederick to the Merrimack plant in Huntsville to advise them on production problems. Frederick Flather, Interview Transcript #86.12, pp. 10 & 16, Oral History Collection, Mogan Center.
water power, that is to say, hydro-electric power, rights of
the old Massachusetts, Lowell, and Middlesex mills, and the
real estate of the Massachusetts mills. A 1932
advertisement for the L.I.D.C. boasts of its control of one
million square feet of industrial space, the softness of the
Merrimack River water to which it is entitled, and its "5000
kilowatts of hydro-electric power with equal amounts of
steam power." It lists Herbert Lyman as Treasurer of the
L.I.D.C. and Frederick A. Flather as President.

If a report on the L.I.D.C. written for the management
of the Merrimack is to be believed, Flather, from this
supposedly honorific post of president, made sure the
L.I.D.C. treated the Boott Mills with special care. At the
end of 1943, Jenks and Ballou, Consulting Engineers,
reported to the Merrimack that the L.I.D.C. had been
operated largely for the benefit of the Boott. Jenks and
Ballou judged that the Boott's recent offer to buy out the
Merrimack's half share for $100,000 scarcely reflected the
value of the L.I.D.C. to the Boott, or the value it should
have for the Merrimack. The report scornfully noted the
special treatment given to the Boott in the matter of
L.I.D.C. hydropower. In fact, until a new L.I.D.C.
management took over in 1939, irrational hydropower fees and
real estate rentals charged by the L.I.D.C. left that firm
in the red. According to Jenks and Ballou, "simply wretched
management had prevailed for years" at the L.I.D.C. Even
after the 1939 shakeup, the Boott, i.e. Flather, was
refusing the demands of the new L.I.D.C. management to pay
the same rate for steam-generated electricity as other
L.I.D.C. customers. The engineers concluded that the
L.I.D.C. "is holding the bag for Boott and Merrimack is
paying the piper. [sic]"

By the time of the 1939 shakeup at the L.I.D.C., the
stockholders of the Merrimack had other reasons to be
disenchanted with Frederick A. Flather. While in the
darkest days of the Depression, 1932 and 1933, both the
Boutt and the Merrimack had been forced to suspend
dividends, 1934 found Flather's Boott making money again for

55 Lowell City Directory 1932 (Boston: Sampson and
56 Jenks and Ballou, Consulting Engineers, "Estimates
of Value to the Merrimack Manufacturing Company of the
Lowell Industrial Development Co., Lowell, Massachusetts,"
(12/22/43), pp. 4-5, 7, and 13-15. Vol. 65, Merrimack
School. The new Treasurer, CEO., of the L.I.D.C. was Louis
D. Waldron, who also took over the Treasurer's position at
the Proprietors of Locks and Canals in 1939. Frederick A.
Flather continued to hold the office of President in both
organizations for years to come. Lowell City Directory 1940
its stockholders. The Merrimack well remained dry.\textsuperscript{57} The problem was not in the amount of effort F. A. Flather was devoting to the Merrimack. Indeed, a consultants' report on the condition of the firm faulted Flather for micro-managing the concern.\textsuperscript{58} However, what worked for the Boot was not working for its neighbor.

By the end of 1934, the Merrimack directors were discussing shutting down the Lowell operations of the firm. February 1937 saw a shakeup of the Merrimack management: Bertram S. Hawkins, veteran of textile management in Rhode Island, was brought in as a director and took over Herbert Lyman's role of Treasurer, while the latter took over Flather's post as President.\textsuperscript{59} By 1938, Frederick A. Flather was off the Merrimack board.\textsuperscript{60}

That year, B. S. Hawkins was deep into a reorganization of the Merrimack's business practices, shedding its selling agents and modernizing management. After April, 1938, Hawkins combined the offices of Treasurer and President of the Merrimack. In Lowell, aged equipment, in some cases dating back to 1879, was junked, and parcels of real estate were sold off. New, long-draft spinning technology was installed at both Lowell and Huntsville.\textsuperscript{61} The Alabama plant was closed during 1938, a decision which ostensibly allowed for re-conditioning of the facility, but which also vitiated a Textile Workers Organizing Committee victory in an election to represent the plant's employees.\textsuperscript{62} In 1940, Hawkins could report to the stockholders that the

\textsuperscript{58}Quoted in Gross, Boott Cotton Mills, p. 232.
Merrimack organization had made its first real manufacturing profit since 1929.

The old Boston Associate firm, the Lawrence Manufacturing Company, had since 1926 been under the control of C. Brooks Stevens, who had married into the Butler/Ames family. Stevens was a cousin of the Andover Stevens family which had pioneered woolen manufacture in the Merrimack Valley, and he brought several of his cousins onto the board of the Lawrence mill. Their expertise and the link to their J. P. Stevens selling organization in New York may have been of some help in keeping the knitting mill afloat, but the Lawrence remained troubled. For ten years, C. B. Stevens and his sons sought out a salable product for the Lawrence knitting machines. The underwear business was dropped by the end of the 20s, and production centered on wide-knit fabrics and yarns for other hosiery firms. The flood of 1936 hit the Lawrence plant hard, flooding the bottom floors and ruining generators and leather belting.

This disaster convinced the Lawrence owners to sell off the hosiery yarn business. C. Brooks Stevens contacted the agent of Amoskeag Industries up in Manchester, and proposed that the Lawrence’s spinning frames and the spinning unit’s manager become part of a new company in the Queen City. Amoskeag Industries midwived a new firm, the name of which recalled the traditions of both Manchester and Lowell: the "Amoskeag-Lawrence Company." Into vacated space at the Lawrence yard moved another entrepreneur, one who would become quite a power in the Merrimack Valley in future years. His name was Royal Little.

The constant decrease of cotton spindles in Lowell, and the lack, during the Depression, of major competition in woolens from the South, resulted in wool manufacture surpassing cotton in importance in Lowell after 1936. Perhaps this should be taken as the end of the Bosc tone Associate regime in Lowell: the investment in the city’s woolen mills came from sources outside of Boston, e.g. the Stevens of Andover and Tewksbury.

The second industry of Lowell in the 1930s, after woolen manufacture, was the shoe and leather industry. During the decade, the shoe industry, unlike the textile

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63 Letter of Bertram S. Hawkins ... 3/21/40.
65 Stevens, History and Yarn, pp. 25-27.
68 Parker, Lowell, pp. 4-5. In 1936, there were fewer than 250,000 active cotton spindles in the "Spindle City." Ibid., p. 4.
industry, was to see some successful strikes among its workers.

**Strikes And the Flood**

In his 1930 visit to Massachusetts, Louis Adamic noted the distrust with which city government greeted the coming of shoe companies to their jurisdictions. He reported that, despite the location of several shoe manufacturing establishments in the city since 1928, Lowell civic and business leaders were frank in saying that they were 'afraid of the shoe industry,' because, with its cruelty to workers and its utter lack of organization, self-discipline, and public conscience, the shoe industry was seldom, if ever, an asset to a community.

In the early spring of 1933, the Shoe Workers Protective Union, a union independent of the American Federation of Labor, sent agents into Lowell to begin to organize shoe workers for a strike aimed at improving their situation. A strike in the spring would prove painful to the shoe concerns, which needed to fill orders due in June. Meetings of SWPU leaders with the mayor of Lowell and the heads of the Chamber of Commerce and the Trades and Labor Council failed to head off the strike. Three thousand five hundred of perhaps four thousand Lowell shoe workers walked out April 7. The shoe manufacturers refused to meet with the representatives of the SWPU, which was insisting not only on higher wages, but on a closed shop.

The strikers ignored the suggestion by the State Board of Conciliation and Arbitration in late April to drop the closed shop demand. They gained precious little support from the Lowell Trades and Labor Council, which supported the AFL-affiliated Boot and Shoe Workers Union's claim to be the bargaining agent for all shoe operatives. Regular meetings at the Lowell Civic Auditorium kept up morale, as news came in of labor actions up and down the river. In early May, fights broke out between strikers and strikebreakers outside several plants. An alarmed mayor arranged for conferences in Boston May 10-12 in which Governor Ely met with representatives of the SWPU, the

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70 Ibid., p. 257.  
72 The situation among New England labor organizations in the shoe industry had been chaotic for years, marked by fierce jurisdictional battles between the Boot and Shoe Workers and independent unions, and it remained so after the 1933 strike. See Davis, Shoes, pp. 177-194.
manufacturers, and the State Arbitration Board. Apparently, these consultations steered the governor against calls to bring out the state militia. Finally, after seven weeks, the strikers agreed at a May 26 vote at the Auditorium to drop the closed shop demand in return for recognition of the SWPU and a 10% wage increase. A few shoe shops left town, but the union remained strong in Lowell the rest of the decade.

In its hopes to profit from government intervention in the country's industries via the NRA, the UTW set up a regional headquarters in Lowell in August of 1934. The textile workers of the city joined in the great strike of September 1934. In the case of Lowell, besides the United Textile Workers union, the Workers Protective Union was involved. The mills of Lowell slammed shut during the first week of September.

The management of the Lowell mills had no interest in recognizing the unions. Nearby examples of union-management cooperation had not worked out well. Up in Manchester, the Amoskeag's attempts at dialogue with its workers in the late 1920s had not gotten it out of financial difficulties. The Amoskeag's recognition of the UTW in 1933 had not prevented its shutdown in the current General Strike. Over in Salem, Mass., a policy of union-management cooperation since 1927 at the Pequot Mills had ended badly. In the miserable cotton textile economy after 1925, and especially after 1929, Pequot management constantly sought to utilize its labor more efficiently. The Pequot workers perceived UTW negotiations concerning increasing work loads as merely a series of give-aways. By 1934, the cooperation, after having been advertised far and wide by the UTW and having attracted the attention of academic researchers, had ended.

Aware of the failure of worker/management cooperation elsewhere in the New England industry, and realizing that the real target of the big 1934 strike was the Southern textile industry, the Lowell mill owners sat tight. In an effort to show good will to mill management, union representatives publicly distanced themselves from the Communist Party. The strike ended sadly in Lowell, as

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74 Ibid., p. 123; Davis, Shoes, p. 184.
75 Lowell Sun, 8/22/34, p. 3.
78 Lowell Sun, 9/19/34, p. 1.
elsewhere. The unions declared victory, but they had gained nothing. Only the end of the decade would see victories for organizing efforts in Lowell textile firms.

The situation for labor unionists in Lowell remained strained through the 1930s. In 1937, Mayor Archambault became so exasperated with the activities of Shoe Workers' Protective Union leader Jean Bellefeuille that he publicly proclaimed that he was going to have him escorted out of town by the police. Bellefeuille, who was a Lowell native, and a dozen fellow workers stormed into the mayor's office and had him back down. In 1940, when the owner of the Green-Barr Shoe Company locked out his employees rather than abide by the decision of the State Labor Arbitration Board on a wage dispute, Mayor Ashe set up a citizens' committee to try to negotiate a resolution between owner and workers, but neglected to invite the leaders of the Shoe Workers' Protective Union. Jean Bellefeuille et al insisted they be made part of the proceedings, and they argued their case well enough to convince various committee members - including the chairman (a Protestant pastor), the Oblate pastor of St. Jean Baptiste, the district court judge - to insist that the owner abide by the arbitrators' decision. This proved a Pyrrhic victory for the union, because a short time later the Green-Barr Shoe Company left town.

By the end of the 1930s, the workers at the Merrimack had become frustrated enough with the low pay and ethnic prejudice to begin to organize. Management remained resolutely against a union, but by 1941 a young organizer could stride into the mill office with thousands of signed union cards and announce, "My name is Jimmie Boutsulis and I represent the employees that you by law must bargain with collectively." Boutsulis (later "Ellis") was immediately thrown out of the office, but the National Labor Relations Board insisted the Merrimack deal with their employees' independent union. A seven-week strike in the Fall of 1941, during the period of increased manufacture for the U.S. military buildup, ensured the union was recognized.

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79 Jean Bellefeuille, Interview Transcript #75.12, pp. 25-29, Oral History Collection, Mogan Center.
80 Ibid., pp. 12-20; Lowell City Directory 1940 (Boston: R. L. Polk, Co., 1940), p. 317; Lowell City Directory 1941 (Boston: R. L. Polk, Co., 1941). An ally of Jean Bellefeuille in organizing Lowell shoe shops and textile mills, Louis Vergados, claimed in 1975 that Bellefeuille had been a Communist Party member and that his interest in agitation, rather than coming to agreement on contracts, helped chase such shoe shops as Green-Barr out of town.
81 Louis Vergados, Interview Transcript #75.15, pp. 5, Oral History Collection, Mogan Center.
82 James Ellis, Interview Transcript #75.11, p. 19, Oral History Collection, Mogan Center; James Ellis, "The Unions were Few and Far Between," The Last Generation, p. 286; Lowell Sun, 10/941, p. 1.
Troubles between labor and management added to Lowell's constant theme of division and discord. One event did happen during the 30s, however, which pulled the city together against a common danger. The danger came not from human sources, but from the natural world.

Lowell, like Manchester up the river, had long been concerned about the Merrimack's periodic floods. After an inundation in November of 1927 which left 100 Lowellians homeless, Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers had sought Federal aid in the effort to control the river. However, such assistance was not forthcoming. A report by the Corps of Engineers in 1933 judged flood control work on the Merrimack "impracticable": the 26 year average interval between floods on the Merrimack gave that river low priority on the list of Corps of Engineers projects. In other words, the next deluge after the episode of 1927 should occur around 1953.

The need for jobs during the Depression turned fertile minds to other rationales for public works projects along the river. In February of 1935, Governor James Michael Curley announced to voters along the Merrimack that the Roosevelt administration had agreed to a massive project to eliminate pollution along river's length. Forty million dollars would be spent, and, the newspapers reported, "Purification of Stream From Source to Newburyport Will Require Services of 8000 Men and Vast Quantities of Cement, Crushed Stone and Lumber." Before the construction industry of the Valley could fairly begin to cheer at the prospect of constructing a sewer from Winnepesaukee to the sea, federal officials took the away all cause for joy. No such undertaking had been agreed to, said Public Works Administration officialdom. Valley residents soon learned to ignore subsequent claims on the part of the governor that millions of dollars ($140 million in one Curley press release) were arriving from Washington to make the Merrimack's waters pure.

Thus, when in the second week of March of 1936 a warm from stalled over the New England mountains, mixing rain with melting snow, the reservoirs which might have trapped the extra runoff and the concrete channels which might have helped shield low lying neighborhoods existed only in the blueprints of certain engineering studies. On March 13, rapidly rising water forced from their home 300 residents of a low-lying section of Lowell on the north bank of the Merrimack. Three days later, the river had dropped six

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83 Lowell Courier-Citizen, 5/11/33.
84 Lowell Leader, 2/21/35.
85 Lowell Leader, 2/22/35.
feet, and the papers could trumpet that the "DANGER FROM FLOODS IS PAST."

However, the rains returned, and by the 19th, the river was rising one foot every three hours. Years later, Jack Kerouac would remember the river coming "boiling in brown anger" and in such volume that the dam at Lowell, next to the Moody Street bridge, scarcely altered its flow:

The River was Drowning Itself - It came over the Falls at the White Bridge not in its usual blue sheen and fall (among whitecaps snow) but sleered over in a brown and hungry slide sheen that only had to slip two feet and was in the foams of the bottom flood.

Now large areas of Lowell north of the river were flooded, as was the junction of the Merrimack and Concord rivers - brown water surrounded the Post Office and the Civic Auditorium. The downtown of Lowell was for the most part spared because of the foresight of engineer James Francis 86 years before. He placed a huge water gate at the point where the waters of the river upstream of the dam flowed into the canal system threading its way among the old mills. Late on the afternoon of the 19th, four men cut through the thick iron hangers holding up the 21 ton gate, and the raging river was cut off from the manmade channels. Walls of sandbags next to the gatehouse prevented the river from finding a way around the gate.

The river found its way into enough of the city to damage or destroy a thousand homes and render 5,000 Lowellians homeless. Relief centers were set up around the city, and volunteers aided their homeless neighbors From the evening of the 19th, companies of the National Guard patrolled the city. On the 20th, 60 Gloucester fishermen and 10 dories arrived to carry out rescue work. Several thousand WPA workers helped battle the flood, women from WPA sewing projects from Lowell to Framingham providing a steady stream of sandbags with which male workers built floodwalls. By the 21st, Lowellians began weeks of cleanup, with 2,100 workers on the WPA payroll helping in the effort. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in state and

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87 Lowell Courier-Citizen, 3/16/36, p. 1.
88 David Kearns, "The 1936 Flood in Lowell, Massachusetts" (unpublished paper, 5/15/75, Mogan Center collection), p. 4.
91 "The Great Flood of 1936," the April 1936 issue of the New England Power Association's Contact magazine.
federal funds arrived the next few months to pay for repairs to Lowell’s public works. 93

Lowellians could congratulate themselves on their volunteerism and hard work during the flood. However, in the midst of the chaos of the flood, another blow had fallen upon the textile industry of Lowell. The Nashua Manufacturing Company announced it would close its blanket-making operations at the old Suffolk millyard. Over six hundred workers lost their jobs. 94

Lowell would need more resources than those called forth by one natural disaster to improve its economic health. Unfortunately, it had little to differentiate its general situation from that of dozens of other suffering industrial towns of New England. Up the river in Manchester, economic development would benefit from some special circumstances. Among these were some institutions lacking in Lowell.

Lowell’s Lacks

Up in Manchester, the 1936 flood would form part of a larger memory of The Year of Miracles. The deluge would be but another of the challenges the citizens banded together to battle that year. When the Amoskeag finally went into bankruptcy four months after the flood, the local response to the crisis was strengthened by the stability given by a successful shoe corporation, the wealth of the regional electrical utility, and the assistance of the New Hampshire development agency.

Lowell’s situation regarding the shoe industry, electric power, and state development assistance did not allow of hopes for special succor from those sources. The steady employment and relatively high wages given by the J. F. McElwain shoe corporation gave an economic underpinning to many Queen City families. In contrast, the shoe companies of Lowell were notoriously fly-by-night.

With the exception of the Amoskeag hydroelectric plant at the falls in Manchester, the electric power for southern New Hampshire was supplied by Public Service of New Hampshire, an Insull company. PSNH took an active part in fostering local industry to make use of its electric power. It had a lively interest in developing the large market in Manchester.

In contrast to Manchester, electric power in Lowell was supplied by many organizations. For years, the canals’ millpowers divided among the old Boston Associate firms had been devoted to electric power generation. Far from concentrating electric power generation, the downfall of the old textile regime in Lowell during the 1920s merely

redistributed the old Locks and Canals Merrimack River hydropower potential among a number of owners, old and new. (See table next page).  

As old industrial firms along the Concord River in Lowell fell victim to the decay of New England manufacturing, the Wamesit Power Co. found itself taking over Concord River real estate it had sold long ago. It became the duty of Ames Stevens, son of C. Brooks Stevens, to bring in new tenants to utilize the Wamesit’s hydro-electric power garnered from the Concord River. During the 1930s, a series of companies, some owned by the Stevens clan, leased mill space and electric power along the banks of the Concord.  

The Lowell Electric Light Company, the company of the city devoted exclusively to supplying electric power, generated power locally at a coal-fired steam plant. However, it could draw upon a huge reservoir of power, much of it hydropower, for it was a subsidiary of the New England Power Association. This last, a holding company, controlled the largest hydropower facility in New England, on the Fifteen Mile Falls on the upper Connecticut, from which a 126-mile long transmission line extended to a New England Power substation near Lowell.  

The New England Power group of companies, spread in an arc from Rhode Island to Vermont, had grown out of the waterpower holdings of the International Paper Company. International Paper began in 1898 as an amalgamation of nineteen pulp and paper companies producing mainly newsprint. Very soon it became clear that the vast landholdings of the new trust, hundreds of square miles of forest land and watercourses, contained hydropower potential far beyond the needs of the International plants. By 1928, the concern had been renamed the International Paper and Power Company, and the New England Power Association was a subsidiary.  

Unlike the Insull interests in northern New England, however, the International Paper interests never became

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95 Parker, Lowell, pp. 49, 112-113, & 124-125.
97 Parker, Lowell, pp. 122-123.
DIVISION OF THE MILL POWERS OF THE LOWELL CANALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mills</th>
<th>Number of Mill Powers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merrimack Mfg. Co.</td>
<td>39 &amp; 24/30ths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boott Mills</td>
<td>20 &amp; 22/30ths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Rayon Co.</td>
<td>8 &amp; 20/30ths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Real Estate Firms**

| Lowell Industrial Dev. Co.   | 27 & 13/30ths                 |
| Hamilton Co.                 | 16                            |
| Appleton Co.                 | 8 & 16/30ths                  |
| Assets Realization Co.       | 8 & 12/30ths                  |

**Not In Operation 1943**

| Nashua Mfg. Co.             | 6 & 15/30ths                  |
| Saco-Lowell Shops           | 3 & 9/30ths                   |

**TOTAL:** 139 & 11/30ths

involved in the running of textile mills. Insull companies, PSNH and Maine Central, grew in large part by snapping up dead or declining textile mills and their waterpowers. The growth of the International's power empire largely depended upon hydropower potential linked to paper mills it already owned. The Lowell Electric Light Company, far down in the New England Power hierarchy, was not to be an important resource for Lowell redevelopment.

Up in Manchester, the New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission snapped into action to aid the city in its time of trial. During Lowell's miserable Depression experience, it could not depend upon significant assistance from the Massachusetts Development and Industrial Commission.

In 1929, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had set up a small Development and Industrial Commission within the state Dept. of Labor and Industries. An act of 1937 had reorganized the Commission and directed it to the "promotion and development of the industrial, agricultural and recreational resources of the Commonwealth." However, a certain lack of enthusiasm for this commission on the part of legislators might be deduced from a relatively small appropriation for its activities: in 1938 its budget was $113,700, with $55,000 earmarked for promotion of recreation. In contrast, New Hampshire, with 1/9th Massachusetts' population, appropriated $70,000 for economic promotion and development.

In any case, the situation facing the promoters in the Commission was staggering: Massachusetts was an industrial state, and in the 1930s its industries were sinking. From North Adams in the Berkshires to New Bedford near Cape Cod, textile mills were in trouble. The paper mills of Holyoke,

99An exception to this rule was the International Paper Company's 20th century control of the old Winnepiseogee [Winnepesaukee] Lake Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Co., the entity which in the 19th century allowed the Boston Associates to regulate the waterpower of the Merrimack emerging from Lake Winnepesaukee. However, despite its name, the WLC&WMC, was a real estate and water power concern, rather than a textile company. Moody's Manual ... 1923, p. 932; Theodore Steinberg, Nature Incorporated, Industrialization and the Waters of New England (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 99 ff.

100Massachusetts Dept. of Labor and Industries, "Report of the Massachusetts Development and Industrial Commission for the year ending November 30, 1937" (Boston, 1937), p. 3; Massachusetts Development and Industrial Commission, "History Card," in catalogue of Massachusetts State Library.

the shoe shops of Lynn, the jewelry factories of Attleboro faced closures and cutbacks. At the close of 1930 the city of Fall River, once the greatest textile city of America, went bankrupt and had to hand its financial rule over to the state government for the next decade.  

In this context, the problems of Lowell did not loom very large in the horizon of the Mass. Development and Industrial Commission. While the crisis of 1936 in Manchester, New Hampshire's premier city, immediately caught the attention of that state's political leaders, Lowell's lingering decline merely echoed an all-too-familiar story for mid-level industrial cities in Massachusetts. Lowell's place in the schemes of the planning agencies of Massachusetts by no means equalled that of Manchester in the plans of the New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission.

While New Hampshire under the leadership of Governor John Winant immediately welcomed Federal support for state and regional planning and in 1933 set up a state planning agency, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts waited two more years to do the same. During the summer of 1935, Massachusetts became the last of the New England states to set up a planning department.

The Massachusetts State Planning Board was chartered to develop a master plan for the Commonwealth and to support Massachusetts localities in their planning for development. On the short term, the studies generated by the planning agency did not so much help Lowell as document its

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102 David Davenport and John J. Croston, Unemployment and Prospects for Reemployment in Massachusetts, Business Research Studies, #15 (Boston: Harvard University Bureau of Business Research, 1936); Thomas Russell Smith, The Cotton Textile Industry of Fall River, Massachusetts: A Study of Industrial Localization (New York: King's Crown Press, 1944), p. 159. A Nov. 21, 1935, memo concerning "Available Factory Space" in representative Massachusetts cities prepared for the N.H. Governor's Textile Committee of 1935 shows the scale of the Commonwealth's industrial collapse. Lowell had 1,500,000 sq. ft. of mill space free, but the southern Mass. cotton towns of New Bedford and Fall River had respectively 4 to 5 million sq. ft. and 2,600,000 sq. ft. of mill space vacant. The shoe towns of Lynn and Haverhill had 1,200,000 sq. ft. and 450,000 sq. ft. free respectively. "Textile" File, Bishop Peterson Papers, Diocesan Museum, Diocese of Manchester, N.H.


