Paper Towns: Sense of Place in Industrial, Small-Town New England, 1869-1927

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ABSTRACT

After the Civil War, new technologies and business structures transformed the American economy and society. One area that has received much attention in the antebellum period but much less after the Civil War, is small town New England. In the late 1860s, the introduction of wood pulp paper technology transformed formerly small market and manufacturing communities into centers of heavy industry. This dissertation is a study of this transformation. It focuses on three communities: Bellows Falls, Vermont, Franklin, New Hampshire, and Turners Falls, Massachusetts.

This study examines four broad areas: the historical background of the towns, and townspeople’s awareness of their place in local history; the changing technology of woodpulp paper production and the growth of industry in the towns; the daily life of the towns when they were at their most prosperous; and finally the long period of decline of the communities after consolidation of the mills into the International Paper Company in 1898.

My chief interest is in how people experienced the world around them--their senses of place. If the Gilded Age and Progressive eras were periods in which American society became increasingly centralized, this study examines that centralization from the periphery rather than the center. Townspeople were keen observers and participants, and their engagement made the communities vibrant places. Thus, local history was not simply an antiquarian diversion, but was essential to the construction of a sense of place. Similarly, the appreciation of the sublime helped give meaning to shared experiences. An important way townspeople viewed their communities was with view photography--stereographs in the nineteenth century and real photo postcards in the twentieth.

The paper towns were at their peak when their mills were independent. The economic crisis of the 1890s had a dramatic impact on the towns. Business leaders sought to foster local development, and workers sought to protect their interests by organizing labor unions. Indeed, after 1900, the dominant story of the towns becomes one of organized labor. The final crisis for
the towns was in the 1920s, as developers to develop hydroelectric power, and a bitter strike closed the mills.
PAPER TOWNS:
SENSE OF PLACE IN INDUSTRIAL,
SMALL-TOWN NEW ENGLAND, 1869-1927

by

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DISSERTATION

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in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

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Writing this dissertation has been a very long process. Many things have conspired to slow my progress, but I have been fortunate to have had remarkable support. I wish to thank my committee, which included Margaret Susan Thompson, Andrew W. Cohen, Subho Basu, and James Roger Sharp. Edward F. Mooney chaired the defense committee. All of the members of the committee helped me sharpen my argument, and asked questions that will be tremendously useful in future work. I wish to thank Roger Sharp, particularly. Roger has been a remarkable and encouraging mentor. I have learned much about historical research working as a research assistant for him. This was as much an apprenticeship as a way to pay my way through school.

I cannot thank my advisor, Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, enough. She first introduced me to the themes that underlie this work. Indeed, this work springs from concerns I developed in a readings course in my first semester at Syracuse. She has criticized and helped shape this work, and has been generous with her time, encouragement, and warm friendship. In conversation, she has gently but effectively directed my attention. Her insights in conversation, discussion, lecture, and her own writing have been an inspiration. Any number of times, when my resolve faltered she convinced me to continue.

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This gave me the means to travel to Madison, Wisconsin to research the labor unions discussed at the end of this study. Finally, after several years of adjunct teaching, and feeling like this project had stalled eternally, I was awarded a fellowship by the Maxwell School. This gave me the means to write without distraction. I could not have completed this study without that assistance.

I did much of the research for this study in the local libraries in Bellows Falls and Franklin. The staffs have been patient and helpful throughout. I spent two summers splitting my time between the libraries in Bellows Falls and Franklin. In Franklin, the library staff was friendly and supportive, and gave me insight into the community that I might have missed by simply reading the local papers. A high school student and summer employee of the library dubbed me “Microfilm Dude,” a nickname I cherish. In Bellows Falls, Christine Burchstead helped me find my way around the local history collection in Bellows Falls. More recently, Emily Zervas, now the library’s research librarian, has been particularly helpful. For Turners Falls, the library staff of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association guided me through the microfilm of the Turners Falls Reporter and other archival materials. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst had microfilm for the Greenfield Gazette and Courier, which was also essential to my understanding of Turners Falls.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BFT  Bellows Falls Times
FJT  Franklin Journal-Transcript
FT   Franklin Transcript
GG&C Greenfield Gazette and Courier
TFR  Turners Falls Reporter
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

On April 8, 1899, a contributor to the *Souvenir Edition of the Bellows Falls [Vermont] Times* assessed the town’s significance for modern American life:

This is an age of libraries, of newspapers, of magazines, of reading circles, therefore an age of intelligence and progress. The printing press is the lever that has lifted mankind from semi-barbarism to a civilization which is almost omniscient and omnipresent. This lever rests upon the fulcrum of the great industry and art of paper-making.¹

Bellows Falls, as the “great paper-making center of Northern New England,” was therefore, at the center of American civilization.² Although a town of 6,000 inhabitants, the writer boasted it could hold its own with larger cities. “There are few places outside the great cities,” the author wrote, “where more business is transacted in a given time than in the public square of Bellows Falls. The place has the stir and animation of city life.”³ He concluded proudly, “Bellows Falls, like the western boom town, is a paper town.”⁴ This study examines Bellows Falls and two other paper towns: Franklin, New Hampshire and Turners Falls, Massachusetts. All these were among the first producers of the groundwood pulp that was used in the manufacture of newsprint and other cheap grades of paper.

The paper towns may have had the bustle of cities, but they were remarkable as centers of industry that preserved many of the qualities of New England village life. Their dramatic natural settings inspired admiration and considerable pride; townspeople enjoyed a vibrant social life and civic engagement. This local pride was strong enough that it helped mediate developing class divisions. There certainly was conflict, including persistent problems with drunkenness and rowdyism, but the strength of the communities and their small size made the problems manageable. There was less need than there was in cities for overbearing social control. For
more than thirty years, the towns enjoyed remarkable prosperity, for paper was necessary even in hard times. Finally, however, with the consolidation of the paper mills into the International Paper Company the towns began to stagnate and tensions within the communities began to rise. Relations between the local elite—merchants, small manufacturers, and professionals—and International Paper began to deteriorate. At the same time relations between workers and the management of the mills deteriorated, as workers organized into labor unions. The divisions in the communities were felt even within the unions, with a bitter rivalry between skilled and unskilled unions. Tensions in the communities finally exploded in 1921 when International Paper began to move newsprint manufacturing to Canada and simultaneously worked to break the unions. A long and bitter strike closed the mills in Franklin and Bellows Falls; by the time the strike was over, International Paper’s decision to shift newsprint manufacturing to Canada closed the mills permanently. Even in Turners Falls, where workers broke the strike after a few weeks, the newsprint mill remained open only until 1936.

I became interested in small towns in New England as a resident of Bellows Falls during the 1980s. I moved to Bellows Falls as a high school student, and it was the home to which I returned between semesters in college and for several years after. As I became acquainted with northern and western New England, I was struck by the mill towns like Bellows Falls that were once prosperous but now had vacant mill or factory buildings and aging houses and tenement buildings. In the area around Bellows Falls, there was a similar pattern in towns larger and smaller than Bellows Falls (which had a population of about 3500 during the 1980s). Even in towns such as Brattleboro, Vermont or Keene and Claremont, New Hampshire, which had successfully made a transition to the modern consumer and service economy, there was evidence of the old industrial economy. Brattleboro has buildings of the Estey Organ Company, distinctive for their slate shingle siding. Keene, New Hampshire has the Colony Mill (a woolen mill) and the old repairs shops of the Fitchburg Railroad, both now converted to shopping malls. In Springfield and Windsor, Vermont and Claremont, New Hampshire there were machine tool companies. In Claremont, woolen mills line the banks of the Connecticut and remain an
important part of the cityscape.

The deindustrialized mill towns of New England are an important aspect of the region’s history, but until recently they have received little attention. Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach’s study of the Amoskeag mills in Manchester, New Hampshire is a notable exception, but Manchester, with a population of over 100,000 is considerably different from Bellows Falls, Franklin, and Turners Falls. Recent studies in the area of landscape history are beginning to fill in the gap in our understanding of industrial small New England. The purpose of this study is to add to this understanding.

For this study I chose three towns that were linked by a common industry: wood pulp and the paper made from that pulp. Although an important industry in New England, paper manufacturing has received relatively little attention. Judith McGaw’s *Most Wonderful Machine* is a notable exception, but her focus is on mechanization in the fine paper industry in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Chronologically, her work ends shortly after the present study begins. Further, the mills in this study made newsprint, an inferior grade of paper not made in the Berkshire mills. The mills in Bellows Falls, Turners Falls, and Franklin were among the first to manufacture groundwood pulp on a marketable scale, and they were among the original mills of the International Paper Company. I chose the sites partly for the sake of feasibility: Turners Falls is about 100 miles southwest of Franklin, and Bellows Falls is approximately in the middle. They had a common dominant industry, but they were different enough to be interesting. Finally, studying these towns allows me to examine the mills from their founding in 1869 until they closed in the late 1920s and 1930s.

As pioneers in wood pulp paper, the mills in these towns were exceptional. Other industries—cutlery in Turners Falls, cream separators in Bellows Falls, and Shaker socks in Franklin—made the towns exceptional as well, for each of these mills and factories was once a leader in its respective industry. Further, from the perspective of residents, the towns were exceptional because they had distinctive senses of place. Unlike modern suburban communities, nineteenth century mill towns were distinctive in layout, architecture, and topography. No one
would confuse Bellows Falls for Franklin, Turners Falls, or even closer neighbors such as Springfield or Brattleboro. But if the towns were exceptional for their industries and senses of place, they were representative of deindustrialized small communities in the Northeast. The vacant mills, empty storefronts, and aging houses and tenements are recognizable features of many small communities around the northeast.

Small town life has been trivialized in elite and popular culture for much of the last century. By the 1920s, when America had become a predominantly urban nation, many were eager to look at small towns as part of the past. The city represented the future; small town localism was retrograde. The local elites were especially held up to ridicule. They were Mencken’s “booboisie” and Sinclair Lewis’s “babbitry.” The alternative to this ridicule, Christopher Lasch shows, was nostalgia. This reduces small towns to sentimental icons of a way of life that never was. The nostalgic view of small town life denies conflict and minimizes change. Villagers, Lasch writes, quoting Sherwood Anderson, were like “members of a great family.” This of course ignores the divisions and conflicts that were as important in small towns as they were anywhere else. The towns were fragmented along ethnic and class lines. Violence, drunkenness, and rowdiness were persistent problems. Merchants and professionals generally dominated local government, and certainly they could be small-minded. The towns were never static; they were dynamic places. But what is remarkable was the ability of townspeople, and even the elite, to come to terms with this conflict and change. The towns in this study were remarkably resilient; the strong pride of place cut across divisions, and helped maintain a sense of community.

The paper towns provide a chance to study the growth and decline of these small centers of industry. These are examples of what Robert H. Wiebe called “island communities.” This study examines a process of centralization and rationalization from the perspective of the “island communities.” If the United States, as Wiebe argues, was a “society without a core,” community leaders relished their provincialism. For Wiebe, the dominant narrative of American History in the Gilded Age and Progressive Eras was one of centralization and rationalization. In business, a
managerial revolution led to the growth of modern, well organized corporations. The population in this period grew rapidly with the influx of immigrants, many of whom found work in the thriving mills and factories. Even if the population of rural areas and small towns was still greater than that of urban areas, cities were growing faster. Farms and small towns represented the past; the future was in the cities.\textsuperscript{10} Government gradually came to terms with the rapid changes. The most important development was the centralization of power, the emergence of modern bureaucratic government. Wiebe argued that this was perhaps necessary, if not inevitable. America in the 1870s, he showed, was a “distended society,” which ultimately proved unsustainable. As this old society finally reached a breaking point, it was gradually replaced with modern, bureaucratic systems.

For Wiebe, modernization was a disembodied force; his actors have little agency. Small towns had outlived their times; modernity was urban, rationalized, and bureaucratic. This view marginalizes the small towns and farming regions that surrounded them. Centralization and bureaucratization were tremendously alienating. The loss of autonomy brought with it the loss of prosperity. Community leaders had sincere concerns about the prosperity and health of their communities. They were not anxious about their statuses, as Richard Hofstadter put it, as much as they were concerned about the quality of life in their communities, and justly worried that corporations, and in the 1930s the federal government, would suck the life out of their communities.\textsuperscript{11} Describing this process of centralization, Wendell Berry wrote more aptly than Wiebe,

\begin{quote}
The Civil War made America safe for moguls of the railroads and of the mineral and timber industries who wanted to be free to exploit the countryside. The work of these industries and their successors is now almost complete. They have dispossessed, disinherit, and moved into the urban economy almost the entire citizenry; they have defaced and plundered the countryside.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

For Berry, this process of centralization turned rural areas and small towns in colonies, exploited for their resources but with no concern for the health of communities and environment.\textsuperscript{13}

Wiebe’s description of island communities was inaccurate, for the communities were
never completely insular during the time covered in this study, and even several decades before. Perhaps Bellows Falls and Franklin were before 1850 when they were market and small-scale regional industrial centers, but by the 1840s, railroads connected both villages to Boston. Alvah Crocker, a paper manufacturer and railroad promoter, founded Turners Falls to take advantage of the connections between Boston and Hudson River the Greenfield and Troy Railroad provided. Further, the development of wood pulp paper manufacturing linked the towns to large urban markets beginning in the 1870s. For about thirty years, however, as industry grew and communities developed, the towns enjoyed a brief, if unsustainable, golden age.

An understanding of the paper towns sheds new light on the importance of place in the American past as discussed in several areas of scholarship. My goal is to fill a gap in our understanding of the intersection of the history of landscape, industry, and community. While industrialization and labor in cities have received much attention, very little has been done regarding industrialization of small towns in New England after the Civil War. While there are no direct models for my work, my approach has been particularly informed by work in landscape history, cultural anthropology, the history of technology, the “new” labor history, and the history of photography. Drawing on some of the most exciting works in these fields has enabled me to develop a theoretically rich perspective that nevertheless allows me to keep the history of actual people and places front and center, allowing them to tell their own stories. After highlighting some of the studies by other scholars that have helped me shape what would otherwise be an overwhelming welter of details regarding the histories of these communities, each of them a rich story in their own right, I will lay out the structure of the current study. Finally, I will discuss the major types of sources used in this study, focusing on the local weekly newspapers.

Because towns in this study depended on waterpower for their existence and were thus in rugged and beautiful areas, virtually everyone in towns—from workers to the local elite and visitors—had a deep appreciation for the landscape, recognizing its beauty and wondering at its sublimity. Thus, this study builds on works by historians concerned with landscape and culture. For recent historians, landscape is not simply a static entity that people observe and frequently
destroy. It is frequently a product of culture, or at least the way we choose to see and interpret it is an aspect of culture. Simon Schama notes, for example, “Even the landscapes that we suppose to be most free of our culture may turn out, on closer inspection, to be its product.”

American historians have been interested in this idea at least since Leo Marx wrote of the pastoral ideal in his classic work, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in American*, published in 1964. Marx argued that Americans could accept technology because they brought to it ideas from their appreciation of landscape. He introduced the idea of the “technological sublime,” showing that people borrowed the rhetoric of descriptions of the natural sublime to describe the inevitability and otherwise inscrutable power of machinery.

Landscape history has become increasingly important for regional historians in New England. The first of the modern works of history seeking to understand the New England landscape as a cultural as much as physical phenomenon was William Cronon’s *Changes in the the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, published in 1983. Cronon’s portrait of the conflicting attitudes toward the land by English settlers and Indians and of the gradual process of ecological change has informed recent histories of New England landscape, notably, for the purposes of this study, Jan Albers’s *Hands on the Land: A History of the Vermont Landscape*. Albers writes about changing uses, and perceptions, of land from before European settlement until the end of the twentieth century. Her work is a broad survey and a valuable introduction that helps broaden the view of the Vermont landscapes from the persistent pastoral and wilderness stereotypes of twentieth century tourist literature.

Recently, historians have been exploring the history of New England landscape, building on the work of both Cronon and Schama. Notable among these is Joseph A. Conforti, who explores New England landscape and regional identity as a dynamic aspect of culture. Conforti refutes the idea that New England has a static regional identity derived from Puritanism. New England, he argues, is a “country of the imagination.” Conforti emphasizes differences in identity within New England, noting the variety in landscape, land use, and local culture. In an essay titled “Regional Identity and New England Landscapes,” in Richard W. Judd and Blake
Harrison’s *A Landscape History of New England*, Conforti offers an overview of landscape in successive periods of history, from Puritan settlement through the twentieth century.²¹ Judd and Harrison’s volume of essays explores a wide variety of topics, offering, as the editors note, “an overview and an assessment of recent scholarship on the history of land use, landscape perceptions, and environmental change in New England.”²² Water powered industry after the Civil War, however, receives only passing mention, despite the photograph of the paper mills in Bellows Falls on the book’s dustjacket.

Between 1870 and World War I, townspeople were eager spectators of their environment; with this spectatorship came the sense of place that was vital to the communities. For townspeople an appreciation of the sublime was not simply a part of what Dona Brown called the “the creation of a national market for scenery.”²³ Townspeople were not tourists, but they eagerly watched as spring freshets made the falls sublime, as rivermen drove logs over the falls, and as industry changed the local landscape. Certainly, boosters, local historians, and in Turners Falls even a local poet named Josiah Canning tried to foster a sense of place, but this was difficult. Alongside this official sense of place was an informal appreciation of local life that was frequently at odds with the goals of the boosters.

I use a definition of “sense of place” developed by geographer John Brinkerhoff Jackson. Jackson wrote that the term is modern, but that the concept has a long history. Nineteenth-century Americans thought in terms of the concept, and they worked to create a sense of place, thinking consciously about how towns looked—their architecture, landscaping, and relation to their natural settings. “Sense of place” was a part of the larger set of ideas nineteenth-century Americans inherited from classical antiquity. The Romans had household Gods, whom they called *Lares* and *Penates* who protected the household and gave it a spiritual grounding. They also had a larger idea of what they called the *genius loci*, or a spirit of the place.²⁴

Today, the idea of the sense of place can still refer to a quasi-mystical feeling of the character of a place. Jackson described “sense of place” as a specifically historical phenomenon. He saw the sense of place coming not so much from buildings and the natural environment as
from the memories of past events. He wrote,

Ask any American of the older generation what he or she most clearly remembers and cherishes about the home town and its events and the answer will rarely be the public square, the monuments, the patriotic celebrations. What come to mind are such nonpolitical, nonarchitectural places and events as commencement, a revival service in a tent, a traditional football rivalry game, a country fair, and certain family celebrations. For all of these have those qualities I associate with a sense of place: a lively awareness of the familiar environment, a ritual repetition, a sense of fellowship based on a shared experience.25

Finally, for Jackson, a sense of place is a “common or vernacular way of recognizing the unique quality of the community we live in.”26

Industry was the driving force of both the growth and decline of prosperity in the paper towns. This study necessarily draws on the work in the history of technology. Again, Marx’s Machine in the Garden is an important starting point. Marx argued that Americans could accept technology because they brought to it ideas from their appreciation of landscape. He introduced the idea of the “technological sublime.”27 He showed that people borrowed the rhetoric of descriptions of the natural sublime to describe the inevitability and otherwise inscrutable power of machinery. Building on this, David E. Nye systematically explored Americans’ fascination with both the natural and technological sublime and showed that it has been a “preferred American trope through two centuries.”28 This study draws heavily on Marx and Nye’s ideas. People in the paper towns were fascinated by the sublimity of the falls and the mills to which the falls gave their power. Nye examines aspects of the sublime on a national scale. He defines the sublime, puts it in an American context, and then explores specific examples: the railroad, bridges and skyscrapers, the factory, electricity, the modern electrical city, the 1939 World’s Fair, the atomic bomb, the Statue of Liberty, and finally the sublime and consumerism. While this study has much in common particularly with his discussion of the “industrial sublime,” I am interested in the appreciation of the sublime in a vernacular appreciation of the sublime. Falls, spring freshets, mills, and machinery fascinated townspeople locally and were essential to the sense of place and pride in the communities.29 By the 1920s, however, the loss first of local control, then of industry, and finally of prosperity hindered townspeople’s ability to be impressed
by the natural and technological sublime.

Case studies of technological change have drawn on anthropological models. Foremost among these is the work of an anthropologist, Anthony F. C. Wallace. Wallace’s *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* is a study of a cotton milling community in Southeastern Pennsylvania. For him, technology is a cultural issue. Machinery and the production of cotton fabric are not as much the point of the book as are the processes of change of which they were a part. Wallace shows not only the artifacts of technology, but also how that technology was part of changes in religion and politics, and how those changes were deeply rooted in patterns of kinship. Wallace’s study is remarkable in the way it captures the sense of place of Rockdale in fine ethnographic detail. He does this by describing landscape, spatial relationships, and material culture, particularly architecture.

Wallace examines the early period of the industrial revolution, and the process of industrialization in Rockdale was very different from that of the paper towns about fifty years later. He is interested in the early development of textile machinery, but also the shift in mindset that went along with industrialization. Rockdale was a remarkable place, a set of small, industrial hamlets in rural setting, but close enough to Philadelphia to benefit from the fervent interest in science of the Enlightenment. The industrialists benefited from the social connections and the scientific community of the city, notably at the Franklin Institute. For him, as and also McGaw (see below), evangelical Christianity was essential to the development of an industrial mindset. Religion for Wallace helped shift values from the communitarian attitudes that emerged from the Enlightenment to the individualistic attitudes of self-discipline and entrepreneurialism that were essential to capitalistic, industrial development.

These shifts, from preindustrial to industrial and from communitarian to individualistic, together with the development of religious attitudes that emphasized personal transformation and social control, were significant to the early industrial revolution, but they were much less important to the post-Civil War industrialization of small town New England. The nexus of evangelical Protestantism and industrialization meant little to communities with a large Roman
Catholic immigrant population. By 1870, fifty years had passed since the first wave of industrialization. The concern is no longer to develop an industrial mindset: the revolution had already taken place. Further, the communities that developed in the 1870s were too heterogeneous for an evangelical approach to social control. Irish and French Canadian workers would not have responded to evangelical attempts at social control. By this period the industrialists were more interested in building and operating mills than in cultivating values in their workforce.

Merritt Roe Smith shared with Wallace this kind of meticulous investigation of an industrial community. He also developed a conception of technological development not as simple progress, but as a process of negotiated and often precarious change. Smith’s *Harper’s Ferry Armory and the New Technology: The Challenge of Change* is a forceful illustration of “the anxieties and misgivings that attended the rise of large-scale manufacturing in the early nineteenth century.” For Smith, virtually every aspect of the growth—and destruction—of the Harper’s Ferry Armory was the product of monumental struggle. From the political fight to get the armory in Harper’s Ferry, to the building of factories, the planting of heavy industry in a conservative agrarian region and the shift from artisanal to industrial values, the story of the armory was characterized by struggles. Smith shares with Wallace an interest in the nature of the technology itself. Gun and gun-making technology was at the center of the various struggles, and Smith offers an intensive look at the machines and their products. He mixes stories of political struggles, labor and management disputes with discussions of barrel boring machines, lathes, and schematic views of the guns.

Smith and Wallace’s studies helped to establish a trend that historians of technology have followed since, concentrating on the impact of technology on communities, and using in-depth analysis of specific sites in order to show the cultural struggles involved in technological change. Among the more recent studies of the social impact of technology—and the one that has the greatest bearing on my own research—is Judith A. McGaw’s *Most Wonderful Machine: Mechanization and Social Change in Berkshire Paper Making, 1801-1885*. McGaw’s work
shows the influence of Leo Marx, for she charts the transition from the pastoral ideal to an acceptance of mechanized industry—the garden before and after machinery. McGaw looks at first the mechanizers, then the machinery, the architecture of the mills, and town development. From there she examines social classes and the effects of mechanization on the workers, particularly women. She takes her title from Melville’s “Tartarus of the Maids,” in which the author reflected on the demoralizing effect of the paper industry on women. McGaw’s debt to Smith and Wallace is evident throughout. Like Wallace, she looks into the lives of the industrialists and the workers with the sharp focus of an ethnographer. In general, she downplays worker and millowner strife. “Rather,” she writes, “machine production reinforced much of the preindustrial craftsman’s sense of common interest with his employer. Workers’ diversity and their sense of shared manhood and equality with their employers made them opt for personalized negotiation rather than collective protest.” McGaw does not deny the presence of social control, especially regarding evangelical Protestantism, but she shows that what paternalism there was was not overly coercive.

McGaw’s work is important as an introduction to the history of paper making in New England. She shares with Smith and Wallace an intensive understanding of the technology itself and of the types of work that the machines entailed, and she captures the relationship of the mill buildings to the layout of the towns. What is most important about her discussion, however, is her rejection of the technological determinism. McGaw concludes,

Machines certainly opened many new doors to nineteenth-century Americans, but the choices among doors and the decisions to enter were primarily social ones. Indeed, without simultaneous social innovation, mechanization would not have become the rapid, pervasive, and economically successful enterprise that Americans made of it. This study builds on McGaw’s work, but with important differences. In the period covered in this study, papermaking was already a thoroughly mechanized process. The shift I study is from the mechanized mills to large-scale industry. My interest is not so much social as cultural change. My concern is with the lives of the towns themselves and how people viewed and interpreted the world around them. Several studies of industrialization after the Civil War
inform the present work. First among these is Herbert Gutman’s classic essay, “Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America.” This essay is important because it shifted working-class history from the study of organized labor to the study of the “culture of work.”

Gutman’s idea of the “culture of work” entailed looking intensively at specific groups and places: “The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America”; aspects of Paterson, New Jersey; or Standard Oil. Gutman drew on cultural anthropology, particularly the “thick description” of Clifford Geertz.

“Thick description” for Geertz is a semiotic approach to the interpretation of cultures. He sees culture as patterns of shared behaviors, symbols, and “webs of significance” that a scholar needs to examine as a step toward interpretation, “from the actor’s point of view.” Geertz’s classic example of his “thick description” is the interpretation of a wink. On the thinnest level, it is simply a physiological movement. Viewed through the lens of a specific cultural context, however, it takes on a particular meaning and becomes a “public code.” For Geertz, this insider’s view is not the ultimate goal, and indeed his entire point is that writing anthropological literature is an act of interpretation based on systematically collected data; thick description is a tool but not an end.

Geertz’s often-quoted example of interpretation through thick description is his “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” which concludes his Interpretation of Cultures. By meticulously describing the symbolic importance of the cock, the event of the fight itself, and the process and importance of betting, Geertz shows that the Balinese cockfight is a “dramatization of status concerns.” The importance of the cockfight is not in accomplishing anything tangible—Geertz makes the point that no one gains or loses status through a cockfight—but in presenting a symbolic act that “renders ordinary, everyday experience comprehensible.” In Geertz’s interpretation, the Balinese cockfight functions in much the same way that a play or a novel functions in European culture.

Gutman drew on Geertz not only for thick description, but also for his rejection of “the theoretical dichotomies of classical sociology—Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, mechanic and organic solidarity, [and] folk and urban cultures.” Classical sociological theory argued that
industrialization caused the breakdown of “‘premodern’ patterns of collective behavior.” Gutman questioned this, writing that what workers “bring to a factory depends, in good part, on their culture of origin, and how they behave is shaped by the interaction between that culture and the particular culture into which they enter.” Gutman saw not revolutionary change but negotiated adaptations in which folkways could serve as tools for grappling with profound change.

Thomas Bender has also written about the Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft dichotomy, and has questioned the thoroughness of the shift. In *Community and Social Change in America*, he argued that historians and social scientists had provided much analysis that showed weaknesses of the basic theory. He concluded, “Community is apparently more pervasive than urban theory would predict.” Bender’s chief criticism of Tönnies’s theory, and work springing from it, is that it suggested an evolutionary progression: community broke down in modern, industrial contexts. Drawing on the work of Robert Redfield, Bender suggested a more complex conception of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. “The task of the cultural historian or critic,” he wrote, “is to probe their interaction and to assess their relative salience to people’s lives in specific situations.” This study is an attempt at such a probe.