In the grim competition engendered by the deindustrialization of a region, seemingly moderate differences in economic position of various communities of the region begin to loom large. Not only did Manchester exceed Lowell in its wholesale trading potential (while equalling it in retail potential), but it served, unlike Lowell, as the seat of a major insurance company and of its state's major electric utility.

However, until 1941 (and the development of Grenier Field), it seemed that Manchester could not hope match its sister city in tapping into the military buildup for the coming war. Edith Nourse Rogers' long fights to keep Ft. Devens alive began to pay off handsomely with the 1940 conscription. Ft. Devens became the reception center for all of the one-year draftees from New England. Twenty-five million dollars were poured into the construction of 1,200 new buildings. In 1941, $680,000 was spent to build an airfield at the base, and construction was begun on what was soon to be the largest facility in the world for repair of motor vehicles.

The building of the airfield at Ft. Devens meant that government money could not be expected for the construction of a field in Lowell proper. However, the upgrading of Devens' facilities brought construction paychecks into Lowell. The expanded fort also meant that the coming war promised not only textile and shoe contracts for Lowell industry, but also soldiers' spending in the city's stores. From a coldly economic point of view, war would bring good things to Lowell.

Conclusion

As the 1940s began, one could wonder whether Lowell's political and business leadership were in a position to take advantage of opportunities brought to it by changes on the national level. Lowell boasted a representative in Congress who worked hard on helping individual constituents and on getting funding for Ft. Devens, and Lowell citizens banded together to push various political agenda, e.g. lower tax rates. The Lowell Chamber of Commerce constantly promoted the ideal of diversified industries for the city. However, there existed no locus of power in Lowell which simultaneously possessed real ability to expedite the arrival of new industry and remained untied to the interests of the older industries.

105 Massachusetts State Planning Board, Progress Report on State Planning for Massachusetts 1936 (Boston: Mass. State Planning Board, 1936), passim. Table on next page of this dissertation appears after ibid., p. 188.

106 Fort Devens, p. 11.
Mrs. Rogers was related to families intimately involved in textiles. The Chamber of Commerce might talk a lot, but it did not control mill space or waterpower. Congeries of corporations descended from the old Boston Associate firms did control the industrial real estate and the power sources. The Lowell city government could claim no stunning breakthroughs in attracting new industry or in garnering special help from other levels of government. Indeed, early in the next decade, the Lowell electorate would be frustrated enough with stories of corruption that they would vote in a new form of government organization.

With the coming of the Second World War, there would be work aplenty even in the smallest mill towns of New England. However, to negotiate the postwar world of big government and national capitalism, communities would need sophistication, unity, and not a little luck. In a New England filled with dozens of old industrial towns thirsty for economic development, the successful communities would be those able to react quickly to opportunities and ready to take advantage of any sort of advantage it possessed over its neighbors.

As the 1940s began, Lowell leaders seemed neither skilled in dealing with big government or big business, nor even simply pulling in the same direction. However, ready or not, the war was coming to Lowell.
EMPLOYMENT IN MANUFACTURING IN TEN MASSACHUSETTS CITIES

SOURCE - DEPT. OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

MASSACHUSETTS STATE PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 1936.
CHAPTER V

MANCHESTER REFUSES TO DIE

Introduction

While Lowell in the 1930s presented a picture of bewilderment in the midst of closing plants and uncertain employment, Manchester in the same decade became a model of citizens battling against economic disaster. "Manchester in New Hampshire," trumpeted an optimistic 1940 study of New England, "has proved beyond a doubt the ability to take it on the chin and come back smiling."¹

"Smiling" may be overstating the emotional state of a city which still faced major employment problems in 1940, but the cooperative efforts of Queen City business and governmental leaders to respond to the 1936 shutdown of the Amoskeag did have something of the epic about it. Inspired by a tradition of cooperative responses to mill shutdowns in small New Hampshire cities and supported by the state government, a core group of Manchester leaders managed to gain control of the vast Amoskeag properties to ensure their orderly disposal for the good of the community. Strong enterprises such as PSNH and McElwain, and the tradition of progressive activism in New Hampshire's state agencies contributed to the result in 1936.

The story of that year has been told as a heroic saga: a tale of the forces of history - the Depression - and of nature - the 1936 flood of the Merrimack River - conspiring to crush the community of Manchester, but failing utterly as the stalwart citizenry refused to buckle and joined together to take control of the millyard, the river, and their destiny. In theaters throughout the country a newsreel told of a city that refused to die; magazine articles described and praised the effort of Manchester's leading citizens to fashion a new industrial future for their city.

This telling of the story is in fact a fairy tale. A new economic regime would take a quarter of a century to arrive in Manchester. However, the tradition of cooperative effort in economic development established in 1936 would have a part to play in the slow emergence of the Queen City

from chronic short employment and unhealthy dependence on a declining textile industry. The bloom which came in the 1960s depended on seeds planted in 1936.

Local Factors

Crucial to the local response to the events of 1936 in Manchester was the civic capitalist tradition in that city. The philanthropist Frank P. Carpenter (1845-1939) summed up an old 19th century tradition of local ownership mid-sized manufacturing firms: he ran the Amoskeag Paper Co. and his father-in-law manufactured the once-famous Amoskeag locomotives and fire engines. Carpenter’s benefactions to the city became legendary: among them were a beautiful library, a history museum building, even a post office. In the 20th century, local economic power was often associated with utilities and financial institutions. The holders of power garnered from modern corporations headquartered in Manchester expressed a lively concern for the fate of Manchester, and they also participated in the erection of civic buildings.

Some important buildings erected before the textile decline of the 1920s have been described in Chapter Two. However, problems in the cotton textile industry did not prevent the erection of the crown jewel of Manchester’s cultural life. On the evening of October 9, 1929, the Currier Gallery of Art, a Beaux Arts palazzo in granite and limestone, opened its door to the public. For more than a decade trustees of the estate of Moody Currier (1806-1898, Manchester banker and governor of New Hampshire, 1885-1886), including Frank P. Carpenter and Herman F. Straw, had supervised the erection of the art museum called for in Currier’s will. They were quite self-confident: in the planning process, the trustees turned down a design by Ralph Adams Cram for the building. The visitors to the gallery admired its mosaic murals, its marble staircase, its quite impressive collection of statuary, paintings, and porcelains.

Noble structures continued to rise in the Queen City. In 1930, the Association Canado-Americaine, and insurance fraternity for Franco-Americans, opened a granite and brick headquarters, fronted with columns and housing a library which contained a major collection of Quebecois and Franco-American literature. In 1931, Frank P. Carpenter gave the Manchester Historic Association a granite edifice diagonally across Victory Park from the marble public library he had donated to the city fifteen years before. In the MHA building were housed a museum and extensive archives. If
the Boston Brahmins had for a century endowed their port city with cultural institutions funded by profits from the Merrimack Corridor, the Manchester entrepreneurs now proclaimed their own civic pride by means of cultural monuments of brick and stone.  

The elite class of the Queen City could take pardonable pride in the handsome looks of their city's cultural monuments. They also had confidence in the fiscal responsibility of city government. Because of an interesting series of events having to do with the construction of two new bridges over the Merrimack in the early 1920s, the deep split between business and political classes found in Lowell (in great part a split between the Yankees and Irish of that city) did not occur in Manchester. According to a series of off-the-record interviews of Queen City politicians conducted by James Burke as he researched his "Race and Religion as Factors in Manchester's Politics (1918 - 1938)," the years of the First World War had seemed to mark the downfall of Yankee, Republican, city government. An alliance of the Irish and Franco-American Democrats seemed to guarantee that the Republicans would never elect another mayor. However, the administration of Democratic mayor Moise Verette came to grief in 1921 over contracts for bridge construction.

In May of 1920, the aged bridge over the Amoskeag Falls had been condemned as unsafe. (Indeed, the "Skag" bridge quietly slid into the Merrimack during an August night that year.) At the same time, the old agitation for a new bridge to link the shoe workers living in west Manchester to the shoe factories in the southern part of the city across the river had finally borne fruit, and it was decided to build this "Queen City" bridge. The cost of the construction contract negotiated by the Verette administration with Massachusetts contractor Leo Bayles Reilly outraged Manchester business leaders. In January of 1921 five of their number gained a court injunction against the Reilly contract. At the same time, a bill was pushed through the New Hampshire legislature - whose Yankee rural majority had no love for Franco Democratic mayors or Irish contractors - which vested oversight of the Manchester budget in a governor-appointed Finance Commission. The original contract was voided, and the two bridges were constructed at much less cost. Henceforth, Manchester's fiscal policies would be notable for their conservatism. By

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Manchester Leader, 5/28/20; Manchester Union, 8/16/20; Manchester Leader, 1/24/21, 1/27/21, 1/29/21, 2/24/21, 3/2/21, 3/2/21, & 4/20/21.
the simple expedient of running Franco-American candidates, the Republican party in the city ensured that it benefitted from the bridge scandal, and Republicans occupied the mayor's office for the next dozen years. 5

The economic elite of Manchester enjoyed amicable relations with city hall, and possessed enough self-confidence to contribute to projects enhancing the city's cultural life. However, the travails of the city's textile industry could not allow bankers and business executives to adopt a attitude of complacency. The elite's relation to the Amoskeag's problems went far beyond worried conversations at the Country Club. As will be detailed below, the reorganizations of the Amoskeag in the 1920s had left financial institutions of the Queen City in possession of hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of Amoskeag Manufacturing Company bonds. Since bondholders' right to interest payments were absolute, any further Amoskeag reorganizations would have to take the views of holders of bonds into account. Bonds held by Manchester banks would give those interested in the city's health a position from which to bargain over the disposition of the Queen City's major business.

As they considered the erratic employment trends of textile manufacture, city leaders could take some solace in the diversity of Manchester industry. The shoe industry employed one third of the city's industrial workers, and cigar-making and the construction industry employed another one tenth. 6 However, these industries proved to be rather small and rather low-paying. The ailing Amoskeag remained the city's major employer, providing employment for over half of the city's industrial workers. Tending looms, sewing shoes, rolling cigars, and carrying hods did not generate much of an income for those engaged in those activities.

The commercial activities of the Queen City also ameliorated the effects of the cotton textile slump. The


retail area of Manchester extended from the Massachusetts border up to Concord, N.H., and contained, in 1927, a population of 183,532. The wholesale area of Manchester extended from the southern state border to deep into the White Mountains, 120 miles north of the city, and contained a population of 380,522. The commercial activities of Manchester became most important for the city after the Amoskeag shutdown. In 1937, Manchester merchants told a New York Times reporter that it was "the out-of-town trade that is keeping us alive." However, possibilities for true prosperity in the Merrimack Corridor, and Manchester, remained tied through the 1930s to the health of the cotton textile industry. That industry, and the Amoskeag with it, had been quite sick since the mid-1920s. No successes in the local shoe industry or local wholesale business could buffer the Queen City from the cotton industry's further decline in the Great Depression. Manchester's business and political leaders were deeply troubled by the problems of the Amoskeag into the 1930s. The working class of Manchester was tortured by the loss of Amoskeag jobs.

The Depression And Manchester

The Depression began for Manchester industrial workers well before 1929. One clear index of the hard times fallen upon the city's working class neighborhoods consisted of the net emigration of such workers in the decade of the 1920s. Social scientists in the 1930s calculated that during the 1920s the Queen City had suffered a net emigration of 10,580 persons (13.5% of the city's 1920 population; 9,030 births partially offset this population loss).


10Daniel Creamer, and Charles W. Coulter, Labor and the Shutdown of the Amoskeag Textile Mills (Philadelphia: Works Progress Administration, November 1939), pp. 298-299. This compared to a migration loss during the same decade of "about twenty percent of the 1920 population" of such Massachusetts textile cities as Lowell, Lawrence, Fall River, and New Bedford. C. Warren Thornthwaite, Internal Migration in the United States (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1934), p. 38. In 1920, Manchester's population was 78,384; in 1930, 76,834.
The bulk of this emigration occurred during the 1922 strike and in the bad years for textiles after 1925. 11 The coming of the Great Depression slowed down emigration from the Queen City: where would un- or under-employed workers go in economically-ravaged New England in the early thirties? However, job losses continued. In one dramatic case, the great Manchester cigar-making concern, R. G. Sullivan Co., mechanized production in 1931, and 200 young women replaced 600 male hand workers. 12 The relief rolls in the city grew longer and longer, tripling in the three years between 1929 to 1932 (805 to 2,430) and the $159,400 relief expenditure of 1929 had more than doubled three years later. 13

A particularly cruel blow to Manchester occurred on June 9, 1930, when the Merrimack River Savings Bank closed its doors, freezing $11,138,000 belonging to 20,000 depositors. The initial explanation of the closure had to do with bad investments in land mortgages out West. The Amoskeag management, in a spirit of public service, moved quickly to cover some tens of thousands of dollars of bonus payments it had deposited the previous months on behalf of its operatives. The liquidity of other Manchester depositors had to wait upon the resolution of a major court case brought against the Treasurer (the executive officer)

11 Most, 3/4ths, of the emigrants did not travel beyond the New England area. The emigration did not reflect the employment profile of the Queen City: while 3/5ths of Manchester's gainfully-employed workers labored in manufacturing, 2/3rds of the emigrants came from the ranks of trade and service workers. With the manufacturing base of Manchester's economy shrinking, the opportunities in trade and services lessened. However, during the 1920s there seemed to be openings in those areas elsewhere. The general decline in New England manufacturing did not hold out much promise of industrial emigrants, say from the Amoskeag workforce, finding jobs at all close to their original homes. Indeed, Amoskeag emigrants tended to come from the ranks of the clerical and the more skilled workers, with special talents to offer employers elsewhere in New England. As would be expected from the last finding, Amoskeag emigrants tended to come more from the Anglo-Saxon and Irish-American groups overrepresented in skilled and clerical jobs in the millyard, than from the generally less-skilled Franco-American and immigrant workers. Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown, pp. 303-310.

12 Ibid., pp. 73-74. Something of a tradition of paternalism at the half-century-old firm persisted in the stipulation in the will of the founder's widow that no female employee willing to work be discharged. Norma Macrury, "A Case Study of a New England Textile City in the Depression of the 1930s" (Unpublished Thesis Radcliffe College, 1941), p. 105.

of the bank since 1899, Arthur Hale. In April of 1931, this gentleman was convicted on 49 counts of misuse of bank funds in pyramid schemes to hide the Western losses. After appeals to the State Supreme Court failed, Hale was sentenced to three years in prison. It seems depositors eventually got back about 65 cents on the dollar.  

Some bright moments emerged during the early 30s in Manchester. The City Health Officer could report that continuous efforts in the poorer sections in the city had halved the infant mortality rate in the fifteen years since 1915. During 1931, a large new colonial style Union-Leader Building rose across from Victory Park; it opened in January of 1932. In February of that year, F. P. Carpenter gave money to the U.S. government to build a new, granite Post Office alongside the other civic buildings he had place around the Park.

Whatever the beneficial effects of these construction projects, the Depression hit the city hard. By the end of 1931, the municipal government was desperate for ready cash. In early 1932, Dumaine came to its rescue by adding $500,000 to $100,000 already subscribed by the city’s banks in an emergency loan.  

By 1932, major deficiencies in the old poor relief system had become glaringly apparent. The following summer, the state gathered relief functions into the New Hampshire Recovery Relief Administration. This reorganization owed much to the Progressive legacy of Winston Churchill and Robert Bass.

During the 1920s, the mantle of Robert Bass, the pre-WWI progressive governor of New Hampshire, fell upon the shoulders of John Gilbert Winant. Despite his painfully halting mode of public speaking, the idealistic, sincere Winant had managed to be elected to the state legislature.

14. Manchester Leader, 6/9/30, p. 1 & p. 2; 6/13/30, p. 1; 4/27/32, p. 1. Wayman notes, p. 216; McLane Diaries, 4/9/31. Ex-mayor Arthur Moreau must have been most chagrinned by the Merrimack River Savings Bank collapse. A director of the bank, he was open to rumors that he had withdrawn $45,000 in his personal funds just before the bank closed, rumors which may have played a part in his defeat in an attempt to serve a fourth term as mayor in the November elections of 1930. (He lost to Democrat Damase Caron.) In fact, according to newspaper reports at the time of Hale’s sentencing, it was he to whom the Assistant Treasurer of the bank had brought his suspicions in early June of 1930. The two men had travelled to Concord and told the State Bank Commissioner of Hale’s convoluted attempts to cover up worthless loans. Although he well knew that the bank would have to be closed, Moreau did not save his money. Leader, 6/9/30, p. 2; 4/27/32, p. 1.


several times before 1924. That year Bass supported him in
the Republican primary for governor against Frank Knox,
publisher of the Manchester Union newspaper. Knox had been
a supporter of Bass’s progressive program before the World
War, but as time went on, he joined the traditional
Republican establishment. Winant, on the other hand,
carried on the progressive cause with support for a 48 hour
week for women and children laboring in factories, for
international cooperation for peace (he had served with
distinction as an army aviator in France), and for the
proposed amendment to the U.S. constitution against child
labor.

Effectively aided by Bass’s secretary, H. Styles
Bridges, and lawyer John McLane of Manchester, Winant won
the primary against Knox. He went on to join in a
Republican sweep of most state offices in 1924. New
Hampshire legislators did not share Winant’s progressive
views, however, and in 1925 blocked both the 48 hour law and
the Federal Child Labor Amendment. On the other hand,
Winant and his allies were able to frustrate an attempt to
repeal New Hampshire’s primary law. Winant’s achievements
during his two-year term lay not in social reform, but in
expanding the state’s road system, and in rationalizing the
state administrative machinery.17 During Winant’s
governorship, a State Board of Publicity came into existence
to broadcast New Hampshire’s resources, industrial,
agricultural, and, not least, recreational.18 Beginning
with the Winant administration, state agencies began paying
much more attention to data-gathering and planning
concerning regional problems and possibilities.19

Winant’s interest in informed approaches to problem-
solving went back to his experience as a state legislator.
After the war, in 1923, he had joined Robert Bass and Frank
Knox in founding the New Hampshire Foundation, dedicated to
gathering and disseminating information about the state’s
problems.20 As governor, Winant happily joined his fellow
governors in their 1925 for a regional "New England
Conference," a "Town Meeting of New England Business." As
detailed in the Chapter 3, the New England Council was born
in answer to this call.

However, hewing to his Progressive ideology of trust
in expertise and openness to change did Winant little good
among the movers and shakers of his party. The failure of

17 Bernard Bellush, He Walked Alone, A Biography of
pp. 62-74.
18 New Hampshire State Planning and Development
Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission, 1936-
19 Ibid.
20 "New Hampshire Foundation" file, Box 116, Winant
Collection, F.D.R. Library, Hyde Park N.Y.
New Hampshire Republicans in the 1926 primary elections to support Bass as their candidate to the U.S. Senate served notice that the state wished for Coolidge normalcy over progressive reformation. Winant's attempt to break with custom and seek a second term as governor also failed to gain Republican support. Undaunted, for the rest of the decade Bass, Winant and their allies continued to support the New Hampshire Foundation. They also promoted further administrative reform in Concord.21

An electorate suffering ever more from the Great Depression responded to Winant's continuing championing of workers' rights and returned the liberal politician to the statehouse in 1932. Winant soon proved most resourceful during this time of trial. An emergency credit act enabled the state to guarantee loans to strapped political subdivisions. The findings of a Brookings Institution on the shortcomings of New Hampshire's county relief system were heeded and poor relief in the state was centralized. A new minimum wage act for women and minors was enacted. New Hampshire became the first state to fulfill its enrollment quota in the new Civilian Conservation Corps.22

In August of 1933, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes set up the National Planning Board as a unit of the Public Works Administration.23 When the new organization offered to aid states in the setting up of their own planning organizations, the Winant administration accepted with alacrity. It not only set up a planning board, but also invited representatives of the national board to a meeting of a regional New England planning board in Concord in April of 1934.24 The beginning of the next year, Winant's ally Styles Bridges, now governor of New

Katherine S. Morrill, "Governor John Winant," in New Hampshire Governor's File at the New Hampshire State Archives.
Hampshire, signed a law merging the planning board with the latest version of the 1925 State Board of Publicity, the Development Commission. The new entity, the State Planning and Development Commission was authorized to take an active part in fostering New Hampshire industry. In the mid-1930s, this mandate definitely included aiding the state’s major center of industry, Manchester.

Before the Deluge

In many tellings of the story of Manchester in the 1930s, Frederic C. Dumaine emerges as the villain. No less a historian than David Landes judges the financial reorganizations Dumaine supervised during the mid-1920s as condemning the Amoskeag to "death by the drip method." Textile executive William Spencer, who for a time in 1934 acted as a representative of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company to the workers, left eloquent testimony, in an interview for Tamara Hareven’s Amoskeag. Life and Work in an American Factory-City, to the parsimony of the Dumaine management during the corporation’s last years.

However, he also judged that "one should give Dumaine credit that he felt he had a moral obligation to run that mill." Certainly Dumaine devoted considerable effort to keeping the mills operating in the years after the financial reorganizations. This was no simple case of taking the money and running. Dumaine devoted time to discussions of the company’s position with the company union set up in the 1920s and with the AFL Union of Textile Workers when it finally became the bargaining agent for Amoskeag workers. He attempted to interest the Aluminum Company of America in the hydropower potential of the Merrimack and - here he proved most prophetic - attempted to get government agencies to underwrite truly effective flood control on the river.

27Landes, Revolution in Time, p. 331.
28Hareven and Langenbach, Amoskeag, pp. 349-351.
29Ibid., p. 351.
In the final years of the Amoskeag's existence, he wrote, visited, and phoned New Deal officials again and again in an attempt to develop a level playing field between Northern and Southern textile companies and to arrange for firm financing of the struggling mills.

Tamara Hareven points out that, although he had been Treasurer of the Amoskeag since 1906, Dumaine did not become a presence in the lives of the textile workers until the time of troubles in the 1920s. Until then, the Straw dynasty of local mill agents seemed to most workers to be the heads of the Amoskeag empire." During the 1922 strike and after, it became clear to all where the ultimate power truly lay. In 1928, Dumaine, rather than William Parker Straw, addressed the representatives of the company union at a Manchester meeting, explaining the financial pressures affecting the company. In January 1929, W. P. Straw resigned - apparently he was not pleased at further demands by Dumaine that the workers accept wage reductions and his superiors were not happy with lack of profits. Now outsiders with no traditional relationship with the Queen City would become the mills' local managers. As the Depression complicated the textile situation, Dumaine sent to Manchester the man he had used to clean up the Hamilton Mill fiasco in Lowell, Henry E. Rauch. In the public mind, Dumaine and Dumaine's hand-picked men would from now on bear the prime responsibility of what happened to the mills.

By 1929, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company had realized the old, reliable gingham trade had largely evaporated in the new era of shifting consumer fashions. Its worsted wool division continued to show profits, but no new cotton product initiatives - umbrella cloth, mops, cotton/rayon mixtures - returned the cotton manufacturing division to a consistently profitable status. An experimental unit to produce rayon yarn was set up in an old building in 1926 and actually turned a profit most of the subsequent eight years. However, management balked at the prospect of competing with the yarn production of such chemical giants as Du Pont and Celanese, and the unit was closed in 1933.

excerpts from Dumaine Diary, Wayman notes, File 10, Box 20, Dumaine Collection, MHA.

31 Hareven and Langenbach, Amoskeag, p. 18.
33 Kenison, "Dumaine's Amoskeag," p. 278.
34 Ibid., p. 254. One financial paper claimed that the Amoskeag mills had come to rival Heinz's "57 varieties" of product. Ibid.
The legally-required payment of interest to holders of bonds of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company exacerbated the company's record of weak profits and deficits in the millions of dollars. By the Depression years, the bond interest payments had become an albatross around the neck of the Amoskeag. (See table next page.)

The Amoskeag workers knew quite well of deficits, of hesitancies regarding rayon, and of the intensely competitive situation in cotton textiles, not only from their own reading and observation, but also from the briefings their representatives received from management. For most of the 1920s, Agent W. P. Straw spoke to "workers' congresses" of representatives from the briefings their representatives received from management. For most of the 1920s, Agent W. P. Straw spoke to "workers' congresses" of representatives from the company-sponsored union, but in April 1928 Frederic C. Dumaine broke all tradition and came to Manchester to address the workers personally. This initiative was repeated in subsequent years, but in no case did Dumaine have very cheering news to impart. Constant themes of management's speeches to the workers and to members of city government were the fragility of any profits made due to hand-to-mouth buying by customers and the unfairness of Manchester city tax rates, especially when contrasted with Southern municipalities' treatment of their mills. 36

Dumaine had a point concerning relatively severe taxation in Manchester: the state of New Hampshire allowed, besides usual municipal taxation on mills and machinery, a stock-in-trade tax on inventory. By the calculations of some experts, the percentage of Amoskeag gross income paid in such taxes exceeded not only that paid by representative Southern mills in the late 20s and early 30s, but also that paid by most mills in New England. For instance, in 1926, briefings their representatives received from management. For most of the 1920s, Agent W. P. Straw spoke to "workers' congresses" of representatives from the company-sponsored union, but in April 1928 Frederic C. Dumaine broke all tradition and came to Manchester to address the workers

## AMOSKEAG PROFITS AND LOSSES 1928 – 1935

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
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<tr>
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<td>($1,097,203)</td>
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From Table F - 2, Creamer and Coulter, *Labor and the Shut-Down of the Amoskeag Textile Mills*, p. 313.
personally. This initiative was repeated in subsequent years, but in no case did Dumaine have very cheering news to impart. Constant themes of management's speeches to the workers and to members of city government were the fragility of any profits made due to hand-to-mouth buying by customers and the unfairness of Manchester city tax rates, especially when contrasted with Southern municipalities' treatment of their mills.37

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The workers listening to Amoskeag managers explaining the company's troubles may have accepted their statistics. However, they also were well aware of the trouble and frustration occasioned to their families by lack of wage raises, by curtailed hours, and by the policy, inaugurated in 1929, of paying those working on certain types of cloth lower rates in order to allow the cloth to compete more

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effectively on the market. In October of 1929, Horace Riviere of the United Textile Workers union was in town meeting behind closed doors with Amoskeag workers, preparing for an eventual resurrection of the UTW in Manchester. 39

The UTW did not reemerge in Manchester during the first few years of the Depression, but it slowly gathered strength. On the national level Dumaine may have garnered praise as a spokesman for the bringing of Southern wage rates up to the Northern level, and for his cooperation with the new National Recovery Administration regime, but back in Manchester, workers suffered from stretch-outs and speed-ups inaugurated by Dumaine's unpopular lieutenant, Henry Rauch. 40

In the spring of 1933, several thousand workers at seven Manchester plants manufacturing women's shoes joined compatriots elsewhere in southern New Hampshire in striking for higher wages. (J. F. McElwain, a men's shoe concern, was not affected by this strike.) 41 Week after week, Amoskeag workers and management watched the shoe strike drag on. Then, at the beginning of May, F. C. Dumaine received a missive from the secretaries of brand new union locals for "Woolen and Worsted Workers" and for "Cotton and Rayon Workers." This letter respectfully informed him that a majority of Amoskeag workers were now members of the United Textile Workers of America, that the company's wages were too low, and that the secretaries undersigned would be pleased to meet with Dumaine at his convenience. Apparently Dumaine found such a meeting inconvenient.

However, when the U.S. Department of Labor sent a Commissioner of Conciliation to the Queen City on May 18 to explore the situation at the shoe factories and at the

39Ibid., pp. 232-234; Manchester Union, 10/8/29. See appendices for statistics on Amoskeag periods of employment for different categories of workers and on actual earnings of workers in the 1920s and 1930s.

40An interesting bit of anti-Rauch testimony comes from a son of F. C. Dumaine, Christopher. This younger Dumaine was put to work in the mills in the early '30s, in an echo of his own father's early career. From this vantage point he developed a cordial antipathy to the Rauch management team. Christopher wrote his father that "They are working for themselves and not the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company." Of Henry Rauch himself, he wrote, "He does not know a thing about manufacturing or the art of handling 'help'." Christopher Dumaine to FCD, middle 1930s, Box 37, File 3, Dumaine Collection, MHA.


42Wilfred J. Therrien and Alphonse Chartier to FCD, 5/3/33, File 3, Box 18, Dumaine Collection, MHA.
Amoskeag, officials of the company did meet with him. They talked to the commissioner the day after he talked with the UTW’s Horace Riviere. On May 20, Amoskeag management promised a 15% wage rise the end of July, but insisted that the mills would operate during June and July only at the old rates. The Amoskeag operatives insisted on receiving the 15% increase sooner, and they walked out. The textile mills of Manchester joined the major part of the city’s shoe industry in ceasing operations.

In marked contrast to the strike of 1922, the walkout of 1933 featured violence. On the 22nd, a crowd of over 3,000 caused some injury to Amoskeag overseers and clerical staff still working in the millyard. In the confusion, 250 shoe workers attacked one of the factories against which they were striking. Governor Winant ordered four companies of the National Guard into the city to keep order. May 23 saw a running fight between 400 troops and police and several thousand striking textile workers. Governor Winant was in the city the next day to confer with members of the strikers’ executive council, Horace Riviere, Mayor Caron, and the Catholic Bishop John Peterson. The governor promised to withdraw the troops on the 25th, if order were kept. Meanwhile the Mayor had sent F. P. Carpenter to Boston to confer with Dumaine. Order was kept, the troops started home, and on the 26th it was revealed that Dumaine had arranged with Bishop Peterson to announce a settlement granting an immediate 15% increase in wages.

Making a point of repudiating communists and other radicals, Riviere led the Amoskeag workers in the ratification of the pact May 27th. That same day, striking shoe workers and their employers met in the presence of the Chairman of the State Board of Conciliation, Attorney John R. McLane of Manchester. The shoe strike was entering its third month. By June 3, the striking workers had accepted a 10% increase offered by half of the struck plants. Two of the other plants ceased operations, eliminating employment for a third of the 3,000 striking shoe workers. By the time the strike entirely ended June 10, many shoe workers were disenchanted with the Shoe Workers’ Protective Union. Horace Riviere and the UTW, now effectively the bargaining

43 Manchester Leader, 5/19/33, p. 1; 5/20/33, p. 1 & p. 2.
44 Ibid., 5/23/33, p. 1; 5/24/33, p. 1; 5/25/33, p. 1 & p. 14; 5/26/33, p. 1. In July of 1932, a priest-friend of Dumaine’s from Concord, N.H., had introduced him to the newly-named Bishop Peterson, late rector of St. John’s Seminary in Boston. As the records in the Peterson file in the Dumaine archives indicate, the two respected each other from the first. As will be seen below, Governor Bridges of N.H. respected Peterson enough to appoint him to several commissions dealing with Manchester problems in the mid-1930s. File 14, Box 15, Dumaine Collection, MHA.
agent with the Amoskeag management, would have to see what they could do for the textile workers. 45

This proved to be not that much. The files of the Dumaine Collection at the Manchester Historic Association reveal many meetings between the Dumaine management and UTW president McMahon and local representative Riviere, meetings often of an educational nature, letting the union men know of the problems of competition with Southern mills. Even though the Cotton Textile Code of the NRA was formulated in 1933 with the goal of lessening the North/South wage differential in cotton manufacturing, the brutal truth proved to be that under the code the wage differential widened in the case of the Amoskeag. 46

The UTW realized that the benefits the textile workers were supposed to be receiving from the NRA codes were not appearing. This was largely due to many mill owners, especially Southern mill owners, ignoring wage and hour provisions of the Textile Code. On Labor Day, September 1, 1934, the UTW combined a major organizing effort in the Southern mills in concert with a strike in the mills up North. Amoskeag workers, along with UTW members throughout New England, went out on strike. Happily, Manchester avoided the bloodshed which occurred elsewhere that month. State militias in Rhode Island and the South shot and beat textile strikers. The Southern organizing effort was crushed, and the UTW had to be satisfied with assurances of a federal inquiry into the textile situation. On Sept. 24, the UTW Manchester workers were back at work. Any hope of achieving parity between work conditions in the Southern and Northern mills totally disappeared with the Supreme Court's invalidation of the NRA in May of 1935. 47

46 Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown. The meetings with McMahon and Riviere appear in File 3, Box 18 in the Dumaine Collection, MHA.
Just before the operatives gave up their strike in 1934, a concerned Manchester Chamber of Commerce set up a Citizen’s Committee for the Resumption of the Amoskeag. In the event, this committee seems to have had little effect upon the decision to restart operations at the mile of mills. However, its membership contained a number of men connected with Manchester financial institutions. These institutions not only had an interest in the economic health of the city, but also possessed some power in determining the fate of the city’s major employer. They held hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of the very bonds which were such an albatross around the Amoskeag’s neck. Within two years a similar citizen’s committee would play a major part in the Amoskeag story, and as the chart on the next page shows, the Manchester bondholding institutions would have considerable representation among the 1936 core group of Manchester citizens who would deal with the results of Amoskeag losses.

Dumaine continued to trust in the future of the Amoskeag, enough so that he took a live interest in attempts to curb the Merrimack River’s penchant for periodic floods. Amoskeag management had been a supporter of attempts to control runoff into the river since 1896, when Thomas Jefferson Coolidge had urged the protection of White Mountain forests. In April and May of 1935, a New Hampshire trustee of the Amoskeag wrote Dumaine of the very slow progress of the state legislature in acting upon N.H. recommendations for the construction of storage basins in the upper reaches of the river. The Treasurer replied that "It is too bad some way could not be found to induce our

by the failure of the great 1922 strike, the violence of the 1933 strike, and the utter futility of the 1934 effort. See Hareven and Langenbach, Amoskeag, pp. 300-301.

A member of the 1934 committee tightly tied to Manchester bondholding institutions was Norwin S. Bean - New Hampshire Fire Insurance Co., Manchester Savings Bank, Merchants National Bank. Another member, Arthur L. Franks, would show up on the board of the Amoskeag Industries successor company to the AMC. Manchester Leader, 9/22/34, p. 12. Franks, an electrical contractor, had headed an earlier C of C inspired Citizens’ Committee which, sparked by a frightening report given by Dumaine to the C of C and to city officials in April of 1932, issued a short report which conveyed a "GRAVE DANGER of a PERMANENT CLOSING" of the mills, but which could prescribe no solution to the Amoskeag’s fundamental competitive problems. Along with Franks on this 1932 committee was Postmaster Joseph Geisel, later to take an outspoken part in the deliberations of Manchester leaders during the crisis of 1936. Manchester Leader, 4/11/32, p. 1 and 4/22/32, p. 1.

LINKS BETWEEN AMC BONDHOLDERS AND AMOSKEAG INDUSTRIES

**Bondholding New Hampshire Institutions:**

A. Amoskeag Savings Bank ($288,000.00)
B. New Hampshire Fire Insurance Co. ($200,000.00)
C. Manchester Savings Bank ($117,000.00)
D. Mechanics Savings Bank ($92,000.00)
E. People’s Savings Bank ($20,600.00)
F. Merchants National Bank ($20,000.00)
G. Hillsborough County Savings Bank ($14,400.00)

**Major New Hampshire Bondholding Individuals**

Frank P. Carpenter ($197,000.00)
Norwin S. Bean ($50,000.00)

**Amoskeag Industries Directors and Officers:**

**PRESIDENT:** Arthur E. Moreau

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Frank P. Carpenter - B: N. H. Fire Insurance Co.; D: Mechanics Savings Bank

Harry L. Additon - G: Hillsborough County Savings Bank


Marston Heard - E: People’s Savings Bank

Harry C. Jones - [Federal Savings and Loan]

Willard D. Rand - A. Amoskeag Savings Bank

Avery L. Schiller - A. Amoskeag Savings Bank

**CLERK:** John R. McLane - C. Manchester Savings Bank

**TREASURER:** Harry L. Davis - A. Amoskeag Savings Bank

**AGENT:** W. P Straw - A. Amoskeag Savings Bank Planning Board
National Government to construct those storage basins."\textsuperscript{50}
Within a year, natural events would expedite federal action on this matter.

The Amoskeag kept losing money. In 1933, the required payment of bond interest changed a net profit into a loss. The following two years, the bond interest pushed net manufacturing losses into the million dollar range. In June of 1934, Dumaine, whose mansion was located in Groton, Mass., attended the 50th anniversary of the town's famous boys' school, and spent some minutes talking to Groton School alumnus Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Dumaine stressed the need to cut back all textile mill operations to one shift only, if overproduction was ever to be reduced.\textsuperscript{51}

However, Southern producers, heartened by the complete failure of textile unions to penetrate the South during the September 1934 strike, continued to follow practices which undercut the NRA code's goal of reducing production.\textsuperscript{52}

The Amoskeag's troubles mounted until in April of 1935 banks which had lent the manufacturing company money notified Dumaine they required more collateral. The AMC pledged its accounts receivable to renew the loans, but this procedure starved the concern of liquid capital. It was decided the corporation would accept no more orders, and as the orders-in-process were completed, employment at the Amoskeag dropped from a 1935 high of 11,000 in March to less than 1,000 in September.\textsuperscript{53}

In September, Dumaine visited Washington, D.C., in an attempt to get some help from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, but, as he reported to a phone call to a member of President Roosevelt's staff, R.F.C. head Jesse Jones could not see his way clear to supporting the Amoskeag as long as the requirement remained to pay bond interest.\textsuperscript{54}

As Dumaine already knew, somehow the burden of bond interest had to be overcome if the Amoskeag was to survive.

In early October, Dumaine went to Manchester to meet with members of a Citizens Committee headed by ex-mayor Arthur Moreau, and with a Textile Committee, appointed by

\textsuperscript{50} Frank Sulloway to F. C. Dumaine, April 15, 1935 & May 20, 1935; Dumaine to Sulloway, May 21, 1935. Box 16, Sulloway File, Dumaine Collection, Manchester Historic Association.

\textsuperscript{51} June 2, 1934 excerpt from F. C. Dumaine's diary in Wayman notes, File 10, Box 20 in Dumaine Collection, MHA.


\textsuperscript{53} Wayman notes, p. 264, File 10, Box 20 in Dumaine Collection, MHA; Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown pp. 63-64.

\textsuperscript{54} Dumaine phone call, 9/11/35, President's Personal File 8037, FDR Archives, Hyde Park, N.Y. See also Wayman notes, excerpts from Dumaine's diary Sept. 1935, pp. 272-275, and Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown p. 64.
Governor Bridges and chaired by Bishop Peterson, to explain the Amoskeag's problems. Dumaine stated that the company would restart operations if workers agreed to let management set a competitive wage rate and work speeds, and if the city lowered tax assessments. During the rest of the year, a series of meetings were held with union officials, city officials, Bishop Peterson, and Governor Bridges in which adjustment of difficulties regarding wage and tax rates were negotiated. On Dec. 5, the tax rate was put on a par with those obtaining in the South, and the Board of Tax Assessors stated that,

we want to assure Mr. Dumaine that the whole population is willing to help and wants to help. Such sentiments, alas, did not solve the problem of the company's bonded indebtedness. On Dec. 20, the Trustees of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company decided on the reorganization of the concern, refinancing the debt - i.e. getting rid of the bond obligation - and concentrating production in the most useful sections of the enormous plant in Manchester. As a first step in this project, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, on Dec. 24, 1935, applied for protection under section 77b of the Federal Bankruptcy Act.

An indication of future troubles in the reorganization effort came on Jan. 20, 1936, when financier Frederick Prince called from New York City to demand that owners of bonds, of which he was one, receive full value for their holdings. Dumaine actually took a midnight train to New York to try to explain to the multi-millionaire the plans for Amoskeag. Prince made it quite clear that he mistrusted Dumaine, and would resort to court action to protect his investment. However, Dumaine remained sanguine about continuing the Amoskeag operations in a reorganized form, and on Feb. 20, he actually bid on and secured a WPA order for one-and-one-half million yards of gingham.

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55 Wayman notes, p. 275. The Governor's Textile Committee, appointed Aug. 9, 1935, was especially concerned with the Manchester situation, aiming at preserving the old industry and finding ways of cooperating with the State Planning and Development Commission to foster new industry. The Committee consisted of Bishop Peterson, members of the Governor's Council Alphonse Roy (of Manchester) and James Farmer. Edmund Jewell, assistant publisher of the Manchester Union and Leader, and Avery Schiller of P.S.N.H.. Manchester Leader, 8/10/35, p. 1 & p. 12.
56 Manchester Leader, 12/5/35, p. 8. For series of meetings, see Leader and Union for months of November and December; the UTW materials in File 3, Box 18, Dumaine Collection, MHA; and Wayman notes pp. 278-280.
57 Creamer and Coulter, pp. 64-65.
58 Wayman notes, p. 294, and Dumaine diary excerpt for Jan. 20 and 21.
On Feb. 28, 1936, at the Boston offices of the company, Dumaine and the management of the Amoskeag met with Gov. Bridges, Bishop Peterson, Moreau of the Citizen’s Committee, and representatives of the textile union, including McMahon and Riviere. After intense discussions lasting from mid morning to late afternoon, it was decided to have the Citizen’s Committee poll the workers to determine if they would be willing to accept management’s demands for lower pay, two shifts, and control over pace and organization of work.\footnote{Report of Meeting at Boston Offices of Amoskeag, Feb. 28, 1936, File 17, Folder 4 "Amoskeag," Styles Bridges Papers.}

The vote of the operatives, held on March 7, was rather closer than Dumaine could have wished (3,669 for managements stipulations, as opposed to 3,133 against), but it encouraged the AMC management to go ahead with their plans. They would convince the bondholders to opt for turning in their bonds for stocks. The disposal of the bonded indebtedness issue would allow the RFC to advance loans for the Amoskeag reopening. The city of Manchester had promised to lower its taxes, and the workers had agreed to new work rules and lower wages. Dumaine felt on March 9 that he could assure Gov. Bridges of a favorable outcome for the Amoskeag situation.

On that date, March 9, the Amoskeag management submitted to the Massachusetts Court a reorganization plan. This plan would assure creditors that they would be paid in cash and holders of common stock that they would retain the stock. However, bondholders could exchange each $100 bond for either, A) one share of preferred 5\% stock and 15 shares of common, or, B) $50 in cash and one half share of preferred 4\% stock. If more than half the bondholders voted for option B, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company would simply not have enough cash to reorganize.\footnote{Kenison, "Dumaine’s Amoskeag," pp. 298-299.} Clearly Dumaine wanted bondholders to opt for option A. To strengthen support for option A among New Hampshire bondholders, Frank P. Carpenter of Manchester, despite his 90 years, agreed to rejoin the Board of Directors of the AMC. (He had retired from the board in 1928, i.e. at 82 years of age.) On March 12, in Boston, AMC trustees gathered to set a meeting of AMC stockholders for early April in Manchester. That same day, the optimistic Dumaine bid for several hundred thousand more yards of WPA gingham.\footnote{Wayman notes, pp. 297-299.}

However, a new player was now entering the drama. In the snow-packed valleys of the White Mountains, it began to rain.
The Deluge

The second week of March saw a warm front stall over New England and begin the melting of extensive snow cover in the White Mountains. At the same time, rains fell for days. On March 14, the rains ended, and cooler temperatures lessened the runoff from snow. Then another warm front caused the snowmelt to resume and the front brought with it very heavy rains. Experts on New England river systems later judged that this combination of high rainfall and melting snow, running off into river systems already bank full, produced floods greater than any of record on all the major river systems on the Atlantic seaboard south of the Penobscot. 62

On March 18, flood waters fourteen feet above normal flow washed away one of Manchester’s three main bridges and annihilated various pedestrian bridges constructed by over the years by the AMC. Intensive sandbagging efforts prevented the roiling waters from digging a channel around the end of the Amoskeag dam and flooding the power canal system. Only wooden outbuildings of the millyard were swept away, but several feet of fine silt covered the first floors of mill buildings next to the river, and any machinery housed there. 63

Citizens of Manchester concerned about the economic implications of the flood could take some solace in a headline spanning the width of the business page of the March 23 issue of the Manchester Leader: "Diversified Industries Pave Way for Remarkable Comeback at Newmarket." Apparently the failure of the major industry of a town need not signal the town’s death.

The closing of the Newmarket Manufacturing Company’s silk and rayon mills after a 1929 strike (the company moved to Lowell, Mass.) had thrown one thousand operatives in that New Hampshire town out of work. After a miserable few years, local businessmen, under the leadership of realtor Laurence Meyer, organized a for-profit corporation to take over the mill properties in order to entice in diversified industries. In this, the corporation, Newmarket Industrial Associates, did rather well, soon housing shoe, paper, and silk concerns in the old millyard. In 1936, Meyer became industrial agent for the New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission. 64

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62 Boston Society of Civil Engineers, Sub-Committee, "General Description of the 1936 and 1938 Floods," (November 1, 1940), p. 13.
The Newmarket group was following in a legacy of several decades standing in the Granite State. The state's pioneering industrial development effort began in 1912 in Keene, and was continued elsewhere in New Hampshire, most notably in Rochester and Laconia.

In 1912, after seeing a major Boston and Maine repair facility move to Chelmsford, Mass., Keene businessmen organized a for-profit corporation to develop new industries locally. The Keene Development Company constructed eight factories in the next few years and filled them with shoe, printing, specialty fabric, furniture, and cutlery companies. The Keene Development Co. did so well it split its stock in 1929. In Rochester in 1928, it seemed that factory space of a closed shoe and tannery concern would be purchased merely for storage purposes. Rochester's Chamber of Commerce members acted to control the disposition of the factory. The Rochester Factory Holding Company managed to keep shoe concerns in the space, no small thing as the Depression came on. Three years later, in 1931, the Laconia Car Company, makers of street and railway cars, closed. The next year, energetic citizens organized the Laconia Industrial Development Corporation to buy part of the streetcar-making plant. Three woodworking concerns from outside Laconia merged, and the new company moved into the factory space. In 1937, the company would be successful enough to buy the space outright from the Laconia Industrial Development Corp.

These New Hampshire examples showed that local citizens could accomplish some good for their community by taking over shut-down factories. However, in communities filled with jobless workers trained for a specific industry - e.g. silk weaving or vehicle construction - it would have


Dalton, "Community Development Corporations," pp. 127-132, 136-143, and 149-152. Also, in 1934 a shoe company in the small town of Raymond went into bankruptcy. The Raymond Industrial Association was incorporated that year, and it bought the shoe plant which it leased to a series of concerns in the following decades. Ibid., p. 149.
been nice to have had the machinery in place in order to entice in other firms engaged in that industry. What could happen if local citizens did not organize quickly enough to save equipment for their community had been shown in the case of Clinton, Mass., home to one of the Amoskeag's competitors in the gingham market, Lancaster Mills.

Like the Amoskeag, Lancaster Mills had faced a collapse of the gingham market in the 1920s. Its employment had dropped from 2,250 in 1920 to 400 in 1930 (in a community of 12,800 souls). In March of 1930, the Lancaster went out of business, and in July it auctioned off supplies and equipment with a book value of $1,600,000 for $82,575. In 1933, Clinton's venerable (1849) Bigelow carpet mills shared the fate of the carpet mills of Lowell when the Bigelow carpet combine decided to shut down the local units. In May, 1933, equipment with a book value of $1,000,000 was auctioned off for $20,000. In order to have some say over the disposition of the immense space in the abandoned Lancaster and Bigelow mill buildings, the leading citizens of Clinton raised enough money to acquire the properties. New firms - printing companies, distillers, etc. - moved into portions of the mills, but, sans textile machinery, the buildings did not supply the type of employment for which Clinton workers had been trained.67

New England mill town takeovers of abandoned industrial space and attempts to invite in new industry gave informed Manchester natives much to ponder as they considered the ever-more-likely closing of the great Amoskeag. Of course, none of the development efforts just mentioned were on the scale of what would have to be attempted in the Queen City, but the path had been blazed.

The future of the Amoskeag became very unsure in March of 1936. In the weeks after the flood of 1936, it became clear that not only the financier Frederick Prince but also many AMC bondholders from New Hampshire had developed "cold feet" about supporting the Option A reorganization plan championed by Dumaine. The latter argued that the $2,500,000 in flood damage to Amoskeag buildings and machinery could be made good over several years. In any case, not all the damage needed to be repaired, since the corporation was anticipating resuming operations on a much-reduced basis.68 A letter of April 3, sent on behalf of the New Hampshire Fire Insurance Company and other New Hampshire

bondholders, made it quite clear that these bondholders lacked faith in the Dumaine regime. They wanted the trustees of a reorganized Amoskeag to be "actively interested in the development of the Company and of the City of Manchester." 69

Although he leaders of Manchester spurned him, Dumaine - despite his 70 years - kept up the fight for his reorganization plan. On May 25th, the city mayor and city assessor informed Dumaine that the tax assessment on Amoskeag properties would be double the amount promised in December of 1935. In early June, Dumaine was driven by his son F. C. Dumaine, Jr., up to the Amoskeag Bank Building in the Queen City to meet with Manchester holders of AMC bonds. His son recalled decades later the stony silence of his father on the return trip south. After some miles, the younger Dumaine broke the silence and asked what happened. His father said that the majority of Manchester's bondholders had decided not to support the reorganization plan. It was Dumaine's feeling that prior to this meeting the Manchester bondholders had given their word they would go along with the refinancing in order to keep the mills open. ... when he reminded them of this commitment they stated they had only said they might go along with the reorganization. 70

The next day, June 9, the trustees of the Amoskeag met in Boston and voted to withdraw the reorganization plan, the older and younger F. C. Dumaine and F. P. Carpenter either abstained or voted against the necessary motions. The fate of the Amoskeag was now in the hands of the Federal District Court in Boston. 71

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69 Letter from "Trustees of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company Manchester, New Hampshire, April 3, 1936," Dumaine Collection, MHA.
70 Kenison, "Dumaine's Amoskeag," pp. iv and 305.
71 Minutes of meetings of the trustees of the Amoskeag Company and the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, June 9, 1936. Dumaine Collection, MHA.
The City That Would Not Die

In May of 1936, the U.S. District Court for Massachusetts appointed a Special Master to investigate the possibilities of reorganizing the Amoskeag. On July 9, he reported back to the court that the concern should be liquidated. On July 21, a federal judge signed the liquidation order. On July 30, Gov. Bridges issued a statement recognizing "the seriousness for the City of Manchester and the State of New Hampshire" of the court-ordered liquidation. He pledged the cooperation of the State Planning and Development Commission in securing effective utilization of the extensive Amoskeag plant, either in restarting departments of the corporation or by inviting in new industries. Bridges announced that the State’s Executive Council had allocated $3,000.00 to these efforts.