Like Bender, I am suspicious of the thoroughness of the shift from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft. Yet, a profound change did take place in the towns in the 1920s, when the paper industry, which had been in a slow decline since the consolidation of the International Paper Company in 1898, came to a dramatic end. The change was most dramatic in Bellows Falls and Franklin, where, in 1921, a long and bitter strike shut down the mills. The mills never recovered. It was less dramatic in Turners Falls where the strike lasted only briefly, but even there, industry gradually left in the 1930s as the waterpower was increasingly reoriented toward generating hydroelectricity.

Gutman was one of a group of scholars, including David Montgomery and David Brody, who helped to transform labor history from the study of trade unionism to that of working-class history. Several community studies emerging from this “new labor history” are important to the
present study. First is Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach’s study of the textile mills in Manchester, New Hampshire entitled *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City*. *Amoskeag* is a collection of photographs and interviews. The authors let the words and pictures speak for themselves; the work has little analysis. It is important in that it gives voices to the mill workers and captures remarkably the architecture and moods of the mills.55 Another work is Roy Rosenzweig’s *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920.*56 The work is a study of Worcester, Massachusetts. Rosenzweig’s interest is leisure, particularly drinking and the celebration of the Fourth of July, the attempts at social control, and ultimately the rise of commercial entertainment. Finally, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly examines life in communities around textile mills in the Southern Piedmont. The authors weave together oral and archival evidence to develop a complex and very personal portrait of the communities.57 Their reliance on oral history is similar to Hareven and Langenbach’s, although *Like a Family* is much more a work of synthesis, and covers a much larger area.

The present study has much in common with Rosenzweig’s, but I find important parts of his work troubling. The workers in the paper towns, like those in Worcester, were fragmented along ethnic lines, and this fragmentation hindered the development of a working class identity. This presents a problem for his interpretation because he discusses the culture of a class that had no solidarity or recognition of its identity. Until the 1920s, when, according to Rosenzweig, movies helped to homogenize the ethnic workers’ communities, there was not a working class in Worcester, but rather a collection of ethnic working classes.

Rosenzweig’s analysis of these ethnic communities is particularly problematic, mostly because he lacks evidence. He argues, like Gutman did before him, that folkways that immigrants brought with them were vitally important, at least until the immigrants started to rise into the middle class, but he lacks evidence to support his claims. Discussing the informal and illegal saloons called “shebeens,” he bases his claims of cultural continuity between rural Ireland
and urban Worcester on Kenneth Connell’s *Peasant Ireland* and by making a comparison between Irish drinking habits and African American adaptation of work songs to the blues.\(^{58}\) Moreover, his treatment of Irish culture lacks subtlety and fails to take into account the regional diversity of Ireland. If immigrants brought folkways with them, they were regional folkways; if we are going to understand continuities we should at least know where in Ireland the immigrants came from. In any case, without a richer ethnographic understanding of Irish drinking customs, his work supports old stereotypes of drunken Irishmen. This is an interpretive challenge, especially for historians like Rosenzweig—and myself—who rely on newspapers. People who were not socially important—or wealthy—usually made news only when they got in trouble. Speculation on cultural meanings from this type of data tends to fall into a trap of vague generalization and stereotypes.

In the present study, attempts to control saloon life looked less like a class war than a simple attempt to keep the peace. Only in Turners Falls, the village closest to cities such as Worcester, Springfield, or Holyoke, did struggles over the saloon look anything like a class war. They were more likely ethnic conflicts. In 1885, for example, when Germans at Town Meeting blocked Irish candidates to the school board, the Irish voted against licensing saloons. Newspaper editor Cecil Bagnall joked that this was a “race war” and commented, “If the Germans insisted on scratching all Irish names [from the school board], without rhyme or reason, the Irish were quick witted enough to take away the Germans’ beer and keep it away from them until they consented to become docile again.”\(^{59}\) In Bellows Falls and Franklin alcohol control was simply a matter of law enforcement. In Bellows Falls, police raided not only illegal saloons but also hotels and restaurants that served a middle class clientele. In Franklin, liquor raids showed no ethnic patterns. Police raided Irish, French Canadian, and Yankee saloonkeepers.

Rosenzweig’s discussion of early twentieth century attempts at social control to regulate ethnic working class behavior is more successful than his discussion in the first part of the book because it is less speculative, but it is substantially different from my discussion. The Safe and Sane Fourth movement, for example, had an impact on the paper towns, as it did on Worcester
and many other places across the country. Newspaper editors, especially in Bellows Falls and Franklin, however, were quick to point out that the revelry the night before the Fourth was not dependent on either class or ethnicity. Celebrations on the night of the Third began with firecrackers, tin horns, and other noisemakers, and during the night pranksters would be at work, removing gates and steps from houses, and generally redistributing property around town. Usually at midnight, someone somewhere in town would light a bonfire. The noise would continue at least until dawn when the official celebrations (if there were any) would begin. For most of the period between 1870 and 1908, when the Safe and Sane Fourth Movement began, the noise and mischief of the Glorious Fourth was something the towns took in stride. The Bellows Falls Times noted in 1879, “The boys must be tolerated to a reasonable extent on the Fourth, and if they do no worse than last year, as to ‘early music’ it will not be worth the while to complain. …” In 1874, the Merrimack Journal even noted that the noisy celebration of the Fourth was following, though falling short of, the spirit of the founding fathers, noting that John Adams gave the first instructions on how to celebrate the day. The noise, the Journal noted in 1879, “is one of the intolerances we have to tolerate.” The Journal was clear that the raucous celebrations were general across the community. The paper quipped in 1884, “The night before the fourth is the only night on which the respectable boy feels at liberty to make a hoodlum of himself.”

By 1908, all the towns began to welcome the Safe and Sane Fourth movement, but this had limited success. Omar Towne, editor of the Franklin Journal-Transcript, advocated a “more sane celebration of the Fourth,” but then asked, “But what would the Fourth be without noise?” He claimed that adult men caused most of the injuries. “About the best thing to do,” he concluded, “is to teach men that they should quit being kids when they put on long trousers, and the small boy will soon follow with as sane an observance of the Fourth as can be desired.” The movement was a failure in Turners Falls, for in 1919 the local paper still complained of disorder on the night of the Third. The Turners Falls Reporter noted, “the night before the Fourth here was a lively one, and entirely to the taste of the bolsheviki, and the ways of the patriotic seemed a good deal like what people shudder at when they read the dispatches from the wild and woolly
countries of Europe. The Safe and Sane Fourth movement underscores the differences between the paper towns and Worcester. While Rosenzweig shows attempts by what he calls the “dominant culture” to reform and even control working class culture, the small towns north and west of Worcester seemed more inclined to take the disorder in stride, and adopted the national reform movement only halfheartedly.

Size was the chief difference between Worcester and the paper towns. Worcester was a manufacturing city, with a diverse set of industries. Simplicity is the appeal of a small town. Worcester had groups of people that were larger and more powerful than the groups in small towns. Proximity perhaps softened the elites’ attempts at social control: members of the working class (in its vague and fractured form) were frequently close neighbors of the elite. The classes interacted on the street, at public events, and in church. When tensions rose in the communities, especially after 1900 when labor relations began to decay, they were not so much conflicts between dominant and alternative cultures as they were responses to specific grievances. Moreover, during strikes, local merchants frequently supported the strikers, recognizing that the strikers were members of the community, while management was not. During the great strike of 1921-1926 merchants in Bellows Falls only turned against strikers when J. T. Carey, president of the Paper Makers’s Union, refused to negotiate with community leaders. Such was the sympathy of townspeople in Franklin generally that one of the strikers was elected mayor for three terms during that strike. Separating working class culture from a dominant culture was difficult. The elites were never as powerful as their urban counterparts.

Hareven and Langenbach, on the one hand, and Hall and her co-authors, on the other, touch on issues of organized labor. Both groups of authors show that labor organizing and strikes were important aspects of community life in the textile towns. This was true in the paper towns as well. After 1900, organized labor became an important part of village life, as workers organized rival skilled and unskilled unions, fought for the eight-hour day, and finally fought against the implementation of the Open Shop in the 1920s. Unionism in the paper industry was in its infancy in the period of this study. The Open Shop movement, which played a role in the
shutdown of the mills in Bellows Falls and Franklin, devastated not only the mills but also the unions. Only during the Great Depression did the unions begin to come back to life. Two studies have focused on this rebuilding. The first, *The Paper Rebellion: Development and Upheaval in Pulp and Paper Unionism* by Harry Edward Graham, is a study of the leadership of John P. Burke, president of the Pulp and Sulphite Workers from 1917 to 1965. In his youth, Burke, who grew up and worked in the mills in Franklin, New Hampshire, was a radical industrial unionist, but in the period of Graham’s study, had become increasingly entrenched and unresponsive to members of the unions especially on the West Coast.\(^{66}\) The other work, *Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers’ Union, 1933-1941* by Robert H. Zeiger, examines the union in the aftermath of the Open Shop movement.\(^{67}\)

My interest in the unions is purely from the local perspective and what their development tells us about the growing class tensions as the mills declined. Union development in the first decade of the twentieth century, the dramatic conflict of the 1920s, and the shutdown of the mills between 1927 and 1936 were vitally important to the sense of place of the towns. The consolidation of the mills into the International Paper Company exacerbated class tensions that in the nineteenth century had been manageable. Between 1900 and 1910, the unions were badly divided. In 1908, the unskilled International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers sided with management and fought the skilled International Brotherhood of Paper Makers. In 1910, the unions were unable to maintain solidarity at all. Only in 1921, as International Paper was preparing to move its newsprint manufacturing to Canada and was about to install the Open Shop, did workers unite enough to fight.

Finally, this study draws on the history of American photography. The works of Alan Trachtenberg and Robert Bogdan are important to this for study for their methodology. Photographs—stereographs and cabinet cards before 1900 and “real photo” postcards after—are rich sources for understanding the importance of place. Photographs are interesting and problematic sources. As Alan Trachtenberg has pointed out, they convey not only information but an interpretation of what they portray as well.\(^{68}\) A photographer composes an image,
choosing what to include or exclude. Other aspects of the photographer’s craft, including light and focal length of lenses, help convey an interpretation of a scene. This study examines the significance of photography for capturing a sense of place, and draws particularly on Trachtenberg’s work. Robert Bogdan has also done important work on photographs printed on postcard stock, or “real photo” postcards. Bogdan shows the significance of real photo postcards to rural areas and small towns in the Adirondacks, and, in collaboration with Todd Weseloh, more broadly in American life.69

This study consists of four parts that allow me to portray fully both the changes in the places I study and the changes in their inhabitants’ sense of place: landscape, local history and the natural sublime; the paper industry; the social and cultural experience of my two case studies, Bellows Falls and Turners Falls; and the decline of the paper towns. The first part consists of a single chapter examining local history and the appreciation of the landscape before and during the period of industrialization. Bellows Falls and Turners Falls had dramatic histories connected with the falls. For example, for nineteenth century antiquarians and boosters the sublimity of the falls was deeply entwined with stories of battles between Indians and early settlers. This chapter sets the stage for the ensuing in-depth examination of the social and cultural history of the paper towns in which I examine thematically what I see as the most central aspects of the experience of life in the paper towns within the larger narrative arc so vital for our appreciation of their significance, both in the period of their thriving and in their decline.

The second section deals with industry. The first chapter of the section concerns the construction of the mills and the second examines the state of wood pulp and paper manufacturing in the last three decades of the nineteenth. The third section presents five chapters concerning the towns themselves. The first chapter describes the towns, their layouts, and commercial and residential areas. The second examines the life around the falls, including floods, drownings, and logdrives. The third offers a discussion of photography by profiling three photographers in Bellows Falls. I chose Bellows Falls for this chapter because the village had three prolific identifiable photographers: P. W. Taft, who produced stereographs in the 1860s and
1870s, F. J. Blake, who made a small number of stereographs but worked more in larger formats and published a book of views in 1885, and R. C. Bristol, a real photo photographer who worked in the village between about 1905 and the end of World War I. This discussion of the development of view photography allows for a comparative discussion of photographs in the other towns with those in Bellows Falls. The fourth and fifth chapters of this section deal with aspects of daily life, the persistent problems with violence and rowdyism and the importance of sports and recreation.

The last section of the dissertation concerns the gradual decline of the villages. It consists of three chapters. The first examines the attempts, particularly in Turners Falls and Franklin, to maintain village autonomy. By the 1890s, community leaders were concerned with preserving local autonomy as the Depression of 1893 inspired a wave of corporate consolidation. In Turners Falls this concern with autonomy was played out in a controversy over the construction of an electric railway between the village and neighboring Greenfield. In Franklin, local business leaders responded to the threat by organizing a board of trade and, in 1894, a city government. Finally, however, in 1898, the wood pulp mills in each of the towns became part of the International Paper Company.

The second chapter of this section looks at the development of organized labor between 1900 and 1915, the strikes that took place between 1907 and 1910, and the initial development of hydroelectric power, in 1912. The final chapter examines the Open Shop movement, the great strike that lasted from 1921 until 1926, and the final shutdown of the mills. The relation of the strike to the shutdown of the mills was never clear, but many believed that the strikes caused the final shutdown. This was probably not the case, for the Underwood Tariff, which dropped the duties on cheap grades of paper and the chance to build modern, efficient mills close to the supply of lumber made these oldest mills obsolete. Moreover, as the waterpower of the dams was increasingly being developed for hydroelectricity, the company did not try to modernize these old mills. They were no longer profitable, a point that became worrisome in the economic hard times following World War I. Yet, many believed that the strike destroyed the mills. Finally, this loss
of industry had a devastating impact on the paper towns, contributing in a profound and
fundamental way to their modern sense of place.

The rest of this chapter is a discussion of sources. For much of this study I relied on the
resources available in local libraries. While deed records, maps, local histories, church records
(in Franklin), and ephemera were all useful, the major sources for much of this study were the
local weekly newspapers. Other sources, including personal papers and oral history, would have
been useful, but the local libraries do not preserve these. Oral history, more than eighty years
after the period covered in this study, would be deeply problematic. Newspapers, of course, are
also problematic, for their editors were among the towns’ local elites. It is easy to dismiss local
papers. The Library of Congress, for example, describes the *Bellows Falls Times* as containing
“chiefly advertisements.” Moreover, because the small towns themselves have been
marginalized, the papers can be easily dismissed as the voices of the provincial elite. Certainly
the editors were critical of much in the towns, particularly the drunkenness and rowdyism that
sometimes seemed to define the ethnic and working class parts of the communities, but they were
generally careful not to label people according to ethnic or class stereotypes. The editors
recognized that they served the towns generally and not just the mercantile, professional, or
financial interests in the communities.

The newspapers served a variety of functions. The goals of the editors were to inform,
criticize, entertain, edify, boost the communities, and ultimately to advertise goods and services.
In the 1870s, newspapers were four-page weeklies; each page was its own section. For example,
a reader might find national and international news on page one, edifying or amusing reading on
page two, state and regional news on page three, and local news on page four. Usually, there
would be editorial comment on page two. Advertising would take up most of the space on pages
three and four, but editors and compositors could fit a large amount of information into a tightly
packed column.

Of the three towns in this study, only Bellows Falls had a long history of local
journalism. Franklin and Turners Falls both had their first newspapers beginning only in 1872.
Before the *Merrimack Journal* was founded, residents of Franklin and vicinity read the *Concord Monitor*, published in Concord, fifteen miles to the south. The *Monitor*, founded in 1864, seldom covered local Franklin news. Similarly, people in Montague, of which Turners Falls became a village, took the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, at least until Addington Welch and Cecil Bagnall founded the *Turners Falls Reporter*. The *Gazette and Courier* covered news relating to Turners Falls, and through the 1860s closely watched the construction of the Hoosac Tunnel, which was vitally important to the development of the village.

Bellows Falls, however, had had a newspaper almost continuously since 1817, when Bill Blake, the local papermaker, founded a Federalist paper, the *Vermont Intelligencer*, and hired the satirical poet and inventor, Thomas Green Fessenden, as editor. The *Intelligencer* continued under different proprietors until 1835, when the *Bellows Falls Journal* supplanted it. The *Journal* was short-lived and in 1838, John Weeks Moore, a member of a venerable family in New Hampshire journalism, moved to Bellows Falls and started the *Bellows Falls Gazette*. Bellows Falls local historian Lyman S. Hayes described the *Gazette* as a “stanch [sic] Whig paper.” Moore proclaimed on the masthead of the number from November 28, 1840, that the paper was, a “Family Newspaper and Weekly Journal of Domestic and Foreign News, Literature, Science, Agriculture, and the Fine Arts.” On the first page of that paper he printed the song, “Old King Cole,” arranged for voice in three parts. In 1848, Moore, who spent much of his time in Bellows Falls serving as postmaster, began a second newspaper, *The Literary Excelsior and Musical World, An Independent Family Newspaper Devoted to Polite Literature, Rational Amusement, the Arts, and to the General Diffusion of Musical Information*. The first number of the paper included articles about “Improved Pianofortes,” the difference between English and Italian Operas, and an article about an unfortunate canary that died while trying to imitate human song. Moore included with the paper the melody and lyrics for the English folk song, “The Vicar of Bray.” By the early 1850s, Moore was devoting most of his time to compiling the musical information he had been publishing in his papers into the first American encyclopedia of music, which he published in 1852 as *The Complete Encyclopædia of Music, Elementary, Technical,*
**Historical, Biographical, Vocal, and Instrumental.** In 1851, Moore sold the *Gazette* to O. H. Platt, publisher of the *Vermont Republican* who published the paper simultaneously in Brattleboro, Bellows Falls, and Ludlow, Vermont. Hayes notes that the paper supported the Democratic Party.⁷⁴ In 1855, A. N. Swain, a young newspaperman from Windsor, Vermont, joined Platt. In 1856, the *Republican* dropped its affiliation with Bellows Falls, and Swain started a new paper, the *Bellows Falls Times*. John Weeks Moore later noted that the *Times* was “one of the most reliable Republican newspapers of the State.”⁷⁵ Swain continued to edit the paper until he retired in 1888, when he sold his interests to F. H. Brown.⁷⁶

In eight years, the paper went through a succession of owners, but in 1896, Hayes wrote, it “passed into the hands of ... W. C. Belknap and Company.”⁷⁷ Willis C. Belknap, a native of Berlin, Vermont, had worked as a court reporter for Adolph Ochs in Chattanooga, Tennessee before buying an interest in the *Times*. A graduate of the Montpelier Seminary and Dartmouth College, he studied law at the University of Michigan, and was admitted to the bar first in that state, but also in Tennessee, and later, in Vermont.⁷⁸ Belknap brought to the *Times* a similar moderate though conservative, measured, and balanced approach that was much in keeping with Swain’s founding vision. Like Swain, Moore, and Bill Blake, Belknap was a member of Bellows Falls’s Episcopal church, where he sat in the congregation with the community’s leading merchants and some of the paper mill owners, including Wyman Flint and George K. Russell. Belknap would remain at the helm of the *Times* until his death in 1934, and his family would continue to run the paper for another thirty years.⁷⁹ His loyalties clearly lay with his friends in the business and industrial community, but he took a soft-spoken approach, seldom offering comment that could be considered controversial. Indeed, he was much more of a modern journalist than any of the editors in either Franklin or Turners Falls. Perhaps he learned from Ochs, but in any case he insisted, “To be on the fence is the proper place for a country local paper.”⁸⁰

The *Bellows Falls Times* was a venerable paper with a long pedigree. In both Franklin and Turners Falls, the newspapers only grew as the communities industrialized. Franklin was
hardly less developed than Bellows Falls—it even had a local source of paper—but it did not support a newspaper until 1872. Moses B. Goodwin, a native of Buxton, Maine and graduate of Bowdoin College, founded the *Merrimack Journal* that year. Like Belknap, although a generation older, Goodwin was a lawyer who had been admitted to the bar in both Maine and New Hampshire. Before the Civil War he had practiced law in Franklin. By 1861, John Weeks Moore notes, he was on the editorial staff of the *National Intelligencer*, in Washington, D. C., but quit the paper for a position with the War Department. After the war, he returned to Franklin and, with F. M. Calley, began the *Merrimack Journal*.

At the outset, the *Journal* was a self-consciously Republican paper. Goodwin wrote a prospectus for the paper for its first number on February 23, 1872:

> The establishment of a public journal in this town has been long desired by all classes of our people. We have entered into the enterprise assured of support from the whole body of this community, and with the determination to furnish them a newspaper of which they need not be ashamed. … With the cooperation of this and surrounding communities, whose interests are identified with the success of the undertaking, we promise to exhibit constant improvement in every feature of the enterprise and to make it, in some degree, a proper exponent of the intelligence and public spirit of the population. …

Goodwin continued by explaining that his primary interests were the “educational and religious interests of this immediate region” (in Washington, Goodwin had been noted for his devotion to education, and wrote a report on the “‘History of Colored Schools’ in the District of Columbia,” published in 1871). The paper was “to be Republican, but not a partisan paper.” His goal was to cherish “the essential principals of Republicanism.” The political affiliation, he assured his readers, was purely of a “personal nature,” but he would “take no part” in partisan politics. This was important, for the industrial leaders of the community, the Daniell, Sulloway, and Aiken families, were Democrats. Two weeks after the first issue, to back up his claims of being disinterested in partisan politics, he ran an editorial commenting on the upcoming state General Election. He wrote, “Before we greet our readers again the long agony of the stump combatants and party managers will be over, and most of the people will be very glad.” He found much to praise in the persistence of the Democrats and much to criticize in the “personal bickerings” in the Republican ranks.
The *Journal*, Goodwin noted, was part of the rapid growth of Franklin, and particularly the mill village of Franklin Falls, which he vaguely called “East Franklin.” In the column next to his prospectus, he printed an editorial comment about Franklin, noting, “No town in the State has grown in wealth, business strength and population more rapidly in the last five years than Franklin, and its growth has never been more rapid than in the last year.”85 Driven by the construction of the paper mills, East Franklin had seen in the last year the construction of “sixty buildings, embracing stores, churches, mechanic shops and dwelling houses.” Within the last year, East Franklin had seen the construction of its first brick commercial block, built by Walter and Rufus Burleigh, with room for stores, offices, and a public hall (the basement, Goodwin noted, contained the offices of the Journal). The village boasted three churches—both Calvinist and Free Will Baptist as well as Methodist—and two religious societies, Catholic and Episcopal, that did not yet have church buildings.

The *Journal* became an important part of a bustling business establishment, but it did not have an easy start. It went through a quick succession of owners. Goodwin’s tenure as editor was short: John Wecks Moore noted, it was only “two years and eight months.”86 At first, Goodwin was the editor and F. M. Calley the printer. In 1874, Calley sold his interest to bookseller and job printer, Omar A. Towne. Towne, except for a few months in 1874 and 1875, would remain active in Franklin’s affairs, as newspaperman, merchant, real estate agent, and judge, until his death in 1927. Towne only remained at the *Journal* briefly, selling his interest to D. T. Elmer in 1874.87 In 1876, Wheeler sold the paper again, to Russell P. Eaton, and 1880, Eaton sold the paper to B. B. Farnsworth and Roscoe E. Collins.88 Collins rejected any political connection for the paper and made it independent. He made the paper both informative and entertaining, but the local news under his editorship was pointed, critical, and frequently sarcastic; indeed, Franklin’s historian Alice M. Shepard noted that Collins “was not tactful” and frequently angered his readers.89

Collins left town in 1889, but his now former wife, Octavia, became editor of the *Journal*. Her style was less caustic than her former husband’s, but she maintained a strong
editorial stance. Although the paper remained unaffiliated politically, Collins tended to take a conservative stand on local issues, favoring the leading industrialists—W. F. Daniell, A. W. Sulloway, and Walter Aiken—who were Democrats and who tended to oppose the aggressive localism of the businessmen in the Board of Trade. Collins offered a spirited debate on local issues, particularly the movement for a city charter in the early 1890s, but the paper went into a slow decline, especially in the face of competition.

Beginning in 1882, this competition came from John A. Hutchinson, who began to publish the *Franklin Transcript*. Moore writes, “Mr. Hutchinson was a good scholar, a systematic worker, and in spite of continued ill-health made a success of the paper from its start.” Hutchinson formed a partnership with O. A. Towne. In October 1883 Hutchinson’s health forced him to step down from the paper, and Towne bought his interest. Towne was more interested in his printing and mercantile trade than he was in editing, and hired a twenty-one year old newspaperman by the name of Samuel Robie to run the paper. Towne and Robie published the Transcript for sixteen years, and it became the stronger of Franklin’s two papers. Like the *Journal*, it was independent politically, but consistently sided with the local Republican establishment. In 1894, Towne and Robie published it twice weekly—the only such paper in New Hampshire. The paper quietly went back on a weekly schedule two years later. In June 1898, Robie sold his interest back to O. A. Towne. At the same time, Towne bought the *Journal* and Octavia Collins left town. Towne would remain the publisher through the 1920s; the paper would continue to be published until 1974.

Turners Falls never had as successful a paper as either Bellows Falls or Franklin. The *Turners Falls Reporter* survived from 1872 until 1920, but was plagued by financial problems. Turners Falls was too close to Greenfield for the *Reporter* to be able to compete with the well-established *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*. The *Greenfield Gazette* had been published since 1792. In 1841, it merged with the *Courier*, and the *Gazette and Courier* remained the dominant paper in the region for ninety years. In the period between 1870 and 1930 it was a formidable force in the region and left little chance for a strong paper in Greenfield’s upstart neighbor of
Turners Falls.

Nevertheless, a growing community needed a newspaper. In 1872, Addington D. Welch, the foreman at the Amherst, Massachusetts Record, was enterprising enough to found a paper in the fledgling community. Welch’s apprentice, and soon partner, was Cecil T. Bagnall. He would remain with the paper until it ceased publication in 1922. The Gazette and Courier announced the new paper in July 1872: “‘Turners Falls Reporter and Franklin County Patriot,’ is the name of a neat looking paper issued by A. D. Welch. Success to the new city and new paper.” After a year and a half, however, the Gazette and Courier reported on problems at the Reporter. In January 1874, the Gazette and Courier reported that Bagnall had quit his position as associate editor and had taken a job as a local reporter for the Worcester Press. A month later, the Greenfield paper gave more details, reporting, “A.D. Welch, editor of the Reporter suffers fits of insanity from drinking, in Northampton Insane Asylum.” The paper commented that the Reporter “will be printed as usual.” In November, the Gazette and Courier reported that the Reporter would cease publication. Welch finally left the paper in December, moving to Providence, Rhode Island where he became a lecturer on the Temperance circuit. The Reporter did not go out of business, but announced that Bagnall was now editor.

Welch handed over the reins awkwardly in an editorial entitled “Valedictory.” The public knew that he was leaving because of alcoholism, but he tried to maintain his dignity as he left. “The task of establishing a newspaper is no light one,” he wrote, “and many are the trials and struggles encountered of which the outside world knows nothing.” He continued, writing that he had “aimed from the outset to give the paper such a tone that its influence might only be for the good. How well we have succeeded we leave our constant readers to judge; we only carry with us the consoling satisfaction of having made an honest endeavor.” Bagnall was young and inexperienced, but Welch assured the readers that he will do his duty by you; it becomes you to do yours by him. Remember that it is the patrons of the paper who are responsible for its success. If you will be just, many of the crosses we have had to bear will be removed. If this is not the case, then those who are the cause of any failures that may occur must bear the penalty of the effect produced.
Welch placed the blame for the paper’s difficulties on individual people, not on the vague obstacles of economic uncertainty and a new community, and not on his own failings.