On August 14, Governor Bridges sent telegrams to 17 leading citizens of Manchester, inviting them to become members of a "Committee which will coordinate the activities of the State Planning and Development Commission with all interested parties in Manchester in a drive for new industries." The designated chairman of the "Governor’s Coordinating Committee" was Arthur E. Moreau, already chairman of the Citizen’s Committee. The committee’s membership included representatives of Manchester’s major financial institutions, the head of the Manchester Central Labor Council, and such leading citizens as Bishop Peterson.

74 Facsimiles of 8/14/36 telegrams, File 17, Folder 4, Bridges Papers, N.H. State Archives. The seventeen, all of whom accepted, were: ex-mayor Arthur E. Moreau, Joseph H. Geisel (President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce), William H. Zeller (Secretary of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce), George H. Sander (Chmn. Industrial Committee of the Manchester C of C and district mgr. of Public Service Co. of N.H.), Bishop John B. Peterson, Avery R. Schiller (VP, Public Service Company of New Hampshire), Mayor Damase Caron, Arthur M. Heard (People’s Saving Bank), Norwin S. Bean (Manchester Savings Bank), John L. Barry (Manchester Central Labor Council), James G. Driscoll (), H. W. N. Bennett (physician), J. R. McLane (attorney), Edward C. Blake (), Walter M. Africa (Manager, Manchester Gas Co.), Carl S. Nute (General Agent, New England Mutual Life
Four days later, eight members of the committee, led by Moreau, met with Captain Langley and Mr. Laurence Meyer of the State Planning and Development Commission. Langley and Meyer assured the committee members of the state administration's firm support for their efforts, and that the SPDC was setting up an office in Manchester in order to "keep in constant touch with the Amoskeag situation as it developed." All in attendance, from the representative of the Labor Council to the directors of banks, to the state officials, agreed that negative publicity about Manchester should be vigorously refuted.

On Friday, August 21, the Governor's Committee and many invited members from Manchester's financial and industrial circles, including Henry Rauch and Col. W. P. Straw, met with Special Master Arthur Black in order to hear the latter's plans concerning the disposition of the Amoskeag properties. The Manchester natives learned that an auction would be held in the early Fall, that the woolen department of the Amoskeag was in a position to be sold as a single unit, and that the hydropower plant of the Amoskeag was regarded as a particularly valuable portion of the property. In answer to a question, Black stated that he would entertain bids for the entire concern from a "big man." A Manchester businessman queried, "Suppose the big man is Manchester, they would he get any preference?" Black replied that no special preference would be shown, but other remarks at the meeting revealed that the idea of Manchester interests taking over the plant was in the air.

After the weekend, on Monday, Aug. 24, Moreau convened a meeting of the Committee and invited businessmen and the representatives of the SPDC. Moreau brought up Black's


Information about the meetings of the "Governor's Coordinating Committee," from 8/18/36 to 9/2/36, come from carbon copies of the minutes of the meetings taken by the committee's secretary, William Zeller of the Chamber of Commerce. Every so often, Zeller gets caught up in the excitement, and, as we shall see, inserts some editorial comment. The Minutes are in Box 1, Folder 49, Amoskeag Industries File, Arthur O. Roberts Collection, Manchester Historic Association. Hereafter, "Committee Minutes." Also, use will be made of the diaries of John R. McLane covering this time period, kindly supplied by his son. (Hereafter, McLane Diaries).

The concern expressed in the 8/18 rump meeting regarding Manchester's public image was occasioned by a report that Industrial Rayon of Cleveland, Ohio, had refused to ever consider a Manchester location due to the city's supposedly bad labor climate.

Committee Minutes, 8/21/36; McLane Diaries, 8/21/36.
willingness to accept a bid for the Amoskeag plant from a Committee of the city's citizens, and he asked those present for their sentiments about placing such a bid. Silence. Whereupon, "Mr. Moreau stated that what he would like to see would be for the city to buy and own this entire plant and liquidate it themselves." Nudged into action, the Committee of 17 agreed to appoint an Executive Committee to explore the possibility of getting financing for such a bold stroke. Bishop Peterson, in his one contribution to the proceedings of the Governor's Committee, stated firmly that he did not see how citizens of Manchester could afford to buy the Amoskeag hydropower plant along with all the other property. In this, the bishop was to prove prophetic. 77

During the next several days, an Executive Committee consisting of Moreau and seven others picked by him from the Governor's Committee, worked closely with a committee of Manchester bankers, including Frank P. Carpenter, to develop the financing necessary for a bid to acquire the Amoskeag properties. On Thursday morning, Aug. 27, Moreau explained to the bankers that the Executive Committee thought "that for the best interest of Manchester a group should purchase the entire plant of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company," with the thought of selling or leasing machinery and buildings in an orderly manner. Schiller, a member of the Executive Committee, stated that the Public Service Co. was interested in obtaining the hydropower plant. The Executive Committee turned to the representatives of the Manchester banks and insurance companies to hear what financing they could supply for the acquisition of the Amoskeag millyard. When Manchester's major banker temporized, F. P. Carpenter burst out, "Well, let's do it; let's buy the plant." With this, the bankers began to fall into line. While they talked, Carpenter and banker Arthur M. Heard, retired to the outside corridor. 78

Joseph Geisel of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce insisted that private subscriptions to a group to buy the plant could not be gathered until the bankers' support was certain. On cue, Carpenter and Heard returned to the room, and, the secretary of the meeting reports, with a twinkle in Mr. Heard's eye it was easy to be seen that he had some most favorable news for us.

77 Committee Minutes, 8/24/36; McLane Diaries, 8/24/36. 78 Committee Minutes, 8/25/36 and 8/27/36. The members of the Executive Committee were Moreau, Zeller, Geisel, Schiller, and McLane of the Governor's Committee, plus Albert L. Clough (alderman), Arthur L. Franks (electrical contractor), and Edmund F. Jewell (Manchester Union-Leader). One sees Attorney John McLane's athletic interests breaking through his usually laconic record-keeping when he writes in his diary for 8/27/36, "had to miss Longwood tennis [tournament in Boston] for Amoskeag Com. meeting."
He then announced that Mr. Carpenter would personally subscribe two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000) towards the purchase of the plant. This gesture on his part seemed to put a lot of confidence into all those present.

Moreau stated that Black should be approached "right now" to determine if he would countenance a private sale to the Manchester interests in place of a public auction. A phone call was made to Boston, and a meeting was arranged for that very afternoon between the Executive Committee, travelling to Boston by car, and Black and the Amoskeag Trustees.

This meeting proceeded most positively, although Black insisted that a fair bid (assessors were currently evaluating the Amoskeag's worth), a firm financing plan, and a 10% down payment would have to be submitted to him by noon Thursday, the third of September. The afternoon of Friday, Aug. 28, the Executive Committee and representatives of Manchester's banks heard a report from W. P. Straw on the valuation of the Amoskeag property. He thought $5,000,000 a fair value for everything - plant, hydropower, tenements - but warned that carrying charges for the plant would cost well over $100,000 per year. He was assured that besides the $5,000,000, the Committee anticipated raising another $500,000 for carrying charges and other contingencies. The secretary of the committee reports that those present had confidence that the amount could be raised from "bondholders and interested parties." However, he also writes that the magnitude of the project to be completed within a few days daunted them:

when the meeting adjourned there was not too much confidence in the heart of anyone present in the possibility of completing this huge transaction. While everyone seemed determined, at the same time that certain something was lacking that would make a person 'cock' sure that we were going to go straight through with this huge proposition.

By Tuesday, Sept. 1, Moreau could report $490,000 had been subscribed to, and that the Public Service Co. would offer $2,000,000 for the Amoskeag hydropower. The bankers reported that they could supply a mortgage loan of $2,800,000, but they wanted Public Service to pay $2,500,000 for the hydropower. It was reported that the issue would be raised the next day at a meeting of the utility company's board of directors. An impatient Geisel pointed out there was no time to waste: $500,000 would be due in Boston in just forty-four hours and ten minutes. The Executive

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79 Committee Minutes, 8/27/36.
80 Ibid., 8/28/36. Information on Black's stipulations is revealed in the 9/1/36 minutes. McLane notes in his diary for 8/28/36, "all seem favorable to buying @ 5000000 (sic)."
Committee decided to go ahead and choose seven directors of the proposed corporation to run the Amoskeag. 81

On the afternoon of Wednesday, Sept. 2, several directors of the Public Service Company of New Hampshire, including its president Walter S. Wyman, joined a meeting of the Executive Committee and representatives of the banks to hash out the exact terms of purchase of the Amoskeag hydropower. Wyman declared PSNH wished to contribute positively to the effort to arrange for the sane disposal of the Amoskeag properties: he had seen what happened when outside interests came in to tear machinery out of bankrupt mills, leaving the plant a shambles. However, instead of the $2,500,000 desired by Manchester's bankers, Wyman declared that he was willing to present to his board a plan to pay $2,250,000 for the hydropower and contribute $100,000 to the capital stock fund of the new corporation. The PSNH representatives left to prepare for their own board meeting. 82

Moreau told the Executive Committee and bankers that other interests had indicated they might bid for the whole Amoskeag plant. The time to make a decision on hydropower had arrived. Geisel stated the case baldly, "Gentlemen, if we vote 'no' on this proposition from the Public Service Company, we are junking this whole plan of ours for one hundred fifty thousand dollars," and this was foolishness. The Executive Committee adjourned at 1:50 P.M. to meet again right after the 2:00 PSNH directors' meeting. 83

At 3:15, the Committee reconvened and accepted the PSNH terms, which were what Wyman had presented: $2,250,000 for the hydropower plant and $100,000 contributed to the new corporation's stock fund. Those present connected with Manchester's banks assured the others of the financing of the $2,800,000 mortgage loan. At this point, Moreau asked, "Now, Gentlemen, what about the check for five hundred thousand dollars to be in Boston tomorrow noon?" Frank Sargent of the New Hampshire Fire Insurance Company promptly

81 Committee Minutes, 9/1/36. Those chosen for the corporation on that date were Norwin Bean, Willard Rand, Harry Additon, Harry Jones, Marston Heard, Aretas B. Carpenter, and Arthur Moreau. John McLane became Clerk for the new entity, and Harry L. Davis (Treasurer of the Amoskeag Savings Bank) its Treasurer. By 9/8/36, A. B. Carpenter had surrendered his place to his father, F. P. Carpenter, and ten days later Avery Schiller joined the board of Amoskeag Industries. Minutes of the Board of Directors of Amoskeag Industries. 9/8/36 and 9/18/36. McLane's terse entry for 9/1/36 neglects to mention the creation of the corporation he would serve for decades. McLane Diaries, 9/1/36.

82 Committee Minutes, 9/2/36, 12:35 meeting. McLane simply notes for 9/2/36, "Traded waterpower for 2 1/4 million - everyone agrees to go along."

83 Committee Minutes, 9/2/36, 12:35 meeting.
handed over a check for his organization’s contribution to the stock fund of the new corporation, and Willard D. Rand of the Amoskeag Savings Bank stated his bank would make up the difference. The Executive Committee adjourned at 4:10 to meet with the entire Governor’s Committee at the Carpenter Hotel at 4:30 and deliver the news that Manchester interests would henceforth control the destiny of the Amoskeag millyard. 84

The activities of the group that created Amoskeag Industries (AI) could be presented as a heroic drama, and it was, in a newsreel of 1937. However, the story of heroism has to be nuanced considerably. North Carolina journalist Jonathan Daniels did this admirably in a portrait of Manchester published in 1940. 85

Daniels pointed out that PSNH got good value for its $2,250,000, and that the Manchester bankers, unlike philanthropist Frank Carpenter, were risking not their own money but that of their thrifty depositors. He noted that, as of 1939, AI had financial difficulties and that employment in the millyard was far below that of the textile mills’ halcyon days. The future was unsure, no anchor like the great Amoskeag existed any more for the Queen City’s economy, too many people worked for the WPA. Daniels concluded that the city’s problem was more one of morale than of money: "More than new industries Manchester needs some magic to bring back the sense of safety." 86

From a vantage point half a century later, one reads Daniels’ report with the knowledge that a city’s sense of safety should not come from any particular industrial entity like the Amoskeag. Huge steel mills, long assembly lines, sophisticated high technology manufacturing systems, all have proved weak reeds upon which to lay all one’s economic hopes.

What could give a sense of confidence would be city leaders able to effectively and intelligently cooperate to build up the economic health of the community. That in the hard years of the late 1930s, Amoskeag Industries did not prove a stunning success is not surprising. That the community leaders of Manchester were able to mount such an initiative within weeks of the court’s July 1936 announcement of the death of the Amoskeag was quite impressive and boded very well for the future. In an increasingly complex economic and governmental world, organizations combining expertise in negotiating with business and government with dedication to the good of the community would prove assets of immense importance. The

84 Committee Minutes, 9/2/36, 3:15 meeting.
86 Daniels, "Portrait...," p. 446.
creation of Amoskeag Industries signaled that in the Queen City a tradition of cooperative approach to economic problems had been born.

Yet, in the late 1930s, the significance of the AI effort remained hard to gauge. Jonathan Daniels gave high marks to Moreau and other leaders for organizing the "rescue corporation." However, he also wrote of the corporation’s troubles, and in general the tone of his article was less than optimistic. Daniels dwelt upon the insecurity and sense of loss among Manchester natives.

Daniels also dwelt upon that which had attracted the attention of so many other visitors to the Queen City: Manchester’s "strange loveliness." Perhaps for a reader with the advantage of 50 years’ hindsight, there is a sense of expectancy, of possibilities for the future in Daniel’s description of the city as he returned to his room after a long day of interviews. (After all, the economically good years of WWII were just about to begin.) Daniels wrote that above the city’s streets the view from my room in the Carpenter Hotel picked me up like a drink. Down below me lay the chimneyed brick tenements with their granite-lintled windows. ... Beyond them the old, long, looming factory buildings erected for utility were beautiful too, with the Merrimack running between them. Far away across the river was a striped red and white brick church steeple with its golden cross.

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87 Ibid., p. 444.
He closes his description with an arresting image:
In the middle of the picture was a smokeless brick stack, lean and beautiful against the sky. 88

88 Ibid., p. 446.
CHAPTER VI
THE TWO CITIES, THE WAR, AND AFTER

Introduction

This chapter follows the fortunes of Manchester and Lowell through the 1940s. For all the drama and increased production of the Second World War, the decade did not bring a radical change in the economic situation of the Merrimack Corridor. Old industries and underemployment remained characteristic of the region. An effort by Royal Little and Textron, Inc., to build a synthetic textiles empire out of old cotton mills in New England came to grief. Under the general circumstance of their cities' location in a region with little to attract dynamic, new industries, neither industrial development corporations like AI or real estate development operations such as those controlled by the Stevens clan or the Boston Associate mills in Lowell had much chance for dramatic success.

In the troubled years after 1936, the organizers of Amoskeag Industries [AI] realized that there would be no easy way back to economic health for Manchester. Hopes raised by an upturn in the cotton industry in 1937 would soon be dashed. Although it was very careful to check the trustworthiness of firms that moved into the Amoskeag millyard, AI found itself trapped into pretty much the same constant search for new industry to fill factory space characteristic of holders of industrial real estate throughout New England.

The Second World War brought massive factory orders to Manchester and Lowell. It also brought an air force base to the former city, and armaments factories to the latter. The air force base was to prove the more valuable addition, for the munitions factories of Lowell closed at war's end. During the 40s, Manchester did better than Lowell in another way. It elected a mayor in 1944 who was to provide the city with steady, if uninspired, leadership for the next 16 years. In Lowell, on the other hand, the old ethnic rivalries in city government continued, and a mayor went to jail for fraud.

However, the Queen City ended the 1940s just as tied to declining textile industries as Lowell. As the 50s began, all the textile towns of the Merrimack Corridor would find themselves searching for a means of economic revival.
Manchester Through the Forties

In a neat bit of poetic justice, William Parker Straw, dismissed in 1929 from the position of Agent for the Amoskeag by Dumaine in part for being too tender-hearted toward the workers, found himself seven years later offered the position of Agent by the new owners of the millyard, Amoskeag Industries. Straw's job was to oversee disposition of the millyard in such a way as to preserve employment for Manchester workers. Straw accepted the offer. On Nov. 2, his home in north Manchester provided the site of negotiations with, among other companies, two Boston Associate mills still surviving in good health: the Pepperell of Saô/Biddeford, Me., and the Pacific of Lawrence, Mass.¹

In the event, the Pacific took over leases of mill buildings and also purchased 1,772 Draper Northrop looms from Amoskeag Industries.² The Chicopee Manufacturing Co., the old Boston Associate firm in Chicopee, Mass. (now a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson medical supply company, making cotton medical dressings), also leased buildings. By mid-December, the sales and leases of machinery and real estate were going so well that rumors were circulating around Manchester that the stock holders in Amoskeag Industries were going to be making tremendous profits. Arthur Moreau suggested to his fellow directors that any profits above a 4% return on investments be put into a fund "to build up the industrial welfare of the city."³ The sales and leases went on pace. The Pacific operation built up to a workforce of 1,500, and the Chicopee to a workforce of 525. National Youth Administration and WPA offices and a variety of small businesses moved into the millyard. Unfortunately for the economic advancement of the city, a number of shoe firms which moved into the millyard had merely relocated from elsewhere in the city. Their payroll of several hundred workers did not represent a net gain for Manchester. However, the directors of Amoskeag Industries could take pride in the fact that by the fall of 1937, some 3,700 people were employed in the millyard by

¹Minutes of the Board of Directors of Amoskeag Industries, Inc., 10/1/36, 10/6/36, 11/2/36. Hereafter "Directors' Minutes."
²Directors' Minutes, 11/27/36, 12/11/36.
³Directors' Minutes, 12/15/36.
firms which the directors were confident were not fly-by-night operations. The profits made by Amoskeag Industries during its first year became something of an embarrassment in light of the AI endeavor's reputation as an heroic and quixotic effort. Moreau's suggestion concerning plowing profits into an industrial welfare fund for the city was ignored, and a punitive undistributed profits tax meant that there was no thrifty and legal way to squirrel away the funds. Thus, on Aug. 17, 1937, the directors decided to declare a huge dividend before the end of the fiscal year (Aug. 31). Amoskeag Industries had proved to be something more than an exercise in civic patriotism!

The next fiscal year did not pose any public relations problems concerning profits: 1938 brought a loss of $25,377.51. In April of 1938, the Pacific management informed Agent Straw that a downturn in the textile market would force them to close their Manchester establishment. All inducements on the part of AI for the Pacific to treat the shutdown as temporary fell on deaf ears. The Pacific managers told the AI representatives that manufacturing costs at Manchester are as low as in their other mills; that conditions are satisfactory to them here and they have been well treated and would like to stay here.

Unfortunately, the hopeful prognostications for the cotton textile industry in 1937-38 had not proved true, and the situation was back to the bad days of the late 20s and early 30s. Straw grimly judged that if the "Pacific should give up manufacturing here that there would be little possibility that these mills could be operated for cotton textiles by any one else."

The AI directors had been disappointed that no private concern had taken on the management of the worsted unit of the old Amoskeag. Unlike the cotton units, its machinery was relatively new, and, unlike the cotton industry, woolen mills in New England were not suffering from Southern competition. Spurred by the Pacific disappointment, the AI directors arranged in the summer of 1938 for loans from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Manchester banks to allow a New York worsted manufacturer to start up the

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5 Directors' Minutes, 8/16/37. The profits for the first year proved to be $301,138.78. Directors' Minutes, 1/26/38.
6 Directors' Minutes, 1/25/39.
7 Directors' Minutes, 4/8/38.
8 Directors' Minutes, 4/25/38.
worsted unit. AI and the Bachman Co. of N.Y.C. shared ownership of the new Amoskeag Worsted, Inc.

Soon, AI had set up several wholly-owned subsidiaries to make use of Manchester mills and machinery: Raylaine Worsted, Inc., manufacturing wool and rayon fabrics; Amoskeag Fabrics, Inc., manufacturing spun rayon and cotton goods; and Amoskeag Mohair Spinning Company. (Textile manufacturing in the Queen City had added an arsenal of fibers to the old staple of cotton.) Mr. Laurence Meyer, veteran of the successful Newmarket Industrial Associates, and employee of the industrial division of the State Planning and Development Commission, was devoting a major effort to attracting new industry to the Queen City. AI decided to ensure his retention at the state agency by agreeing to pay his salary.

The loss of the Pacific operation and its 1,500 jobs was a hard blow, but AI was doing its best to develop industries. In April of 1939, the Stevens interests of Lowell contacted AI with a proposal that the knitting machines of the Lawrence Manufacturing Co., already supplying yarn for Raylaine Worsted, be sold off and transferred to Manchester. Later that year, Amoskeag-Lawrence Yarns, Inc., went into operation, carrying on the old Lowell tradition in Manchester. It was predicted that this concern would eventually employ 400 to 500 workers.

However, in 1939, the situation in the millyard was none too happy. AI's initiatives in developing new textile industries left the company with a mortgage debt of $1,173,000, and the operating loss for the year ending in August 1939 came to $80,803.74. Five years before, the old Amoskeag had employed 8,852 (and had paid out in wages $6,400,000); the AI efforts had only brought half that employment. The new industries in the millyard were not high wage. In fact, most of the employment in the millyard

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9 Directors' Minutes, 7/25/38 & 8/22/38.
10 Directors' Minutes, 10/17/38, 11/19/38, & 1/25/39.
11 Directors' Minutes, 7/25/38.
12 Pacific's departure did not help the Queen City's miserable relief statistics for the year. Writing in 1939, Creamer and Coulter figured, on the base of a nine-month average, that the percent of families on relief (direct relief or work relief outside of WPA or CWA employment) for 1938 to have been 12.6%. For purposes of comparison, the percent of Lowell families that year was 8.8%, as was the percent for New Bedford families. Daniel Creamer, and Charles W. Coulter, Labor and the Shutdown of the Amoskeag Textile Mills (Philadelphia: Works Progress Administration, November 1939), pp. 316-318.
13 Directors' Minutes, 4/4/39 and 1/24/40.
15 Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown, p. 131.
- 4,248 in November, 1939\textsuperscript{16} - was given by textile concerns: the Chicopee gauze plant and relatively small spinning and weaving concerns, and also a textile machinery unit in the old Amoskeag machine shop. Shoe shops provided a large part of the remaining employment. Other firms devoted to storage, dry cleaning, manufacturing chilled steel grit, or making clothing could not be termed high-paying.\textsuperscript{17} Academic investigators concluded in 1939 that

It cannot be disputed that the volume of new employment was a small fraction of the volume lost by the closing of the Amoskeag mills; or that little advance had been made toward the diversification of the city's industry and what advance had been made was with companies paying wages no better, some a little worse, than the textile industry.\textsuperscript{18}

Perhaps disappointment with this performance led the city government, in 1940, to refuse point blank to take over maintenance of the streets running through the large millyard section. AI had proposed to make the assumption of this burden more palatable for the city by also handing over the old armory, a playground, and a sports field which AI had inherited among the old Amoskeag real estate holdings. After being refused by the city government, AI went to court - after all, an increasing number of the millyard buildings were now owned outright by companies other than AI - and won a judgment in its favor. The city took over maintenance of the streets serving the millyard concerns, without taking over the armory and recreation fields.\textsuperscript{19}

The year 1940 saw the small AI-financed mohair-spinning firm close; it had never made a profit.\textsuperscript{20} However, the other AI initiatives were making money, and employment in the millyard continued to improve (4,721 in 1940\textsuperscript{21}). The millyard payroll had climbed to over 2/3rds of the old Amoskeag payroll of 1934 ($4,500,000 in 1940).\textsuperscript{22}

As the Amoskeag Manufacturing Co. collapsed during 1934-36, Manchester's shoe factories became a most important factor in the city's economic health. A 1936 editorial in the Manchester Leader rejoiced that the city was not a one-industry town, and mentioned the 2,000 Queen City workers employed in J. F. McElwain factories.\textsuperscript{23} The McElwain

\textsuperscript{16}"Amoskeag Jobs Rise With Mix of Industries," Christian Science Monitor, 11/10/39
\textsuperscript{17}Speech by Arthur E. Moreau, 8/10/38; Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{18}Creamer and Coulter, Shutdown, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{19}Isabel Horner Tarrant, "Amoskeag, the Industry that Built a City" (unpublished research paper in Manchester Historical Association archives, late 1970s), p. 82.
\textsuperscript{20}Directors' Minutes, 1/24/40 and 12/9/40.
\textsuperscript{21}Amoskeag Industries File, New Hampshire History Room, Carpenter Memorial Library.
\textsuperscript{22}Directors' Minutes, 1/24/40.
\textsuperscript{23}Manchester Leader, 3/18/36, p. 4.
concern continued to prosper through the decade, and in 1938 it at long last accepted an independent union as a bargaining agent.  