Bagnall, for his part, came out swinging. He asserted that the importance of Turners Falls “demanded a live paper.” He recounted the industrial growth of the village since the paper had begun, and asserted that the paper was more important than ever. Because the town was being built by people like Alvah Crocker and others “who count their dollars by the million,” the village “will in a very short time outstrip all other manufacturing towns on the Connecticut river.”

The newspaper, he argued, was essential to the “substantial manner” in which the developers were building the village. He promised his readers “the live news of the week, both local and general” and assured them that he would not use the editorial columns to grandstand. He wrote, “the present manager has no hobbies to thrust before the many readers of the Reporter who do not care to be bored to death week following week. …” He promised that the columns of the paper would “always be open to every citizen, of whatever creed, class or station, to express his views on any subject that may interest our readers,” but asked writers to be brief and to remain civil. He wrote:

If any persons think it necessary for their happiness to fight a terrific battle before the public, the paper will make the announcement in its news columns, and suggest Montague Plains as a very good place to fight the matter out with whatever weapons they may mutually agree upon, and if needs be, the editor will be present with a roll of sticking plaster, to show fair play and dress the wounds of the vanquished. Or, if the matter must be given to the public in print, we would kindly but firmly suggest that we do very good handbills in our office!99

This was characteristic of Bagnall’s dry and sarcastic sense of humor. Indeed, Antonia J. Stemple, his associate editor and local news reporter for the last two decades that the paper was published, wrote that Bagnall “feared nobody on earth.”100

Bagnall may have feared nobody, but for much of his tenure as editor, he had reason to fear financial failure. By the end of 1870s, he could maintain its services to the community, but at the price of sacrificing his independence to the industrialists and financial leaders of the community whom he might have occasion to criticize. Even so, the paper was never successful
enough to allow him to earn a full-time income, and throughout his tenure at the paper he earned his living and supported the paper with his job printing business.

Bagnall was defensive about his tenuous position. In November 1878, he responded to criticism with two articles. On November 6, he printed a comment under the “Turners Falls and Vicinity” column noting that R. N. Oakman, treasurer of the Russell Manufacturing Company and board member of the various corporations in Turners Falls, received complaints “from his personal friends for ALLOWING the Reporter to be edited by its sole editor in such a manner as the latter has considered proper.” Bagnall asserted he had complete control of the paper. Oakman, he wrote, “subscribes for a copy of the Reporter and pays for it, but in doing so he does not obtain control of our opinions any more than does any other subscriber.” Bagnall stressed his independence:

We can assure everybody that Mr. Oakman is not to blame because the Reporter follows any particular course, for the simple reason that the publisher is the sole proprietor, editor, and manager, and has been such nearly four years. Further, this paper will continue to be edited just as our judgment dictates, so long as we are its owner, and we see no reason why that term should not be of long duration. This is penned to set Mr. Oakman aright before the eyes of his complaining friends.

Bagnall continued this theme the next week. He recognized that the work of publishing the paper had been “an almost unbearable burden,” and that the paper would not have survived without the generous assistance, “with kind expressions of good will (which are truly and gratefully appreciated by the writer) and substantial offerings … [of] many of our influential citizens.” The people involved in the major corporations in the village were thus supporting the paper. This would keep the paper on its feet but it compromised Bagnall’s claims to his role as disinterested observer. The paper, he point out, had achieved a “national reputation,” and his benefactors recognized its value to the community.

Recognizing his gratitude, and promising that the paper would be on better footing shortly, Bagnall nevertheless indulged in a long complaint about his treatment by people in the village, and about the conditions under which he had been forced to work. He wrote,

In order to pay his bills, he has been obliged to act as job printer, pressman, compositor,
errand boy, bill collector, news-gatherer, local editor, and business manager, and has had

to entertain spring poetry contributors, solicitors for charitable objects, and thoughts of
the poor house. He has received insult upon insult from all quarters, some of which,
although not intended as such, (we will say in charity) made wounds that time is slow to
heal. By no one is the ugly side of human nature seen so often, as by a newspaper man,
and nowhere is it felt so keenly as in a little village. . . . Heavy at heart, without a dollar
to his name, and a rich man demanding interest at the door, has the writer left a clumsy
old hand press to pen a sketch that would be copied and re-copied until it had been read
by tens of thousands of people. The man in the circus who can keep up a half dozen
knives at once, gets a large salary, and we have often thought that with our ability to do
numerous things at once, and cheaply, we could do well to hire out as patent stove shaker
with the numerous attachments. In that capacity we might be used by others to stir up a
bed of live coals, but, then we shouldn’t have our pride wounded by being scolded for
attempting to do right by the average fellow being. 

This was Bagnall’s lowest point, and the paper did improve as he promised. His position was
hardly fair, for he had had the paper dumped on him by an alcoholic boss. The boosters who
promised Turners Falls’s bright future, were too sanguine in their predictions, and while the paper
companies were successful, the community at large—and perhaps more so than the communities
farther from the metropolitan centers—felt its growth hindered by the economic conditions in the
country in the wake of the financial crisis of 1873.

Bagnall set the tone for the paper with this complaint. Indeed, he remained bitter and
sarcastic, with a sense of humor that frequently lacked sensitivity and even civility. He remained
bitter about his treatment by Addington Welch. In 1875, for example, he reported, “A. D. Welch
is one of the petitioners for a mass meeting in Providence, favoring prohibition. He always did
favor prohibition, so long as he could get his whiskey without trouble.” Again, in 1878, he
noted,

Add. D. Welch is at his old tricks again. After a long spree, which everybody knew of, he
came out in public and said he never had broken his pledge, and called all who had said
so liars and scoundrels. This in face of the fact that all of his hearers had seen him drunk.
The Providence papers speak of this as “one of the major’s little eccentricities.” Mr.
Welch is now in a home for inebriates, and yet he says he never drank anything.

Bagnall would become an ardent supporter of Temperance, but not prohibition. His complaint
about Welch was not so much that he was alcoholic but that he was sanctimonious. He did not
confine his bitterness toward hypocrisy to alcohol, but took aim at other issues as well. For
example, in 1886 he commented on the editorial inconsistency of the Gazette and Courier.
reprinted a comment from the neighboring paper and added a comment of his own: “Those who go to Florida do not always find it the paradise of their expectations. One man writes home:

‘There is nothing here but fleas, niggers and rattlesnakes.’—Gazette. What ‘niggers!’ We thought they were not called niggers in Republican papers. Mugwump ideas must be demoralizing.”

Bagnall had a long tenure at the Reporter. He worked there for his entire career, from age twenty-one until his retirement at about seventy-two. He remained characteristically acerbic and even offensive, but the tone of the local columns eventually softened. Bagnall spent more and more of his time pursuing the job printing side of the business, and by the beginning of the twentieth century had given up much of the weekly duties of editing the paper. He hired as associate editor Antonia J. Stemple, the daughter of Prussian immigrants. Her father worked in the Russell Cutlery. For the last twenty years of the paper, the local columns at least were under her control. The tone of paper under her leadership softened, especially in its coverage of immigrants. Stemple was perhaps the most widely recognized journalist in the three towns in this study. She published articles in major magazines such as Good Housekeeping, St. Nicholas, and Travel. More ambitiously, in 1922, after the Reporter had ceased publication, she published a reflection about her time as an editor in the Homiletic Review.

The article, titled “Occurrences in an Editor’s Life,” was a warm and humorous anecdotal reminiscence of her work on Reporter, which in the article she called the Clarion. Her point was that the work of an editor, particularly of a small country paper, was comparable to the pastoral work of a clergyman or the work of physician. “Undoubtedly,” she wrote, “the healers of souls and bodies do learn an amazing amount about people, but they certainly know no more, and probably not as much, as does the country editor.” She continued, “Of all newspaper offices, the small town institution is the best in which to study mankind—and that includes womankind—in the raw.” She continued,

There’s no day passes in a country newspaper office without its fun, its pathos, its trials, and its irritations; but it is when you have occupied the seat of authority for years, and have grown acquainted with every man, woman, child, and dog in the community, that you get to know people inside out. And after you have learned that, you feel both glad
and sorry. One rejoices over the fine things, and is saddened by some of the evidences of vanity and pettiness which frequently get the upper hand in the lives of even the best of men. \textsuperscript{109} Stemple devoted most of the article to these “evidences of vanity and pettiness.” For example, she told a story of, the “village ‘Pooh-Bah,’ whose word was law [and who] fell victim to the bane of so many dictators—he got the gout.” When the editor, whom Stemple never named, printed the reason why he was laid up, the man was “sizzling with wrath.” She wrote, “He finally wound up with the threat that if the \textit{Clarion} ever dared to print his name again, the editor would be immediately introduced to the business end of a shot gun.” The next week, when “Mr. Doe was re-elected president of the savings bank” the editor printed the list of directors but printed only “President” for the man’s name. When the man complained again, the editor responded, “Why... Didn’t you tell me only week before last that if I ever printed your name again, you would shoot me? Well, I’m not hankering to die just yet, and so I adopted safe methods.” Stemple concluded, “The big man saw the point, capitulated handsomely, and withdrew the embargo on his name. Not only that, but he frankly acknowledged that he had made a fool of himself. ...” Stemple continued with other anecdotes: the problems of deciphering handwriting; the faulty memories of the townspeople; the people who refused to pay annually; the lack of gratitude for kind notices in the paper. She wrote of a woman who took offense that the paper had reported that her brother had died of “natural causes”: “What do you mean?’ she cries, wrathfully, ‘by saying my brother died from natural causes? We didn’t kill him!’ ‘Well, what was the cause of his death?’ I ask mildly. ‘I was told he died of heart failure, and you can stop my paper.’” Stemple’s article was, as she pointed out, “but a few of the lighter matters of everyday occurrences in the editor’s life.” Her point, though, of the intimacy of village life, of the foibles of people, and of the central position of paper to the life of the communities, is important. Published in a journal for Catholic clergy, Stemple’s article pointed out that an editor’s job was partly pastoral. Indeed, the editor’s job was complicated: she or he had to inform the readers, offer criticism, and boost the community for both local readers and people outside the communities.
Photographs lack some of the problems of newspapers. They were not as clearly elite documents. Photographers worked as independent entrepreneurs and photographed scenes that they thought would sell. Commercial scenic photography had a popular audience, and photographers had a taste for the commonplace. They photographed important landmarks and scenic attractions, but they also photographed tenements and scenes that would have been interesting to local people. Photographers and newspapers worked in similar ways. Both groups selected subjects and interpreted them, and both reveal much about life in the communities. Chapter 7 is a detailed discussion of photographs.

Finally, the last two chapters of this study draw heavily on the journals of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers and the papers of the second union. These documents give valuable insight into the labor unions. The unskilled Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers are better represented than the skilled Paper Makers. The Wisconsin Historical Society preserves microfilm of the union’s papers; records of the Paper Makers’ union for this period do not exist. Between 1906, when the Pulp and Sulphite Workers separated from the Paper Makers, and 1909, when the American Federation of Labor recognized the unskilled union, the two unions were bitterly divided, and even through the 1920s tensions remained. The unions received little coverage in the town newspapers except during strikes, so the union papers help with our understanding.

These are the main sources in this study. I rely on newspapers more than other sources. Each has strengths and weaknesses. The type of documents that are lacking are written accounts that could give insight into working class culture. I am not convinced, however, that it is accurate to think of a united working-class culture in the towns. There were too many divisions—ethnic divisions and the dispute between skilled and unskilled workers were the strongest. Newspapers had a middle class bias, but if it is important to try to take working class culture seriously, it is important to do the same for the middle class and the elite.

Life in small towns in New England changed dramatically between the end of the Civil
War and the beginning of the Great Depression. Many of the changes experienced in the towns were not unique to New England, although the process of deindustrialization started earlier in the northeast than in other regions. My view of these changes is tragic; indeed, it is hard to look at the towns today and not wonder at what they used to be. Thus, while I try to chart changes in the sense of place across time, my interest is also largely descriptive. If a sense of place comes from “a lively awareness of the familiar environment, a ritual repetition, [and] a sense of fellowship based on a shared experience,” then my task is to describe that environment and the shared experiences and to try to capture the intimate communities that made the towns distinctive.\textsuperscript{110} Newspapers and photographs, despite whatever class biases they may have, convey this sense of place probably better any other available sources. The purpose of this study is to try to give a portrait of the towns approaching as much as possible an understanding of them from the perspective of people who lived in them.
NOTES


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 51.

4 Ibid.


6 Lasch, 100-105.

7 Ibid., 105.


9 Ibid., 12.


13 Ibid., 8, 16.


23 Brown, 48.


25 Ibid., 158-159.

26 Ibid., 160.

27 Marx, 195.


29 Ibid., 109.

31 Wallace, 3-4, 15.

32 Ibid., 227-237.

33 Ibid., 296-317. Wallace takes a very broad view of evangelicalism and suggests but does not explain the connection between Calvary Church (Episcopal), which was the religious center of Rockdale and the evangelical movement of the Second Great Awakening.


35 Ibid., 327. Smith contrasts the relative backwardness of the people in Harpers Ferry with the progressiveness and ready acceptance of industrialization by the people of Springfield, site of the other national armory.

36 Ibid., 86-92; 129-136. In Smith’s narrative this mix of politics (on large and small scales) and the material aspects of technology is epitomized in the career of John H. Hall, a Massachusetts native “who labored more than twenty years under special contract at Harpers Ferry.” Securing his position through the influence of a “pressure group” on Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, Hall made important innovations in the machinery at Harper’s Ferry while contributing to the persistent conflicts through his insensitivity to local culture (184, 194, and “Hall and the American System, 1824-1840, 219-251).


38 Ibid., 316.

39 Ibid., 381.


43 Ibid., 14.

44 Ibid., 6.


46 Ibid., 412-453.

47 Ibid., 437.
48 Ibid., 443.

49 Gutman, 17.

50 Ibid., 18.

51 Ibid.


53 Ibid., 27.

54 Ibid., 43.


58 Rosenzweig, 40-41; 242-243.

59 “Montague Town Meeting. No License out of Spite,” TFR, March 5, 1885, p. 1.


61 MJ, July 10, 1874, 2.


63 MJ, July 4, 1884.

64 *Franklin Journal-Transcript*, July 1, 1909, 4.


71 Moore, 479.

72 Lyman Simpson Hayes, *History of the Town of Rockingham, Vermont, Including the Villages of Saxtons River, Rockingham, Cambridgeport, and Bartonsville, 1753-1907* (Bellows Falls, Vermont: Town of Rockingham, 1907), 431; Moore, 176.


74 Hayes, 431.

75 Moore, 1886, 542. Moore, writing thirty years after the fact, was mistaken in his dates, claiming that Swain had taken over management of the Gazette directly from him.

76 Hayes, 432.

77 Ibid., 433.


81 Moore, 551.


83 Moore, 1886, 552.

84 Editorial, MJ, March 8, 1872, p. 3.

85 Ibid.
86 Moore, 551.
87 Ibid., 543.
89 Ibid.
90 Moore, 537.
91 Ibid., 543.
93 Editorial, FT, June 24, 1898, p. 2; Shepard, 466.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
101 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Nov. 6, 1878, p. 2.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 "Turners Falls and Vicinity," TFR, Sept. 1, 1875, p. 3.
105 "Turners Falls and Vicinity," Turners Falls Reporter, Dec. 4,1878, p. 3.
106 "Turners Falls and Vicinity," March 24, 1886, p. 4.

109 Ibid.

110 Jackson, 158-159.
CHAPTER 2
LOCAL HISTORY AND THE SUBLIME

For people in Bellows Falls, Franklin, and the area that would become the village of Turners Falls, local history and the natural beauty of the places were closely connected. None of these places was particularly obscure; by the 1850s, railroads had started to bring visitors to the areas. People were attracted to the towns for their natural beauty, and as the towns started to industrialize, developers were eager to use both the scenic beauty and local history to promote development. The towns were already well known before industrialists started to harness their waterpower. The falls in Bellows Falls had been famous since the end of the eighteenth century. Samuel Peters wrote about them in his *General History of Connecticut*, and Jedidiah Morse had noted them in his *American Universal Geography* of 1805. By the 1850s, tourists started to arrive in town to admire the falls and stay in a resort hotel called the Island House. Franklin, situated at the headwaters of the Merrimack River, was famous not only for this reason but as the birthplace of Daniel Webster. When the town was organized in 1828, George Nesmith, its chief promoter, recognized the marketing potential of Webster’s birthplace, and made sure it and the farm Webster owned were in the town limits. If there had not already been a town of Webster, N. H., Franklin doubtless would have received that name. Turners Falls was known for its dramatic falls, but also as the location of an important battle in King Philip’s War in 1676. The village of Turners Falls was not developed until about 1870, but visitors to Greenfield on the opposite side of the Connecticut River would have visited the falls.

The celebration of the natural setting and local served several functions. The sublime characteristics of the falls and stories connected with the falls were sources of considerable local pride. Antiquarians had a sincere interest in the local history and scenery. In Turners Falls, the poet Josiah Canning, who wrote under the pseudonym, the “Peasant Bard,” used the history and
scenery as subjects for his poetry. More important, they brought attention to the areas. Local go-
getters were eager to use the history and scenery to attract developers.

**Bellows Falls**

Henry David Thoreau visited Bellows Falls in September of 1856.¹ Like many people who visited the village in the middle of the nineteenth century, he took the Cheshire Railroad north from Fitchburg, traveling to southern Vermont and New Hampshire to enjoy the scenery. He climbed Fall Mountain, the steep and rocky ridge overlooking the falls from the New Hampshire side, noted the various plants and trees, and described the rocks that made up the falls. Describing the falls, his thoughts turned to history. He commented on the force of the water, and how it had carved the riverbed, digging potholes into the rocks; he carefully illustrated these in his journal. To help his description, he cited the earliest description of the falls in Samuel Peters’s *General History of Connecticut*. Thoreau noted, not entirely accurately, that Peters had written that the pressure of the water at the narrows was such that “you could not thrust a crowbar into” it (Peters’s comment was, “an iron crow floats smoothly down” the current of the falls).

Thoreau praised Peters’s work:

> It did me good to read his wholesale hearty statements,—strong, living, human speech, so much better than the emasculated modern histories, like Bancroft’s and the rest, curst with a style.... I would rather read such histories, though every sentence is a falsehood, than our dull emasculated reports which bear the name of histories. The former, having a human breath and interest behind them, are nearer to nature and to truth, after all. The historian is required to feel a human interest in his subject and to so express it.²

Thoreau had a point: if Peters tended to hyperbole, he captured much of the rhetoric of the sublime that had already become popular in descriptions of the American landscape. Peters described the falls:

> Two hundred miles from the Sound is a narrow of five yards only, formed by two shelving mountains of solid rock, whose tops intercept the clouds. Through this chasm are compelled to pass all the waters which in the time of the floods bury the northern country.... People who can bear the sight, the groans, the tremblings, and surly motion of the water, trees, and ice, through this awful passage, view with astonishment one of the greatest phenomenons in nature....³
Peters wrote that “masts, timber and trees” that struck each other or the walls of the chasm “are rent in one moment, into shivers, and splintered like a broom, to the amazement of the spectators.” Finally, he drew a religious moral from the scene, writing that the force of the waters compelled “the hardiest travelers to reflect how feeble is man, and how great that Almighty who formed the lightenings, thunders, and the irresistible [sic] power and strength of waters!”

Peters’s description of the falls closely followed Edmund Burke’s delineation of the sublime. In 1757, Burke laid out the characteristics of the sublime in his *Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. He defined twelve properties of the sublime: terror, obscurity, power, privation, vastness, infinity, succession and uniformity, difficulty, magnificence, light and color, sound, and “bitters and stenches.” Peters covers at least six of these: terror, obscurity (in the falls’ distance from Long Island Sound, and its proximity to the northern woods), infinity (in terms of power), difficulty, terror, and magnificence. Spectators are necessary for the psychological element of terror: the fact that the Great Falls were a sight that was unbearable to the spectators made them sublime.

Part of what made the falls sublime was their historical associations. Their impact was difficult to convey in words, but history made the power tangible. This history was obscure and not verifiable fact; it was more correctly legend. Thoreau was one of Peters’s few defenders. Many dismissed the book as the “Lying History of Connecticut.” The fact that history was more the stuff of good stories than strict fact made it all the more sublime, and Peters supplied his readers with such a legend. His story was of the one person who was supposed to have survived a passage over the falls. She was an Indian woman whom Peters wrote “suffered herself to fall within the power of the current.” From this beginning the story quickly degenerated into a drunken Indian joke:

Perceiving her danger, she took a bottle of rum she had with her, and drank the whole of it; then lay down in her canoe, to meet her destiny. She marvelously went through safely, and was taken out of the canoe some miles below, quite intoxicated, by some Englishmen. Being asked how she could be so daringly imprudent as to drink such a quantity of rum with the prospect of instant death before her, the squaw, [sic] as well as her condition would let her, replied, “Yes, it was too much rum for once, to be sure; but I
was not willing to lose a drop of it; so I drank it, and you see I have saved all.”

It is significant that the only person who was supposed to have survived the falls was an Indian. The falls and the Indians were linked in the early stories of the villages. Bellows Falls, the nineteenth-century builders of the village discovered, had been an Indian burial ground. Town historian, Lyman Hayes, noted that builders excavating cellars for buildings frequently discovered skeletons. He wrote,

The bodies were uncovered sitting upright, having been buried in a sitting posture with the knees drawn up to the chin, in a circular hole dug deep enough so that the top of the heads came within a foot or two of the surface of the ground. The ploughs and scrapers would take off a skull, and the workmen would dig down and find the remainder of the bones. In this way, . . . dozens of skeletons were found, and some of them were preserved for many years about the town.

In Bellows Falls, as well as Brattleboro twenty miles to the south, Indian petroglyphs mark the rocks on the riverbanks. In Bellows Falls, the petroglyphs are on a rock directly above the narrows. The carvings have fascinated antiquarians at least since the 1850s, when Benjamin Hall described them in his History of Eastern Vermont. Modern scholars have linked them to shamans, suggesting that they represent, as Jan Albers notes, the “faces of the keepers of game, who were believed to reside under water.” This modern view agrees with the older view that the Indians were part of the sublimity of the falls. The Indian woman could survive her trip because she was part of the natural order that included the falls. People of civilized, English backgrounds could only be spectators, but the Indians were part of the falls themselves.

Whether the poor Indian woman actually went over the falls is perhaps irrelevant. The fact that a variant form of the story exists suggests that it is a legend and not simply an offensively told bit of history. In August of 1849, the Bellows Falls Gazette reprinted an item from the Brattleboro Eagle that followed the basic plan set out by Peters. It set up a pastoral scene, broke it with a description of the sublime scenery of the falls, and then illustrated it with the Indian story:

Many remarkable stories are related about these Falls, whether true or not, of course, I cannot say. Among other things, it is said that in the time of the early settlements in this region, an Indian woman, was, for some crime, condemned to be hung; but previous to the execution of the sentence, she was allowed to choose between hanging and paddling a
canoe over the Falls. She chose the latter and went over it in perfect safety. But, being so elated with the good fortune, she offered to . . . [repeat] the feat over again, for a quart of rum, which was accordingly given to her, but [this time] she was not so successful;--before she was half way over the rapids the canoe [with] its occupant were immersed in the waves, and the poor squaw died, as many in our day, with a bottle of rum by her side.11

The author had a purpose here, to preach against the evils of drinking, and it is impossible to know if he had heard a variant of the story or had made it up himself. The author presents the story as a legend and makes no claims for its authenticity. In fact, he minimizes the importance of the Indians, even claiming that the petroglyphs were a hoax:

If one can endure the fatigue of climbing over these rocks,—leaping from one to another across portions of the river—which may be done when the water is low; as at present—he will find very many things to interest him. There are very many wells [pot holes] ... some of them very deep, made by large stones revolving in some eddy.... On the side of one large rock are a number of human faces represented, said to have been carved by the Indians. By the side of these is the date “1791,” and I think it quite probable that some yankee of that period was the sculptor. They are very much worn, and in a few years, I presume, “Time’s effacing fingers” will obliterate them all.12

The author described the falls in August, when the river was at its lowest point. Like Thoreau, he described the potholes, which for him were more of a mystery than petroglyphs. Few have shared the skepticism about the origin of the carvings with this writer in the Brattleboro Eagle, who was apparently unaware that similar carvings mark the banks of the Connecticut in his own town. The date of 1791 marks the beginning of the development of Bellows Falls and the founding of the navigation company, and may very well have been carved by someone involved with the digging of the canal.13

Peters dwelled on a humorous, if tasteless, joke to illustrate his description of the falls but ignored two episodes in the history of Anglo-American settlers’ contact with the Indians near Bellows Falls. One story was that of the march of the Deerfield captives, led by John Williams, in 1704. These captives stopped just north of the Great Falls, at the confluence of the Connecticut and what is now the Williams River, at a place where Williams baptized members of the party.14 The other story was that of John Kilburn’s fight against the Indians in Walpole, New Hampshire in 1755. Thoreau refers to this story in passing, but does not explain it. He had climbed Fall Mountain, describing the vegetation along his way and the hawks that have circled
the summit of the mountain at least since the first Anglo-Americans settled there. On his descent, as he walked south along the valley, he noted that he had “bathed in the Connecticut, evidently not far from site of the old Kilbourn fort.”\textsuperscript{15} The story, as it was told in the late nineteenth century seems to have come from a Dr. E. Morse, who contributed it to Francis Chase’s \textit{Gathered Sketches from the Early History of New Hampshire and Vermont}, published in 1856.\textsuperscript{16}

John Kilburn was the first settler of Walpole, arriving there in 1749. He built his cabin at the confluence of the Connecticut and what is now the Cold River, south of the bottom of the Great Falls and Fall Mountain. The narrow strip of land bounded by the Connecticut to the west, Cold River to the south, Fall Mountain to the east, and the Great Falls, had been an Indian village in earlier times. The closest English settlement to Walpole was Charlestown, about twelve miles north and settled in 1740. It was the location of a fort, called “Fort Number Four,” built in 1743. Eventually this fort marked the eastern terminus of the Crown Point military road, which connected the eastern shore of Lake Champlain with the heart of northern New England.

Kilburn, with his wife, son, and daughter lived alone by the foot of Bellows Falls for two years, when Benjamin Bellows joined him, clearing a farm closer to what is now Walpole village. Bellows received the charter for Walpole, and a small settlement developed near his farm. Morse noted that during this time the Indians “prowled in the woods around him,” and that Kilburn camped at different places on Fall Mountain to “elude the scalping knife of his lurking enemy, though they not unfrequently [sic] visited and plundered his hut in his absence.”\textsuperscript{17} With the beginning of the settlement at Walpole, relations with the Indians improved, Kilburn began to trade with them, and they began to inhabit their old village site again. In 1753, relations between Kilburn and his fellow settlers and the Indians began to deteriorate. Two men, named Twitchell and Flint, went to cut lumber on Fall Mountain. They were killed and one of them was scalped. Morse wrote, one “they barbarously cut open, took out his heart, yet warm, cut it in pieces, laid it upon his breast, and thus left him to be found by his friends.” Morse concluded, “This massacre was among the first appearance of a rupture of the negotiations for peace pending between England and France, and was the commencement of a new and long series of Indian ravages.”\textsuperscript{18}
Two years after this attack, in the spring of 1755, the Indians attacked Kilburn’s cabin. An Indian, named Philip, perhaps stirring memories of King Philip’s War eighty years before, visited Kilburn asking to trade with him. Kilburn sold Philip supplies, but recognized that he was probably a scout for a war party, a fear that was justified by Governor Shirley in Albany, who sent word that an Indian attack on the Connecticut River villages was imminent. A friendly Indian had informed Shirley that “four or five hundred of the savages were collected in Canada, whose object was to butcher the whole white population on Connecticut River,” a scenario that certainly could have reminded the settlers of the earlier Indian war. Kilburn quickly built a palisade around his house; a mile to the south Bellows did the same with his house and gristmill. On August 17, 1755, John Kilburn, his son, and two other men “were returning from work about noon, when one of them suddenly discovered the red legs of Indians among the alders that skirted the meadows, as thick, in his own language, ‘a grasshoppers.’” The men rushed to the garrison to prepare for battle, while Kilburn’s wife and daughter, Hitty, kept watch. They counted 197 Indians around the house and another party of about the same size closer to the Cold River. The Indians’ object was to “waylay Colonel Bellows and his men.” Bellows, however, was able to surprise the Indians, force them to show themselves, and give “the party a fine chance for a fair shot.” Bellows had only thirty men, and the Indians about 200, so after the initial attack, he ordered his men back to his garrison. The Indians focused, instead, on attacking Kilburn. Morse told the story:

Here the “Old Devil” Philip, as he was now generally called,—being the same wily savage who had visited Kilburn’s house the season previous,—came forward, securing himself behind a large tree, and called out loudly to those in the house to surrender. “Old John, young John,” he cried, “I know you; come out here; we give good quarter.” “Quarter!” shouted Kilburn from the house, with a tremendous voice, that thrilled through every Indian heart, “quarter, you black rascals! be gone, or we will quarter you!”

The Indians fired on Kilburn’s cabin, lodging into it at the first shot about 400 musket balls. According to Morse, Kilburn later described the scene, saying, “All the devils had been let loose.” In their first shot, Kilburn and his men killed an Indian who “from his extraordinary size, and other circumstances, appeared to be Philip.” Kilburn, his family, and the other men defended
the house, hanging blankets “near the roof of the house” to catch the balls, which they ran “into new bullets if necessary” and “returned to the savages with interest.” As the sun went down, the Indians retreated, and as Morse wrote, the “Sound of their guns and the cry of the war whoop died away in silence.” John Kilburn died in 1789 at age eighty-five, and was buried in the Walpole cemetery, not far from the Bellows Family.

In the late nineteenth century, the story of Kilburn’s fight was an oft-repeated tale around Bellows Falls, and it even developed a small body of folklore around it. Morse attached a legend to the story of Twitchell and Flint’s killing. He told of a rock in the Connecticut from which Twitchell had fished:

It is believed by the friends of Twitchell—at least by some of the number—that his guardian spirit continued, as long as his savage murderers lived, to hover over them by night and by day, and to warn them of the wiles of the Indians. Even a rock in Connecticut River, where he used to fish with never-failing success, was a long time held in religious veneration; and few, it is rumored, of all those who to this day go to angle from “Twitchell Rock,” return without taking from the stream a most generous fry.

The Bellows Falls Times ran articles about the fight in 1869 and again in 1880, and in 1888 published a poem about the event written by Dr. Morse. The first article, titled “Poor Mattie Kilburn,” was pure fiction, a sentimental tale of faith and devotion of a twelve-year-old to her gallant father. Ostensibly, the story was an explanation of a landmark, an “old tree, which was a vigorous young oak at the time the story begins. The fort in the story was not Kilburn’s, but seemed to be at the location of Walpole village, as it developed later in the eighteenth century. The story began like Dr. Morse’s: the Indians had formerly inhabited the valley, but had left the settlers undisturbed until the beginning of the story, when they started to return to the falls. As the story opened, John Kilburn was on Fall Mountain tending his sheep, while young Mattie waited for him and looked after of the house, “like a notable little woman as she was.” When Kilburn saw “a whole fleet of canoes, paddling down the ‘long river of pines,’ as [the Indians] called the Connecticut,” he rushed home. Kilburn and Mattie tried to flee, but “saw that retreat was cut off, for some of the Indians were already skulking about their house.” Unable to join the men who had climbed Fall Mountain with their weapons, Kilburn and his daughter hid in the
bushes. When they came to the oak tree, Kilburn “thought a minute, then swung himself up the oak under which they had paused.” The story continued:

Leaning down, he drew the child after him, and without a word let her carefully down into a great limb struck by lightning some years before.

The tree had decayed inwardly while outwardly it looked hale and strong, for young shoots had sprung up round the broken place, and hid the hole with thick green branches.

“Aren’t you coming, too, father?” asked Matty, looking up from her dark hiding place.

“No, dear, I’m going to fight; you are safe here, no one knows of the hole but me. Stay quiet till I come for you. Keep a good heart my lass, and trust to father, answered John, leaning down to kiss the brave little face that looked at him from the green gloom.”

Kilburn joined the men on Fall Mountain, where according to this version of the story, he was “mortally wounded, and only reached the fort to die, trying vainly to tell something which kept him from departing in peace.” This important message was that Mattie was hidden in the hollow tree. The townspeople of Walpole remained in the fort for “many days,” and were unable to hear Mattie’s cries. When the men “ventured to return to their work, all was still under the oak, and the rustling leaves could not tell them of the little pale face lying dead in the green gloom.” Finally, a boy climbing the tree discovered what he thought was “buried money,” and when the men investigated, they found Mattie’s bones, together with the money and possessions she had saved. The mystery of what Kilburn was trying to say as he died was solved, and “many tears were shed over the remains of the once pretty, well-loved child.” The story concluded: “The old tree stands, broken, bare and solitary, but no one cuts it down, and children as they pass it, look up with sad eyes, saying pitifully—‘Poor little Matty Kilburn!’”

There was nothing factual about the story. A stroll through Walpole’s cemetery shows that Kilburn survived the battle by thirty years. Yet, in its maudlin way, the story affirms an important point about how people looked at the landscape. Like Morse’s version of the story, this story points out a landmark and uses history, or more properly legend, to explain its importance.

The heroic couple of John Kilburn and his daughter, however, seemed to have attracted had more than just this legend. Lyman Hayes mentions in passing a “tradition” that Kilburn and
his daughter “once spent the night on the top of” Fall Mountain, “the father keeping watch while his daughter slept.”

An Indian, who discovered their presence, suddenly sprang from the bushes and attacked Kilburn, and in the fight which ensued, the Indian was hurled headlong from the point now known as Table Rock.26

This story does not ring true. Why would Kilburn and his daughter spend a night on Table Rock, leaving his wife and son at the base of the mountain? Again, the facts are less important than the message of the story: Table Rock, a jagged outcropping on the western side of the mountain (and not particularly tablelike) is an important landmark for local people. Moreover, the mountain itself was associated with Kilburn. The two prominent features of the landscape of Bellows Falls, the Falls and the mountain that overlooks them, commemorate the heroism of these first settlers of the area: Col. Benjamin Bellows gave his name to the falls, and Kilburn to the mountain.

Two weeks after Thoreau visited Bellows Falls, on September 13,1856, the village was descended upon by students from Amherst, Middlebury, and Dartmouth Colleges to rename Fall Mountain. They gathered at the Island House, an opulent hotel close to the falls and rechristened the mountain Mt. Kilburn, a name it officially bears today.27 Lyman Hayes wrote that the naming ceremony paid at least passing attention to the wrongs done to the Indians a century before, for the students presented a pageant depicting local history. One student “clothed from head to foot in Indian costume, represented himself to be the only survivor of a numerous tribe that once roved over these hills and valleys.”28 He described the traditions of the tribe, and the “asked if it was not his right to affix a name to this mountain, once the free hunting ground of his tribe.” When the students answered affirmatively, he refused, and “only asked that they ‘give no Indian name to this mountain, for it will only serve to keep in remembrance the wronged red man.’” He asked that out of mercy the tribe be forgotten. One may wonder what authority he had for this proxy, but the name of the mountain has never stuck anyway, and the simpler, more descriptive name of Fall Mountain continues to serve its purpose.29
From the time of Samuel Peters to the end of the nineteenth century, observers described Bellows Falls in terms of Burke’s definition of the sublime. Of major observers, only Jedidiah Morse downplayed the falls’ impressive qualities. Morse wrote in his *American Universal Geography* of 1805:

The perpendicular height of this fall, reckoning from the foot to the upper bar, the distance of about 100 rods, is forty-four feet. There are several pitches, one above another, in the length of half a mile, the largest of which is where the rock divides the stream. Notwithstanding the velocity of the current, the salmon pass up the fall, and are taken many miles above, but the shad proceed no farther. This is the famous fall which is so extravagantly and ludicrously described in an anonymous publication, filled with such extravagant falsehoods, commonly known by the title of “Peter’s History of Connecticut.”

In his attempt to portray Peters’s history as extravagant, he erred in the opposite direction. He captured some of the drama of the falls, describing the apparatus used by salmon fishers and the bridge that crossed the falls at their narrowest point: “On the steep sides of the island rock, hang several arm chairs, fastened to ladders, and secured by a counterpoise, in which fishermen sit to catch salmon with dipping nets.”

The sublimity of the falls was a matter of taste. Peters was more interested in the psychological impact of the scenery while Morse was more interested in showing the potential of the country for settlement and economic exploitation, minimized the frightening aspects of their appearance. Perhaps Peters told too many tall tales in the rest of his history for his fairly reasonable description of Bellows Falls to seem credible.

Edward Hitchcock, however, made Peters look temperate. He described Bellows Falls in 1824:

Every thing at this romantic spot conspires to impress the beholder with the idea of wild sublimity. The perpendicular fall of the water is of no great height; but the whole stream is here compressed into a channel of a few rods in width, worn out of solid granite, a quarter of a mile, or more, in length, down which the current dashes, as if impatient of its confinement in so narrow a bed; and at the foot of the sluice, it spreads out again into its accustomed width and soon resumes its wonted calmness.

Near the middle of these Falls a bridge is thrown across the river, and from this, a fine view is afforded of the rapids and surrounding scenery. The first time I visited the spot, I chanced to cross this bridge from the east, as the evening twilight was dying away, and there was just indistinctness enough upon objects to leave room for the play of the imagination. In the middle of the bridge I stopped and looked into the foaming stream
below, where the ragged rocks, half seen amid the partial darkness, jutting out from the
banks and shooting up from the bottom, presented a real Charybdis, devouring whatever
entered its jaws. Dangers enough were visible, in the dark waters below; and while
nothing but the bridge seemed to separate me from destruction, on looking up, I saw the
venerable Fall Mountain, rising with its impending precipices, and threatening to bury the
whole in ruins.

He continued, giving instructions on how to view the falls:

Nearly a mile below the falls, on the Vermont side, is a favourable
spot for viewing them
and the surrounding scenery. From this point you can see the cataract nearly in front,
with the bridge crossing it at right angles, with the line of vision; while the mountain,
here seen in its whole length, forms a lofty mural barrier on the eastern bank. At the foot
of this mountain, just beyond the bridge and almost overshadowed by the shaggy rocks,
stands a large and elegant mansion house; and on the opposite side appears a neat
compact village.32

The danger of the falls with its devouring jaws, the apparent fragility of the bridge, the
indistinct qualities of the light and its effects on the imagination, and the looming mountain, were
all qualities that Burke attributed to the sublime. An undated woodcut by Alonzo Hartwell
(figure 2-1) in the Rockingham Free Public Library shows the falls from this perspective.

In 1844, a traveler from Chelsea, Vermont (a farming village about seventy miles north
of Bellows Falls) wrote about Bellows Falls that nature had “bestowed some of its richest and
rarest decorations of sublime scenery in this unusual romantic and happy spot in New England.”
The writer described the landscape around the village, noting the pastoral scenery in Vermont, the
“shady shores and verdant meadows” on the Connecticut River. Farther from the river were
“green-capped hills, diversified with forests and cultivated fields.” The writer described the
village, with its “cottages, palaces, and glittering spires, [which] peep from amid the pleasant
groves and ornamental trees, which are animated both by the rich melodies of the feathered
songsters and the Bellows Falls belles.” The author contrasted this picturesque scene with the
sublimity of the falls and Fall Mountain: “On your left, Fall Mountain rises in bold relief and
sublime grandeur. At its foot, roars a wild, terrific [sic] cataract, lashing itself into foam as if
impelled by a thousand frantic furies.”33
Descriptions of the falls using the rhetoric of the sublime persisted at least until the 1880s. For example, Hamilton Child, compiler of gazetteers for many places in New York State, Pennsylvania, and Vermont, wrote of Bellows Falls in his *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Windham County, Vt., 1724-1884* in terms that were classically Burkeian:

> At the times of high water, the appearance of the river and falls is sublime. Through its rocky bed the stream rushes with irresistible force, masses of water being broken by opposing ledges of rock and dashed many feet into the air, until the whole volume is thrown to the lower level, a distance of forty-two feet, forming a scene so sublime that, in the words of the poet, it may be said of it:--

> “Its voice was like the thunder, and its sleep  
> Was like a Giant’s slumber, loud and deep.”

Child quoted Peters’s description of the falls and added another legend, that Captain Kidd “ascended the Connecticut in boats laden with treasure, to this point, where it is asserted, he buried his ill-gotten gains; but no discoveries have been made to authenticate the legend.” The story developed from a discovery in 1839 of several Spanish coins by workers excavating at the head of the canal. The association of Kidd with the falls was one aspect of their sublimity: the
falls were so mysterious, powerful, and obscure that it was only natural for one of the great mysteries of New England’s history to be concealed there.

Franklin

Like Bellows Falls, Franklin had a history of Indian battles during the French and Indian War. Franklin has no dramatic waterfall like Bellows Falls or Turners Falls, but the town is situated at the confluence of the Pemigewasset and Winnipesaukee Rivers, where they form the Merrimack at a place called “the Crotch.” Daniel Webster, Franklin’s most famous son, described the crotch as the place where “the salmon and shad shook hands and parted; the shad all going into the lakes, the salmon all keeping up the mountain torrent, which they continued to ascend, as used to be said, until their back fins were out of water.” In 1849, Webster described the two rivers that formed the Merrimack, writing from “Elms Farm,” the farm where he was raised, and which he kept until his death:

From where I sit, is two miles and a half to the head of the Merrimack river, which is there formed by the confluence of two beautiful streams, but rejoicing in harsh Indian names, viz.: The Pemigewasset; which rises in the White Hills, pours down their southern slopes and declivities, dashing over many cascades, and collecting the tribute of various smaller rivers and brooks in its course. It is the beau ideal of a mountain stream, cold, noisy, winding, and with banks of much picturesque beauty. 2d, The Winnipiseogee; this river issues from the great Lake of the same name, which lies about N. E. from this spot…. The river issuing from it, and running to its junction with the Pemigewasset, a distance of 15 or 18 miles, makes a fall of about 100 feet, by several successive cascades, affording all of them, excellent mill power.

Thematically, Webster is consistent with the writers in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls. He balanced the wild, “harsh” Indian past with nineteenth-century prospects for the future: what formerly had been a site of picturesque (notably not sublime here) beauty was now the region’s hope for the future. The Webster family figured in these prospects, for early in the nineteenth-century, the falls on the Pemigewasset in Franklin were called “Webster Falls,” for Daniel’s father. Subsequently, and continuing into the twenty-first century, the falls are called “Eastman Falls,” for a relative of Webster’s mother, Abigail Eastman. During Webster’s lifetime, the
Winnipesaukee River had already started to supply power to textile and paper mills, and “factory village” of Franklin (later called Franklin Falls and by the 1890s the population center of the town) was already developing in the oxbow that the Winnipesaukee forms just above the crotch. Franklin’s first paper mill was started about 1820, and so was active during the last three decades of the orator’s life.

The place had once been an important area to the Indians, Suncooks and Penacooks, as a fishing ground and for transportation north along the rivers to the White Mountains and Lake Winnipesaukee. Through the years, townspeople found many Indian artifacts, notably arrowheads and a large stone mortar for grinding corn, which remains at the eastern side of town and is marked by a state historical marker. The early history of the area is dominated by stories of two people: Hannah Dustin and Daniel Webster. By the 1870s, as Franklin was becoming increasingly industrialized, the people of Franklin were instrumental in building a monument for Dustin and in preserving Webster’s birthplace.

The residents of central New Hampshire were no less aware of the Indian history of the region than their neighbors to the southwest. The newspaper for Franklin in this period, the *Merrimack Journal*, ran historical stories like the papers in the other towns, and in 1874, residents of Franklin were among the promoters of a monument to Hannah Dustin, who had killed her Indian captors in what would eventually become part of Concord about fifteen miles south of Franklin. Central New Hampshire is rugged country, and farming was difficult. Newspaper stories portray the early settlers struggling to wrest what they could from the wilderness, carving out farms, building saw and grist mills, and persevering through times of hardship and scarcity. The Indians were one of the parts of nature—“children of the forest,” the *Merrimack Journal* called them—that had to be overcome, and the newspaper never portrays them as more than childlike and savage.
Franklin’s most important historical association was with Daniel Webster. Webster’s personal story was deeply entwined with the history of region, for his family was among the first group of settlers in Salisbury, New Hampshire, and for a time, his biographers claimed, his birthplace (figure 2-2) was the northernmost English settlement in New Hampshire. Charles Lanman, Webster’s secretary and biographer wrote that Ebenezer Webster’s first house “was the first log-cabin ever seen in this section of country,” built “at a time when, between his residence and the borders of Canada, there was not a single human habitation, excepting the Indian’s wigwam.”

Franklin’s attention to Daniel Webster was opportunistic: a village hoping to become the next Lowell or Manchester could not have had a better native son than the statesman. Webster, as one of the most famous orators of American history, the great defender of the constitution, and the great supporter of New England’s economic development, was an ideal symbol for the town. A man of humble birth who by hard work and tenacity rose to international prominence, Webster embodied in a person what the boosters of Franklin hoped would happen to the young industrial village. The opportunism went both ways, for Webster was eager to exploit his humble beginnings for political gain. Most famously, in 1840, in a campaign speech in Saratoga,
Webster used his birthplace to fit himself into the Log Cabin rhetoric of the campaign:

Gentlemen, [he said,] it did not happen to me to be born in a log cabin, but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log cabin, raised amid the snow-drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early, as that when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man’s habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist. I make to it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them.44

The exploitation was mutual, and as long as Franklin could promote itself as the birthplace of Daniel Webster, Webster’s own exploitation of his birthplace could only work to the town’s advantage.

Webster’s roots in Franklin were indeed deep. While the land that became the town was first settled in 1749, its settlement remained sparse for more than a decade. Ebenezer Webster, Daniel’s father, settled in Bakerstown (later renamed Salisbury), New Hampshire at the conclusion of the French and Indian War. He built the log cabin in which Daniel was unlucky enough not to have been born, and started to farm a rocky piece of land on a hill above the Merrimack, a couple miles south of the Crotch. Ebenezer Webster’s role in the settlement of the town, more than that of a hardscrabble farmer, was as the proprietor of the town’s first sawmill, which he built on the brook that ran by his cabin. He also gained the rights to the falls on the Pemigewasset just above the Crotch, in what eventually became the village of West Franklin. Eventually, these falls passed into the family of Daniel Webster’s mother, and still retain the name Eastman Falls.45

As Ebenezer Webster’s family and wealth grew, he bought what was probably the best farmland in the area. Daniel Webster retained this farm, which he named Elm Farm after the tree for which he had particular affection, until his death in 1854. While he visited his birthplace annually, Elm Farm was the place where he stayed, and where he directed his superintendent, John Taylor, on how he wanted the farm run. His early biographers, Charles Lanman and S. P. Lyman visited him at Elm Farm and used the image of Webster musing over local history and lore to humanize an otherwise aloof and inscrutable man.
Charles Lanman, particularly, noted Daniel Webster’s fondness for the “scenery, the
legends, the history, the crops, and the trout of the Merrimack Valley.” His “Elms Farm” was
rich in all of these, but particularly in history and legend, for the farm had been the site of
Franklin’s counterpart of Kilburn’s fight in Walpole. Toward the end of his life, in 1849,
Webster reminisced with his biographer, S. P. Lyman about the farm, and recount legends
connected with it. The first was an explanation of a local place name, “Call Brook.” The stream
took its name from Philip Call, an early settler, at about the time of the French and Indian War.

Call, his wife, and their son and daughter-in-law lived near the brook:

While the Messrs. Call were both in the field, and the elder and younger Mrs. Call were
in the house, a small party of Indians came suddenly upon them, and went in. They were
seen to enter by the men in the field, who perceiving them unarmed, and cherishing the
hope that the savages would do no harm to the women and child, they concealed
themselves in the field. The younger Mrs. Call, seeing the savages entering the house,
seized her child and hid herself behind the rude chimney. The Indians demanded milk
and food, which the elder Mrs. Call gave them. All this time the little child, who was
naturally a noisy chattering thing, remained perfectly silent with its mother; the least
sound would have betrayed both. They ate till they could eat no more…. The elder lady
doubtless thought that by giving them all they demanded, they would go peaceably away,
though at that time a high price was paid in Canada for scalps; but she was fatally
mistaken; for, instead of gratitude, Indian hatred was uppermost, and those barbarous
savages killed her on the spot and carried off her scalp, while the younger woman
escaped unhurt. Hence the stream is called Call’s Brook. The child lived to a good old
age, and Mr. Webster has often seen and conversed with her.

The story affirmed Webster’s point that he made elsewhere that the harshness of northern
New England accounted for the strength of character of the people in the region. Webster
apparently, however, had an ear for local legend, for his second story is a classic, supernatural
local legend:

One Peter Bowen, in those days, lived also on this farm. He was a high-tempered, daring
man, and was often with the Indians. He owed two of them a grudge. It so happened that
he was alone with these two Indians, coming up the river. At Call’s Brook he shot one,
and killed the other with the butt of his gun; he carelessly left their bodies partially
concealed under the top of a fallen tree.

Bowen fled, but the governor of New Hampshire agreed with the Indians in Canada to
find and hang him. Lyman continued, “He eluded the officers for a month, or more concealing
himself in the woods.” He was finally caught, but “a party of his friends and neighbors, disguised
as Mohawk Indians, went to the jail, tore it down, and released the prisoner.” Bowen was not exactly free:

After that, he was undisturbed, and for years he lived here, tilling his land. But the ghosts of the dead Indians constantly haunted him. He often saw, in his imagination, other Indians, armed to take vengeance on him, starting up from behind haycocks in the meadows, and lurking about his house. This frenzy or fear grew on him, and turned his brain, so that he, finally, surrendered himself to the tribe of which his victims were members, and there, strange to relate, the affair was amicably settled. His offence [sic] was offset against some other offence, and he thenceforth lived to a great age—the ghosts ceased to haunt him, and he finally died in their midst, as one of the tribe.  

Webster’s birth and rearing in the wild country of central New Hampshire was important to his presentation of himself. In explaining his stand on Indian affairs to President Fillmore in 1852, for example, he recounted the story of the Call family. His nineteenth-century biographers recounted the stories of his family on “what was then the extreme verge of civilization,” as Samuel Smucker put it. Charles Lanman wrote that when Webster was born, “between his residence and the borders of Canada, there was not a single human habitation, excepting the Indian’s wigwam.”

These stories were an important part of Webster’s mystique. Webster’s biographers wrote of him in terms of the sublime, and his birthplace was the foundation for their portrayal. His biographers linked him to mountains. In their descriptions, his intellectual powers and stature as a statesman were as sublime as the topography of his home region. Lanman began his biography of Webster by noting, “It is a striking coincidence” that Webster, “the greatest intellectual character of his country,” was born “in the shadow, as it were, of Mount Washington.” Lanman continued, describing the views from Webster’s birthplace. Southwest of the house was “the noble mountain called Kearsarge, which holds the same rank among its brother hills that Mr. Webster was acknowledged to hold among men.” William Seward, in his obituary address for Webster before the Senate, compared him to Mont Blanc, making the point that Webster’s character was as difficult to survey as Mont Blanc was on a rainy day. Seward noted Webster’s provincial character and his associations with the “spindles of Lowell, and the quarries of Quincy; with Faneuil Hall, Bunker Hill, Forefathers’ Day, Plymouth Rock, and
whatever else belonged to Massachusetts.” “And yet,” Seward continued, “what that was most truly national has ever so sublimely celebrated, or so touchingly commended to our reverent affection, our broad and ever-broadening continental home; its endless rivers, majestic mountains, and capacious lakes; its inimitable and indescribable constitution….

By 1873, when Webster had been dead for almost twenty years and Franklin Falls was a quickly growing industrial village, the town was eager to use Webster’s birthplace for boosterism. It sought to restore and maintain Webster’s birthplace. Webster had been unaware that the house was standing. Even more important than the house, however, was the giant elm tree, which had figured large in the Webster legend, and had become a massive, sweeping tree that spread over the site of the birthplace, “as if,” Lanman noted, “to protect the spot from sacrilege.” The spot, part of an active farm in the 1870s, was picturesque, and the tree easily fit the Victorian rhetoric of the sublime. Its trunk was massive and solid, and its branches extended over a diameter of about 150 feet, a fit symbol for the image of the stalwart but intellectually sweeping character of the old statesman.

One of the most enduring images of Webster showed him as an old man, sitting in a simple, wooden chair beneath an elm, dressed formally in a vest and frock coat, but wearing a broad-brimmed felt hat. Both Marshfield and Franklin claimed the image, but Lanman published it with the caption “Mr. Webster at Marshfield.” The people of Franklin, supposing it to be of Webster on one of his annual pilgrimages to his birthplace, have captioned the picture, “Daniel Webster at Franklin.” When Franklin became a city, in 1893, the image became the city emblem. The image is equally symbolic (and accurate, for doubtless Webster struck such a pose in both places) for both towns. The tree in the city emblem of Franklin is much smaller than the tree at his birthplace would have been in 1850. Yet, the image is more profound for Franklin, for in identifying Webster with the tree—showing that both were rooted in Franklin—it links Franklin with greatness. Webster rooted elm trees in Marshfield, but the elm tree in Franklin rooted him.

After the Civil War, as Franklin began its period of rapid growth and industrialization, Webster’s birthplace became an important symbol for the town’s boosters. In 1873, Franklin’s
leading citizens invited the Marshfield Club, a group of Webster’s old friends, to visit Elm Farm and the birthplace. By this time, people had discovered that the house in which Webster was born still stood. Elms Farm, however, had been broken up. The Webster estate had sold Elm Farm to Rufus Tay. In 1871, the farm buildings and 180 acres had become the New Hampshire Orphan’s Home, a private charity. George Nesmith, Webster’s old friend and colleague as a lawyer, was active in the organization and operation of the Home, and owned most of the remaining land in Elm Farm, about 100 acres.

The Marshfield Club traveled to Franklin by the Northern Railroad, which Webster had eagerly promoted, and which passed “a few rods distant” from the farm house at Elm Farm. The club was received at the farm by Franklin’s prominent citizens, notably George Nesmith, with the pomp and ritual characteristic of the period. The party was enlarged by New Hampshire residents who had come down to Franklin on an earlier train, and by a “majority of the members” of “both branches of the Legislature,” which had been adjourned until four o’clock that afternoon. The Franklin Cornet Band played as the guests were escorted to the farmhouse. The Merrimack Journal was well aware of the civil-religious solemnity of the occasion for it reported:

No such pilgrimage was ever before made in homage to any great public benefactor of this country so many years after his departure. The nations of classic antiquity were accustomed to visit with oblations to the tombs of their relatives at certain periods, and to those falling in war the funeral ovations were awarded by the appointment of civil authorities. But, excepting the Father of his Country alone, neither ancient nor modern history furnishes an example of such a spontaneous homage at the shrine of any great public man at so long a distance from his death, as was poured forth on this occasion to the memory of the majestic statesman who sprang from the soil of this town.