However, the textile and shoe industries had generally low wage rates, and any successes they had in Manchester did not in fact restore the Queen City to economic health. A small, but significant initiative in the diversification of the Queen City's industries lay in the founding in the millyard in 1937 of the Marion Electrical Instrument Co., employing twelve workers in the production electric measuring devices. Two years later, the founder, Marion L. Short, beset by money and family difficulties, sold out to several investors, including William McElroy, who had been working for AI enticing new industry to the city. McElroy, now president of Marion Electrical, began to rely more and more on a self-taught young man, Roscoe Ammon, to actually supervise the electrical work. World War II was to be very good to the Marion Co. and to Roscoe Ammon.

The coming war was also to give the Queen City a first class airport. During the 1930s, half a million dollars in government funds had been spent on the Manchester airfield, asphaltaling the runways, and building a second hanger and an administration building. In 1940, Manchester leaders had hoped for their airport to be chosen by the Army Air Corps as the site of its new Northeastern facility, but in the event Chicoopee, Mass., got the nod. However, October first of that year, the New Hampshire WPA administrator announced that more than a quarter of a million dollars would be spent on an expansion of the Manchester field. The U.S. military buildup was expediting such initiatives, and on Oct. 3, the War Department announced that $1,500,000 would be spent on an Air Corps base at the Manchester site. By March, 1941, 700 construction workers were working 24 hours a day putting up 94 buildings. In July, the 45th Bombardment Group moved into the new air base.

The fliers put on a fine show, but in fact the base was woefully unprepared for the initiation of hostilities on Dec. 7. Air Force officer William A. Whelton remembered that the field "had no mission and no standing orders." The only ordinance on the base consisted of practice bombs. Officer-of-the-day Whelton received no orders during Dec. 7, and when he went off duty he took his wife to the movies downtown. The flashing of a message on the screen telling all military personnel to return to quarters finally let

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24 Interviews with retired J.F. workers, three of them officers of the New Hampshire Shoe Workers' Union, and with Robert Mulvanity of the company's labor dept. from 1935 to 1965.


27 Manchester Union-Leader, Army Air Base Supplement, 7/17/41.
Whelton know America’s leaders were indeed reacting to Pearl Harbor. Soon, unarmed bombers from Manchester were patrolling the North Atlantic for a reported German battle fleet.28

The Army named the field after a Manchester native, Lt. Jean Grenier29, and Grenier Field roared into action as a base for sub patrols and especially as headquarters for the Air Force Transport Command ferrying thousands of planes and men to Europe. During the war, 50,000 troops passed through Grenier Field, and 6,000 troops were stationed there.30 The purchases of these soldiers benefitted Queen City commerce, but the city gained from the war in other ways.

War orders poured into Manchester factories. AI-financed factories produced military clothing. In November 1941, a local entrepreneur, Mack Kahn, took over the AI’s Amoskeag-Lawrence Yarns, Inc. Kahn’s new Amoskeag-Lawrence Mills, Inc., converted cotton textile machinery in order to manufacture merino yarns for military hosiery and undergarments. Other textile concerns moved into the millyard, including Textron’s Sewn Products Division which manufactured parachutes, ponchos, sleeping bags, tents, etc.31 A garment concern which had arrived in the Amoskeag millyard the year before the war, Brookshire Knitting Mills, did very well producing knit goods for the military. (As “Pandora Knitwear, Inc., this concern was to be a fixture in Manchester for the next half-century.)32

29 Grenier had died in 1934 in a crash of his U.S. Army training plane. Manchester Union-Leader, 1/23/42.
31 Guyol, Philip N. Democracy Fights. A History of New Hampshire in World War II. Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth Publications, 1951), pp. 145-146. Textron was part of the textile empire being assembled by Royal Little, of which more below.
32 May Gruber, Pandora’s Pride. Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1984), p. 123 ff. Gruber’s memoir (she was president of Pandora Knitwear after 1964) gives a view of AI recruiting of industry which does not show up in that organization’s records. Gruber recalls that her father returned from his initial scouting trip to Manchester to his New York base and reported that "the mucky-mucks in Manchester took me around like a long-lost brother. ... Their tongues are hanging out for small businesses like ours to move in. They’ll do everything they can to help us get started." Ibid., p. 118.
shoe and leather industry profited also, with J. F. McElwain alone producing 11 million pairs of shoes during the war. Military contracts enriched the small electrical concerns of the Queen City - Marion Electrical Instrument Co. (ammeters, etc.), Chaber Corp. (radar parts), and Anchor Manufacturing Co. (radio equipment).  

The war ushered in not only a prosperous era for Manchester industry, but also an era of very stable leadership with the election in 1944 of Josaphat Benoit, editor of the French-language newspaper L'Action, as mayor of the city. Benoit was to stay in office until 1962, during this time getting good marks from the city's business community for his efforts on behalf of Manchester's economy.

Benoit's efforts could never be characterized as innovative, however. Indeed, the Progressive legacy in New Hampshire politics as a whole seems not to have survived the 1940s. Styles Bridges, erstwhile associate of Bass and Winant, after his election the U.S. Senate in 1936 became a pillar of right-wing Republicanism. The Manchester newspaper holdings of Col. Frank Knox, who had been a pillar of Progressivism at the century's beginning, were put up for sale after Knox's death in 1944 and were acquired by an arch-conservative. A nephew of John R. McLane of Manchester, John McLane Clark, a Nieman Fellow and, like his uncle, an associate of John Winant, tried to buy the papers, but in 1946 he was outbid by William Loeb, hitherto an erratic publisher of small newspapers in Vermont. Loeb's newspapers would boost economic development in general, but

33 Ibid., pp. 150 & 159. The really large high tech manufacturing order in New Hampshire, however, was the production by Sylvania during 1944 and 1945 of radio proximity fuses at the old Pacific Mills plant in Dover, N.H. Ibid., pp. 159-160.
would often be nay-sayers to new ideas for building up Manchester's economy.  

Good ideas for economic progress were what the civic leaders of the Queen City needed with the end of war contracts. The war years had brought a reprieve for the Manchester textile industry, development for local electronics concerns, and the economic benefit of a military airport. After the war, the city possessed a tradition of cooperation between government and business in its economic development. However, the Queen City emerged from WWII still heavily dependent on the textile industry, and its fortunes ebbed and waned with the fluctuations of the market for fabrics. In 1947, a good year for the textile industry, the level of unemployment in the Manchester area was 4.7%; in 1949, a terrible year in the industry, the rate of unemployment rose to 11.4%.  

The future of the textile and shoe industries of Manchester were scarcely secure. In the latter half of the 1940s, the danger from Southern competition clearly remained for the New England cotton textile industry, and, in those years, the New England wool and worsted industry also became subject to competition from the South. The shoe industry in Northern New England remained rather strong, but it faced ever-increasing competition from manufacturing centers elsewhere in the United States. For all the efforts of Amoskeag Industries and the profits garnered from war manufacturing, the economic future of Manchester remained murky. Down the river, in Lowell, the war and postwar experiences were roughly the same.

Lowell in the Forties, and Textron

Lowell's economy, like that of Manchester, gained from war-connected manufacturing and commerce. However, a great deal of its military manufacturing proved especially unstable, even during the course of World War II. A number of factories, manufacturing munitions and weapons, opened and shut in direct correlation to military contracts. The fragmentation among various civic groups in Lowell continued in the 1940s, and the political life of the city proved quite dramatic.

In 1939, state representative George T. Ashe had gained the mayoralty in Lowell. During the next two years, he strove to reverse the city's constant 1/2 million dollar deficit by rationalizing the organization of city

37 Interview with John Mongan, mayor of Manchester in the 1960s, 3/23/94.
departments. Despite the rancor of many at Ashe's civic job-cutting, he was re-elected in 1941. Very soon thereafter, however, Lowell governmental figures began to be summoned to Cambridge to testify before a grand jury of the Middlesex County court. In March of 1942, Mayor Ashe, the city purchasing agent, and several others were indicted for conspiracy to defraud the city government through a dummy hardware company, and Ashe was indicted for taking a bribe. Before the year was out, Ashe and his friends were convicted on the conspiracy charge, and the mayor pled guilty to bribery. They all went to jail.40

Ashe's conviction reinforced the negative opinion many Lowell citizens had of the moral fiber of the Irish politicos that ran city hall. According to historian Marc Scott Miller,

The words 'corrupt,' 'inefficient,' and 'conservative' were commonly applied too Lowell's political system during the years of the depression. 'Irrelevant' could also be used, because who controlled political offices had little to do with the Yankee mill owners who, through economic power, controlled the city.41

Miller explains that the Ashe scandals allowed Yankee lawyers and mill executives to push through a new plan of city government in 1942. Among 30,000 votes cast in Nov., 1942, the new form of government won by a 2,342 vote margin. This so-called "Plan E" form of governance, took power away from the mayor and gave it to a city manager. It also substituted a city-wide, proportional electoral system of election for the old ward elections for city posts. The adoption of Plan E did not result in a burst of efficient, progressive government, for many of the old faces continued to be elected under the new proportional voting scheme.42

With World War II, change did come to the city's labor union situation. Louis Vergados and his allies in the successful unionization of the Merrimack by the "Lowell Textile Independent Union" attempted the same thing at the Boott. However, in this effort the organizers ran into not only the inscrustation of the Flather clan, but rival organizing efforts by the CIO textile union. Apparently,

41Miller, Irony of Victory, p. 11.
the two labor groups came to a compromise in September of 1941, and the Boot was left to the TWUA-CIO. Under the demands of constant war production, the Boot management recognized the union in October of 1942. The remaining Boston Associate firms of Lowell had finally capitulated to the demands of labor. Government interest in maintaining war production resulted in nearly all firms participating in war contracts also accepting unions.

The new wartime conditions led to large movements of people in and out of the city. Lowell workers commuted to war work at Ft. Devens, the General Electric plant in Lynn, the Watertown Arsenal, and the Naval Yard in Charlestown, Mass. By 1944 about 5,000 Lowellians travelled to work at these places.

Representative to Congress Edith Nourse Rogers saw her efforts to keep Ft. Devens open in the '30s bring a large local economic payoff in the '40s. Three divisions for the European Theater were trained at Ft. Devens. Thousands of troops being routed overseas through Ft. Devens spent their free time in the downtown of Lowell. They were welcomed by stores and invited to church socials. They also came to know another side of the city. The bars and brothels of Moody St. became famous worldwide.

Congresswoman Rogers did not rest in her efforts to help Lowell during the war. She used her generation's worth of Washington contacts to entice war industry to the city. The Lowell Sun, a great booster of the congresswoman, gave her credit for the return of armaments factories to the city fifteen years after the closure of U.S. Cartridge.

In 1942 the Remington Arms Company set up shop at two locations in Lowell, the Bay State Mills property along the Merrimack River, with the large concrete factory built in the early 1920s (and left empty in the 1930s), and the old U.S. Cartridge property near the derelict airport on Lowell's southern boundary. The wages offered for munitions work surpassed those of the textile firms, and workers fied the mills to take one of the 5,000 places at the arms plant. With a huge payroll, and with new construction totaling $5,000,000, the Remington was declared by the Lowell Daily Sun to be "the biggest thing that has

44 Miller, Irony of Victory, pp. 35-36.
45 Ibid., p. 89.
46 Ibid., p. 93.
47 Lowell Daily Sun, 1/6/44; ibid., 3/19/46.
49 Miller, Irony of Victory, pp. 18 & 52.
happened to this city since the [U.S.] Cartridge Shop was going full blast during the last war."

The Remington operations closed down late in 1943,\(^{50}\) To the chagrin of federal manpower officials, Remington workers proved loath to move to war work outside the city. In a Boston Herald feature article early in 1944, an unnamed Lowell businessman denounced a scheme by Lowell industrial leaders to keep workers in the city so that after the war and military contracts ended there would still be a Lowell labor surplus. The informant declared that the industrialists "want to make sure that the law of supply and demand works in their favor, when they have to stop doing business on a cost-plus basis."\(^{52}\)

Whatever the reason for labor immobility,\(^{53}\) in short order other war industries moved into the vacated factory space. The General Electric Co. and U.S. Rubber Co. set up shop in the Remington properties, and Lowell continued to benefit from war industry.\(^{54}\) However, war jobs did not lift Lowell out of its status as a low-wage city: in 1943 the average Lowell weekly wage of $31.88 only brought the city up to the prewar U.S. average.\(^{55}\)

After the war, factories tied to the military closed down, and the Lowell's economy remained based on textile manufacture. Oddly, at a time just after the war, when the textile market benefitted from the release of pent up civilian demand, the board of directors of the Merrimack Manufacturing Co. decided to sell out. Lowell-born Jacob

\(^{50}\) Lowell Daily Sun, 3/4/43, p. 1.
\(^{51}\) Perhaps because of miserable quality control. Word-of-mouth among Remington workers was that the bullets being manufactured there were ending up dumped in the river. Interview with Alice Swanton in Miller, *Irrony of Victory*, p. 62. The Lowell Daily Sun in a 1946 editorial tied the Remington closure to a massive oversupply of small arms ammunition. Lowell Daily Sun, 10/31/46.

\(^{52}\) Catherine Coyne, "Jobs for All in Lowell Expected by Summer," Boston Herald, 1/30/44, p. 1 and p. 10.

\(^{53}\) James Ellis, labor organizer in the early 1940s, considers the clannishness of Lowell's ethnic groups as a major break upon mobility elsewhere: "I made a study you see after the war. Ah, I don't think that management blocked the people. I think the people blocked themselves. There was a natural tendency because of the minority [culture] ... the closeness ... . Number one the family tie was very close .... number two they were afraid of the unknown to go someplace else." He refers to the unwillingness in 1948-49 for Lowell textile workers to take jobs in nearby Worcester. James Ellis, Interview Transcript #75.11, p. 17, Oral History Collection, Mogan Center.


\(^{55}\) Lowell Daily Sun, 6/22/43, p. 1; Miller, *Irrony of Victory*, p. 21.
Ziskind purchased the Merrimack in April of that year. He kept on B. S. Hawkins as General Manager, and displayed a full-page advertisement in the Sun assuring its readers that "we are glad to advise you that the mill will continue to operate. We have never had any other ideas on this subject." In fact, the ad let readers know that the Merrimack would be hiring some extra help.56

However, all indications were that the Lowell textile industry was in trouble. When the Ames Worsted Co. decided to set up a new plant in 1945, it did not do so in Lowell, but in Canada.57 Other mills kept operating, but with little reinvestment. The Flathers admitted in 1945 that no one could "build hopes of a longer economic life for the Boot Mills than five years."58 The second half of the 1940s was characterized by constant disputation between the Flathers and the workers at the aged Boot.59 At that mill, as with so many others in New England, the plant and machinery were old, and labor-management relations poor.

Labor organizer James Ellis returned from the war to his native city to begin a progressive newspaper, the Industrial Journal. During the life of the paper, 1946-1948, Ellis argued with the city authorities that they should establish an industrial commission to really diversify the industrial base of the city. According to Ellis, the Sun, the bankers, and the stockholders of the textile mills were not interested in hiring an "industrial commissioner," or, for that matter, in putting advertising in the Industrial Journal. The paper folded, and Ellis went elsewhere to work as a Textile Workers of America organizer.60

In the late 1940s, efforts toward economic diversification, whether pushed by James Ellis or by the Chamber of Commerce, had not accomplished that much in Lowell. However, the city contained synthetic cloth units controlled by Royal Little, and Mr. Little had embarked upon a grand campaign to create a textile empire.

56 Lowell Sun, April 15, 1946, pp. 1 & 8. The Merrimack must have been closely held by Ziskind, for it disappears from the Moody's Industrials manual after 1946. By the time he died in 1950, Ziskind had assembled a sort of textile and apparel manufacturing empire in New England and Canada. See his obituary in the New York Times, Oct. 19, 1950, p. 31.
57 Miller, Irony of Victory, p. 207.
58 Gross, Boot Cotton Mills, p. 211.
59 Ibid., p. 203 ff.
During the war, Royal Little, a nephew of the founder of the Arthur D. Little consulting firm, had expanded his synthetic fiber operations from Rhode Island into northern New England. Among these factories were units in Lowell and Manchester. As orders for parachutes and other war-connected cloth products made by Little-connected enterprises declined, Little and his associates thought they saw a way to keep their factories in operation. Their idea was to create out of old textile mills of the region an integrated garment and curtain manufacturing and marketing corporation which would be able to produce handsome products so efficiently that Southern competition could be bested.

There was some precedent for converting a number of New England mills into a modern corporation integrated forward into marketing. The Pepperell up in Maine had modernized the production of bedclothes, including in the corporation’s functions a very sophisticated marketing effort. That initiative had proved most successful, and, by the 1940s, the Pepperell organization included mills in Rhode Island and the South. (It will be recalled that Pepperell’s efforts to make a success of the Massachusetts mills in Lowell in the late 1920s had proved one of its few failures.) The Pepperell, however, had not created a empire on short notice.

This is what Little tried to do. Beginning in 1943, under the rubric "Textron," Little’s operation began to take over older New England mills, mills whose owners were delighted to sell out. They knew that, once the war was ended, the problem of Southern competition would return with a vengeance. The Suncook Mills of N.H., the Manville Jenkes and Lonsdale organization of Rhode Island, and the Nashua Manufacturing Company of the Merrimack Valley became part of the expanding Textron network.

By 1948, the Textron gamble in New England had failed: the textile industry was as competitive and volatile as ever, and it was only the Textron units in the South, subsidiaries of acquired New England mills, which were making money. Textron began to close its New England plants, although, out of opportunism, the corporation would purchase other New England textile operations in the future. The goal of these Textron purchases during the 1950s clearly consisted of getting short-term profits and then getting

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61 In fact, Royal Little was a member of the board of directors of his uncle’s firm after 1945. E. J. Kahn, Jr., The Problem Solvers - A History of Arthur D. Little, Inc. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1986), p. 97.
out. Indeed, by the early 1950s the corporation would begin to diversify out of textiles.\footnote{Royal Little, How to Lose $100,000,000 and Other Valuable Advice (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 63 ff; Harris, Case Study, pp. 238, & 289-290.}

The end of the Textron offensive clearly signalled that the salvation of the Merrimack Valley would not be coming from textiles.

**Conclusion**

By the beginning of the 1950s, many cities in New England had climbed on to the industrial development corporation bandwagon (Lowell did so in 1951).\footnote{Philip H. Ragan, "Industrial Foundations and Community Progress," Harvard Business Review, (Fall 1952), 69-83; Richard B. Gillett, "Industrial Diversification in the Merrimac Valley: An Analysis of Recent Community Efforts," (Unpublished M.S. thesis, M.I.T., 1952).} However, the effectiveness of their efforts varied widely, in part because of varied levels of coordination within the communities. Leaders of these reindustrialization efforts recognized that it often took an abrupt economic crisis, such as happened in Manchester in 1936, to overcome inertia and divisions among a community’s constituencies. As one development corporation head explained, "much can be done in a speedy manner when a pistol is held at the head of a community."\footnote{Greater Lawrence Industrial Corporation executive director Jack Barry in a speech of March 15, 1950, quoted in Ragan, "Industrial Foundations," p. 78.}

However, even reindustrialization efforts which had begun after a community had felt the cold muzzle of such shutdown pistols could not change the comparatively dim economic prospects of northern New England. A well-ordinated redevelopment effort eager to welcome in new industry which paid well would achieve no results if no such industry wanted to locate in the region.

What the Merrimack Corridor needed to change its chronic unemployment and low pay was a new economic base. The new base would not arrive in force along the Merrimack until the 1960s. Then high tech industries would begin to change things in Manchester and Lowell.
CHAPTER VII

MANCHESTER AND LOWELL ENTER A NEW ECONOMIC ERA

Introduction

The history of the Merrimack Corridor in the 20th century can be quickly summed up as the fall of one technological regime and the rise of another, a journey from cloth to computers. However, just as the general decline in cotton textile production in the 1920s and 1930s played itself out quite differently in Manchester and Lowell, the rise of high tech occurred differently in the New Hampshire town and in the Massachusetts town. During the mid-twentieth century, the superficial similarity in architecture, the common history symbolized by common street names ("Appleton," "Moody," "Merrimack"), the linked transportation systems of Lowell and Manchester did not guarantee a common response to the new world of big government and big corporations.

As can be seen in the Upper Ohio Valley after the 1970s downfall of steel, or in many old industrial regions in Europe¹, any advantage a community in an industrial region enjoys during the decline of the industry which originally created the region will be important in the scramble to fill the economic void. During World War II, factory orders poured into both Manchester and Lowell, but it was the Queen City which emerged from the war with a government-built facility which proved of great aid in future economic growth. In the early 1950s, both Manchester and Lowell set up new industrial development corporations, but it was the Queen City which had the living tradition of cooperation across governmental and business boundaries in the effort to garner new industry. By the 1960s, the two cities saw their rates of economic revival, as measured in

diversity of industry and rates of unemployment, differ markedly. The cooperative tradition in Manchester had an impact on that city's superior performance that decade.

However, by the 1980s, the public and private sectors of Lowell had learned how to cooperate, and the Massachusetts city had joined its New Hampshire city in entering a new economic era. In the process of building new economic regimes tied in large part to high tech industries, both cities had gained an appreciation of their industrial legacy. Part of that legacy was the road from 1930s depression to 1980s hope. It had proved to be a long and hard one.

The Old Ways Die in the Merrimack Corridor

As the decade of the fifties began, the future for New England's traditional non-durable industries of textiles and shoes seemed bleak. The weaknesses of the cotton industry had been amply shown since 1925. New England's footwear industry as a whole seemed vulnerable to competition: factories in the South and West usually paid lower wage rates and were larger and more tightly integrated with merchandizing outlets. Indeed, low wage rates in the northernmost counties of New England were drawing shoe shops north from the Merrimack Valley. (Of course, the McElwain plants in New Hampshire did not share in the fragility of their small, hand-to-mouth sisters along the Merrimack.) In the early 1950s, research by William H. Miernyk found that the predilection for New England of the owners of a number of the region's cotton and shoe factories had more to do with those factories staying in the region than any strict cost/benefit analysis of locational advantage.

The same situation obtained for a number of woolen and worsted mills Miernyk studied. In contrast to the situation before WWII, the Southern Piedmont now proved a fierce competitor in the manufacture of cloth from wool. The Northern woolen/worsted industry suffered from overcapacity, and its unionized workers had fought long and

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5Ibid., pp. 270-273.
hard to raise its wage rate. The South had a pool of textile workers who could learn how to work with the wool/worsted fabrics and who could be paid less than their organized brothers and sisters up North. New technical developments allowed cotton spindles, of which the South had more than enough, to be used for the spinning of wool. In the summer of 1951, the crusty old editor of the American Wool and Cotton Reporter began to warn of a "New Hegira" of wool and worsted production south to the Piedmont. The future looked bleak for the woolen and worsted mills operating in Manchester and Lowell.

For the wool manufacturing center of Lawrence, Mass., the early 1950s became a disaster. Huge old mills with famous names began to close: the Arlington, the Ayer, the Wood, the Shawsheen in nearby North Andover. As the American Woolen Company wrapped up its massive operations on the Merrimack, a legacy of bitterness between the city and the textile corporations was summed up in an executive's statement to Fortune magazine reporters: "American Woolen doesn't owe Lawrence a God-damned thing." By 1957, Pacific Mills had closed its woolen and cotton production in Lawrence, consolidating its operations in Southern plants. The Boston Associate legacy in Lawrence had come to an end.

Clothing manufacture was making up to some degree for losses in other areas of non-durable manufacture. However, the dispersal of New York area garment shops to empty mills and lofts in New England was manifestly motivated by a search for low wage rates. New apparel factories might offer employment to the inhabitants of old mill towns, but the pitiful wages they paid would not be the mechanism of general economic upturn.

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10 Estall, New England, p. 194. Estall points out that in 1962 the "apparel and related product" industry category provided 6.6% of all New England manufacturing employment, but only 3.7% of New England manufacturing earnings and 3.4% of New England value added in manufacture. The relative proximity of the old textile centers of Fall River and New Bedford to the New York market had caused many garment firms to locate in those cities' abandoned mills, but Estall remarks "such cities are well advised to pursue their search for more stable and higher paying industry." Ibid.
However, by the 1950s, a possible engine for the economic revitalization of old textile areas had become manifest. World War II had led to more than doubling of employment in the relatively high-paying manufacture of electrical machinery in New England between 1939 and 1947. Much of this increase had been limited to the western half of Connecticut and the area around Boston, it is true, but a spillover of Boston-connected manufacturing had occurred in the Merrimack Valley. In the quarter century after WWII, defense contracts caused a continuous growth of electronics manufacture in New England. Defense-connected "high tech" firms sought cheap factory space, readily at hand in empty mills, and a labor force capable of assembling delicate components. The "digital dexterity" and ability to concentrate of workers trained in the textile industry, especially female workers, proved of special utility to the new high technology concerns.\textsuperscript{11}

The location of the defense-related electronics industry around Greater Boston had to do in part with available manufacturing space and suitable workers. It had much more to do with the brains which invented and improved the new electronic gadgets, brains trained in the educational institutions of Boston. The Merrimack Valley was once again to be changed by industrial systems planned by Bostonians.

The Genesis of High Tech in New England

In 1865, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology opened its doors. From its beginning, MIT was dedicated to applying scientific principles to the solution of industrial problems. In 1886, MIT student Arthur D. Little lived up to this orientation by setting up a chemical analysis firm in Boston. By the early decades of the 20th century, scientific consultation had become part of the modus operandi of progressive firms, and the expertise of Arthur D. Little, Inc. was sought by some of America's largest corporations, including such New England giants as United Shoe Machinery and International Paper.\textsuperscript{12} MIT researchers but Estall remarks "such cities are well advised to pursue their search for more stable and higher paying industry." Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11} Fuchs, \textit{Changes}, p. 183; Estall, \textit{New England}, pp. 35, 92, & 234. The claimed aptitude of textile workers for high tech work may have been overstated. As will be seen below, at least after 1958, relatively few mill workers made the transfer into high tech jobs. This data is reinforced by Maura Doherty's findings in her ongoing study of female workers in Lowell during the past 40 years.

\textsuperscript{12} Susan Rosegrant and David Lampe, \textit{Route 128, Lessons from Boston's High-Tech Community} (New York: Basic Books, 1992), pp. 45-50. The effervescent empire builder (and
forged strong ties with local industry, and in many cases formed their own companies. In 1922, MIT electrical engineer Vannevar Bush and others set up the company which, backed by money from the House of Morgan, was to develop into Raytheon. 13

During World War II, the immense influx of federal dollars for technological research flowed into Harvard and MIT and such firms as Raytheon. Their labs ensured that after the war, eastern Massachusetts would continue as a base for research in radar, communications, and new means of fast computation. In 1951 Chinese immigrant An Wang left the Harvard Computation Laboratory to set up a small computer memory manufacturing company in the South End of Boston. 14 That same year, eleven of the top missile researchers for Raytheon, led by Royden Sanders, left Raytheon to form Sanders Associates, operating out of an old Waltham foundry. 15 In 1957, Ken Olsen left the MIT-affiliated Lincoln Lab to form Digital Equipment Corporation, headquartered in a old American Woolen mill in Maynard, Mass.

DEC's arrival was Maynard region's salvation, bringing employment in the computer industry to the area's inhabitants and also bringing highly paid scientist and technician immigrants. The payrolls of DEC and other firms housed in the old woolen mills sparked local economic growth. 16 Indeed, in town after town near the new Route 128 beltway around Boston, old factories began to fill with high tech startup firms. The new enterprises brought the region the sort of growth which decaying Merrimack Valley mill towns lusted after.

loser) Royal Little was the careful Arthur D. Little's nephew.


By the mid-1950s, one Merrimack textile city had succeeded in passing through a bust-in-textiles to a boom-in-high-tech cycle. Frustrated city officials elsewhere along the Merrimack Corridor could look at Nashua, N.H., and dream.

The bust in textiles in Nashua began with outside capital seeking skim off war profits made by the city’s old Boston Associate mills. During WWII, Wall Street investor J. Arthur Warner had slowly gained a majority stake in the Nashua Manufacturing Co. The wisdom of his stock purchases became clear by the end of the war, when the N.M.C. had liquidated all debt, possessed an inventory of goods and raw cotton conservatively valued in excess of $5,000,000, and, besides this, had accumulated another three and 1/2 million dollars in cash, government notes, and accounts due (mostly from the U.S. government). In light of the threat of renewed Southern competition after the war, and especially in light of the unusually high demand for cotton inventory, it was time for Warner to cash out.  

Liquidation would have netted Warner $60 a share in late 1945, but rather than taking this road, Warner and the other directors of the N.M.C. decided to accept a purchase offer from Royal Little. It will be recalled that Little was seeking to create, under the name "Textron," an integrated garment and curtain manufacturing and marketing corporation. Adding the highly-regarded Nashua product lines of cotton blankets, sheets, and the excellent "Indian Head" cotton garment fabric to the Textron operation would have made sense, if Textron had not been keyed to synthetic fabric production. As it was, the $100 a share Little paid to Warner et al for the Nashua concern (i.e. $10.5 million total) evidenced, in the later words of a Textron executive, "a little bit of what you might call opportunism." Textron was cashing in on a postwar thirst for blankets, with the hope that the N.M.C.'s old mills and management practices could be modernized before the tide of Southern competitive products broke once again over the New England textile industry.

By 1948, Little's gamble had failed. In September, Textron announced the closure of all the plants by the end of the year. Taking their cue from Manchester and other New Hampshire localities which had set up community development corporations in times of crisis, civic leaders of Nashua quickly formed the Nashua-New Hampshire Foundation. The Foundation's directors, alderman (soon-to-be mayor) Hugh Greg and the executives of such Nashua firms as J. F. McElwain, found Royal Little easy to deal with, perhaps because Senator Tobey of N.H. had opened hearings on the

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causes for the shutdown. The Foundation gained control of the Textron properties, and Textron agreed to lease back the Jackson Mill, a great concrete edifice built by Lockwood-Greene way back during the postwar optimism of 1919. The Foundation did well enticing small enterprises to the hundreds of thousands of feet of mill space, and it paid off the mortgage by July of 1950.

However, the end of 1951 brought a new crisis, when Textron decided to liquidate all its New England holdings. The 320,000 sq. ft. of the Jackson Mill would have to be filled. By the summer of 1952, a tenant was found for the mill, Kaiser Manufacturing Co. In this lease, Nashua hit the absolute jackpot, not because of the coming of Kaiser to the city, but in the arrival with it of the group of brilliant scientists who had departed the Raytheon missile lab the previous year to form "Sanders Associates." From two floors of the Jackson Mill, Sanders would grow to become New Hampshire’s largest employer. A Nashua historian would write that the 1952 arrival of Sanders was a major turning point in the city’s history, just as founding of the Nashua Manufacturing Co. had been in 1823.

In ten years, Sanders would employ 3,000 just in Nashua, Hugh Gregg would have been elected governor on the basis of his record in helping turn Nashua around, and the Nashua-New Hampshire Foundation (unlike other N.H. community development corporations, a nonprofit entity) had given hundreds of thousands of dollars to its designated beneficiary, the New Hampshire Society for Crippled Children and Handicapped Persons.

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22Winship, Testing Time, p. 170.

23Ibid., p. 180.
The experience of Nashua served as a beacon to the other mill towns of the Merrimack, indicating what could happen if the correct high tech firm were enticed into town. A caveat should be entered here, however. It was not necessarily the unemployed mill operatives who flowed into the new electronics firms. An MIT/Harvard study looked at the 674,000 workers who left the New England textile industry from 1958 to 1975. Only 20,000 of them entered high tech employment during those years. The great majority went to work in private or public service sectors. The importance of the arrival of high tech firms into town lay in their priming the pump of the local economy - deserted mills required no services - and in the highly-paid university-trained segment of their workforce, employees whose large pay checks initiated beneficent multiplier effects in consumer spending.

As for the general run of the New England workforce, the rising new economy of the region characterized by employment in the high tech and services sector would not prove a cornucopia. The MIT/Harvard study mentioned above came to some grim conclusions about working in the new economy. By the early 1980s, New England wage levels had fallen in comparison with other regions. Earned income in the region was becoming more and more unequally distributed among workers, "both between and within (most) industries, even among those who work year round, and within as well as between the sexes." Regional employment was "highly unstable," with a great deal of part time work and the highest-paying manufacturing employment occurring in industries particularly susceptible to boom-bust cycles, e.g. defense firms. Many of the region's workers faced "significant barriers to upward mobility." Even the fastest-growing industries in New England faced the same dangers from regional competition and rationalization efforts by national corporations that had undercut the old regional industries.

The new high tech/services economy did provide jobs, however. Among a workforce which had faced decades of underemployment, this was no small matter. However, the new jobs would often be non-union, or the unions connected with them would often have been cowed from the experience of long years of economic insecurity in their industries. "The labor movement in New England," judged the 1982 MIT/Harvard study, since the late 1940s had been, outside the public

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25 Ibid., pp. 67-68.
sector, "by and large relatively quiescent." Perhaps the unions for public employees and hotel workers might remember the brave dreams of 1912 and the Bread and Roses strike. In the textile towns along the Merrimack, the unions which had finally been recognized because of federal interest in unhindered production during the Second World War had been able to do precious little about the closure of the old Boston Associate mills. Power lay elsewhere, in corporate boardrooms, in governmental agencies, in research labs.

Manchester’s Progress

In 1950, the Manchester city government became more proactive regarding economic development. A Manchester Industrial Council was set up to report to the mayor and aldermen. Chaired by textile manufacturer Ben Mates, the M.I.C. included representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the State Employment Bureau, local government, the press, and labor. Initial interest of the M.I.C. focused on supporting the development of more textile and shoe concerns in the Queen City. This was playing straight into the declining sector of the New England economy, and, in any case, the contact work done with new industry was on an informal basis. In 1952, the M.I.C. tightened up its operation by hiring Merrill Teulon from the industrial section of the New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission. Teulon was to work full time on industrial contact work, aware of Manchester’s disproportionate dependance on soft goods manufacture.

However, during the rest of the 50s, success in bringing in a new industrial plant tended to be cancelled out by the closure of old enterprises. Many years, unemployment in the Manchester area reached above 5%, although never putting the area in the state employment agency’s "persistent and substantial unemployment" category.

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26 Ibid., pp. 118-119; see also, pp. 48-49.
industrial real estate by the end of the 40s, sought to aid development by means of surveys, loans to businesses, and buying and holding sites which the M.I.C. or others wished to develop but lacked the cash to purchase immediately. Businessmen and government officials were cooperating in an effort to build up Manchester. However, Mayor Benoit's administration, if steady, was not terribly creative, and, in any case, the economic growth connected with Route 128-type firms only slowly moved up the Merrimack Valley. By the end of the 50s, the view of John Mongan, a Manchester telephone company analyst about to try his hand at politics, "the City That Would Not Die was just breathing." 

Mongan’s run against perennial incumbent Josaphat Benoit in the mayoralty election of 1959 revealed a strong current of dissatisfaction among Manchester voters. Benoit only managed to win over challenger John Mongan by 1,066 votes out of 29,622 cast. Mongan’s campaign consisted largely in radio broadcasts and newspaper ads emphasizing the Manchester worker’s low rate of pay. The challenger’s excellent showing (Mongan had no organization and he spent only $1000 dollars on his campaign) indicated a Queen City citizenry frustrated with years of seeing industries come and go in the old factory buildings, with no breakthrough into steady prosperity. 

Postwar hopes that Grenier Field would become a permanent military installation were seemingly disappointed by the unsuitability of the hilly terrain surrounding the site for the new military jets. In Fall of 1949, the base was put on stand-by status. However, in 1951, the base was reactivated because of the Korean War. However, it was mainly a maintenance facility, and the city fathers yearned to see the airport and its great acreage put to constructive use. Civilian use of the airfield gradually increased after the return of service by Northeast Airlines in 1951. To those in the Queen City who recognized the limited appeal to new industry of location in the aged Amoskeag millyard, the hundreds of undeveloped, federally-owned acres around the airport seemed a likely place for a new industrial park. 

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31 Binstock, Politics in Manchester, passim; interview with John Mongan, 3/23/94.

32 Binstock, Politics in Manchester, pp. III-5 - III-7.

Roscoe Ammon's Marion Electrical Instrument Co., producing electric coil measuring instruments, had proved quite successful supplying the war effort. In 1946, the firm bought one of the milyard buildings to increase its manufacturing space. Problems encountered in ferrying Marion instruments by air to the Korean conflict spurred the company into entering the realm of aviation navigational instrumentation. The company continued to grow, employing 265 in 1955. That year, Ammon began to discuss with directors of Amoskeag Industries the likely development of an industrial park out at Grenier Field, and AI's cooperation with Marion in promoting this initiative. The negotiations concerning the returning of portions of Grenier to civilian use got very complicated indeed, but by 1957, Marion and AI were confident the industrial park idea would go ahead, and the two entities co-sponsored a $5,000 survey of uses for the Grenier property.

The study encouraged the city of Manchester to go ahead and develop the park, with the Marion company as its first tenant in a modern, single-story manufacturing facility. Ammon kept up his live interest in the economic development of his city, in 1959 donating half a million dollars to the construction of a civilian air terminal building at the airport. Progress in the Queen City's economy was beginning to roll along.

In 1960, M. I. C. agent Teulon enticed Sanders Associates to build a facility at the airport industrial area. In 1961, Mayor Benoit declined to run again, and John Mongan, flush with ideas about creating new industrial parks, was voted into office. He was able to gain state funding for a speculative industrial building and then found a tenant for the newly-built factory. Plans were laid for a number of industrial parks in the Manchester area. Meanwhile, at the Grenier field site, Sanders expanded its facilities in 1965, and that high tech firm was joined by Disogrin Instruments, the Daven Division of McGraw Edison, and Scoville Aerosol. A thousand employees were working at the airport park in 1965.

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34 A. I. Directors' Minutes, 1/23/46.
36 A. I. Directors' Minutes 1/26/55 and 7/11/57; Manchester Union-Leader, 8/7/57.
37 David Tillman, "Insuring Jean Grenier's Name," New Hampshire Profiles, April 1971, p. 42; Vitali Mostovo, "Grenier Field," New Hampshire Profiles, October 1972, p. 49. Roscoe Ammon died shortly before the terminal's completion in December, 1961, and the building was named after him. Ibid.
38 "Remarks by John C. Mongan before the Greater Manchester Development Corporation March 22, 1994."
39 Tillman, "Grenier's Name," p. 42.
While new industrial parks were being brought on line, serious thought had been given to the renovation of the Amoskeag millyard downtown. In 1961 an analysis by the Arthur D. Little organization had pointed out the area’s lack of appeal for new, hopefully high-wage, industries. The 19th century roadways were unsuited for modern motor traffic, the buildings were all-too-often ill-maintained, and the canals between the mills were "in effect open sewers." The consulting firm urged a policy of selective renovation of millyard properties, with attention being paid to the relocation within Manchester of firms forced to move by the renovation. After years of discussion, during which the conditions in the millyard only worsened, the Manchester Housing Authority in 1966 began the nation’s first industrial urban renewal project.

A New Sensitivity Along the Merrimack: Manchester

The project to make the millyard more usable for industrial and commercial uses by widening roads, filling in the polluted canals, and razing buildings (most of them small service buildings) to increase parking space, did not win the plaudits of all observers. Photographer Randolph Langenbach began to develop a photographic archive of the millyard, especially the buildings to be destroyed, for the Smithsonian and himself. The curved facade of the brick mills which had so impressed visitors from England was to be altered, and the reflection of the mills in the canals (painted several times by Charles Sheeler after a sojourn as a guest of the Currier Gallery in 1948) would be seen no more. Drawing upon Langenbach’s work, New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable waxed wroth in a 1968 article, "Manchester, N.H.: Lessons in Urbicide," proclaiming that "demolition is under way of one of the most remarkable manifestations of our urban and industrial culture."

Anyone who has visited Manchester after the completion of the millyard urban renewal project could scarcely agree that the Amoskeag millyard has been totally destroyed. (And certainly, the anthrax-contaminated Arms Mill should have

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41 Ibid., p. 67.
been eradicated. The mile and one half of brick mills still present a striking vista. One can perhaps wonder if too much was destroyed, if the project was not guided too much by short-term, utilitarian goals. However, what is certainly of moment in the Huxtable article excoriating insensitive urban renewal and in Langenbach's labors at lovingly recording the mills both spared and destroyed is a deep appreciation not only of the millyard's beauty, but of the significance of this built environment as a monument of our urban and industrial culture. As will be seen below, a similar sensitivity was being manifested in the old Spindle City down the river, Lowell.

In the Queen City, the Currier Gallery manifested this sense of appreciation when in the Fall of 1975 it mounted an exhibit based upon Langenbach's work, "Amoskeag, A Sense of Place, A Way of Life." The timing of the proved uncannily appropriate, for the last great textile unit still functioning in the city, the Chicopee production unit housed in the old Coolidge mill, had closed its doors in February. The exhibit proved "an unprecedented success." Visitors found themselves surrounded by wall-sized photographs of the mills, the workers' housing, and textile artifacts. Besides this, they could hear tapes of portions of interviews of Amoskeag workers gathered under the direction of Langenbach's then wife, historian Tamara Hareven. In the book of oral history which grew out of Hareven's project, reference is made to the sense of dignity the exhibit gave to the retired operatives who saw their workplaces and fellow workers "immortalized" in the mural-like photographs (and in the taped interviews):

The exhibit evoked an overwhelming response from former Amoskeag and Chicopee workers, some of whom visited the show over and over. On Sunday afternoons about five hundred former workers with relatives and friends would go through the exhibit.

... The former workers of the Chicopee whose portraits were displayed in the exhibit had become historical symbols. As soon as they realized this,

44 World War I had dislocated the wool-sanitizing procedure that Amoskeag-bound fleeces had undergone in Great Britain. After Arms Textile took over the mill, anthrax contamination was discovered. The picture the building decontamination process presented in 1971 seemed out of Buck Rogers: "space-suit" garbed men carrying chemical-spraying hoses into the plastic-wrapped mill. Once the anthrax spores had all been killed, the building was knocked down, and the site converted to a parking lot. See Redevelopment Office of the Manchester Housing Authority. The Amoskeag Millyard Urban Renewal Project, Summary Report. Manchester, N.H.: Manchester Housing Authority, 1982), pp. I-11 & II-3.

it was no longer necessary to explain why their lives were important, why we wanted to interview them, and why we were writing this book.  

The boosters of Manchester could never again be cavalier in their attitude toward the historical value of the city’s old industrial buildings. The final report, in 1982, on the Amoskeag Millyard Urban Renewal Project spent some pages emphasizing the careful regard which the project had entertained concerning the historic worth of the mill buildings, and it emphasized that 75% of the millyard’s 5.5 million square feet of floor space survived the urban renewal process. The Manchester Historic Association began to conduct tours through the old industrial districts, and today the Currier Gallery includes in its tour of a Frank Lloyd Wright "usonian" building it acquired in 1988 a swing through the still-noble Amoskeag millyard. Many of those taking these tours are in Manchester because in the mid-1960s the city began an economic upturn.

A New Economic Era Along the Merrimack: Manchester

By the end of 1965, long-term tendencies in the economic life of postwar Manchester were becoming evident. The population of the city proper kept growing - 77,685 in 1940, 82,732 in 1950, 88,282 in 1960 - while surrounding towns grew at a fast clip. The percentage of the workforce employed in non-manufacturing positions was constantly rising - 62% in 1965 (ten years before it had been 52%; ten years later it would be 73%). Much of this portion of the workforce was tied to financial services. The percentage of the manufacturing workforce devoted to the making of durable goods was also rising - 22% in 1965 (ten years before it had been 17%; ten years later it would be 41%). The greater part of the employment in durable manufacture was devoted to electric products.

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By the latter half of 1966, the unemployment rate of the Manchester Local Office Area was under 2%.\(^5\) At the end of that year, Manchester Industrial Council agent Merrill Teulon could write the mayor and aldermen that a labor shortage for local industry had appeared.\(^5\) The unemployment rate of Manchester, as computed by the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security, remained under 4% for the next eight years.\(^5\) A new era had begun for the Queen City.

The new economic mix of service and durable manufacturing employment in Manchester and environs enabled the area to weather the post-1970 decrease in government spending in defense work in much better shape than sister cities down the river. Nonetheless, the statistics for 1975 remained grim: that year the unemployment rate in the Manchester Labor Market Area averaged 9.1% (the national average was 8.5%; the Lowell area's rate was 13.8%). However, the unemployment rate for the Queen City fell to under 3% in April of 1978.

A new prosperity, fueled by growth in high tech and financial services, was changing the look and smell of the Valley. Smokestacks stopped belching smoke and drains stopped emptying dyes and chemicals into the river as old textile and shoe firms continued to close. New synthetic leathers and cementing techniques gave foreign manufacturers of footwear an advantage over New Hampshire firms. In 1973, the Bee-Bee Shoe Co. of Manchester closed (200 workers laid off), and after years of decline, the last manufacturing facilities of J. F. McElwain closed, letting go of its last 275 Manchester operatives. Textile firms followed suit: in


\(^{51}\) Fitzpatrick, Response to Unemployment, p. 14; Merrill Teulon to Board of Mayor and Aldermen, 12/8/66, p. 1. Local History Collection, Greater Manchester Industrial Council Box 1, Manchester Industrial Parks File, MHA.


1975, Waumbec Mills, Inc. (390 workers), Chicopee Manufacturing Co. (450 workers), and Syntextils (500 workers) all shut their doors.54

However, in the late 70s and early 80s, sons and daughters of textile- and shoeworkers flocked into new service or high tech industries, old buildings were sandblasted, and new construction appeared everywhere. In 1974, the Manchester city government underwent further training in sophisticated economic development when it participated in a Community Improvement Program aimed at helping officials allocate budget resources and network effectively with other levels of government, business interests, and universities.55

The Manchester tradition of networking between private and public entities had paid off handsomely by the late 1970s. The Queen City now formed an apex of the "Golden Triangle" of New Hampshire, an area of outstanding growth.56 The economic expansion of Manchester occurred not only with attention paid to conservation of the built environment, but also with a new regard for the natural environment. Spurred by the 1972 Federal Clean Water Act, a billion dollars was being invested by various levels of government into the cleanup of the Merrimack River. One of the covered-over canalways of the Amoskeag miliary now housed a huge sewage intake pipe to carry off, for the first time, the human waste of eastern Manchester for treatment.57 By the 1980s, reconstruction of the old 19th century fish ladders around the dams in Lawrence, Lowell, and Manchester enabled species not seen for generations to ascend the river again.58

"Lowell Has No Hope"?

Down the river from Nashua and Manchester, communities after World War II began to follow the example of their New Hampshire sister cities and set up local industrial development agencies. In 1950, business leaders in the wool city of Lawrence and in the shoe city of Haverhill set up

54 Manchester Employment Conditions, #353, pp. 13-14.
57 Redevelopment Office of the Manchester Housing Authority, p. I-10.
industrial foundations to entice in new industries. In this, the Merrimack Valley towns were joining a growing list of New England cities aware of the precarious state of their aged industries and interested in such local development initiatives. By 1955, at least 75 such New England local development corporations existed.

Lowell took part grudgingly in the movement for organized economic development. Against the opposition of the Lowell Chamber of Commerce, which claimed all that could be done for industrial development was being done, the city of Lowell in 1951 appropriated $50,000 for the operation of a Lowell Development and Industrial Commission. This body, ten members representing business, labor, and financial interests appointed by the city manager, concurred that there should be a special effort made toward the attraction of electronics and light metals industries. Recognizing that the city lacked free industrial space likely to entice such businesses - corners of century-old mills did not provide the optimum space for these enterprises - the commission determined to construct factory buildings on modern lines. A section of South Lowell was turned into an area to house new industry, with streets named optimistically "Electronic Ave." and "Industrial Ave." A 42,000 sq. ft. facility was constructed, and in May of 1953 a transistor-producing subsidiary of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., purchased the plant.