Webster’s elevation to the level of prestige of Washington, and above even his classical forebears, was hubris. It speaks to the arrogance of the Endicotts, Ameses, Amorys, and other members of the Marshfield club, but also to the sanguine boosterism of Nesmith and the Franklin contingent. With Webster’s apotheosis, however, the places and things with which he was associated became quasi-holy relics. Even though the farmhouse at Elm Farm had become the centerpiece of the Orphans’ Home, the original block of the house, had been kept exactly as had it appeared when Webster’s father had died in 1806. Even more than the houses, which were after
all still actively used and periodically enlarged with wings and ells, the elm trees became objects of veneration, for they, like the man who planted them, “sprang from the soil of this town.”

The dinner for most of the guests took place in front of the farmhouse at Elm Farm, and beneath the spreading elm trees. The wives of the Franklin’s industrialists and other prominent citizens served the dinner, pouring over 100 gallons of coffee. The names included Mrs. Walter Aiken, Mrs. Warren F. Daniell (the wife of the local manager of the paper mill), Mrs. F. H. Daniell (the sister-in-law of the Warren F. Daniell and the wife of one of the chief investors in a local hosiery mill), Mrs. D. C. Burleigh (the wife of a tool manufacturer and builder of the first brick commercial block in town). Other prominent citizens were represented—the names Kenrick, Gerrish, Johnson, Rowell, and Sanborn were all intimately connected with the founding and development of Franklin. The Marshfield club itself met inside the mansion, in a room in which “the great man was wont, in his annual sojourns here, to entertain his friends.” After dinner there were speeches by members of the club, music by the cornet band, and a song and “declamation... pertaining to the great statesman” offered by one of the orphans.

At the conclusion of the dinner, the members of the club climbed into carriages for the steep and bumpy ride up the hill to Webster’s birthplace. By this time the sun was setting, and this added to the picturesque quality of the birthplace. The club, accompanied by “a large number of other guests” and the cornet band, stopped at the birthplace. They inspected the room in which Daniel Webster was born. Then, “sentiments were given under the great elm,” and the party drank from Webster’s well. The club gave “mementos” to the widow of John Taylor, Webster’s farm manager for many years. Hiram Shaw, then owner of the birthplace, presented each member of the Marshfield club with a cane made from trees on the farm. The club inspected the site of Ebenezer Webster’s sawmill, and then continued on their journey to Webster Lake, where Webster had spent many happy hours fishing at a spot marked by a rock engraved with his name.

This last bit of the club’s journey gave the members of the club a chance to revel in the landscape over which the spirit of Webster acted as a genius loci. The Merrimack Journal noted:
The party next pushed their journey some four miles over the rugged hills, enjoying the grand picturesque scenery till their gaze broke upon the scene of transcendent beauty which evoked shouts of delight from the whole throng who saw it for the first time, as they were driven up into the park fronting the mansion of J. B. Aiken, Esq., and, looking down upon Webster Lake—as charming a water scene as is to be found in the wide world.

Aiken served the Marshfield club wild strawberries. Finally, the party had to bid farewell to the lake that Webster had “declared the finest mountain lake in the world.” The Journal concluded, “Thus ended the triumphant day, beginning beneath the Elm which Daniel Webster planted seventy years ago, and ending at the Lake on which he for so many years delighted to enjoy old friends, mountain scenery and mountain air.”

It is difficult to see Franklin’s entertainment of the Marshfield Club as anything but an exercise in boosterism, and certainly, one wonders at the sincerity of the sentimentalism. The occasion gave the Marshfield club a chance to indulge in sentimentalism, but it gave the industrialists and other local elites a chance to sell their town to well-connected Bostonians. This first public celebration of Webster’s birthplace happened at the beginning of Franklin’s post-Civil War industrial development. The Nesmiths, Daniells, Sanborns, Burleighs, and others saw in the growth of the paper and textile industries limitless potential, and hoped that the town would become as prominent as an industrial city as Webster had been as a statesman. For this, the elm, with its massive base and broadly arching limbs, was a good symbol. However crass the sentiment may have been, Webster was at the heart of the Franklin’s Gilded Age sense of place.

Webster was responsible, to a large degree, for connecting his hometown with Boston. Franklin could not have industrialized if it had not been chosen for the route of the Northern Railroad, and Webster was among the chief promoters of the line. George Nesmith, the first president of the Northern Railroad, was chiefly responsible for laying out the right-of-way through Franklin, and even used his friendship with Webster to have the road pass through Elm Farm, making necessary the removal of an ell from the farmhouse. When the Northern Railroad reached Franklin in 1847, the road’s directors called on Webster to address the people gathered for the dedication ceremonies. He did this twice, first at the end of August, when the road from
Franklin was completed as far as Grafton to the northwest, and again, in November, when it was completed all the way to Lebanon on the Connecticut River, just south of Webster’s alma mater, Dartmouth College.

In his first speech, Webster had two concerns, to assure people of the importance of the work from the perspective of a local, and a person who had, like many people along the route, been inconvenienced by its construction. His second purpose was political on a larger scale, to cast himself as a life-long supporter of public improvements, from the days when, as a youth he attended a meeting to discuss the construction of a highway from the head of the Merrimack to the Connecticut at Lebanon. Speaking in Grafton, on August 28, 1847, Webster used his sentimental attachment to the region to impress and entertain his audience. He began:

We are on Smith’s River, which, while in college, I had occasion to swim. Even that could not always be done; and I have occasionally made a circuit of many rough and tedious miles to get over it. At that day, steam, as a motive power, acting on water and land, was thought of by nobody; nor were there good, practicable roads in this part of the State. At that day, one must have traversed this wilderness on horseback or on foot.

Webster was careful to point out that inventions that helped man conquer natural inconveniences did not detract from or destroy the picturesque landscape, but rather added to it. Machinery, the product of man’s ingenuity, was comparable to the majesty of the landscape. He continued, “The application of steam to the moving of heavy bodies on the water and on the land, towers above all other inventions of this or the preceding age, as the Cardigan Mountain now before us lifts itself above the little hillocks at its base.”

Webster recognized the complaints people had against the railroads, that they interfered with people’s property, and that they were “closed corporations.” He noted that the “track of a railway cannot be a road upon which every man may drive his own carriage.” He countered this by portraying the railroads as an agent of democracy.

Let me say, fellow-citizens, that in the history of human inventions there is hardly one so well calculated as that of railroads to equalize the conditions of men. The richest must travel in the cars, for there they travel fastest; the poorest can travel in the cars, while they could not travel otherwise, because this mode of conveyance costs but little time or money.
Of the inconvenience of the railroad, and the disruption property, Webster could point out that he was as inconvenienced as anyone. He said,

When the directors of the road resolved to lay out [the right-of-way] upon the river (as I must say they were very wise in doing), they showed themselves a little too loving to me, coming so near my farm-house, that the thunder of their engines and the screams of their steam-whistles, to say nothing of their inconveniences, not a little disturbed the peace and repose of its occupants. There is, beside, an awkward and ugly embankment thrown up across my meadows. It injures the look of the fields. But I have observed, fellow-citizens, that railroad directors and railroad projectors are no enthusiastic lovers of landscape beauty; a handsome field or lawn, beautiful copses, and all the gorgeousness of forest scenery, pass for little in their eyes. Their business is to make a good road. They are quite utilitarian in their creed and in their practice. They look upon a well-constructed embankment as an agreeable work of art; they behold with delight a long, deep cut through hard pan and rock... and if they can find a fair reason to run a tunnel under a deep mountain, they are half in raptures.66

Yet, Webster argued, the benefits of the railroads outweighed their inconveniences, for they opened otherwise useless land for development. He stressed the infertility of central New Hampshire, with its hamlets such as “Little Gains” and “Hard Scrabble,” and promised that the railroads would help to further New Hampshire’s already admirable “health and industry, good morals, and good government....”67

Webster continued this theme in November when a train stopped in South Franklin (near Elm Farm), picked him up, and continued to Lebanon, where he received a toast and gave a speech. With the arrival of the Northern Railroad in Lebanon, New England was well on its way to completing a web of railroad lines. Boston would soon be connected by rail with Montreal and Burlington, Vermont; Lake Champlain and the St. Lawrence River would be connected with Massachusetts Bay as Lake Erie was connected to New York Harbor by the Erie Canal.68 The Northern Railroad, by connecting the Merrimack with the larger web of railroads and canals, would enable central New Hampshire to achieve its destiny as a region of small manufacturing towns. Webster compared the Merrimack with the Connecticut, noting that the latter was admirably suited to agriculture, while the former was good only for manufacturing:

It is the impression of many, that land in New England is poor; and doubtless such is the fact with regard to a great portion of it. But throughout the whole United States I do not know of a richer or more beautiful valley, as a whole, than that of the Connecticut River. Parts of it are worth two hundred and fifty dollars an acre for the purpose of cultivation,
and there is no land in the West worth half so much. I cannot say so much for the land of the Merrimack valley for cultivation, but that portion of the country is rich in water-power, rich in manufacturing industry, and rich in human energy and enterprise. These are its elements of wealth; and these elements will soon be developed, in a great measure by the means of railroad communication, to a surprising extent. The whole region of the country along this line of road... will, before our children have ceased to be active among the sons of men, be one of the richest portions of the whole world. Such, I really believe is the destiny of the Merrimack valley.  

Webster downplayed the picturesque character of the landscape, but he did emphasize the impact of the countryside on the character of the people. New Hampshire had a “stern climate and a stern soil,” and this produced an industrious people. “Her climate,” he noted, “is fitted to invigorate men, and her soil is covered with the evidences of the comforts of individual and social life.” Ultimately, the stern quality of the landscape—the quality that gave the region its abundant water-power—also suited its people to industry; the railroad enabled the naturally industrious people to put the water-power to good use. Franklin was singular, according to local historians and boosters, for its ingenuity. Geography, according to George H. Moses writing in the *Granite Monthly* in 1895, worked against Franklin, but this isolation was good for local color and ingenuity. Moses wrote, the “advent” of the railroad had negative effect in that “the local color was wiped from the face of the community.”

**Turners Falls**

The falls at Turners Falls were just as sublime as those in Bellows Falls, and they too had a dramatic story. The story of the “Falls Fight” during King Philips’s War in 1676 was one of the most dramatic stories in the history of the region. Travelers on Massachusetts Route 2, driving east from Greenfield toward Boston drive through the community of Riverside in Gill. Just before the bridge is a scenic overlook that gives a glimpse of the bridge across the Connecticut leading into Turners Falls and the dam across the falls that diverts water into the hydroelectric generating plant. The Connecticut is dramatic at this point. Heading south from Vermont and New Hampshire, it begins a long s-curve just east of Turners Falls. It travels northwest for a few miles before it resumes its southern course. The falls are at the point where the river turns south,
and steep rock walls guide the river around the bend. Edward Hitchcock, eventually state geologist of Massachusetts and later yet president of Amherst College, described the falls in 1824 (in the same article in which he described Bellows Falls):

The river at this place runs in a northwest direction, crossing the rock strata nearly at right angles; and an artificial dam is raised upon these rocks . . . so that the whole stream, which is here more than one thousand feet wide, falls thirty feet perpendicularly. This sheet of water, however, is divided near the middle by a small island on which the dam reposes. For three miles below the principal descent, the water continues to descend so as to render a canal necessary. 73

Hitchcock continued by giving the reader instructions on how to view the falls. He found a spot that framed the falls and gave the widest possible vista:

The proper and almost the only spot for viewing this cataract to advantage is on the elevated ground forty of fifty rods below the falls on the northeast shore. Standing on this spot, you have the principal fall of water nearly in front, or at right angles with the line of sight; and you can see the river above and below the dam one or two miles. The contrast, is, however, very great. Above the cataract the water is unruftled to the very verge of the precipice, down which it rolls in graceful majesty. Below, it tumbles and foams among the rocks as far as the eye can trace it. A little farther down the stream than the station of the observer, the river strikes directly against a greenstone ridge, two hundred feet high, by which it is forced to curve to the left, more than a quadrant, and afterwards runs nearly south. 74

A view published by John Warner Barber in 1839 (figure 2-3) shows the falls from this perspective (figure 2-3). 75 Hitchcock finally described the falls’ major distinguishing feature, the islands that broke the stream and gave the builders of the dam something to which they could attach the dam:

The rocky island that divides the cataract, with the white foam dashing against the base of its cliffs and its top crowned with a few pines and other shrubbery, is a picturesque addition to the scenery. Several rods below this island another is planted of similar aspect, but smaller, and at a much lower level, and apparently inaccessible. The upper island may be reached by a canoe in safety; and then we can descend to the very foot of the falls and find the voice drowned by their roar; and in favourable circumstances see the rainbow arching over the sheet. 76

Hitchcock’s description is significant, for it was one of the first nineteenth-century notices of the falls. This was the article in which he named them. He began his description by noting, “There is no distinctive name by which they are known in the vicinity.” 77 He was puzzled
that the spot was as wild as it was, and wrote, “The country around these falls is little cultivated and there are but few settlements on either side of the river. In almost every direction you see gently rising hills, covered with trees; of which the pine forms a large proportion.” That the trees were predominantly white pine was a mark of the area’s wildness, for those were the trees that loggers cut first. They were especially useful for masts. The area was still virgin forest in 1824. The wilderness was not complete, for a dam and canal had provided navigation around the falls since the 1790s, although the canal had brought little in the way of economic advancement to the area. Naming the falls was a first step, and they became less isolated as the century progressed.

The islands were the feature that gave the falls their significance. In the seventeenth century the falls were important to the local Indians, who called them “Peskeompskut.” George Sheldon, the nineteenth-century historian of Deerfield, wrote that the name meant “a place where the river is divided by the cleft rock.” The Indians gathered there to fish for shad and salmon. During King Phillip’s War, in the spring of 1676, a group of settlers led by Captain William Turner ambushed a fishing party at the falls. It was this event that Hitchcock noted would cause no doubt of the “propriety of denominating this cataract Turner’s Falls.”

Figure 2-2. Turners Falls from the perspective suggested by Hitchcock, 1839.
What gave the falls their meaning, and helped viewers frame the view in a deeper context than simply their appearance, was their association with King Philip’s War. In the 1870s, boosters focused on this history as they promoted the fledgling village of Turners Falls. In 1873, the *Turners Falls Reporter* ran a series of stories on the Falls Fight of 1676, introducing the newest residents of the region to the dramatic history of the place.

The Falls Fight took place on the morning of May 16, 1676. The battle was important in that it marked the turning point of King Philip’s War in favor of the English. The importance of Peskeompskut as a fishing ground was pivotal to the success of the English in the fight, for by the spring of 1676, the Indians were turning their attention from fighting to gathering food. Captain William Turner, in command of the garrison troops along the Connecticut River, saw an opportunity to ambush the Indians while they slept in their camps along the northern bank of the river at the falls. For the nineteenth-century residents of western Massachusetts, the most thorough source of information on the Falls Fight was Epaphras Hoyt’s *Antiquarian Researches*, written in 1824, although the author of the account of the battle in the *Reporter*, published in 1873, also quoted extensively from the seventeenth-century accounts of William Hubbard, Thomas Church, and Mary Rowlandson. The *Reporter* told the story:

Day was now about to dawn, but all was still in the Indian camp. Preparations for the attack were momentary, and the march was promptly commenced; crossing Fall River and climbing up the abrupt hill, the English pushed rapidly through an intervening wood, rushed upon the back of camp, and found the Indians in a profound sleep, without even a watch. Roused from their slumbers by the sudden roar of musketry, they fled towards the river, vociferating, “Mohawks! Mohawks!” believing their furious enemy was upon them. Many leaped into their canoes, some in the hurry forgetting their paddles, and attempting to cross were shot by the English or precipitated down the fearful cataract and drowned, while others were killed in their cabins or took shelter under the shelving rocks on the river bank, where they were cut down by their assailants without much resistance.

The author of the story reckoned that about three hundred Indians were killed, including “many of their principal sachems.” About forty were killed going over the falls. The author particularly wanted to place Philip at the falls for the fight. He noted, however, that there was not sufficient evidence to say that he “figured personally in the Falls Fight.” He placed Philip at
Northfield before the fight, noting that a tree known as “Philip’s Pine” still (1873) stood in the town. He wrote, “There was not much doubt but that he was at the French King or Horse Race,” a few miles upstream from Turners Falls. This point became important a few years later, when the poet, Josiah Canning, at the bicentennial of the fight, imagined Philip’s spirit over the falls. The English troops, led by Captain Turner, weakened by illness, fled toward the northern part of Deerfield, modern Greenfield. Captain Holyoke, a recently commissioned officer in the militia from Springfield brought up the rear. As the English retreated, a small group of Indians who had escaped the Falls Fight, attacked the English and shot Captain Turner. The victory, however, was clearly for the English.

Whatever the opinions of the seventeenth century, by the 1870s, the attitudes toward the Falls Fight favored the Indians. Now many felt that the English had behaved barbarously. The Reporter called the event a “massacre,” and noted parenthetically, “We cannot call a wholesale butchery of sleeping braves a fight.” The article continued: “At the time of King Phillip’s War the Indians came in possession of firearms from the civilized branch of humanity, so that from that time they were in a position to be as barbarous as the whites, and prepared to slaughter human beings with as great facility.”

The most eloquent assessment of the impact of the Falls massacre on the spirit of place in Turners Falls was written by the poet Josiah D. Canning (1816-1892), whom the editor of Knickerbocker Magazine named “The Peasant Bard.” Canning was a farmer from the Gill side of Turners Falls, a friend of William Cullen Bryant, and an outspoken advocate of Indian rights. His work as a poet spanned more than fifty years: his first collection was published in 1838 and a second in 1852. Still active in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, he was particularly active in the 1870s, when the Turners Falls Reporter frequently published his work. His last volume, a collection of poems from magazines and newspapers, was published posthumously, in 1892.
Canning delivered a poem at the two-hundredth anniversary of the Falls Fight. In this poem King Philip appears as the genius loci of Turners Falls. For Canning the falls are a metaphor for the passage of time. Time,

... though ever restless, changeful, swift,
Is like a rapid, overflowing stream
Bearing away our cherished fantasies,
Yet leaving on the shore for us to see
The solid grains of fertilizing Truth.\textsuperscript{88}

For Canning, truth was rooted in a place. The eroding power of the water washed away artifice and lies. Similarly, nature had a restorative value that could feed a soul, wearied by the “dollars, din, and dust” of the nineteenth century, “by her sweet whisperings.” He did not see contemporary civilization as the end product of years of progress, but, with greater humility, recognized that his world of 1876 would be as obscure to the future as the world of King Philip was from him. If anything, the “Peasant Bard” looked with anxiety upon the growth of industry that was sweeping the area when he wrote the poem.

Canning recognized the profound spirit of place that the Falls Fight bestowed on his part of Massachusetts. For Canning, the “old voiceful waters” of the falls told the story:

Lo! this is consecrated ground we tread!
The soil, the rocks, the very air we breathe
Are full of memories of a vanished race
Who here had being, and who cherished life
According to the light to them vouchsafed,--
Called “nature’s darkness” by the sons of light.
Here Clio paused, and wrote a bloody page,
Whose color darkens and whose interest grows,--
Dark’ning and deep’ning with the lapse of Time.

For Canning, nature, “panorama, mountain, flood, and field,” should be the inspiration of patriotic sentiments. He wrote of nature, “Thy look impresses us; thy promptings say:/This is your country! love it!--well you may.” With this in mind, he could introduce King Philip and eventually portray him not as a savage warrior, noble or otherwise, but as a statesman and patriot. He wanted King Philip to be on the same level as the patriots of the Revolutionary War, whose centennial the country was celebrating at the same time that Turners Falls was celebrating the
bicentennial of the Falls Fight. In Canning’s poem, King Philip materialized from the mists over
the rocks that gave Peskeomskut its name:

Is it a wreath of mist from yonder flood,
Like to a human form, which there I see
On yonder islet that subtends the fall?
Or the grim spirit of the sylvan chief,
Wrapped in his robe of pride and dignity?
Is it the anthem of the thundering tide
Where Turner battled and the Indian died,
The voice I hear? or does the spirit speak?
O, listen well!—I act interpreter.

What followed, in the voice of King Philip, was a demand for a recognition of the
Indians’ right to the spirit of the place, as well as a demand for justice, based partly on the still
recently remembered abolition of slavery. The spirit of the place, the *genius loci*, the *Lares and
Penates*, belonged not to the “dollars, din, and dust” of the modern Americans, but to the spirit of
the Indians. Canning’s King Philip said:

Did we not love it too? This goodly scene
Was our ancestral heritage; our right,
Our title, from the great Original.
Here were our Lares, our Penates here!
Our bones are mingled with the soil you till;
Our implements of warfare and the chase
Your plows uncover from the rest of years.
Our spirits note the plowman as he turns
Up to the sunlight of the white man’s day
The things that once were ours, and hear him say
This was the Indian’s! and with curious eye
Inspect it for a moment—then move on
Without a pang of pity in his breast
For all the Indian’s wrongs; without a thought
Save “might makes right,”—the adage of his race.
Were we not men, and like your selfish selves
Called the Great Spirit, Father?—brothers all?
Wild and untutored,—savage as you say,
But, for all that, your father’s children, too,
By nature nurtured, and to nature true.

Now, Philip, with the privilege of a nineteenth-century perspective, addressed a
specifically political question: he asked, “Where slept the pity that you since have shown/To your
black brother whom you *could* enslave.” He asked if the motive for freeing the slaves while
refusing to improve the condition of the Indians was
... Christian charity alone,
Or did the elements political,
More potent still, combine and underlie
The glorious act that goes for Mercy’s own?

The problem, Canning’s Philip pointed out, and the reason that the Indians could not receive just treatment, was that, “His people crave our lands,—those lands will have.” King Philip argued that the brutality of the English and their American descendants had repeatedly beaten the Indians: “By ‘might makes right,’ we’re gone, and you are here!”

As King Philip’s wraith disappeared, Canning again assumed his own voice and lamented,

Kingly Metacom! warrior, patriot, sage!
Now that thy bones are dust, thy country ours
Now that Time’s hand has poured for centuries
Its Lethean waters o’er the blood past,
We can review thy actions and can pass
Unbiased judgment on thy motives true...
Thy soul was with that real greatness rich
Which stamps the nobleman of Nature’s own.

Canning praised Philip’s “statesmanship and patriotic worth.” Finally, when the wraith was gone, Canning mourned,

Rest! spirit, rest!
The sounding aisles of free New England’s woods,—
Her life-blood, gushing from the shaded fonts
That slaked thy thirst, still trickling from the hills
With murmured plaint,—and, ceaseless, leading all,
Yon torrent’s voice, deep, solemn, and sublime,
Thy requiem shall be!89

Canning, through his portrayal of King Philip, expressed distaste for the crassness of the contemporary world and an anxiety about the spirit of enterprise that was changing the falls and the natural serenity. He questioned the nature of progress: the “dollars, din, and dust” of 1876 were hardly an indication that people had progressed in two hundred years. Nature was still a nurturing and restorative retreat, and the falls were still a memorial to King Philip and the Indians, but as industry and social development destroyed nature and drowned out the roar of the falls, Canning felt more loss than progress.
As the wraith of King Philip disappears another specter took form. This was the spirit of enterprise, “sprung from the Plow, the Axe, Loom, Anvil, and the Common School.” It told the rest of the story of Turners Falls from Philip’s time to the present. Canning was proud of the initial period of growth and of the spirit of enterprise, which he sees springing from agriculture, but he recognized that the benefits came with problems. He was not simply anti-modern, for he recognized the benefits of agriculture as well as the “recompense that all derive from well-timed industry.” Digging a canal around the falls, contriving “ways, obstructions conquering, that Commerce might the waters of the river utilize,” and laying railroad tracks were not simply degeneration from a pristine state of nature. Canning captured the complexity of the attitudes toward industry that Leo Marx discussed in *The Machine in the Garden*. He wrote of the spirit of enterprise:

> ... I, too, am he
> Who, tiring of the locomotion slow,
> Laid down the iron rails these shores along,
> Brought forth the iron horse and harnessed him
> To thunder through the valley with his freights,
> And wake the echoes with his rousing shrieks.

Canning’s term, “shriek,” is the same one that Hawthorne used to describe the sound of the locomotive that disturbed him from his reveries in “Sleepy Hollow.”

Canning’s view of the railroad and the industry that it facilitated was in line with that of his contemporaries. His poetry was not sentimental, favoring instead satire and even sarcasm. In his sweeping historical view of Turners Falls, industry was not simply an evil force; Canning was not sentimental about the Indians or New England of the seventeenth century. He recognized that people derived benefits from “well-timed industry.” Moreover, he recognized that historical periods pass, but fretted that what would be left of his age would be crass and would lack the spiritual richness of the legacy of the Indians. Canning was writing at the moment of the industrial development of Turners Falls, when mills, tenements, and commercial blocks were rising in what people hoped would become the city of Turners Falls. Canning referred to this development:
Yonder you see beginnings; but the end
Is in the future far; when I who speak
And you who listen long have passed away;--
Yea, when the children of your children’s child,
As generations shall in turn succeed,
Shall hither gather to renew this,--
Scarcely this sweet spot they’ll find,--this graded cool retreat,
But blocks of brick and stone, and graded streets;
Nature displaced by crowned and regnant Art,
And trade’s confusion dinning in their ears.
Here, where the fisher stood and speared his prey;
Here, where the Indian, happy in the wild,
Thanked the Great Spirit for this paradise,--
Shall stretch the broad highways from shore to shore,
And din of traffic and its roar shall drown
The thunder of the falling flood below.

Canning’s foresight was accurate, and even within his lifetime the shape of the village of
Turners Falls had almost reached its final form. Despite his ambivalence, Canning emphasized
the point that modern people living around Turners Falls were part of the history of the place.
Indeed, he exhorted people to be humble about their place in history.