However, what gains Lowell made in durable goods employment seemed negated by losses in the old, non-durable categories. The Korean War gave a temporary fillip to the textile industry of Lowell. However, 1953 brought yet another bad period for textiles everywhere in the U.S. At the Boott, the union was simply not in the mood to hear of further increases in work load for operatives stuck using ancient machines. In January of 1954, the Boott directors decided to purchase weft to run out the warp in the looms. When the weaving ended in half a year, the mill would close.

The textile industry was disappearing from Lowell. In 1954, Textron bought the Newmarket Manufacturing Co. as a tax write-off, and quickly closed it. Two years later, Pittsburgh interests bought Abbot Worsted from the families which had run it for a century in Lowell and in communities

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61 Gillett, "Industrial Diversification," pp. 72-76.
nearby, and began to liquidate the concern. The superintendent of the Lowell plant of Abbot Worsted sought to set up a new worsted spinning concern using the best of the old company's machinery, but he died of a heart attack in December of 1956, and with him died the Abbot tradition. By 1956, the buildings of the millyard of the Middlesex Company had been knocked down. The site became a parking lot.

At the end of 1957, the last of the old Boston Associate mills, the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, announced it would be closing its doors. During the previous decade, foreign imports had become more and more a problem for the American textile industry. The president of the Merrimack placed the blame on competition from imports of foreign velveteen fabric.

The closure of the Merrimack would put a thousand operatives out of work, and it marked the end of a 134 year tradition. The day after the closure announcement, an editorial in the Lowell Sun lamented the loss of the company, and looked to new electronics firms for economic stability. The piece declared,

The time has come, to reappraise the industrial ebb and flow. In the past year Lowell has failed to attract any new plant substantial size.

The close of the Merrimack was important enough to become a political issue. In the fall of 1958, a Democratic candidate bravely challenging Edith Nourse Rogers, Lowell's perpetual representative to Congress (she had never received less than 60% of the vote in every election since 1925), tried to use the closure of the Merrimack against her. To refute the claim that she had not done enough to keep the concern in town, she produced two letters from the Merrimack's president, written in January of 1957 and November of 1958, commending her efforts to keep the firm open, including attempting to limit imports of velveteen.

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68 Lowell Sun, 12/10/57, p. 1.
69 Lowell Sun, 12/11/57, p. 4.
Mrs. Rogers proceeded to annihilate her challenger in that year's election, 119,678 to 59,646.\footnote{Donald Melancon, "The Transfer of Power from Edith Nourse Rogers to F. Bradford Morse in the Fifth Congressional District of Massachusetts 1956-1964," (unpublished research paper, Lowell Technical Institute, n.d.), pp. 7-9.}

As the implications of the Merrimack closure were assessed by Lowellians, the millyard joined those of the old Tremont and Lowell Machine Shop yards in being erased from the face of the city. By 1962, the Merrimack factory buildings had been pulled down.\footnote{John Coolidge, Mill and Mansion, A Study of Architecture and Society in Lowell, Massachusetts 1820-1865, Second Edition (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), p. xi. The destruction of the old Merrimack workers' housing by 1966 caused an outcry among certain Lowellians. This debate had its part to play in a revaluation of Lowell's past which was eventually incarnated in the Lowell National Park. Ibid., p. xii, and Loretta A. Ryan, "The Remaking of Lowell and Its Histories," in The Continuing Revolution: A History of Lowell, Massachusetts, ed. by Robert Weible (Lowell, Mass.: The Lowell Historical Society, 1992), pp. 379-380.}

By all accounts, the morale in the Lowell of the 1950s and 1960s remained low indeed. The city lost people: the population of 1950 was 97,249 and that of 1960 was 92,107, although some of this loss probably consisted of movement to nearby suburban jurisdictions. Unemployment remained a chronic problem, and both the "physical and psychological city were in a state of decay."\footnote{Ross J. Gittell, Remaking Cities (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 69 ff.}

Paul Tsongas remembered of those years,
Growing up in Lowell, I learned firsthand about decline. It is pervasive, it eats away at everyone and everything. The traditional focus of the Democratic-controlled Lowell government was the distribution of the city's ever-diminishing resources. Various factions vied over control of the governmental structure, as Lowell continued its steady deterioration. The 'enemy' to the city fathers was those s.o.b.'s at the Lowell Chamber of Commerce. The municipal government and the private sector went at each other while the city suffered. Indeed, successful candidates for the city council often attacked the chamber and its 'greed.'\footnote{Paul Tsongas, The Road from Here, Liberalism and Realities in the 1980s (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 18. Richard Howe, Lowell city council member since 1966, and mayor of the city for the 1970-1971, 1988-1992, and 1994-1995 terms, agrees with this assessment. Interview, 6/17/94.}
Such infighting by no means helped Lowell in the quest for new industry to replace its dwindling textile and leather products manufacturing bases. New highways were linking the Lowell area to the 128 growth ring and to Boston and beyond, but links from the downtown city to the highways were lacking. Drawing upon interviews carried on by a Kennedy School of Government team, Ross J. Gittell concludes that many Lowell residents after WWII, were paralyzed by hopelessness and a preoccupation with the way things always were. In 1970, many middle-aged Lowellians had never seen Lowell in any condition except decline and had little reason to believe that things would or could possibly change in the future.

Gittell adds that many workers could not conceive of an economy in which textiles were not the main source of employment, although by 1970 textile manufacturing only employed seven out of one hundred workers.

In a 1986 study of the remaking of Lowell, C. Chandler Bryan wrote, "Fifteen years ago, Lowell was a beaten city." In 1972, the unemployment rate in Lowell and environs was 10.6%.

In 1974, an MIT consulting group wrote of the high unemployment rate leading to crime and sluggish retail trade and the erosion of local industry and commerce resulting in "an alarming rise in Lowell’s tax rate and an inadequate, overpriced housing supply." The M.I.T. planners reported that the remnants of the old millyards, now mostly vacant or underused as warehouse space, contribute little to the city’s employment or economic base but consume prime land. New investment has been minimal, while aging continues its visibly deteriorating effect on the physical condition of the city. Several residential areas of the city are severely blighted.

In 1975, the chief economist for the Bank of Boston told the City Planning and Development Department that "Lowell has no future, government officials should stop wasting their time trying to save the city - it has no hope."

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74 Tsongas, Road from Here, p. 71.
78 Ibid., p. 13.
79 Gittell, Remaking Cities, p. 71.
However, the expert from Boston spoke too soon. By 1974, the Lowell community had already achieved a notable victory. Ironically, in view of the M.I.T. group’s disparagement of the old millyards, the victory lay in taking seriously the historical heritage embodied in the 150-year-old industrial plants of the city.

**A New Sensitivity Along the Merrimack: Lowell**

During the 1960s, Lowell School Superintendent Patrick Mogan had convinced a group of Lowell citizens that the city’s education system must be oriented to producing graduates suitable not for increasingly non-existent mill work, but rather for the new high-tech industries. In discussions concerning this reorientation, the idea arose of using the city as a whole as a "school." The run-down mills and dirty canals represented an important part of American history. Mogan strongly urged that inhabitants of Lowell should treasure their past. Rather than being razed, the old built environment tied to the textile industry should be incorporated into an historical park. Such an Urban National Cultural Park would not only memorialize the past, but also foster community development. Mogan’s vision was not an easy sell. Paul Tsongas, elected to the City Council in 1969, remembered years later,

> I listened to him politely, but I thought his idea was ridiculous. I remember thinking that if you could fill in the canals and tear down the mills, you’d be a lot better off than restoring them.

However, constant championing of the park idea by Mogan and his allies bore results by the early 1970s. In 1971, Mogan and six others formed the Human Services Corporation to serve as a "broker" organization facilitating the cooperation of private and public units in redevelopment of the city keyed to the historic park idea. Their lobbying efforts quickly bore fruit, for in 1972, both the Lowell City Council and the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce passed resolutions in favor of such a park. That same year Congressman Morse introduced a bill to create a national park in Lowell. His successor in the seat for

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Lowell's district resubmitted this bill in 1973 and 1974. The end of 1974, Congress went so far as to set up a Lowell Historic Canal District Commission to evaluate the city as a site for an industrial history park.\footnote{Ryan, ""Roots and Dreams," p. 384; Bryan, "Remaking of a Mill Town," p. 52.}

In 1974, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts swung behind the park idea when it chose Lowell as the first of its series of its Urban Heritage State Park sites. These heritage parks were dedicated to improving the fabric of Massachusetts cities and to memorializing the work life of past citizens.\footnote{Coolidge, Mill and Mansion, p. xiv. The other sites of Heritage Parks which feature fine exhibits on work life are Fall River (textiles, Fall River Line), North Adams (various industries, Hoosac RR Tunnel), Holyoke (paper industry, etc.), Gardner (furniture, silverware), Lynn (shoe industry, GE plant), and Lawrence (textiles, 1912 strike). The small museums at the last three sites are truly outstanding.} The Lowell Heritage State Park soon brought $12.6 million into the local economy. The Mack Building, a four-story commercial building from the 1860s, was remodeled into an exhibit of the water-power systems of Lowell, various locks and canals were refurbished, and a promenade was recreated along the north shore of the Merrimack.\footnote{Bryan, "Remaking of a Mill Town," pp. 51-52; Coolidge. Mill and Mansion, p. xxxi.}

Studies undertaken by the Lowell Historic Canal District Commission, and the fact that Paul Tsongas, who had won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974, now championed the park idea, convinced the national legislature to create the Lowell National Historical Park on June 5, 1978. The national park had a budget of nearly $2 million a year to create visitor's centers, exhibits, tours, and transportation systems. Mogan's vision of a park simultaneously improving the city's fabric and enshrining the city's past, would now become a reality.\footnote{Bryan, "Remaking of a Mill Town," pp. 53-56; Coolidge. Mill and Mansion, p. xiv. Ryan's essay, ""The Remaking of Lowell and Its Histories," recounts the ongoing discussions about the park which ensured that the commemoration of the city's past did not ignore ugly aspects of that past - oppression of workers, economic depression, etc. A visit to the park today confirms that the history presented on tours and in exhibits is far from exclusively celebratory.}
A New Economic Era Along the Merrimack: Lowell

In 1976 occurred "the first successful attempt" in years to keep an industrial firm from moving from Lowell. The city boasted the largest pasta factory in the world, that of the Prince Spaghetti Co. (The facility was not enormous: it employed 300.) When the company threatened to move because of poor access to the new highways around the city, the city government reacted with unwonted alacrity, and arranged for the building of a new road. This was not an earthshaking event, but it indicated a new ability of the public sector to work with the private sector in Lowell. 87

That same year, 1976, fate finally smiled on Lowell's attempts at industrial diversification and development. Wang Laboratories was outgrowing its manufacturing facilities in Tewksbury, Mass., on the site of the old Tewksbury poor farm, and Dr. Wang was looking for a new location. He was quite impressed with an empty building in Lowell, built in the postwar era. Initially, the city government did not evidence much enthusiasm for the occupation of the space by the still-small company. However, there were no other good prospects for the property, and Lowell government offices arranged zoning changes to expedite the move of Wang Laboratories' management functions into the 350,000 sq. ft. building. 88 Within two years, Wang wanted to expand again, and city officials arranged a federal Urban Development Action Grant to help Wang build new office towers in Lowell. 89

Like the advent of Sanders in Nashua, the arrival of Wang in Lowell signalled great things. In the six years after 1976, employment rose in the Lowell Market Area (including Lowell's neighbors Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford) rose an average of 6% each year, double the Massachusetts and the U.S. average. From 1976 to 1982 employment in durable goods manufacture for the Lowell region rose 21.5% (nondurable goods employment went down 3.3% those years). 90

Employment in the Lowell region was also diversifying from the old concentration on manufacturing. In 1982, the percentage of Lowell workers engaged in manufacturing

[89] de Boo & Konar, Back to the Future, p. 33.
remained quite high, 39.2% (the U.S. average was slightly over 20%)\textsuperscript{91}, but this percentage was a far cry from the concentration of manufacturing employment twenty years earlier. In 1962, \textsuperscript{57} & 1/2% of Lowell workers were engaged in manufacturing.\textsuperscript{92}

From 1976, the year of Wang's arrival, to 1982 the category of Lowell industry which included computer manufacture grew on average a startling 43% per year.\textsuperscript{93} With the striking success of the Wang Word Processing System in the late 1970s and early 1980s, twelve-story office buildings arose on the Lowell property to house the increased headquarters staff in two and one half million sq. ft. of space.\textsuperscript{94} While figures for specifically Lowell employment are lacking, by 1986 Wang was employing 14,000 in that city and in neighboring communities along the Merrimack. That same year nine other high tech companies each employing from 100 to 250 employees had settled in Lowell.\textsuperscript{95}

Key to this rise in high tech employment was a continuation of the type of public/private networking which had led to the creation of the Lowell National Park. Using his clout as a member of the Banking Committee of the U.S. Congress, Paul Tsongas browbeat and cajoled the Lowell banking community to contribute funds to a Lowell Development and Financial Corporation chartered in 1975. The LDFC's charter committed it to downtown development; Lowell bankers contributed funds rather assuming that no such development would ever take place (and their funds would return intact). However, the authorizing legislation of the LDFC gave it great leeway in negotiating deals among private firms and the state and national government. For instance, at the instigation of City Manager William Taupier, the USAG money supplied to Wang in 1978 for its new office towers was not given as an outright grant as per the usual practice, but as a loan to be repaid into the LDFC treasury. The money then leveraged such downtown development as a new Hilton Hotel on the site of the razed Middlesex mills. Such clever tactics leveraged LDFC assets from the initial 1975 contribution of the banks from $300,000 to $12,732,794 in 1986.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{92}McDonald, Manpower Review, Lowell, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{93}Flynn, "Lowell," p. 279. The industrial category under which computers fall is named, counter-intuitively, "non-electrical machinery."
\textsuperscript{94}Wang, Lessons, pp. 230-231; Kenney, Riding, pp. 107-108
\textsuperscript{95}Bryan, "Remaking of a Mill Town," pp. 42-43.
\textsuperscript{96}Gitell, Remaking Cities, pp. 78 ff., & 164 ff.; de Boo and Kolnar, Back to the Future, p. 39.
The dealmaking abilities of Lowell leaders continued to sharpen for the good of the city. In August of 1979, City Manager Joseph Tully and Congressman Paul Tsongas sat in a dark corner of a local restaurant and on the back of a placemat devised the Lowell Plan. It was a blueprint for a collaboration between the public and private sectors. Bankers and businessmen were to be allies, not adversaries. Industrial leaders - Wang Laboratories, most notably - were to be assisted in every possible way and were expected to make massive reinvestments in return. From a wish list of projects, the Lowell Plan developed into a nonprofit development corporation - "Lowell Plan, Inc." - which between 1981-1988 funnelled $3,000,000 in private contributions into projects reminiscent of those funded by Amoskeag Industries 30 years before in Manchester: land banking, hiring consultants, etc. A Wall Street Journal article in 1985 described the economic renaissance of Lowell. It quoted a Lowell engineer who had been trained at Lowell Tech two decades before, had moved away in search of a job, and now had returned to share in the new prosperity. The engineer remembered, "People here always used to say 'Lowell' with a declining inflection in their voice." He summed up the change in the city by remarking, "You don't hear that anymore."

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97 Tsongas, Road from Here, p. 20.
98 de Boo and Kolnar, Back to the Future, p. 40.
99 Geraldine Brooks, "The Road Back: Old New England City Heals itself; Can One In Midwest Do So Too?" Wall Street Journal, Feb. 1, 1985, p. 1. Brooks' article contrasts the situation in Akron, Ohio (unemployment near 11%), with that of Lowell. She discovered a marked difference in attitude to additions to the national park system among citizens of the two cities. Her informant was Lewis Albert, who had been the first superintendent of the Lowell National Park, and in 1985 was the superintendent of the 32,000 acre Cuyahoga Valley Recreational Area. "When the Lowell national park was established, 'they let the kids out of school and went fruitcake,' Mr. Albert says. 'When they established the park here (in Ohio), people painted swastikas on rangers' cars and tried to burn their houses.' Some opponents were people who resented the park's prohibition on hunting; others were developers who didn't want the land between Akron and Cleveland locked up." Ibid., p. 11.
Conclusion

Developments in the late 1980s constrained researchers Irene de Boo and Mirelle Kolnar of the University of Utrecht to add a "Postscript" to their study, *Back to the Future: Restoration, revitalization and high tech in Lowell*. In the postscript, the two women report that instead of the "thriving town with plenty of ideas and successes" they had found in 1989, their Dutch conferee A. C. M. Janssen reported two years later that he discovered a Lowell which was a monument to "American bankruptcy," a city very hard hit by the recession of the late 80s.

Wang Labs, the great generator of economic growth in Lowell after the mid-1970s, had guessed wrong about the future of computers, and in the late 1980s had laid off thousands of workers. Other sections of the economy, finance and services, joined in the high tech slump, and by 1991, unemployment figures were around 13%. Two local banks failed as real estate speculations went sour.

The economic downturn affected all the area which had tapped into the growth fueled by Route 128-spawned high technology. Tens of thousands of workers were laid off in eastern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Steadfast refusal to admit a recession was in progress led George Bush to political disaster in the New Hampshire primary of 1990. Banks throughout these regions found themselves hamstrung by bad real estate loans, and soon lost their independence to a few large banking organizations.

Up in Manchester, a number of old financial institutions such as the Amoskeag Bank failed and were incorporated into new banking entities. The unemployment

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100 Irene de Boo, and Mirelle Kolnar, *Back to the Future*.  
edged up to 7.2% in the city proper (6.6% if its environs were included). However, the city now boasted quite a mixed economy: manufacturing 18.2% of employment in Manchester proper in 1990, retail trade trade 21%, financial services 11.5%. The city’s new, varied economy profided a buffer against downturns in particular sectors. It had a long tradition of economic planning and development, which allowed it to respond intelligently to the recession.104

Indeed, Lowell’s tradition of networking built up since the 1970s provided some hope of the community being ready to take advantage of the day of economic revival, whenever it arrived for eastern Massachusetts. Ross J. Gittell, drawing upon researches done by a team from the J. F. Kennedy School of Government, was willing to put a good face on what A. C. M. Janssen had considered a debacle. The Lowell Plan, Inc., and the University of Lowell were mustering their forces to recruit new high growth industries, perhaps biotech companies. Grass roots activism by the Coalition for a Better Acre, speaking up for good housing for the Hispanic and Southeast Asian inhabitants of the old Irish Acre, had forced the network of Lowell groups working for economic improvement to included representation


104 Manchester City Planning Board, Master Plan, Manchester, New Hampshire (Manchester, N.H.: Manchester City Planning Board, 1993), pp. D-8 & D-9. A strong affirmation of the experience of Manchester and Lowell that a tradition of networking among business and governmental entities was crucial to economic revitalization of a declining industrial area came from the researches of a team supported by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce concerning decline and revitalization of manufacturing in the Montachusett region of northern Worcester Co., Mass. This region lies immediately west and southwest of Lowell and covers most of the Nashua River watershed in Mass., including the old gingham-producing centers of Fitchburg and Clinton. The researchers discounted such "visible" factors as wage rates or location as important determinants of economic activity in post-1970 U.S.A., and they stressed the importance of qualitative, "in\textvisibl" factors such as quality of governmental planning, "an improving labor-management climate, a business community with strong entrepreneurial and management capabilites, and an economic climate that has historically favored start-ups of small firms" as the sources of renewed growth for different communities within a given region. Peter Doeringer, David G. Terkla, and Gregory C. Topakian, Invisible Factors in Local Economic Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 14; also see pp. 5 & 98 ff.
from low-income neighborhoods in their discussions. Gittle considered Lowell "favorably positioned" for future growth.

At the very least, the city looked much handsomer than it ever had in living memory. The Boott Mills had become a museum and New England-made looms recovered from a mill in Tennessee now thundered on its first floor. The Massachusetts millyard was cleaned up, and walkways and promenades bordering the canals were installed. Its large buildings were remodeled into apartments. New works of public art, some of them commemorating the contributions of "mill girls" and Irish navvies joined the already existing statues from the proud days of the 19th century.

Up in Manchester, the Amoskeag millyard now boasted wide streets along which students could drive to a branch of the University of New Hampshire. The UNH unit was housed in a renovated mill so attractive and so well adapted to its new function that it won an architectural award. Murals commemorating the city's industrial past and a statue of a female textile operative joined the city's examples of public art. The Queen City now possessed a riverfront park along the millyard, and each year a "riverfest" took place on the banks of the Merrimack.

The river which was the focus of this festival had been considerably cleaned up. A drought in the 1960s had lowered the water level, and pollution on the Merrimack, and such tributaries as the Nashua, became so pungently evident that citizens became mobilized. For environmentalists, and everyone sick of the stink, the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972 was welcome indeed. The mandated cleanup forced the cities along the river to treat their sewage, and, for those factories still operating along the Merrimack and the Nashua, strict enforcement on waste limitations came into play. Recreational use of the river vastly increased, and, mirabile dictu, in the 1980s, the Merrimack began to be utilized as a source of drinking water.

Beginning in 1970, a coalition of federal, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire wildlife and fishery agencies began a project to return anadromous fish to the Merrimack. In a repeat of the late 19th century effort, fish ladders were constructed around the dams on the river, and salmon fry were brought from Maine and Canada. The salmon numbers grew slowly, while shad and alewives returned in large numbers.

Ibid., p. 161.
Cassotis, "Fish Populations."
The historian of the 19th century restocking effort, Lawrence Stolte, ended his account with the collapse of the initiative in the 1890s when a new dam was built at Sewalls Falls near Concord without a fish ladder, and the fish ladder at Lawrence was swept away by a flood. Stolte write, One can always wonder, what if the fishway at Sewalls Falls had been provided in 1893, and the Lawrence fishway had not been destroyed? Would the Atlantic salmon have been a part of the river today? 109

Sewalls Falls again entered the news in the 1980s when investors sought to rebuild the breached dam there in order to generate electric power. The U.S. Dept. of the Interior objected that its computer projections of the salmon restocking effort showed that a new Sewalls Falls dam would make the effort futile. After six years of argument, the dam was abandoned in 1987, and the state of New Hampshire agreed to turn the Sewalls Falls site into a recreation area. 110 Hope exists that the salmon runs will return.

Hope also exists that the wisdom concerning industrial development painfully gathered by Lowell and Manchester will enable those cities to avoid a late 20th century repeat of the miseries of the early 20th decline of the Merrimack Corridor.


CONCLUSION

Over coffee and donuts after church, I talk to the sons and daughters of the millworkers of yore, themselves specialists trained for the high tech industries of the Merrimack Valley of today. All too often, what I am told is reminiscent of the trials of 60 years ago: New England corporations battered by competition elsewhere in the country or producing items consumers suddenly do not want, factory layoffs, children graduating from their schooling with no jobs in sight. The rise and fall of high tech companies seems to be a fast forward version of the tales of the old textile and shoe firms. If anything, the creative destruction Schumpeter recognized in the workings of capitalism seems to have run amok.

Does the story of the highs and lows of Manchester and Lowell over the past century have anything to say to communities today facing the possible demise of their major industry? I think so. A close look at the progress of industrial decline in New England cities two generations ago reveals that different firms within the same industry follow very different histories and that different communities within an economic region follow quite different paths during times of dissolution of the region's economy. There is some cause for optimism in these variations.

While most of the old Boston Associate corporations of Lowell closed in the 1920s, two hung on until the 1950s. In the case of the Merrimack company, a lucky choice in product, fabrics for the automobile industry, enabled the firm to weather lackluster management in the 1930s. A reorganization and World War II revived its fortunes for a time. In the case of the Boott Mills, aggressive selling of a range of products kept the firm going despite minimal reinvestment in the company infrastructure. From all indications, those textile firms which took over the buildings and equipment of the Amoskeag in Manchester and survived for any time, did so on similar bases of luck and aggressive selling of carefully chosen products. Scrambling to find marketable products can save hurting firms. However, a sense of desperation pervades the records of many of the Merrimack Valley textile firms which
survived into the 1950s. A more impressive example of swimming against the tide of industrial decline exists in Maine.

In Biddeford, Me., the Boston Associates had started several textile enterprises in the early 19th century, among them the Pepperell Manufacturing Company. Due to a massive reorganization in the 1920s which rationalized production processes and established an effective marketing organization for the firm, the Pepperell prospered through the Depression. In the late 1950s it saw its Boston Associate neighbors, the York Manufacturing Company (among the companies revived in the 30s by Walter Wyman and the Maine Central electric utility) and the Saco-Lowell Shops close down operations in the Saco/Biddeford area. In order to protect itself against corporate raiding while it invested in production facilities for a revolutionary new "Vellux" thermal blanket, Pepperell merged in 1965 with the southern textile company, West Point. Although other units of Pepperell have either been closed since then, or sold to another corporation, the very successful Vellux unit continues to exist today in Biddeford, and Pepperell continues as part of the West Point-Stevens conglomerate. ¹

An in-depth investigation into the history of the Pepperell since 1948 (the date ending Evelyn Knowlton’s Harvard study of the firm²) would be very welcome. Pepperell’s progress has been markedly different from that of other Boston Associate firms. Owners courageous enough to reinvest in the firm in the 1920s and intelligent, dedicated management in subsequent decades enabled the Pepperell to escape the general textile debacle in New England.

Decisions made in board rooms can enable given firms to survive in an era of decline in their industry. Actions by the leadership of local communities can improve the general environment for such firms. ³ The New England

¹Jacques Downs, The Cities on the Saco (Norfolk, Va.: The Donning Company, Publishers, 1985), pp. 182 & 186; informational flyer from "West Point Pepperell" Biddeford, Maine plant. Apparently, one reason the thermal blanket operation was not moved south in the 60s and 70s was that the inventors of the Vellux process flatly refused to go. Downs, Cities, p. 186.


³In the case of the Pepperell’s neighboring textile machine firm Saco-Lowell, one could claim that the decision of the Biddeford, Me., government to grant tax abatements in 1928 contributed to its survival. However, one could also claim this was an example of blackmail of a local community by one of its major industries. Lowell, Mass., and Biddeford, Me., knew that Saco-Lowell would be closing its operations in one or the other city, and a bidding war in
Council early in its existence stressed the importance in the retention and attraction of industries of local efforts to survey economic possibilities, foster vocational education, improve transportation systems, and gather industrial development funds.\footnote{New England Council, A Year of Progress (The Fourth New England Conference, Municipal Auditorium, Portland Maine, Nov. 15-16, 1928), pp. 25-26.}

The record of Lowell and Manchester confirms the importance of cooperative effort on the part of local parties to foster the economic health of their community. From its creation, most major economic decisions in the Merrimack Corridor have been made elsewhere. Even so, the activities of coalitions of local citizens have not been without their effects.

In the case of Manchester, citizens' committees helped negotiate compromises between the Amoskeag management and the Amoskeag workforce during the cruel years of the early 30s. After the Amoskeag shutdown in '36, a special committee uniting Queen City political and business leaders negotiated with the courts and state and federal agencies to ensure that the millyard and its equipment would remain under local control, and not be disposed of in a haphazard way of little use to the city. Until the arrival of many high tech firms in southern New Hampshire in the 1960s, industrial development groups crossing various business and political lines helped counteract the effect of a declining textile industry. With the arrival of high tech, the existence of a tradition of cooperation among sectors proved very useful in boosting the fortunes of Manchester.

In the case of Lowell, the era of effective cooperation did not come until the 1970s, when local leaders decided that a nadir had been reached in the city's fortunes. Good results followed very quickly, since cooperative activity was neatly served the needs of an expanding high tech industry.

However, the Lowell story emphasizes a finding which can be of little comfort to those concerned with preparing tax abatements began between the two municipalities. Biddeford won, assuming that taxes were a major consideration in Saco-Lowell's decision to stay in that city. The New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission avoided such bidding wars in the 1930s by simply not offering potential immigrant industries any hope of tax abatements. See that organization's Biennial Report, #1 (Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission, 1936-37), p. 113. In the case of Amoskeag Industries, even in its unsure first few years, it avoided the use of tax abatements. [Arthur E. Moreau?], "Remarks delivered before the ROTARY CLUB OF PROVIDENCE June 27th, 1939, on 'How to develop [sic] Industry," Amoskeag Industries collection, Box 3, folder 17, Manchester Historic Association.
locally for the possibility of deindustrialization. In Manchester and Lowell, to say nothing of Nashua and smaller New Hampshire cities, and of Clinton, Mass., it took the perception of a clear-cut crisis to mobilize politicians and businessmen to unite in aggressive local development efforts.\(^5\) Local rivalries, and local indifference prove extremely difficult to overcome. In the absence of an economic disaster in their community, those interested in preparing for a coordinated response to threatened deindustrialization should not anticipate an enthusiastic response to their projects.

Other elements of the stories of Manchester and Lowell prove disappointing to anyone interested in the participation of community members in the fashioning of their economic future. Labor unions have bolstered their members’ wages, but otherwise they have not have much say in the economic fortunes of the Merrimack Corridor. Also, part of the Lowell and Manchester stories have to do with contingencies which lie outside a community’s control. Location is one, and the existence of effective citizen leaders is another.

The story of labor in the Merrimack Valley supplies dramatic episodes in the history of the textile industry of the two cities, but in the end, textile workers gained little voice in their fate. The battle for recognition of textile unions and for workers’ influence over the conditions of their work seemed on the verge of victory after the Bread and Roses strikes of 1912. During the First World War, the federal government gave hope to the labor movement in the mills by enforcing management-labor dialogue. However, the strikes of the early 1920s did not result in textile unions becoming bargaining agents with the corporations. Efforts by the labor unions also did not diminish the North/South wage differential strangling the New England cotton industry. After the coming of the New Deal, the Amoskeag corporation proved willing to deal with representatives of the United Textile Workers, but this resulted only in UTW cooperation in desperate remedies to keep the dying corporation alive its last few years.

Federal government pressure during World War II finally solidified a union presence in the Lowell cotton mills, and Lowell operatives made some gains in wages and

\(^5\)The experience of Biddeford, Me., fits into this model. The disastrous consequences of the departure of the York and Saco-Lowell firms at the end of the 1950s motivated businessmen, professionals, and academics (from the nearby University of New England) to form an Economic Improvement Commission. By the 1970s, the Commission, benefitting from the expansion, not so much of "high" tech as "mid" tech (firms requiring technical knowledge not necessarily tied to computer or defense manufacturing) into southern Maine, oversaw the diversification of Biddeford’s economy. Downs, Cities, pp. 187-188.
conditions. However, the workers never had a real voice in decisions concerning the fate of Merrimack Valley textile mills during the 40s and 50s. Board rooms kept labor representatives at arms length, not allowing them to become part of the discussions which led to the virtual liquidation of the textile mills during those decades. Industrial Development Corporations proved rather uninterested in ideas from union leaders. The brave dreams of the Bread and Roses strikers had rather little impact on the long term economic history of the Valley.

Geography had a marked impact on the economic fortunes of specific Merrimack cities. Even before the change of economic regime in the 1960s, Manchester boasted a more diversified economy than Lowell. (In the early 1960s, 60% of the Manchester workforce was in non-manufacturing positions; in 1962, 42 & 1/2% of Lowell’s workforce engaged in non-manufacturing labor. This was due in part to the location of the two cities. Manchester was far enough away from the great New England metropolis of Boston to enjoy a substantial wholesale trading hinterland, while Lowell’s commerce was very much in Boston’s shadow.

Another locational advantage for Manchester was that it was under the jurisdiction of a different state government than Lowell. Manchester served as the most important industrial center of New Hampshire, while Lowell was but one among a dozen industrial centers in Massachusetts. The New Hampshire state government focused its attention on the Queen City’s predicament, while the government of Massachusetts did not give any special priority to Lowell’s problems.

No amount of local initiative (short of secession) could change such facts of geography. The emergence of successful leaders in local response to deindustrialization may be equally a matter of contingency. Dozens of Manchester business leaders must have read the advice of the New England Council regarding industrial improvement corporations, but it took Arthur Moreau to mobilize a core group to take over the Amoskeag millyard. Admittedly, Lowell did not face a shutdown like that of the Amoskeag in the 1930s. However, there is no record of a Lowell parallel to Moreau, a businessman who had held elective office who had the trust of all ethnic constituencies.

Hundreds of Merrimack Valley teachers must have mused on the historical import of the built environment of Boston Associate cities, but it took a Patrick Mogan to constantly

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press the case of an industrial park in Lowell. Presumably, Manchester could have hosted such a park. Its industrial fabric was significant for being that of an industrial area completely planned by Boston Associate engineers (Lowell's creation was constrained by the previous placement of the Pawtucket Canal.), and, like Lowell, it had local sons in the national legislature in the 1960s and 1970s. Also, after the Ayer clan lost interest in Lowell, that city could produce no parallel in philanthropy to Frank Carpenter of Manchester, the grand old man who did so much long-lasting good for his home city.

Thus, the stories of Manchester and Lowell reveal that many factors involved in a community's response to the downturn of its base industry are not in that community’s control, including the community’s locational advantages and disadvantages, and the existence of leaders committed to the community’s good who are also able to be effective. The record of the decline of the cotton industry along the Merrimack shows labor organizations to have been rather marginal to major decision-making, perhaps a surprising outcome after the dramatic strike victories of 1912.

On the other hand, the record of the response to the decline of the cotton industry in Lowell and Manchester, and of the reception of high tech industries, confirms one’s suppositions concerning the linkage of courageous, intelligent management in a firm to that firm’s success in times of economic trouble. The record also places a premium on the ability of sectors of a community to work together for the common good. Without this ability to network, the outlook for a community losing its old economic base appears grim.

The record of the Merrimack Corridor in times of trouble suggests in general what the local citizen should do to preserve the economy of his surroundings. It also gives hints as to how the local patriot should dwell in her surroundings. The stories of Manchester and Lowell show striking shifts of attitude over time toward nature and "second nature" in the Merrimack Valley, toward the river itself and the built environment around it.

As the Merrimack Corridor was being built in 1849, Henry David Thoreau had described the river as a series of waterfalls around each of which congregated "a busy colony of human beaver" using the force of the river’s water to power spanning new mill towns. A lively built environment of factories, mill housing, and railroads arose around the huge mill stream of the Merrimack. Eight decades later, the industries along the river had fallen nearly silent in the Great Depression, and Southern visitor Jonathan Daniels

8 Remarks by Dr. Pat Malone before the Manchester Historic Association, June 10, 1994.
could describe the Merrimack as "a stream running through an economic graveyard." He might have said "sewer" rather than "stream," so polluted was the river. In many ways, the built environment of the Corridor had become a dead husk. Too many spurs of the railroad rusted unused; too many mills stood empty or only partially filled by small manufacturing concerns. From June 3 to June 18 of 1994, a group of canoeists paddled 180 miles down the Merrimack as part of the "Source to the Sea" Merrimack River Watershed Council celebration. As they passed mill buildings remodeled into apartments, schools, restaurants, museums, and sites for small industries, they remarked on the cleanliness of the water and the return of old fish species. The built environment of the Boston Associate regime had become a thing of charm, the river a place of play.

Perhaps in planning for the future, builders and regulatory agencies should ponder the changed meanings of the Merrimack Corridor and not concentrate merely on pragmatic profit criteria in deciding how they alter nature and create an infrastructure. Use will certainly change over time. Beauty and charm remains. To a surprising degree, the Merrimack and its tributaries have proved able to rebound from their degradation earlier this century. By good fortune, the architects of the Boston Associates erected mills which prove pleasing to the eye when the clutter around them is removed, and the soot is washed away.

The human-built environment of the 19th century Merrimack Corridor has increasingly appeared to be an artifact to be treasured. Mills have become monuments. Happily, much remains to remind one of the world created 150 years ago by Boston financiers and engineers and by the textile workers of Lawrence and Lowell, Nashua and Manchester.

A researcher passes along streets named after Amory and Appleton, Moody and Coolidge, and by churches dedicated to saints from France and Ireland, Poland and Greece. Even after seven decades of demolition of empty mills, one still comes across the vista old writers described: a seeming wall of mills overlooking a canal or a river, water spilling over a dam in the distance.

Yet, even when tour groups are passing through them, the old millyards are mostly dead. No longer do hoards of workers hurry to the gates at the end of the work day. The few Boston and Maine trains never stop at the factories.

At times, a paraphrase of the written prologue to "Gone With the Wind" comes to mind:

The Treasurer in Boston, the Agent in the big mansion are but phantoms now, their power evaporated. And the last has been seen of weaver

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11 Nancy Goulet, "The Merrimack ain't what it used to be - Thank God!" Nashua Telegraph, 6/13/94, p. 1.
and loom, spinner and spindle. Look for them only in photographs and books, for they exist no more. They belong to a world gone with the...

But, no. not quite. If one travels to the place in Maine where the Saco River splashes into the ocean, one comes across Boston Associate mills built still humming with activity. Busy workers push bales to machines, and inspect miles of woven cloth. One can stand on an upper floor, now carefully polished, and, flanked by a bulletin board giving notice of employees' legal rights, open a window. One's feet vibrate to the rhythm of the shuttles and heddles thumping below. One's eyes take in the old dam and the fish ladder beside it. Up the rungs of the ladder leap salmon, striving for the distant mountains, and down the rungs of the ladder cascade the river waters, seeking for the ancient sea.
APPENDIX 1: THE SOUTHERN NEMESIS, 1870 - 1914

The 1906 annual report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor devoted 65 pages to a comparison of labor conditions in the "Cotton Manufactures in Massachusetts and the Southern States." Impressed with the growing challenge to New England cotton textile production posed by the post-Civil War rise of a Southern cotton industry, the Massachusetts Bureau sent agents to investigate the new threat. A careful consideration of the findings of these agents and of testimony from New England textile experts led the Bureau to the conclusion that the market in coarse fabrics would have to be ceded to the Southern mills. It further concluded that the "extensive capital, highly developed skill, and capable management" of the best of the Massachusetts mills would face in the manufacture of finer fabric "powerful opposition" from a South enjoying the advantages of inexpensive labor and raw materials, and mills equipped with the latest model machinery.

The Southern textile industry had begun humbly enough. During the decade after the Civil War, confronting the destruction of the slave plantation system and the war's general devastation, Southern entrepreneurs revived pre-war experiments in spinning of cotton yarn in small mills near the fields where the fiber was grown. To their delight, these post-war industrialists discovered that recent technological innovations greatly eased the process of setting up cotton mills.

Post-bellum improvements in ring spinning machinery sped the rise of a Southern coarse textile industry. Unlike the older mule-spinning technology, ring frames required no great strength or calculated judgment regarding the speed of the process. Since the spinning process of ring frames avoided the mule frames' "dead" period - i.e. the carriage-return winding action when yarn was not actually being spun - ring-frames produced one-third more than mule-frames. For cash-strapped Piedmont entrepreneurs setting up small mills with green labor, ring spindles proved a godsend.

As coarse yarn spinning proved viable in the Piedmont after 1870, traditional Southern disdain for non-

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2Ibid., pp. 102 & 106.
agricultural efforts evaporated, and community leaders, "with the fervor of camp-meeting evangelists," cheered on the creation of the Southern industry. Entrepreneurs not only made high profits in their mills, but were also hailed as saviors of the South.

In the depressed Southern post-bellum economy, capital for the building of first spinning, then weaving, mills proved difficult to raise from local sources. The Northern textile machinery manufacturers stepped into the breach, and accepted stock in fledgling Southern mills as partial payment for their machines. This gave Southern mills a considerable advantage, for they obtained the latest spinning-frames and looms without cutting into the capital being carefully shepherded for the start-up of the new mill. By 1880, the Southern David could face the New England Goliath with confidence. In that year the South possessed only 5.7% of the nation's spindles to New England's 79.5%, but the South had shown it had a great advantage in labor costs.

While other advantages were urged at the time by Southern entrepreneurs as reasons for locating mills in the South - e.g. proximity to the cotton supply, a large waterpower potential along the Piedmont's Fall Line - academic investigators have settled upon low labor costs as the crucial advantage of the Southern industry. According to E. Gordon Keith,

Advantages derived from the elements of taxation, geographic location, and power could have played but a small part in stimulating the growth of the cotton industry in the South.

Keith continues,

it is difficult to believe that the combined strength of these factors alone could have undermined the well established position of the New England industry with its mills manned by workers long schooled in textile traditions. To undersell northern competitors the southern mills needed more than these limited economics; the secret of their success is found, rather, in their abundant supply of cheap white labor.\(^3\)


Transition: Technology, Wages, and Industry Relocation in the U.S. Textile Industry, 1880-1930 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 9 & 115. Alice Carol Galenson, in her study of The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry from New England to the South, 1880 to 1930 (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1975), pp. 211 ff stresses the Southern wage advantage. (She cites the computation of experts that the ratio in Northern to Southern textile wages at the turn of the century to have been in the 1.8 range; in 1930 it may have been 1.4). She points out that an advantage in wage costs proved particularly useful in the cotton industry, the most labor-intensive of all industries: "In 1897, wages were 60 percent of value added in cotton textiles, as compared to 48 percent for all manufacturing. Ten years later, the importance of wages had dropped less than 2 percent in cotton, but more in manufacturing as a whole." Ibid., p. 213.

Keith is correct to speak of "white labor": there was virtually no Black labor inside the Southern mills. Melvin Thomas Copeland, writing in 1917, exhibits the racial assumptions of the time: "There is little likelihood that the negro will become the mill operative in the future. In the first place, the average negro is not temperamentally adapted to monotonous, mechanical work. His mental development does not seem to fit him for understanding the complex machines. Neither does it fit him for applying himself with assiduity for the required length of time." The Cotton Manufacturing Industry of the United States (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1966 [reprint of 1917 work]), pp. 47-48. The uniform failure of attempts to use all-Black labor in mills during the last years of the nineteenth century supported such analyses as Copeland's, but Gavin Wright points to the lack of an experienced pool of Black textile workers to draw from as the factor which ensured that Black mills would fail. With entirely inexperienced work forces, new Black mills could never compete with even newly-started White mills, because the latter began operations with a core of experienced workers hired from elsewhere. (Even pioneer startups after the Civil War had an antebellum pool of textile operatives to draw upon. The tradition of slave-operated mills left no legacy in the 1870s.) Gavin Wright, Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1986), pp. 187-192. See also L. A. Carlson, "Labor Supply, the Acquisition of Skills, and the Location of Southern Textile Mills, 1880-1900" Journal of Economic History. Vol. 41), p. 71. In any case, White workers were fierce in their determination not to have any of their jobs taken by Blacks. As in the North, women composed much of the textile work force. This fact reinforced to the maximum the determination to exclude Blacks: it was not even conceivable that White females should work in the same room as Blacks. McLaurin claims
Southern supporters of industrialization realized the importance of this advantage, and this led to their opposition to any effort to emulate south of the Mason-Dixon line any of the current efforts in New England to pass legislation restricting hours and conditions of labor.  

By the 1890s, the Southern mills were clearly eating heavily into the coarse goods cotton textile market. In 1890, the Southern mills had 10.6% of the nation's spindles and had captured 41% of coarse yarn production while New England had 76.4% of U.S. spindles and retained 45% of the coarse yarn production. Southerners planned to push into the production of yarns and fabrics in the medium and even fine count categories. (Medium goods had a count of 20-60 yards of yarn to the pound weight; fine goods had a count above 60.) The introduction of the Northrop Automatic Loom after 1894 proved to be a major factor in the ultimate success of this Southern effort.  

The Northrop loom resulted from years of development and research by the Draper Company of Hopedale, Massachusetts. The textile machinery industry had become quite sophisticated by the 1880s. The standardization of parts and research and development teams had become standard practice in the industry. The amazing new automatic loom did away with the time-consuming changing of bobbins by hand and also stopped the loom automatically when a thread broke.  

that the implicit threat of management turning to Black labor if White labor was not "reasonable" in its expectations regarding wages and hours proved a major deterrent to textile unionizing in the South. McLaurin, Paternalism, p. 206.

5 McLaurin, Paternalism, p. 50.
9 Copeland explains the action of the Northrop loom in this way: The shuttle is not changed when it has exhausted the thread the thread on a bobbin, but the empty bobbin is automatically thrown out, and a full bobbin just as automatically put in its place. This change is made so quickly that the speed of the loom is not retarded. The amount of time which was formerly spent in the stoppage of the loom on account of exhausted shuttles is thus saved. On the common loom the shuttle has to be changed every eight minutes or oftener. The Northrop loom stops only
The new loom did away with what was denoted the "kiss of death" of loom tenders, i.e. their sucking of a threads into a newly-loaded shuttle. The early 20th century textile industry scholar Copeland explained to his readers that the automatic threading device was proving a boon to the weaver who formerly had to thread the shuttle from five hundred to one thousand times a day, sucking in the filling each time. In doing this he inhaled more or less cotton lint, to say nothing of sizing materials, dust, and dye-stuff. No wonder that weavers had been spoken of as a consumptive class! The automatic threading device has stimulated other manufacturers to devise means for mechanically threading the shuttle on plain looms.

The new shuttle threaders were saving many lives. Unfortunately, Copeland had to admit to his readers, Yet in many mills the shuttles are still threaded in the old way.\footnote{Ibid., p. 86.}

Initially the Northrops were only able to be used with lower-count yarns spun on ring-frames, but after 1900 improvements were made to allow finer and finer counts to be woven on them. The New England manufacturers did not adopt the looms nearly as quickly as the Southerners, as the following table demonstrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>in the Northeast</th>
<th>in the South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>04.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1899, 65% of the Northeast’s spindles consisted of ring spindles compared to the South’s 96%\footnote{Kane, Textiles, p. 24.} The relatively low percentage of the newer ring spindles in use in the North fit in with the low percentage of Northern automatic looms: at that date Northrops could not weave mule-spun when a warp thread breaks or the shuttle is out of position, thus saving perhaps one hundred stops a day. The use of one shuttle eliminates a large amount of labor in setting the pick, i.e., adjusting the mechanism which drives the shuttle. And the saving in wear and tear of the machinery from frequent stoppage is not inconsiderable. Copeland, Cotton Manufacturing Industry, p. 85.

\footnote{Kane, Textiles, p. 24.}
yarn. However, as mentioned above, automatic looms overcame this limitation, and further explanation must be sought for the relative lack of innovation in New England from 1900-1919. Researchers writing after the region's textile debacle of the 1920s charged early twentieth century New England manufacturers with a lack of courage and openness to new ideas.\textsuperscript{13}

The Northrop loom was tailor-made for an industrial region wishing to expand with a minimum rise in labor costs. Its arrival on the scene counteracted a post 1899 labor scarcity in the Piedmont. (Many Piedmont operatives to their farms when cotton prices rose.) One weaver was needed to tend six to ten of the old-style looms; fourteen to thirty Northrops could be tended by one relatively unskilled worker.\textsuperscript{14}

In any case, the shortage of workers eased with the collapse of cotton prices in the early years of the century. An AFL attempt to organize southern operatives at the turn of the century was crushed\textsuperscript{15}, and mill owners felt free to increase the work load of the workers. Before the First World War, the New England mill owners realized they faced a determined and ruthless foe in the Southern branch of the industry.


\textsuperscript{14}Chen, Location, p. 322.

\textsuperscript{15}McLaurin, Paternalism, pp. 120-177.
APPENDIX 2: MANCHESTER INFANT MORTALITY

The U.S. census-takers of 1910 discovered such a high infant mortality rate in Manchester that the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor included the city among the several it investigated in depth. For those areas of the U.S. whose infant mortality reports the Bureau of the Census considered relatively trustworthy, the infant mortality rate for 1910 was, for every thousand live births in the same calendar year, 124 deaths of children in their first year. The rate in Manchester was 193 deaths, well above that of the shoe cities of Lynn and Brockton, Mass., (97 and 99 per thousand, respectively), and even that of the wool city down the river, Lawrence - 167 per thousand.¹

The rate was, alas, surpassed by that for Lowell: 231 infant deaths per thousand live births. Perhaps the explanation for the lack of an in-depth field study of Lowell was hinted at by the Bureau of Children authors when they complimented the city fathers and company heads of Manchester for their assistance in supplying demographic and earnings figures for comparative analysis.² This may be an instance of the great Amoskeag playing gracious host to worthy social scientists, where the corporations of Lowell proved not so cooperative. Or perhaps the Children's Bureau investigators thought that George F. Kennngott covered the ground in Manchester's sister city quite adequately in his The Record of a City, A Social Survey of Lowell, Massachusetts.³

U.S. Bureau of Children investigators establish a higher death rate for infants born of mothers working in

¹Beatrice Sheets Duncan and Emma Duke, Infant Mortality. Results of a Field Study in Manchester, N.H. Based on Births in One Year (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), pp. 11-12. For purposes of comparison, the infant mortality rate (defined as # of live-born infants dying before their first birthdays) for the U.S. in the late 1970s was 13; the rate for Haiti in those years was 130, for Niger 200. Kathleen Newland, Infant Mortality and the Health of Societies (Washington, D.C.: Worldwatch Institute, 1981), pp. 10-11. I am indebted to Ms. Suzanne Paquin for showing me the 1917 document.
Manchester factories as opposed to that of infants whose mothers stayed home.  

Ibid., p. 94, and Duncan and Duke, Infant Mortality, pp. 50-51. Among the Manchester families intensively studied by the Bureau of Children, infants whose mothers worked away from home during the year before birth had a mortality rate of 227.5 per thousand, infants whose mothers worked gainfully at home the rate had a rate of 149.8 per thousand, and infants whose mothers did not gainfully work had a rate of 133.9 per thousand. Duncan and Duke, Infant Mortality, pp. 50-51.
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