Canning’s portrayal of history was episodic. His next poetic visit to the Falls was a
century after King Philip’s War, when shad fishing turned the falls into a spectacle. In a poem
titled “The Shad-Fishers,” he reflected on the impact of the exploitation of the falls, both in terms
of taming them with a dam and navigation canal and in turning them into a spectacle in the spring
shad fishers descended on the Falls in carnivalesque fashion. Canning’s chronology was vague.
One of the characters he mentioned was an accused witch at the time of the Salem trials; another
used a divining rod to search for Captain Kidd’s treasure, allegedly buried at the falls. The poem
had to be set before the 1790s, when the first dam across the Falls ended the fishing, but Canning
did not put a date on the setting specifically: the poem is set vaguely in the eighteenth century.
Still, later local historians in the Turners Falls Reporter in 1873 and for the official history of the
town of Montague in 1910, used Canning’s poem as the their major source.92

Canning was not a historian although he had antiquarian interests and frequently set his
poems in the past. Rather, his purpose was satire. The editor of his last volume of verse noted
his “grim humor, which, sometimes sarcastic, was always irresistible.”93 His “Shad-Fishers”
satirized New England village life while mourning the environmental changes and decline of fish
in the Connecticut. His complaint about modernity was substantially the same as the one he expressed through King Phillip. People now

… live in these noise-making times,
When dams, and mills, and paddle-boats
And other craft the water floats,
With all their din and clickmaclaver
Scare off the red-fins from the river.…

The poem was not a sentimental look back to simpler times. For all its satire and humor, it has a hard edge as the central characters were swept over—or nearly swept over—the falls. The characters are quirky and even eccentric. The falls are most important image in the poem, and the greatest pathos was over their taming. The poem, like the one Canning delivered at the bicentennial of the Fall Fight, is a lament that, “Art and Commerce rule our river” and that modern technological achievements destroyed the sublimity of the falls.95

The tone of the poem covered a range of emotions, from humor at the beginning, to pathos at the end. Canning began with lighthearted memories, and as he reflected he became increasingly mournful. Ultimately, he was saddest about the falls’ loss of sublimity, that they had been “tamed,” but he also lamented that the characters of old “all have traveled over Jordan.” His point was not they were great and exemplary people but that they were real and profane: They were “fishers of shad and not of men.” The falls were more powerful than the people, and the act of taming them destroyed their sublimity while exalting man. This ultimately was a loss for humanity. People had lost their humility and ability to believe in a power greater than themselves. In return, they had gained noise, art, and commerce. For all its science and commerce, man did not even get good fishing, for now a fisher would stand like

A Job in patience in your boots,
But unlike Jonah fain to quibble
About some mighty, whale-like nibble,
When all your spoils at last are seen
A fly-blown string of shiners mean.96

For Canning, the greatness of the people of the eighteenth century was their humility. He contrasted their homespun, “hoddin gray,” with modern fashion and their hard work with modern science:
Bred in the days when hardest toil
Was needful to subdue the soil;
Their school-house was the broad, green sod;
Experience with rule and rod
Taught them the lessons Science spurned;
But Science claims not the learned.97

Canning illustrated his point with a panorama of characters. He portrayed the shad-

fishing season as a grand spectacle when people would “muster there/As now they gather at a

Fair”:

From all the region round about
They came, the gentleman and lout;
The yeoman, whose spring-work was done,
Resolved to have a day of fun;
The peddler, with his gew-gaws fine,
And ballads, dog’rel, not divine;
The bully of the country-side
In all the swell of hero pride;
The gamester who was skilled to know
The science of a lucky throw;
The loafers, whose “chief end of man,”
Was, Go it, cripples! while you can;
The verdant youth from hill side green,
Come down to see what might be seen,
And treat the dolce whom he led
To penny-cake and gingerbread;--
A motley crowd of beings wishing
To see each other and the fishing.98

From this general introduction, Canning continued to introduce the reader to specific

characters from the region’s history. The reader met the “mystified and mystic Johnny” who used
divining rod to search for “mineral wealth, Kidd’s money, etc.”99 “Johnny B----n” was “a noted
man in the region,” who claimed to have found all sorts of treasures, but “The place, the what, a
secret sound;/That all his care was just to heed them,--/For reason that he didn’t need them.” He
claimed to be, “Forever plagued by sport of witches/Who filled with various pains his body,/To
ease which kept him soaked with toddy.”

Canning introduced a witch, or someone “with whom went down the fag-end of the
Salem witchcraft superstition in the falls region.” Like her supposed victim, she “with the bottle-
drainers swaggered.” These notably pre-modern people were at home not only in the human
spectacle of the fishing, but also in the atmosphere of wonder surrounding the falls. In the sublime environment, the superstitious drunks might be forgiven their “misguided and misleading” natures. He depicted a comic scene of two wrestlers who “grappled for a fling; / The one a lithe and nimble fellow, / And pursy one with human tallow.” They fought, and the match ended in a draw, each one proclaiming victory.

The sideshow at the falls does not detract from the important business at hand. Canning described the seining:

So while these scenes were going on,
The scoops were plied, the nets were drawn. Swift shot the row-boat from the shore, As lively played the flashing oar; And as it darted circling round, By skillful hands the net was drown’d. Next came the pulling, long and strong, Like sailors warping ship along; The low, but animated cheers,-- (Fishers aye deem the fish will hear;) Till landward as the meshes drew, The prisoned fish appeared to view, And now grown conscious of their trouble, Made the fenced water boil and bubble.100

This was work, not entertainment or spectacle. Canning emphasized the skill and the reverence the fishers had for the falls. The fish were thick enough in the water to make it appear to boil. The work had to be done right at the falls, and that is risky, for one false move would send a fisher plunging to his death. Parts of the river were associated with people who fished them with particular daring and skill. For example, there was Burnham’s rock, a spot just off the rocky island that split the falls. This rock was

... since drowned from sight
By the curb’d water’s refluent height,
This rock was fisher Burnham’s;
Floods may not wash away his name,
Tho’ rock and master both went under,
The rock out there; he—where? I wonder.101

Josiah Burnham’s quarry was salmon, and he chose the best, though most dangerous spot to fish for this “fish most precious.” Burnham’s luck finally ran out:

But that grim King whom all men fear,
Whose court is everywhere, was here:
A treacherous slip; a sudden shock
While standing on the slippery rock;
The snapping of an oar in twain;
Too much of *extrait de grain,*
Would ‘turn the tables’ and the dishes,
And give the fisher to the fishes.\(^{102}\)

The reference to the slippery was biblical. The wrathful spirit of the Puritans’ idea of

God was part of the sublimity of the falls.

Canning continued strengthening this idea that God used the falls to cast judgment. One

fisher was a particularly harsh judge and had developed “vengeful anger ‘gainst a foe.” He was

in a boat with the object of his anger, and sought vengeance by steering the boat close to the falls.

When his partner, “Inquired in terror, ‘Whither steering!’” the angry man responded,

“Straight o’er the fall with you to hell,
Unless you’ll crave my pardon well!
Down on your knees!—a moment lost
And *God* have mercy on your ghost!”

The frightened man asked forgiveness and the angry man changed the course of the boat,

but the current was too swift, and “The boat in spite of all their rowing, kept slowly, surely,

downward going.” It hung at the edge of the falls, “Then, inch—by—inch, it crawled at

last/Slowly upward out of danger’s path.” The men “joined hands, friends forever more.” The

angry man had learned his lesson about vengeance, for the power of the falls had given him a

warning about a more profound judgment.

From religious metaphors, Canning concludes with a tragic, romantic tale. A young
couple, Lucy and Luman, fell in love and married. Canning set a picturesque scene, with
domestic beauty and happiness, against the sublimity of the falls:

A twelve-month passed in happiness;
Twelve fleeting moons of wedded bliss.
Their cottage nigh the water stood;
Before it, ran the gleaming flood;
Behind it, pines, dark-green and high,
Wrought “conic sections” on the sky.
A morning-glory at the door
Was trained to climb the clapboards o’er;
Beside it spread a garden neat
Where quaint, old-fashioned pansies sweet
Showed pretty Lucy’s willing care,
And painted peaceful gladness there.
Luman was a farmer, but also made his living by working the falls:
And, well acquainted with the flood,
Oft at the helm as pilot stood,
And steered the bateaux of the stranger
Through channels wild and blind with danger.

Luman had a wild streak, the opposite of Lucy’s sobriety. She is the pastoral beauty of
the farmland and cottage; he has in him the roughness and brutality of the falls, though gradually
her charms “sufficed to tame the wildness in him.”

One spring, Lucy had premonitions of Luman’s death at the falls, though Luman ignored
her and went to the river. After a day of fishing, he told his crew to throw one more net. He
caught a salmon, “A real eight-and-twenty pounder,” but as he pulled the net, it broke:

Its weight snapped short the treacherous wood,
And plunged him headlong in the flood.
Then rose a cry of wild despair
From those who could not aid him there!
Swept in an instant from the rock,
He rose, and rallying from the shock,
Struck boldly out for life’s dear sake,
And swam, the island point to make.
O, ’twas an awful sight to see
The brave heart struggling manfully!
The boldest fisher held his breath
Those moments short ’twixt life and death;
And each with fixed, unblinking eye,
Looked on to see him live, or—die.
Alas! that it should prove the last!
The maddened waters bore him past
The island point, and down the steep;
With them he took the wildering leap;
The whirls, more dreadful, caught their prey.
And swept him round in dizzy play;
Till as the vortex wild he near,
Its force upright the victim reared,
And he, all conscious to the last,
Despite the terrors closing fast,
Waved with his hand a sad adieu,
And sank the hissing helix through!103

Canning’s description of the current showed the falls at their most sublime. The images
are terrifying and awful. The power of the falls seems infinite; they look “dreadful;” and their
“hissing” is horrible. The falls here fit Burke’s ideas of the sublime perfectly.
Before concluding the poem, Canning gave the reader a song, an “air called ‘Lily Dale.’” This is a device of which Canning seemed particularly fond. The lyrical interlude let the reader pause and reflect on Lucy’s sorrow. Canning presented an image of Lucy wandering by the falls, singing a song as “wild as a banshee’s lay.” In her sorrow, she became wild and as inscrutable as the falls. The depth of her sorrow is itself sublime. This wild image is the last one Canning gives us of the falls before the 1790s. At the end of “Lily Dale,” he resumed the narrative, now portraying the changes at the falls over time. The image had more pathos than those Canning presented earlier, for man had conquered the sublimity of the falls:

And change is written at the Fall;
For man with mighty beams of wood
Has tamed old Turner’s flood;
And where was once a furious race
Of torrents down a rocky place,
Where madness fretted into suds
The rushing, roaring, raving floods,
The sheet unbroken now descends,--
The mill-dam with the torrent blends.  

For Canning, the taming of the falls, the reshaping of them from the sublime to merely picturesque was sad; the image of “art and commerce” ruling the river was an anti-climax from the “hissing helix” that claimed Luman.

For local antiquarians the sublime characters of their towns’ natural settings were deeply tied up with local history. Townspeople were keenly aware of their towns’ histories just as they were eager to celebrate the beauty of the settings. Both history and recognition of the landscape seemed to indicate the potential greatness of the places. Stories of the falls were important for a variety of reason. At a basic level, they were thrilling entertainment that amused readers. New Englanders in general had a deep interest in and reverence for their histories, and enthusiastically read whatever the antiquarians could compile. History and an appreciation of the falls were sometimes used for more crass purposes. Boosters in Franklin never lost a chance to remind people that Franklin was the birthplace of Daniel Webster. Reverence for the statesman brought the town recognition, and boosters hoped to channel that reverence for tangible benefits. Further, promotional literature for Turners Falls frequently mentioned the battle that gave the falls their
name. Alvah Crocker repeated the story of the Falls Fight of 1676 in his sales pitch before beginning the auctions for building lots in the early days of the village. Crocker was particularly adept at this sort of marketing, but even newspapers in Bellows Falls and Franklin were eager to repeat local history and legends right when the towns started to develop. These stories helped people understand the significance of the falls. They could describe the appearance and emotional impact of the falls, but history helped to give concrete examples of the falls’ significance. History helped give the falls meaning. Especially in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls, history was so important that the villages, and in Bellows Falls the mountain opposite the village reflected this history in place names.

Boosters used this appreciation of the sublime characteristics of the falls and local history for crass purposes, but others saw reflected on the falls in a more profound way. Examining the rocks in the falls at Bellows Falls, Thoreau thought not only about the local history but also about the writing and interpretation of history. For him the dramatic landscape required lively writing, even to the point of sacrificing truth. Similarly, for Canning the falls inspired legend even more than history. Local legend hung over the falls like the spray of the turbulent water. The falls gave the place its spirits, its Lares and Penates. Canning reminded his readers of this spirit just at the moment when the spirit was threatened by industrial development. Finally, Canning was ambivalent: on one hand development threatened to desecrate the falls and destroy their sublimity, but on the other he saw the development in the context of a long history. Canning was suspicious of modernity, but others were more optimistic. For them the beauty of the landscape and drama of the local history suggested the towns were destined for greatness.
NOTES


2 Thoreau, 75.

3 Peters, 110, 112.

4 Ibid.


7 Peters, 112.


9 Hall's passage describing the rocks is quoted in Hayes, *History of Rockingham*, 31-32.


12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.; Albers, 62.


15 Thoreau, 76.


17 Chase, 63.

18 Ibid., 64.

19 Ibid., 66.

20 Ibid., 68.
21 Chase, 69-70.


23 "Poor Mattie Kilburn," *Bellows Falls Times*, April 30, 1869, 2.

24 Ibid.

25 The other versions of the Kilburn story in the *Bellows Falls Times* (November 4, 1880 and February 23, 1888) are unremarkable. The first, by the historian and Lincoln biographer, Charles Carleton Coffin, follows Morse's original closely. The second, a poem written by Dr. Morse, is a simple rendering of the story in tedious verse. The story of Kilburn's fight was also published in Franklin, N. H. as a historical sketch of Walpole, N. H. It was apparently poorly copied from another source for it claims that Walpole's original name was "Great Ball," not the "Great Falls." Unlike other articles, however, it identifies the Indians as St. Francis Indians, "Reminiscences of Walpole, N. H.," *Merrimack Journal*, December 6, 1876, 1.

26 Hayes, *History*, 41.

27 Fall Mountain is a long ridge running from Walpole north to Charlestown, N. H. The southern end of the mountain, with the summit (about 1,070 feet, or 330 meters) and Table Rock, is called Mt. Kilburn, *Bellows Falls, Vermont--New Hampshire*, 1:25,000-scale metric topographical map (Reston, VA: U. S. Geological Survey, 1985); Hayes, *Connecticut River Valley*, 176.


29 Ibid.


32 Hitchcock, 12-13.

33 "Bellows Falls," *Bellows Falls Gazette*, June 22, 1844, p. 3.


35 Ibid., 288.

36 Dorson, 173-178. Dorson cites Lyman S. Hayes as the source for the legend in Bellows Falls (177); see Canning, “The Shad-Fishers,” in *Connecticut River Reeds*, 56 for a reference to Kidd’s treasure in Turners Falls.
"Rambles and Reminiscences: Franklin West Village." *Merrimack Journal*, November 22, 1872, 1. The Journal notes that the name the "Crotch" was in use as early as the 1720s.


39 Lyman, 153-154.

40 Ibid., 155.


42 Ibid.


46 Lanman, 85.

47 Ibid., 155-6. See Lanman, 49-50 and Curtis, 5-6 note 3, for other versions of this story. For more on place name legends in published sources see Richard M. Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow* (Harvard University Press, 1946), 192-194. This work is a classic discussion of the persistence of folk narratives in published sources, including newspapers, town histories, and literature.

48 Lyman, 156. This legend is both an Indian legend and legend of a type that Dorson folklorists generally call a “haunt.” Dorson, 138-173.

49 Lyman, 157.

50 Curtis, 5-6.

51 Samuel M. Smucker, *The Life, Speeches, and Memorials of Daniel Webster; containing His Most Celebrated Orations, a Selection from the Eulogies Delivered on the Occasion of his Death; and His Life and Times* (Philadelphia: Duane Rulison, 1860) 10.

52 Lanman, 10.

53 Lanman, 9.

54 Ibid., 11.
55 William H. Seward, obituary address in Smucker, 453, 454.

56 Lanman, 11.


59 “Historical Day in Franklin,” Merrimack Journal, June 20, 1873, 2.

60 Shepard, 261.


62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., 410-411.

64 Ibid., 411-412.

65 Ibid., 411.

66 Ibid., 412.

67 Ibid., 413.


69 Ibid., 417.

70 Ibid., 418.


72 Ibid., 171.


74 Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., 13.

Ibid., 15.


Hitchcock, 16.

Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 199, 201-204; James D. Drake, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000) 132-134, 151. Drake puts King Philip's War into the context of the Thirty Years War and the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and finds that it "paralleled that to be expected in a civil war more than in a conflict between sovereign powers or even a war between a civilized society and a savage other" (139). Peskeomskut was an exception, and Drake suggests that the "colonial leadership probably knew at the time, that Turner committed one of the war's greatest atrocities by slaughtering a camp that offered no resistance." The fact Turner was killed soon after the Falls Fight meant that he could not be court-martialed, and thus dwelling on the atrocity was pointless" (133).


"The Falls Fight," *Turners Falls Reporter*, January 20, 1873, 2. The story and description of the Indians going over the falls was good enough, apparently, that the author repeated it. The week before this article, in "The Indians," the author gave William Hubbard's description. The sudden attack made the Indians "run into the river where the swiftness of the stream carrying them down a deep fall [Turners Falls] they perished in the waters, some getting into their canoes, which proved to them a Charon's boat, being sunk or overset by the shooting of our men, delivered them into the danger of the waters, giving them thereby a passport into the other world..." *Turners Falls Reporter*, January 13, 1873.


89 Ibid., 29.

90 Ibid.


94 Canning, “The Shad-Fishers,” 54.

95 Ibid., 68.

96 Ibid., 55.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid., 53.

99 Ibid., 56, note.

100 Ibid., 58.

101 Ibid., 59.

102 Ibid., 60.

103 Canning, “The Shad-Fishers,” 65.

104 Ibid., 67.
CHAPTER 3
MILL BUILDING

The mills defined the characters of Bellows Falls, Franklin, and Turners Falls for about sixty years. The mills made the towns distinctive, for while there were many mill towns in New England, the paper towns were exceptional because the pulp and paper mills were among the earliest groundwood mills. This was a source of considerable local pride. Construction of the mills lasted for almost the first half of the period covered in this study, but mostly ceased by the time the mills were consolidated into the International Paper Company. Townspeople greeted the construction of the mills enthusiastically. They brought prosperity. They also encouraged the development of other industries. None of these towns relied solely on paper, even if paper was the dominant industry. What follows is a discussion of the process of mill building in each of the towns.

The towns began their modern period of industrialization in the spring of 1869. Turners Falls was first, for on March 15, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier reported concisely,

The Turners Falls Water Power Company have leased 200 horse-power to Alberto Pagenstecher [sic], Esq., of New York, for the purpose of manufacturing pulp from poplar wood, to be used by paper makers. The canal and buildings are to be finished by July 1st. Mr. P. has also the refusal of 400 horse-power additional. This manufactory will create a market for a species of wood that has hitherto been considered almost worthless. ¹

Alberto Pagenstecher, who owned the patents to the Voelter wood grinding machinery, had experimented with wood pulp in Lee, Massachusetts, southwest of Turners Falls in the Berkshires, and was also setting up a mill on the Hudson, upstream from Glens Falls. About three weeks later, W. A. Russell, a paper manufacturer from Lawrence, Massachusetts, bought mill privileges in Franklin, New Hampshire, and on April 15, leased property for a mill in Bellows Falls. ²

Lyman S. Hayes, Bellows Falls’s town historian at the beginning of the twentieth century
described Russell’s discovery of Bellows Falls as accidental.³ This was not true, for Russell would have had some acquaintance with the village. He was born about seventy miles north of Bellows Falls in the village of Wells River, Vermont, and his father was born in Claremont, New Hampshire, only twenty miles above the village.⁴ Russell’s father, William, had apprenticed in a mill in Wells River that had been started by Bill Blake, the paper maker in Bellows Falls. The paper makers in Wells River following Blake all learned their trade in Bellows Falls.⁵ Moreover, Bellows Falls was well known in New York and New England, for its tourism, its railroad connections, and its undeveloped potential. The only element of chance in Russell’s visit to Bellows Falls was in leasing the waterpower from Jabez Hills, a miser and eccentric who had accumulated land by foreclosure, but had refused to sell, lease, or develop it for more than twenty years.⁶

Pagenstecher, Russell, and Maynadier were looking for large but underused waterpower, and these three sites fit their requirements. Pagenstecher and Russell had been experimenting with grinding wood for paper, and the process demanded a great amount of power. Bellows Falls, Turners Falls, and Franklin all ample waterpower, and community leaders in each were eager to see the power developed. The Bellows Falls Canal Company, owned by English investors from 1792 until 1866, had been sold twice in recent years.⁷ Although it had been built to provide navigation around the falls, it had become impassable by 1856.⁸ Since that time, a gristmill, scythe snath shop, and foundry had drawn power from the canal, but with the a drop of fifty-two feet, the canal was capable of producing a great amount of power, if it was enlarged and the dam improved.

Similarly, Franklin had much potential waterpower, from a series of rapids along the last mile and a half of the Winnipesaukee River, before it met the Pemigewasset to form the Merrimack. The town had a paper mill that was one of the most technologically advanced in New England.⁹ It had not seen hard times to the same degree as Bellows Falls, but still many in New England were aware of the unused, waterpower there.¹⁰ In 1863, when the Daniell paper mill was the only large industry using the waterpower, capitalists in Boston formed the Franklin
Falls Company to develop the power and encourage the growth of industry.\textsuperscript{11} Between 1863 and 1869, Franklin’s industry had blossomed, with two hosiery mills, a two textile mills, and a second paper mill, but there was still unused power, and more that could be developed. Russell was aware of Franklin’s potential: he had been raised there, had worked for the paper manufacturer, Jeremiah Daniell, and had been a boyhood friend of Warren F. Daniell, who by 1869 was the principal owner of Franklin’s major paper mill. Moreover, his uncles, Willis and Willard, and at least one cousin, George K., had also worked in the town’s paper mills.\textsuperscript{12}

Similarly, Turners Falls was a tremendous waterpower that was finally ready for development. Although the \textit{Greenfield Gazette and Courier} noted only Pagenstecher, the veteran papermaker, Alvah Crocker, was developing the waterpower and village of Turners Falls. Crocker had become acquainted with the falls while surveyors were laying out the Greenfield and Troy Railroad, the line that passed through the Hoosac Tunnel.\textsuperscript{13} Crocker was different from Russell in that he was famous as a schemer, skilled at manipulating people and state and federal governments. Crocker was not actively involved with experiments in wood pulp, but he recognized the value of the technology, and was eager to form a partnership with the Pagenstecher family, the American assignees of the Voelter patents.

\textbf{Turners Falls}

Crocker started his scheme to develop the village of Turners Falls in 1866 when he bought a controlling interest in the Locks and Canal Company, changing its name to the Turners Falls Company. He immediately built a new crib dam. The dam was anchored to the rocks in the middle of the river; the eastern end of the dam (from the bank of the river in Gill to the island) was 448 feet and the end from Montague to the Island was 492 feet. It varied in height from about twenty-two to about thirty-eight feet, with an average height of about thirty-three feet. This created an average drop from the canal to the river of about thirty feet. The \textit{Amherst Express} announced in November of 1866, “When the dam is completed it will afford one of the best waterpowers in New England, double that of Lowell, and even larger than that of Holyoke. The
power obtained is 20,000 horsepower.” The dam would serve a new canal, fifty feet wide, ten 
feet deep, and following the course of the original canal. The power would be cheap, partly 
because the dam cost little to build: Crocker promised that it would cost about one-third the price 
of power at Holyoke. He promised further, that rail transportation would cost no more than 
transportation from Holyoke.14

By the end of 1866, Alvah Crocker had a plan for the entire “new city” of Turners Falls. 
The new Turners Falls Company bought, besides the canal and dam, one square mile of land for 
the village. The reporter in the Amherst Express wrote that Crocker had laid out the village with 
sites set aside for churches, hotels, and schools. High ground, the paper noted, had “lots designed 
for the erection of handsome edifices.” In the center of the village, Crocker had set aside the hill 
behind these lots for a park. To lay out the canal, mill sites, and village he hired as chief engineer 
his brother, William P. Crocker, a civil engineer from Laconia, New Hampshire.15 From the start, 
Turners Falls was planned and engineered in ways unlike either Franklin Falls or Bellows Falls. 
The waterpower was completely new, as was the entire village. The canal paralleled a straight 
stretch of the river, and the mill sites were on the narrow strip land between it and the river. 
Crocker had to dig a new canal, but he was fortunate to find a stretch of the river that allowed him 
to set up mill sites in an orderly way.

Crocker assembled an impressive group of capitalists to fund the company, including the 
paper manufacturers George F. Fay and Gardner S. Burbank, Crocker’s partners in Fitchburg. 
The company also included Benjamin F. Butler, J. C. Ayer, from Lowell, and George W. 
Nesmith, who was not only associated with business interests in Lowell but was also the founder 
of Franklin, N. H. In New York, members of the company included the paper sales firm of 
Edwin Bulkley and William C. Dunton, who were also large stockholders in the Winnipiseogee 
Paper Company.16 Bulkley and Dunton were heavily interested in developing groundwood 
newsprint, selling paper to major dailies and machinery to the mills. Moses T. Stevens and 
Charles A. Stevens, also stockholders in the company, were proprietors of the Franklin Mills, the 
woolen mill in Franklin, N. H.
Although Crocker had earned his fortune as a paper manufacturer, he won his fame—or notoriety to his critics—as a promoter of railroads. In the 1860s he served as the Massachusetts state commissioner for the Hoosac Tunnel. He had been New England’s loudest and most persistent promoter of railroads since he had led the first agitation for a railroad connection between Boston and Fitchburg in 1837. Under his guidance, railroad builders connected Boston to all the major parts of New England, north to Concord, N. H., west to Worcester and Springfield, north and south along the Connecticut River, from New Haven, Connecticut to Brattleboro, Vermont, and north through New Hampshire, by Keene, Walpole, and along the eastern side of the Connecticut.\(^\text{17}\)

The Hoosac Tunnel route was an important element of the network of railroads that Crocker championed. It took a northern route through the Berkshires, thereby reducing the distance from Boston to Albany by more than seventy-five miles, compared to a route through Springfield, Massachusetts. The route, however, required drilling through five miles of rock on Hoosac Mountain, an expensive, daunting, and dangerous task. Crocker organized a company to build the tunnel in 1848. In 1851, with a loan from the state for $2,000,000, he began work on the tunnel and the connecting railroad line. He contracted with firms to drill the tunnel in 1855, but by 1861 little more than 3,000 feet of the tunnel was complete, and the main contractor, Haupt and Company, entered into a dispute with the state over payment from the fund created by the loan, with the result that the contract was dissolved and the work stopped.\(^\text{18}\) In 1862, the state seized the tunnel and the connecting railroad, and the following year appointed a commission to oversee the construction. Crocker became commissioner, and by 1866 the Hoosac Tunnel construction was finally proceeding.

In 1867, the Massachusetts legislature passed a bill authorizing a contract for the completion of the tunnel, on the condition that it be finished within seven years. The contract for work at the eastern end of the tunnel was awarded to the firm of Walter and Francis Shanley, of Montreal. The western end was more problematical for earlier contractors had encountered deep gravel beds, which they called “demoralized rock” or “squash pie.”\(^\text{19}\) Finally, Crocker hired a
firm of contractors from Pennsylvania to attempt excavation of this demoralized rock. When they failed, their paymaster and timekeeper, Bernard N. Farren, asked permission to attempt to build the tunnel through the rock, explaining that he had faced similar situations in coal mines in Pennsylvania.20 Crocker gave him the contract with the incentive of a bonus of $100,000 if he succeeded. Farren hired coal miners from Pennsylvania and built a 2000-foot long brick tunnel through the gravel. With the Hoosac Tunnel contract completed, Crocker awarded him another contract to build the Greenfield and Troy Railroad, the line through the tunnel.

In 1866, when the Hoosac Tunnel finally looked like it would become a reality, and when Alvah Crocker finally had the support he needed to complete the project, the new manufacturing village at the eastern end of the Greenfield and Troy Railroad also seemed to have good prospects. Crocker had secured plentiful and cheap waterpower; he had a group of investors of abundant means behind him; and he had good rail connections in all directions. He did not have any industries for the waterpower yet, nor had he sold any building lots in the village. In December of 1866, however, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier announced that the Hartford and New Haven railroad would build a line into Turners Falls and that the Vermont and Massachusetts and New London Northern Railroads would soon do the same.21 Crocker and Farren were busy through 1867 and into 1868 with the construction on the Hoosac Tunnel and the Greenfield and Troy Railroad. Without industry, there was little reason to do much in Turners Falls.

Finally, in August of 1868, the Gazette and Courier announced that Turners Falls would be home to the John Russell Manufacturing Company.22 The Russell family (no relation to the Russells of Franklin and Bellows Falls) had been important local manufacturers throughout the nineteenth century. The first John Russell had moved to Deerfield in 1756 become a silversmith. In 1836, the third John Russell had set set up the knife factory that became the Russell Cutlery Company Green River, in Deerfield, just across the town line from Greenfield. Russell’s brother, Francis, Kendall, and Nathaniel, invested in textiles, building a mill on the town line of Greenfield and Gill, on the Mill River, on the opposite side of the Connecticut from Turners
By 1868, John Russell had retired from active business. In August of that year, Alvah Crocker and B. N. Farren were both elected to the board of directors of the Cutlery Company, and the company announced that it would move to Turners Falls. The Gazette and Courier reported, "It is the intention of the company, who have the means, to build up the largest and most substantial business of the kind in the country." Capitalists formed a building company with $100,000 capital to build two 600-foot long brick buildings “for the use of the operatives of the cutlery works and for business purposes at the Falls.” The paper continued, “This movement inaugurates at once the building of a large manufacturing town at Turners Falls, while will greatly increase the value of every farm within ten miles of it.” The paper concluded with a plea for the county to build a bridge across the river from Greenfield to Turners Falls in order “to give our farmers access to the ‘new city.’”

At the end of August, the Gazette and Courier announced that B. N. Farren had accepted a contract to build the new canal and lay the masonry for the cutlery company. With one business committed to Turners Falls, another soon followed. In March of 1869 the Gazette and Courier announced that the Turners Falls Pulp Company would be the “new city’s” second industry. With two industries and the canal under construction, Turners Falls was quickly becoming a real village. The capitalists with interests in the village formed a building society, called the Turners Falls Improvement Company. This company undertook the construction of fifty houses for the village in the spring of 1869. Finally, a railroad, which had been promised in 1866, was about to become a reality, with the construction of a branch line from the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad at Cheapside, on the town line between Greenfield and Deerfield. “The Turners Falls trains,” the Gazette and Courier reported, “will connect at the Greenfield depot with the trains east and west and north and south.” Again, Farren was in charge of the construction. In March, the Greenfield paper described the work at Turners Falls:

The work at Turners Falls has been in progress through the winter. The trip-hammer shop of the cutlery works has been erected and covered, the rear wall of the other shops built,
the grounds graded, the racecourses built and the south wall is now being built. A gang of hands is at work upon the canal and good progress is being made. A gang of men is also at work upon the Turners Falls and Greenfield Railroad. All these contracts are taken and under the direction of B.N. Farren.28

The Gazette and Courier gave glowing accounts of the growth of Turners Falls. The construction of the canal and the cutlery company were impressive, but the growth was hardly explosive. The pulp company was proceeding slower than the original plans specified. The first plan was to build a small, 200 horsepower mill that would be completed by July, but the plans soon became more ambitious and slower, with a 600 horsepower mill by September.29 The mill did not open until September of 1870, by which time W. A. Russell was already making wood pulp in Bellows Falls.30 The chief cause of the delay of the work in Turners Falls was that the projected work was more difficult than the Crockers, Farren, or the other builders had predicted.

Building the “new city” of Turners Falls on a granite ledge above a sandstone riverbed was a task that was comparable to the construction of the tunnel that made the village possible. During 1869, Farren was responsible for digging a canal, 1500 by 50 by 10 feet, laying foundations for the cutlery company complex and the pulp mill, grading and laying rails on a three and one-half mile line, as well as “sub-branch lines,” or sidings to the mills. The Gazette and Courier explained the difficulties involved in the excavations around the falls:

To comprehend the difficulties of much of this work it must be understood that within the vicinity of the Falls, a few inches below the surface is nothing but solid rock, and the whole of the immense canal and digging for foundations, etc., has been done by patient blasting and the drilling away of almost impenetrable granite.31

The construction of the buildings was an impressive project. W. P. Crocker designed the hydraulic system for the mills. The cutlery needed six hundred and seventy-five horsepower and the pulp mill needed six hundred. The resulting system was a complicated network of brick tunnels with large penstocks—seven and a half feet in diameter—for conducting the water to the mills. The cutlery company had two penstocks, with a total of four turbines.

The cutlery complex itself was built as a rectangle, with blocks surrounding a central mill yard. The largest of these blocks was the forge, built above the banks of the river. The building was 600 hundred long and two and one-half stories high. The Gazette and Courier noted that the
forge contained “twenty trip hammers, eight drops, and a rolling mill.” The forge building also had a room for cutting the knives into their shapes, a “drop shop,” and a tempering room, where the steel was hardened. Finally, the forge building contained a room for grinding the knives. Above the metal shops were rooms for “hafting,” or making and applying the handles to the knives, which the paper noted, “have been all sawed out by a large number of circular saws.” A building, running perpendicular to the forge and bisecting the mill yard, contained machinery for buffing the knives, as well as a machine shop in the basement. Parallel to the forge building, on the banks of the canal, were three blocks. The first, 200 hundred feet long and with two stories facing the canal and four facing the mill yard, contained the offices. Two lower wings flanked this building, with three stories facing the mill yard: the southern wing was 150 feet long and the northern wing was 285. These buildings contained rooms for finishing, packing, and loading the knives on railroad cars. At the northern end, was a loading deck where raw materials were taken into the mill. Completing the complex on the south end was a boiler room. On the northern end, closest to the falls, the pulp mill formed the fourth side of the rectangle. The *Gazette and Courier* emphasized the massive undertaking of the cutlery building, noting that local brick maker, R. L. Goss, had made 2,500,000 bricks for the project.\(^3^2\)

In 1870, with the two mills nearing completion, business in Turners Falls became brisk. To help with funding construction in April of 1870, Crocker met with several of his business associates, including Wendell T. Davis, a Greenfield lawyer and board member of the Locks and Canal Company, and organized the Crocker Institution for Savings. They chose an impressive group of associates, including Matthew Chapman and R. N. Oakman of the Turners Falls Company and a minister, the Rev. H. L. Robinson.\(^3^3\) On May 16, the *Gazette and Courier* announced that Clark and Chapman, a machine-building firm from Bellows Falls, had agreed to move to Turners Falls and build a shop, containing a 100-foot long machine room and a 50-foot long foundry.

In 1871, the biggest news of the year was the announcement in March that capitalists were organizing a paper company, and would build a mill measuring, “250 x 55 feet and capable
of turning out eight tons of paper [in] one day.”

At the beginning of May, the company formed itself as the Montague Paper Company. It was virtually identical to the pulp company. In both companies, Alvah Crocker served as President, Wendell Davis as Clerk, and Edwin Bulkley as Treasurer. Alvah Crocker, A. Pagenstecher, Edwin Bulkley, Wendall Davis, and B. N. Farren served on both boards of directors. The Montague Paper Company had two additional directors: Bulkley’s partner in New York, W. C. Dunton, and mill superintendent, George E. Marshall. By June, a correspondent to the Gazette and Courier wrote that builders were “laying bricks as fast as they are made.”

Construction of the mill took almost exactly a year, and it opened in May, 1872. Newspaper editor Cecil Bagnall toured the mill in January 1873 and gave a glowing description in the Turners Falls Reporter. He described the building and machinery and declared that the mill was “one of the finest mills in the world.”

In the middle of August the paper announced plans to build a second paper mill. The mill would have a 350-foot frontage on the canal, directly downstream from the cutlery works. It would be a fine paper mill, producing writing and ledger paper from rags. As a producer of fine paper, the mill would not compete with the Montague mill, which would make inferior grades of wood pulp paper; rather, it would make a completely different product, using different materials, and requiring different skills. Its closest competition was south on the Connecticut in Holyoke, which in the early 1870s was already known as the “paper city.” The mill’s builder, John Keith, went to Turners Falls from North Adams, where he had managed a mill owned by the firm of Richardson and Upton.

The Keith Paper Company formed in August of 1871, with John Keith as President, Wendell T. Davis as Treasurer, and Alvah Crocker, Edwin Bulkley, and Albrecht Pagenstecher, among the directors.

Construction of the Keith Paper Company began in the summer of 1871. The Turners Falls Reporter noted that Keith and his assistants (including Crocker and Pagenstecher) built the mill as, a “rival of the most formidable character” to the mills in Holyoke. Consequently, Keith wanted the mill to be as solidly built, and up-to-date as possible. It consisted of three main blocks. The main block, close to the river, measured 275 by 45 feet and was five stories high.
Two ells projected east toward the canal, one measuring 50 by 100 feet and the other 45 by 75, with five stories. Construction of the mill took almost two years. The *Turners Falls Reporter* noted that because of the weight of the machinery, including bleaching and beating engines, two fourdrinier machines, calenders, and ruling machines for drawing lines, Keith decided to build the mill in “the most substantial manner.” The builders excavated to the bedrock to give the mill a solid foundation. The walls were seven feet thick at their base. The fourdrinier machines had foundations that were separate from those of the walls made brick, with beams of Georgia yellow pine (which Hofmann noted was one of the best woods for resisting moisture) twenty inches square. The point of this, the *Reporter* noted, was that if the walls of the mill for some reason should collapse, “the heavy machinery would remain undisturbed.”

As with most projects in Turners Falls construction of the Keith mill took longer than its builders hoped. The first winter, the builders discovered that the foundation for a corner of the mill did not rest firmly on the ground. One corner of the mill settled, forcing the builders to rebuild the foundation. The second problem was how to conduct pure water to the mill. Paper manufacturers knew that the quality of fine paper depended to a great extent on the quality of the water used for washing and diluting the pulp. Consequently, the Keith mill had a greater need for pure water than the Montague mill. Keith’s engineers found a source of water at Coldbrook, about two miles from the mill in an “almost inaccessible state.” In order for the Keith mill to operate, workers had to build a fifty-foot dam across Coldbrook, an aqueduct from the brook to the mill, and a filtering system. The engineers were fortunate in that Coldbrook ran through an “immense sand plain extending towards Millers Falls” and this served as a natural filter, but to filter sand from the water engineers built two stone wells, one inside the other. The water main started in the inner well. By the time the water had passed from the outer to the inner well, the sand had fallen away. The Keith mill finally opened in the summer of 1873, but within a few months had to cut its output when paper manufacturers agreed to cut production because of weak demand. By January of 1874, the *Gazette and Courier* reported that both the Keith and Montague mills were running at full production, “in vain attempt to keep pace with their orders,
which have increased rapidly of late.\textsuperscript{42}

The final part of the industrial development of Turners Falls in the 1870s was a cotton mill. In 1872, Joseph Griswold, a seventy-year-old cotton textile manufacturer from Coleraine, Massachusetts, bought waterpower and a mill site from the Turners Falls Company. Griswold had operated mills in Griswoldville and Coleraine since the 1830s, but after the floods of 1869 damaged his mills, he went in search of a better location.\textsuperscript{43} After looking in Fall River and Holyoke, he decided to build in Turners Falls, and started a complex of mills on Sixth Street, between the main mill district and the Sand Patch. The original plan called for three mills, each 500 feet long as well as 110 workers’ houses. To generate power, W. P. Crocker excavated a second canal with a fall of twenty-five feet from the first canal. Griswold’s enterprise, the \textit{Reporter} noted, would cost about $1,500,000 (more than three times the estimated cost of the Keith mill). The scale of the complex was astounding, but it soon became apparent that Griswold would have to build on a much smaller scale.\textsuperscript{44}

In September of 1873, Griswold was at work on the construction of one mill, measuring 375 by 72 feet, and four stories high.\textsuperscript{45} Following traditional textile mill design, the mill would have towers enclosing stairways on either end. Further, at the southern end, there would be a two-story ell, 50 by 100 feet. While the other mill owners hired contractors—usually the Campbell family, Michael Sullivan, or Rector L. Goss—Griswold decided to do the work himself. A correspondent to the \textit{Reporter} wrote that the mill would be cheap to build because all the rock, clay, and sand for construction were on the site to begin with. Griswold only had to bring in lumber, which he cut on his own land in Coleraine. He prepared the site, built a brickyard, and began construction, frequently helping the workers himself. By the winter he had laid stone for about half of the foundation, and had burned a large number of bricks.\textsuperscript{46} For a long time, however, construction of the Griswold mill seemed to go nowhere. Periodically the \textit{Gazette and Courier} or the \textit{Reporter} would report that Griswold was working on the construction, but the papers did not report the completion of the mill until October of 1879.\textsuperscript{47} The completed plant was less than one-third the size of the original plans.
The Panic of 1873 hit Turners Falls harder than the other villages, and Griswold felt the worst of it. By December, the Cutlery was running on “short time,” but business recovered quickly, for by the following February, the Gazette and Courier reported, “The John Russell Cutlery Company are running as near full time as possible without artificial light.” In April the paper reported, “The recent burning of the extensive cutlery establishment at New Britain or some other cause has given a sudden impetus to business at the John Russell cutlery works. The full time system is resumed and about 150 fresh workmen, mostly former employees, have been hired, while of the 17 trip-hammers in the shops, 16 are now in operation.” In September 1874, the Gazette and Courier reported that the Cutlery was “pressed with orders.” The Keith Paper Company limited production to observe, “industry-wide agreements,” but these agreements only pertained to fine paper mills, and wood pulp and other types of paper mills continued to work at full capacity.

Just as the industries in Turners Falls started to recover from the Panic of 1873, however, the village suffered another blow when, in December 1874, Alvah Crocker died. The Turners Falls Reporter blamed Crocker’s death for what seemed like the failure of the village to achieve its destiny as a great manufacturing city. In his obituary for Crocker, Cecil T. Bagnall, the editor of the Reporter, wrote, “Turners Falls owes its existence to mainly him.” He continued:

Of the many grand enterprises of which he was the head and front, the founding of the new city ranks not among the least, and being the last of his triumphs is gloried in it as among the greatest. He entered into the idea with the same determination which obtained the speedy construction of the Fitchburg, the Vermont and Massachusetts, and the Troy and Greenfield railroads, and the piercing of the Hoosac Mountains, and to show what faith went with his work, the half million dollars of his money which is invested in Turners Falls speaks volumes. The town has suffered a serious loss in Mr. Crocker’s death. . . .

Crocker was the village’s most energetic booster, and perhaps the loss of his continued investment had an impact. The country was also in the midst of a depression, and building was slow in the village anyway. The directors of the pulp and paper companies responded to Crocker’s death by merging to form an integrated mill. The Montague Paper Company also grew by building, adding another, more productive and efficient pulp mill, and using a full 2,500
horsepower in the combined mills.

In November 1877, village paper manufacturers suffered a major setback when the Keith mill burned. At first the loss seemed devastating. “Our Great Loss!” the headline began in the *Turners Falls Reporter* on November 7. The paper continued,

Disastrous Fire this Morning!
The Magnificent Keith Mill Burned to the Ground.
Three Hundred Persons Thrown Out of Employment.
Loss Nearly $400,000\(^52\)

The fire started in wood shavings near the carpenters’ shop and spread quickly. The mill’s fire department responded quickly and started hoses pouring water on the fire. The mill’s sprinklers worked as they were supposed to, and fire crews carried hoses from the Montague mill. “But with all the promptness,” the *Reporter* reported, “it was early seen that there was no hope of saving the mill, even though a hundred streams were available to pour upon the flames.” John Keith instructed the fire crews to save the buildings not connected to the main mill, including the office and stock room. Crews were able to save some of the machine room, and the “magnificent machines, worth about $20,000 each, were saved from entire destruction by a constant stream of water.” Immediately after the fire, the damage seemed staggering. The fire threatened the livelihoods of 300 well-paid operatives. The mill had cost $400,000 to build, and the *Reporter* noted, was “considered the finest structure for the purpose, in the world.”\(^53\)

A week later, the damage did not appear as bad. The Fourdrinier machines were damaged but not destroyed, and the bleach house, boiler room, and wheel pit had all survived. Further, insurance would cover all the damage except for the lost rags. The company was already making plans for rebuilding.\(^54\) Within three weeks of the fire, the board of directors had met and formally accepted the proposal to rebuild. Keith began clearing the debris and rebuilding immediately, first salvaging as much of the old mill as possible. The *Reporter* noted that workers were putting a new roof on the machine room, and that it would be ready for work within a month. The paper projected that the mill would operate at half capacity by February. Bagnall reported that Keith would hire male mill operatives to do as much of the work as possible.
Bagnall wrote proudly, “Mr. Keith always gives the local workmen the preference when anything is to be done.”\textsuperscript{55} The walls of the repaired mill were almost complete by the end of the year, and by April, the mill was ready to start.\textsuperscript{56} In April, as the renovated mill was being prepared to reopen, the \textit{Reporter} published a long and detailed description. Bagnall wrote, “Taken altogether the Keith mill surpasses any mill of its kind in the world for convenience of arrangement, beauty of finish, and superior appointments for making first class fine writing and flat papers.”\textsuperscript{57}

The final major addition to the industry of Turners Falls in the 1870s was the Turners Falls Paper Company. Leading the development at the end of 1879 was B. N. Farren and George Marshall, the superintendent of the Montague Mill. The mill would be built between the Keith Mill and the Griswold Cotton Mill. The \textit{Reporter} reported that the mill would be 237 by forty feet, with two ells extending toward the river. Bagnall reported optimistically that some of the subscribers for stock in the company were “‘outsiders’ just beginning to invest in Turners Falls enterprises.”\textsuperscript{58} On May 21, the \textit{Reporter} announced the organization of the company, with B. N. Farren as president, Willard E. Everett (who would go on to be superintendent of the Montague Mill and eventually of the International Paper Company plant in Franklin, New Hampshire) as treasurer, and local lawyer, Austin DeWolf as clerk.\textsuperscript{59} The directors included Farren, Marshall, Everett, Porter Farwell, William D. Russell, and Richard Oakman, all of either the Montague Paper Company or the Turners Falls Company. The mill worked closely with the Montague Mill, the only local source of wood pulp. The Turners Falls Paper Company was organized as a manilla mill, but soon began to manufacture high-quality newsprint, and it depended upon pulp from the Montague Mill.

With the construction of the Turners Falls Paper Company the major industrial development of the village was finished, at least until 1895, when Frank Marshall, a relative of George E. Marshall built a fine tissue mill between the Turners Falls and Keith paper mills.\textsuperscript{60} This mill was built at too great an expense for hard financial times and soon failed.\textsuperscript{61} In 1900, it was bought by A. W. Esleeck, of Holyoke, and became a backbone of local industry (as the mill of the Southworth Paper Company it is the only surviving mill in any of the three towns of this
study).  

Franklin

Industrial development in Turners Falls was planned, and originally conceived on a large scale. Crocker and Pagenstecher built a large pulp mill at the outset and early dominated the new industry. W. A. Russell was more cautious and experimental and built gradually. Rather than build large mills, Russell built mills as clusters of buildings: his mills grew by accretion. Particularly in Franklin, where the rapids in the Winnipesaukee River were spread out over a mile and a half, the development seemed decentralized. Even in Bellows Falls, Russell’s development was a complex network of buildings rather than one centralized plant.

Russell and Maynadier traveled from Lawrence to Franklin Falls to negotiate with mill owners, A. H. Fisher and Charles L. Aiken for use of their paper mill for making pulp at the beginning of 1869. The Franklin Falls Company had worked to attract industrialists since 1863 and had built the Fisher and Aiken mill in 1866. It was part of a diversified development, spread along the Oxbow of the river that included the Franklin Woolen Mill and the Aiken and Sulloway hosiery mills. The Fisher-Aiken mill was small (by the standards of the Daniell mill at the opposite end of the village) but built substantially of brick just downstream from where the Sanborn Bridge crossed the Winnipiseogee at the eastern end of Franklin Falls. Fisher and Aiken installed what was then a large paper machine: a sixty-two inch Fourdrinier. They started the mill by making straw wrapping paper, a cheap grade of paper, especially considering the capital expense of the paper machine. By the end of 1868, however, they had switched to making newsprint. Fisher and Aiken gave Russell the opportunity to built a ground wood mill that followed Voelter’s designs, combining pulp and paper making into one process, but this enterprise was short-lived, for by April of 1869, Russell and Maynadier had already decided to separate the processes. They bought the water rights and the property of the old Franklin Falls hosiery mill, several rods southeast of the Fisher and Aiken mill. Russell signed the deed on April 10, 1869, and began to build a dedicated pulp mill.
The site in Franklin Falls for Russell’s first pulp mill was ideal. Industrialists, including George W. Nesmith and Kendall O. Peabody had developed the power for the Franklin Mills hosiery mill (called locally the “Old Stone Mill”) in 1853, but the power had remained unused since that mill burned in 1858. The waterpower was sufficient to generate about 600 horsepower, more than enough for a mill with twenty-four Voelter grinding machines. The mill was only a few rods upstream from the Fisher-Aiken mill, where A. H. Fisher could experiment with producing a usable grade of groundwood newsprint. The power resources were also ideal, for the Merrimack River, of which the Winnipesaukee was one of the two main branches, was not inclined to flood in the spring or suffer low water in the summer. Within the town of Franklin, the Winnipiseogee fell 165 feet, and promoters of the waterpower claimed that Franklin had the best and most trustworthy waterpower east of Niagara Falls (a claim that promoters of other towns also made).

Franklin had a young and enterprising company in control of its waterpower. After the failure of the Stone Mill, investors in Boston, who formed the Franklin Falls Company in 1863, bought the waterpower and the mill sites along the Winnipiseogee. Immediately, the company turned to buying land, developing the waterpower, and building mills and tenements. In 1863, the company built a new mill called the Franklin Mills, which they set up to make woolen flannels, and four years later, they built the Fisher-Aiken mill. The Franklin Falls Company still had plenty of power to lease, and Russell was lucky to find a site that had already been developed.

As important as the water itself was a group of people who were eager to exploit it. This group included the Franklin Falls Company but also local industrialists, including the Daniell and Aiken families and George W. Nesmith. Moreover, Russell had been raised in Franklin and knew the community well. The elder William Russell was a contemporary of Jeremiah F. Daniell, and W. A. Russell grew up with Warren F. Daniell, and worked with him in the Daniell mill. In that mill, Russell also worked with Albert H. Fisher, who had arrived in Franklin from Montpelier, Vermont in 1846. W. F. Daniell was born in 1826, Fisher in 1830, and Russell in 1831.
Fisher moved to Franklin to apprentice with Jeremiah Daniell and worked in the Daniell mill until 1858, when he started a strawboard mill in Franklin. In 1860, he went briefly to Bennington, N.H., where he also made strawboard, but returned to Franklin when that mill burned, and in 1866 turned his attention to straw wrapping and newspaper.

Franklin Falls also had a group of skilled workers, people who had worked in the Daniell mill, but also in the developing textile and hosiery industries, as well as industries of machine building and needle making. Franklin Falls was a technological center, with a group of workers who were accustomed to working with new machinery. The Peabody-Daniell mill had been a mechanized mill from the start, and had used cylinder machines when they were still in a rough and developing state. A group of English textile workers had come to town in 1853 to work in the Stone Mill, and remained in town after that mill burned. Many of these workers found work in the Franklin Mills and in the town’s other industries. In the paper mill, machine tenders James and Elias Ayles, were among this group of skilled English workers.

Russell signed the deed to the site of the Stone Mill and its water rights on April 10, 1869 and immediately built a wooden frame building with twenty-four grindstones. An early photograph shows the mill as a two-story building with a shallow-pitched gable roof and a clerestory ventilator. A single-story wing extended off the main block of the building to the west. Mill owners in this period preferred brick construction because brick buildings were more solid for heavy machinery, more durable and resistant to the effects of water and steam, and less prone to fire. Hofmann wrote that the best paper mills in New England were built of brick. In Bellows Falls, and eventually in Franklin Falls, Russell built the mills of brick, but for his first pulp mill he chose frame construction that was inexpensive and could be assembled quickly. Ten years later, he paid for this expedient, for the water and steam and lack of “proper ventilation,” the Merrimack Journal noted, had “caused a wonderfully rapid decay.” Still, at the time, when grinding wood for pulp was an experimental technology, the quick and cheap construction was probably adequate to the task. Certainly, mill builders in Franklin Falls had started to favor brick construction, for the Franklin Falls Company and the town’s other industrialists all built of brick.
The older Daniell paper mill was the notable exception in the town. It was not until 1873, when the mill burned, that it was rebuilt with brick, but by this time it had become part of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company.

Russell built his pulp mill cheaply and quickly, but the scale of the operation was not small. The mill worked the same number of grindstones as Alvah Crocker’s more celebrated and solidly built mill at Turners Falls. The Turners Falls mill, which ran on 1,000 horsepower instead of 600, produced about a ton of pulp more per day than Russell’s mill at Franklin Falls. The mill made pulp essentially for one sixty-two inch Fourdrinier machine at the Fisher-Aiken mill. Russell’s mill worked on about the same scale as other early pulp mills, but it did so much earlier. It was the first woodpulp mill that worked on a truly industrial scale, making enough pulp to produce large amounts of newspaper.76

In the summer of 1870, Russell, together with Edwin C. Bulkley and William C. Dunton, bought a controlling interest in the Daniell mill and merged it with the Fisher-Aiken mill and the pulp company, creating an integrated pulp and paper plant. Russell, Bulkley, and Dunton were the major stockholders.77 Daniell, who still owned a considerable amount of the company’s stock, moved to Boston. Biographies noted vaguely that he went to work in a paper trading house. He returned to Franklin after a short amount of time, bought stock in the company, and became its resident manager.

The combined mills of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company had impressive resources, with two paper mills, three sixty-two inch Fourdriniers, cylinder machines, twenty-three beater engines with a capacity of 250 pounds of pulp each, as well as two Jordan engines and two large rotary bleaching tanks for bleaching rags. The Daniell mill, now called Mill Number Two was the largest mill with two of the Fourdriniers, cylinder machines, and sixteen of the beaters. It employed sixty people. The Fisher-Aiken Mill, now Mill Number One, employed thirty-four people; the pulp mill employed forty. Of the ninety-four people who worked in the two paper mills, thirty-four were women.78

The local papers eagerly watched the mills grow. Franklin had no newspaper for the first
few years of Russell’s building campaign, but by 1872, the Merrimack Journal eagerly covered mill construction. Occasionally the paper had sensational news to report. On July 12, 1872, for example, the Journal ran a front-page story with the headline, “Partial Destruction of the Winnipiseogee Paper Mill at Franklin, N.H. Full Particulars of the Great Conflagration.” The fire was in the oldest part of the mill, a frame building constructed in 1837 (what was now called “Mill No. 2”). This was the old mill building that had formerly housed paper machines, beaters, rag room, and drying loft. By 1872, however, the mill’s two Fourdriniers were housed in a newer and more substantial brick block. Between 1870 and the time of the fire, the old wooden mill building had been doubled in size, measuring 40x108 feet. Connected to this building was a bleach house, containing two rotary “bleaches,” or tanks in which rags were boiled in a lime, or sometimes caustic soda, solution, under pounds of pressure. 79 The old mill building contained equipment for processing rags: dusters (used for removing debris from dry rags), rag cutters, and three beaters. The bleaches were filled and working when a fire broke out on the floor beneath them. The building, according to the Journal, was dry and the fire caught quickly. The worst of the fire came when one of the bleaches exploded, sending twisted metal and boiling rags flying. Pieces of the bleach landed about 650 feet away, on the opposite side of the Winnipesaukee River. Fortunately, the paper noted, the exploding cylinder blew away from the crowd gathered to fight the fire, otherwise Frank Daniell, Walter Aiken, mill superintendent Leroy Frost and machine tender Elias Ayles, as well as hundreds of other people would have been seriously injured or killed. As it was, Daniell and Aiken, holding the hose closest to the flames, managed to keep the fire from spreading to the building containing the Fourdriniers and minimized the damage to the rest of the mill. 80

The fire was fortunate, for the mill was fully insured, and the company was able to rebuild quickly. Two weeks after the fire the Journal reported that Daniell and Russell had already begun to rebuild the “bleachery” and that the mill was making paper with stock from the other mill. 81 The rebuilding was almost complete by the end of September. The Journal reported,
The new paper mill buildings will soon be finished. If the rainy weather had not prevented the laying of brick the most of the time for the last two weeks the wall and roof of the extension building would before now have been finished. The very spacious and handsome bleachery building which was finished some weeks ago is rapidly receiving its machinery, and the the whole will be started next week. When finished this will be not only a solid, spacious and completely appointed, but a very handsome establishment—brick and stone from top to bottom. Wm. A. Russell and Warren F. Daniell belong to the class of business men who bless the community within the field of their enterprise.⁸²

The new buildings were more substantial than the old. One of the new buildings, measuring twenty-five by fifty feet, contained a finishing room; another, with a foundation sixty by seventy feet, was storage for rags. In 1873, the company finished the complex with an office building and counting house. The Journal described the building:

It is located in the central front of the extension [sic] series of buildings, and is to be ornamented with a tower rising in front and surmounted with a bell and clock. This building . . . will not only give symmetry and finish to the very extensive and solid mill structure, but will be an ornament as well as a great convenience to the entire village. The community always expect an exemplification of good taste and generous public spirit whenever Warren F. Daniell embarks in building operations, and those who know William A. Russell, the leading proprietor in this vast manufacturing concern, expect no less from him.⁸³

The fire at the old Daniell mill hastened what Daniell and Russell probably would have done anyway. Similarly, in August 1873, a fire started at the old Fisher-Aiken mill. Firefighters, led by Walter Aiken, managed to extinguish the fire before it could do substantial damage. It burned small wooden buildings and damaged the brick machine room of the mill, and made rebuilding necessary. The new buildings greatly enlarged the mill.⁸⁴

By the middle of the 1870s, the three major mills of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company were in place. The Daniell mill, rebuilt and enlarged, was called the “Lower Paper Mill” by locals because of its place on the river. Upstream, the Fisher-Aiken, or the “Upper Paper Mill” was also greatly enlarged. Finally, just upstream, on the eastern side of the Sanborn Bridge, was the pulp mill that served the two paper mills. The two paper mills marked the eastern and western limits of the village of Franklin Falls. Mills of the various other companies—the Franklin Mills, Aiken mill, Sulloway Mills, as well as the Kidder Machine Company, a sash and blind factory, sawmill, and gristmill—were between the pulp mill and the lower paper mill. The Winnipiseogee Paper Company essentially framed the village of Franklin Falls.
Although a smaller river than the Connecticut, the Winnipesaukee had a greater fall in Franklin than the Connecticut had in either Turners Falls or Bellows Falls, but the rapids were more spread out than in the other towns. In Bellows Falls, they were a half-mile long, but the canal created one fall of fifty-two feet. Similarly, the dam across Turners Falls fed a single canal that powered the various mills along its length. The rapids on the Winnipesaukee, however, were spread along about a mile and a half. To use the power most efficiently, the Franklin Falls Company built no single dam and canal, but rather multiple dams, with individual headraces. Thus, as the Winnipiseogee Paper Company grew, it built mills at several points on the river.

Daniell and Russell developed the main mills of the company in the early 1870s and undertook their next phase of development the following decade. Before 1880, the company built a second pulp mill at the eastern limits of Franklin’s development. The mill was slightly downstream from a sawmill built by the Cross family, and was known locally as the Cross Pulp Mill. Following the numbering scheme of the company, by which numbers increased downstream, the Cross mill became “Pulp Mill No. 1.” In 1881, the Journal announced plans for a third pulp mill. At town meeting that March, townspeople voted to exempt new industries from paying property tax for ten years. At the same time, Russell and Daniell bought controlling interests in the Franklin Falls Company and turned that control over to the paper company. Although not ideal to many local businessmen who were displeased that the company had outside ownership, this control helped stimulate development. The new pulp mill was the first development to take advantage of this exemption. The mill was not built by the Winnipiseogee Paper Company, but by a company headed by W. F. Daniell’s son, Harry W., and called the Franklin Falls Pulp Company. In July 1881, the Journal reported that the dam for the mill was twenty-five feet high and capable of generating 1,300 horsepower; the set-back created by the dam, reported the Journal, would “flow within a few rods of Cross mill.” The mill would have twenty grinding machines.

The new pulp mill attracted the admiration of the Journal. It was the most substantial of the pulp mills, built of brick, with a heavy stone foundation and a series of arched tailraces facing
the river. The *Journal* covered its construction thoroughly, reporting in October, “Work is progressing at the new pulp-mill. The dam is nearly completed, water having been let through one end last Sunday. A large gang of men is employed. The mill will be of brick, instead of wood, as at first proposed, and when finished will be one of the best built and finest equipped pulp mills in the world.” The mill was a source of considerable local pride. Officially called the Franklin Falls Pulp Company, inscriptions on photographs in the Franklin Public Library show that locals called it simply “Harry’s Mill.” In 1883, the *Journal* reported, “The most elegant private office in this section is that in the new pulp-mill, whose presiding genius is Mr. Harry W. Daniell. The office is finished in ash, is handsomely papered, and from its windows is one of the best river views to be found. Altogether one can transact business with a feeling of serene comfort in such a well-appointed room.” The mill remained independent of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company until 1889, but from the start it was tightly integrated with the other mills. For example, in 1883, the paper company announced that it would make a variety of improvements. The *Journal* reported that one “improvement to be adopted by this opulent and enterprising company is a tube running from the pulp mill of the Franklin Falls Pulp Co. to the paper mills, through which pulp will run constantly from the machines.” In 1887, town meeting voted to repeal the tax exemptions before the end of the decade that it had specified six years before, and the Daniell family lost its incentive to run a separate pulp company. Finally, in January of 1889 the *Franklin Transcript* announced, “The Franklin Falls Pulp Co. mill and the entire plant has been sold to the W. P. Co.”

In the 1870s and 1880s, the mills in the Winnipiseogee Paper Company seemed to grow more by accretion than planning. Crews seemed to be constantly at work repairing and enlarging the plant. Steam and corrosive chemicals caused frame buildings to decay rapidly, and the company hoped to increase production with larger and more efficient machines. In 1879, for example, the paper company needed to rebuild the pulp mill, adding new, heavy beams. The *Journal* reported, “The Winnipiseogee Paper Company are putting some immense timber into their reconstructed pulp mill. Some of the timbers measure 12 x 14 inches, are 36 feet long, and
Weigh 70 pounds to the cubic foot. The old mill has only been built about ten years, but the steam of pulp making and the lack of proper ventilation has caused a wonderfully rapid decay. The following year, the company enlarged the mill to replace a worn out boiler. Similarly, in 1881, the paper reported, “The Winnipiseogee Paper Comp are building an addition 100x65 to the upper paper mill and making other additions and improvements.” In 1882, the paper reported again, “The roof now being completed on a portion of No. 2 paper-mill will be a desirable improvement. The space inside will be largely increased, as the addition is twenty-seven feet high, and several ventilators and a sky-light will be placed on top. Hitherto the steam has made it excessively hot for the employes. Consideration for the comfort of workmen is a commendable virtue, and one is always glad to see it practiced.” In 1884, the Franklin Transcript reported, “Work has been commenced on an addition of ten feet to the west end of the machine room at No. 2 paper mill. Some modern improvements are to be introduced at this mill and extensive repairs are soon to be made at the machine room of No. 1 mill. A new penstock will also be put in from Sanborn bridge, in place of the old one.”

W. F. Daniell and W. A. Russell were both eager to adopt technological advances. Moreover, the patents on the Voelter grinders expired in 1884, and the proprietors of the early ground wood mills recognized that they needed to keep their mills up-to-date to remain competitive. The mill owners thus were eager to run their operations efficiently, a point newspaper editors, characteristically marveling at the gadgetry of the mills, emphasized proudly. In July 1884, for example, the Franklin Transcript reported the Paper Company had installed a “log haul” to assist removing logs from the Winnipesaukee at the Cross mill. The paper reported, By means of this haul the logs are taken from the water into the mill, thence alongside the shed a short distance from the mill, where they are thrown automatically from the end of the haul, making a distance of three hundred feet from the water. Only two men are required to operate it and one hundred and sixty cords can be easily housed in a day. The logs are taken from the shed by means of a railroad car and used as required. It is substantially built and fitted up with all the necessary appliances. This manner of doing work by power so easily, which before required much labor, brings to mind the fact that we now live in an age of inventions. The Winnipiseogee Paper Co. are on the alert to introduce improvements in the work of manufacturing their products as fast as they are discovered, and are not content to do business with old fashioned, worn out facilities.”
Two years later, the paper continued this theme, reporting on the installation of a new Fourdrinier:

The Winnipiseogee Paper Co. will soon add a new paper machine at No. 1 mill for making wider paper than that turned out by the machines now in use. It will also combine all the modern improvements, and thus facilitate the manufacture of the company’s goods and enable them to continue a successful competition with other firms in the same business.100

When the machine finally arrived the next March, the paper reported,

The new paper machine at No. 1 mill was started Tuesday night and is now running like clock-work. The machine will make eighty-four inch paper, has seventeen large dryers and is supplied with the latest improvements. It is driven by a new fifty horse power steam engine which takes the place of water. the changes and additions have been made at a large expense but the W. P. Co. found them necessary so as to meet the needs of their patrons at a living price. With the present price on paper it is necessary for the manufacturers to have the best facilities and get the greatest product in the least possible time. Competition must be met on every hand, and those who meet it successfully come out ahead.101

In January 1888, the paper company was forced to rebuild the Cross pulp mill after a fire. The Transcript reported sarcastically, “The blaze started near a ‘hot box’ and although several employes were present nobody seemed to understand that water is a good thing to use on such occasions. In a short time the whole building was in flames and nothing could save it.”102 The paper reported that the loss was valued at about $35,000 but noted that it was actually greater because the mill not only lost a considerable amount of wood, but also would be forced to buy pulp. The company rebuilt the mill in the spring, increasing its capacity. In September, the Transcript reported hopefully that the company would build another pulp mill. The reporter complained, “Business has been unusually dull here this summer and the building of this new dam and mill will be a welcome boom.”103 A month later, the paper reported that construction of the new mill would have to wait because, the “rainy weather has retarded the work so that it cannot be completed before winter.”104 The mill would have replaced the original pulp mill, but construction had to wait until 1894.

Instead of simply replacing a groundwood mill with another, Russell and Daniell decided to build a sulphite mill. Reports of the plans were vague, and probably the Franklin Transcript
was unclear on exactly what the Russell and Daniell planned. In January 1889, the Transcript reported, “It is probable that a mill for the manufacture of sulphite paper will be erected here during 1889.”  The mill took almost three years to build. In January 1890, the paper reported hopefully, “When the new sulphite mill gets into running order it will furnish employment for 150 hands, and the number may be increased to 250. That’s good news.”  The mill was finally completed in December of 1891.

At the beginning of 1890, the paper company announced a busy season of building. The company announced that it would not only build the sulphite mill, but Daniell and Russell announced that they would build a railroad branch line that would run east from the mills to the village of Tilton. The Franklin and Tilton was only three miles long but connected with the Concord and Montreal, which became part of the Boston and Maine. The railroad promised to decrease shipping charges, eliminating the need to truck paper and supplies across the highway that connected Franklin Falls and West Franklin, where the Northern Railroad stopped. Helping the paper company, Town Meeting voted in 1890 to,

exempt from taxation, for the period of 10 years from this date, any manufacturing establishment which may be erected by [Daniell] and his associates upon the dam next below the brick pulp mill on the Winnipiseogee river for the manufacture of paper pulp and such other goods as may be manufactured therefrom, and the machinery and capital necessary to operate the same, provided that said establishment shall give employment therein, on the average, to not less than 150 persons.

The description of the location described the Sulphite Mill exactly. The town had repealed a similar provision a few years before, but now granted exemptions individually by a vote in town meeting. Alvah W. Sulloway, Daniell’s brother-in-law and owner of the hosiery mill next to Paper Mill No. 2, introduced the motion to Town Meeting. At the same meeting Town Meeting also voted to grant the Mayo Knitting Machine Company, Franklin’s newest industry, an exemption.

By the summer of 1890 the Sulphite mill was well underway. In June, W. A. Russell surprised the town by retiring to devote his attention to his mills in Lawrence and Bellows Falls. Russell still owned a controlling interest in the Franklin Falls Company but also sold the
Lake Company, which controlled the water flow from Lake Winnipesaukee and thus the water levels in the Merrimack. W. F. Daniell became the principal owner of the companies. Franklin’s papers were always careful to treat Russell respectfully, but the Transcript was gleeful that the company was controlled by local capital. Its management included W. F. Daniell, president, A. N. Burbank, treasurer, and Harry W. Daniell, clerk. Burbank, although Russell’s assistant in Lawrence and Bellows Falls, was a native of Franklin. Finally, Eugene S. Daniell, another of W. F. Daniell’s sons, was the “general superintendent” of the entire plant.

Russell retired from the Winnipesaukee Paper Company at a time when Franklin’s businessmen were particularly worried about the local economy. Franklin had a more localistic approach to business than the other towns, and soft business conditions and a concern for competitive advantage made Franklin’s businessmen look inward. The Manchester Mirror put it, “While we are not aware that anybody has heretofore suffered because it was controlled by Massachusetts mill owners, it is a good thing in view of future contingencies to have it brought home and kept here.” The editor of the Transcript was excited about Russell’s retirement because he felt that it would ensure the company’s growth. With Russell as principal owner, the fortunes of the company were tied to larger out-of-state concerns, but with the Daniells in control, the interests of the mill was closely tied to the community. W. F. Daniell was beloved as a kind and benevolent employer and citizen; because of this, the Transcript felt certain that the mill would prosper and continue to grow.

With the announcement of Russell’s retirement the Transcript reported the immediate plans for development of the plant: “The company will proceed to carry out plans for further improving the plant and extending the business. A pulp mill will be erected on the Cross Dam and a machine room 34x112, and a finishing room, 45x60, are to be added at No. 1 mill. Other additions are likely to take place in the near future.” By the next spring the company announced that it would finish the sulphite mill and install a machine for making book paper. In May, the Transcript reported, “The Winnipesaukee Paper Co. has begun to fit up a part of the new sulphite mill for the manufacture of book paper. Several alterations will be made in the building,
and the work will probably run into the fall.” The company also made good on its promise to replace the Cross pulp mill. In 1891 the company enlarged it by building an integrated sulphite pulp and paper mill—officially called Pulp No. 3 and Paper Mill No. 3. The company finally received the paper machine in November, and in December the Transcript reported, “The new machine now being erected at the sulphite mill is 106-inch, the largest paper machine in town. . . . Workmen are busy at the sulphite mill, getting it ready for business. Much remains to be done.”

The next period of growth started in 1893, when the company announced that it would replace the original groundwood pulp mill. The Transcript reported the decision to replace the mill in February, but by the time construction was supposed to begin, the country was at the beginning of the financial crisis that would send the country into a five-year depression. In July, the Transcript reported tersely, “Building of the new pulp mill is postponed.” The mill was finally built the following summer, for the Transcript announced in August of 1894, “The new pulp mill will be ready for business about Sept 1.” The company kept the building of the original pulp mill, turning it into a carpenter shop.

This was the last major enlargement of the plant. The paper company enjoyed local ownership only briefly, for in 1897 Russell and A. N. Burbank worked with Hugh Chisolm, who owned mills in Rumford and Livermore Falls, Maine as well as Albrecht Pagenstecher, the principal owner of mills in Corinth and Palmer’s Falls, New York and Turners Falls, to hammer out a merger that would form the International Paper Company, effective January 1898. After the consolidation the Winnipiseogee mill stagnated, changing little until 1908, when the company started gradually to shut down parts of the plant.

Like Turners Falls and Bellows Falls, Franklin was not a single-industry town. Hosiery was Franklin’s second industry. Herrick Aiken and his two sons, Walter and Jonas, were a family of inventors. Originally from Dracut, Massachusetts, they settled in Franklin in the 1830s. Herrick Aiken set up a shop where he worked on inventions, notably hand tools, particularly handles for augers. But he also applied his inventive genius to other concerns: he devised the cog railway ascending Mt. Washington. Walter and Jonas Aiken worked with their father,
specializing developing knitting machines and the needles used by those machines. In 1849, James Hibbert of Providence, Rhode Island patented an improved needle for knitting frames. He added a “latch or tongue . . . in connection with the hook of the needle.” The latch needle improved the functionality of knitting machines. Walter Aiken improved on Hibbert’s design. He did his most important work designing a circular knitting machine that allowed for the mass production of “Shaker Socks,” or seamless hosiery.

Aiken improved the design of latch needles about 1850, and in 1855 Jonas Aiken patented what he called a “latch needle regulator.” The following year, Walter Aiken filed a patent application for an improvement to the machine that made it a true circular knitting machine. By 1850, the members of the United Society of Shakers were already making socks at their communities in Enfield and Canterbury, New Hampshire. Aiken sent the Enfield Shakers a machine, and at the same time sent a machine to Israel Woodbury Sulloway, another hosiery manufacturer in Enfield, although not connected with the Shakers. Both the Shakers and Sulloway adopted the new machines. Sulloway’s son, Alvah, moved to Franklin in about 1863, formed a partnership with Walter Aiken, and started a hosiery mill. The following year, they dissolved their partnership, and Aiken continued the enterprise alone. Sulloway then formed a partnership with Frank H. Daniell, who had just inherited rights to half of the dam that served the Daniell Paper Mill. The Sulloway and Daniell mill produced hosiery and woolen flannel until 1869, when Frank Daniell retired from the business and sold his interest to Sulloway. At that point, Sulloway began to specialize in knit hosiery.

The other major industry in Franklin during the 1860s was woolen fabrics. The Franklin Falls Company spearheaded the efforts to diversify Franklin’s economy, and to that end built factory buildings and even housing. In 1863, it built the Franklin Mill, to make woolen flannels. About 1870, Moses T. Stevens of North Andover, Massachusetts, leased the mill and continued to operate it into the twentieth century (eventually becoming part of the J. P. Stevens Company). The other woolen mill, in operation by the early 1870s, was the Franklin Woolen Co., locally called the “Sawyer Mill,” and built adjacent to the Franklin or “Stevens” Mill.
1879, the Sawyer family closed the mill when it opened another in Plymouth Massachusetts. Stevens leased the Sawyer mill in 1881, increasing the size of his plant. People referred to the mills as the Upper and Lower woolen mills until 1897, when Stevens connected the buildings.

Franklin had a diversified local economy, but through the end of the nineteenth century, the paper company was dominant. In property valuations in 1882, for example, at a rate of 15.08/1,000, the largest taxpayers were the Winnipiseogee Paper Company (2800.09) and the Franklin Falls Company (1580.00). Walter Aiken, who never incorporated his mill was the largest private taxpayer (1042.89), and A. W. Sulloway was second (851.56). The Franklin Mills, which rented its facilities from the Franklin Falls Company, paid considerably less than the hosiery manufacturers (316.00)--less than half of what Stephen Kenrick, a farmer and real estate developer, paid.

None of Franklin’s other mills developed as quickly or ambitiously as the paper company. Walter Aiken’s mill, while the most valuable of the hosiery mills in the early 1880s, took its final form early. Aiken built his first mill, a wood frame building, in 1863, and began to manufacture hosiery on a small scale. Walter’s brother, Jonas, had inherited the bulk of their father’s property and owned the mill building. On October 10, 1865, the mill burned, and Jonas, uninterested in rebuilding, sold his interest to his brother. Walter immediately began to rebuild. He laid the first brick of the new building on November 1 and completed the mill on November 30. He enlarged the mill, building a second block in 1869, and a third in 1875. From then until 1893, when Aiken died, the mill changed little. Aiken added a new dyehouse in 1885 and a bell tower in 1887. After his death, his sons updated some of the machinery and added new boilers. The mill finally failed in 1904, when hosiery sales slowed.

The Sulloway mill grew more slowly than the Aiken mill but remained successful longer. Early photographs of the original mill show a four-by-four bay, three-and-a-half story gable-roofed building, with a stair tower on the eastern façade. The Merrimack Journal noted in 1872 that it was the “best built manufacturing building in Franklin, costing about $30,000, and the machinery costing about half that amount.” The mill made both knit hosiery and woolen
flannel, depending on the demands of the market. The Journal reported, “The mill contains three sets of cards, ten hosiery and ten flannel looms, so arranged that he [Sulloway] can run two sets of cards on hosiery and one on flannels, or the reverse, as the markets may suggest. The capacity of the mill is ninety dozen hose and 600 yards flannel, or forty-five dozen hose and 1200 yards daily, employing thirty-five to forty hands.”

Sulloway gradually expanded his operation without enlarging the building. By 1878, he had stopped making flannel, but ran four “cards” (machines for carding the wool) and fifty knitting machines. The Granite Monthly noted that the mill employed about seventy-five hands, but that Sulloway put out the unfinished socks to local farmwomen. By 1885, the mill still ran on four sets of cards but had seventy-five knitting machines and employed “about ninety operatives, besides a large number of women in the vicinity and surrounding towns, whose labor is required in finishing the work which the machines leave incomplete.” The mill produced about “three hundred dozen pairs” of Shaker socks daily.

Sulloway finally enlarged the mill in 1884, with a small addition of twenty-five by twenty-eight feet on the southeast corner of the mill. In 1886, Sulloway was more ambitious. He build a fifty-four by fifty-two foot addition to the north end of the mill, adding six bays of windows to the north end of the mill and raising the roof to a shallow pitch, giving the building a full four stories. He doubled the capacity of the mill, running eight sets of cards, 175 knitting machines, and producing 600 dozen pairs of men’s Shaker socks daily. In 1890, he built a new dye house, a thirty by forty-foot single story structure; this was enlarged in 1896.

Finally, in 1897, Sulloway enlarged the mill again, more than doubling its size. Before 1896, Sulloway, like his brother-in-law W. F. Daniell, had been an enthusiastic member of the Democratic Party. In the 1880s, he had represented Franklin in the state legislature, and had served on the Democratic National Committee, in 1884 even notifying Grover Cleveland of his nomination. But with the nomination of William Jennings Bryan in 1896, Sulloway resigned from active participation in the party, and even praised the policies of William McKinley. Noting the positive effect of the McKinley Tariff on textiles combined with the easing of the depression
of 1893, Sulloway announced in 1897 that he would build a mill, “for the manufacturing of full fashioned hosiery.” The building would be four stories, and measure 125 by fifty-two feet. By February of 1898 the “Annex,” as it was called, was receiving its machinery. This was the last major enlargement of the mill before the 1920s, save for a frame stock house built along a railroad siding of the Franklin and Tilton Railroad in 1900. Hosiery was Franklin’s second industry, but it grew slowly, and was never of the impressive scale of the paper company. There were never multiple mills in the hosiery plants. Rather, the mills grew gradually to fill needs as they developed. The woolen flannel mill of the Franklin Mills followed a similar pattern.

The paper and textile industries were the major industries in Franklin, but the town also had smaller factories. Walter Aiken was both a hosiery manufacturer and machinist. His machine shop made the machinery in his mill as well as the basic machinery of the Sulloway mill. Aiken’s inventive genius attracted other manufacturers. In 1874, H. J. Odell and E. H. Sturtevant founded the Franklin Needle Company in West Franklin, using the power from a stream that emptied into the Pemigewasset below Eastman Falls. Incorporated in 1882, the Needle Company became the “largest and best equipped latch needle manufacturer in the world,” at least according to its advertising. Similarly, in 1890, encouraged by property tax exemptions, the Mayo Knitting Machine Company moved from Massachusetts to a site adjacent to the needle factory. By December 1890, the mill employed thirteen hands. In 1895, the company built a larger factory using power from a dam on the Winnipiseogue between the Stevens and Aikens mills and the Sulloway and Winnipiseogue Paper mills. It incorporated in 1896, with A. W. Sulloway, James and Fred Aiken (sons of Walter), Michael Duffy (the Aikens’ superintendent), and George Shepard (a local furniture manufacturer) sitting on its board of directors. By 1899, the company employed 130 hands.

The various industries were impressive in that they brought prosperity to the town and reflected considerable ingenuity, but they did not inspire the sort of wondrous admiration that the pulp and paper mills did. Judith McGaw has shown that observers frequently described paper mills using what Leo Marx defined as the “rhetoric of the sublime.” Descriptions of Franklin’s
paper mills were no different. From 1840, when the *Farmer’s Monthly Visitor* described the intricacies of Peabody and Daniell’s Fourdrinier, into the 1870s and even later, Franklin’s pulp and paper mills attracted attention for their size and complexity, more so than the town’s other industries.

Descriptions of the mills focused on the quantitative: size and speed of machines and dimensions of buildings. Reporters described the mills using adjectives such as “massive” and “magnificent,” attempting to capture the wondrous qualities of the mills. For example, in 1874, the *Merrimack Journal* described a new Fourdrinier machine that the Winnipiseogee Paper Company was installing in the recently rebuilt Daniell Mill:

The magnificent new Fourdrinier in the Winnipiseogee Paper Co.’s mill No. 2, is almost ready to start into full work. The sixty-two inch machine which was removed to give the new ninety-six inch machine place, [sic] has been sent to Bellows Falls to do duty in the great Russell mill in that place. The first-class sixty-two inch machine, nearly new, which stands by the side of this magnificent piece of work, looks in comparison like a mere model for the Patent Office. We stated recently that it was built at the Russell Paper Co.’s shop in Lawrence. It is the largest and the handsomest Fourdrinier we have ever seen, and our personal observation embraces about all the first-class paper mills in the country. We will not venture to speak of its cost, but dare to say that the four great press rolls have not cost less than $2,000 each, in their places, in running order. . . . This great mill contains 16 first-class engines [beaters], some of them of the largest size, and two Jordans. It contains two rotary bleaches, and two Fourdriniers already noticed.147

Further, in 1879, when the Winnipiseogee Paper Co. rebuilt the first pulp mill, the *Journal* noted the size of the new timbers: “The Winnipiseogee Paper Company are putting some immense timber into their reconstructed pulp mill. Some of the timbers measure 12 x 14 inches, are 36 feet long, and weigh 70 pounds to the cubic foot.”148 In 1880, when the paper company replaced a rotary bleach at the old Fisher-Aiken mill, the *Journal* noted the spectacle of the new machinery passing through the streets:

We have had occasion, lately, several times to speak of improvements going on at the mills of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company. This week they are replacing the iron “bleach” at the upper mill by a larger one. the massive iron vat or tank, some nine tons in weight, loaded upon a stout truck and drawn by several yoke of oxen, passed through the street, Tuesday, attracting much attention. The new bleach which takes its place is about twice the capacity, and weighs nearly fifteen tons.149

In 1883, when the paper company began work rebuilding dams at the lower paper mill
and Sulloway mill as well as the Cross Pulp Mill, the Journal emphasized the volume of materials used in both mills:

The thirty men on the dam at No. 2 paper-mill will use 60,000 feet of timber, 20,000 feet of plank, 5000 pounds of iron, 1500 pounds ship’s spikes and 1000 pounds cut spikes in rebuilding the dam under the direction of Mr. A. P. Richardson, from West Chesterfield, up in Cheshire county. Mr. D. Ned Davis is time-keeper for the help at this and the Cross pulp dam. Both dams will probably be completed before August. The figures above may be applied to the material to be used on the Cross dam. Hon. A. W. Sulloway will put in a new pen-stock to supply power for his hosiery mill.150

The Journal even highlighted the amount of timber that the mills used for pulp. In 1883, the Journal noted, “Over 1,500,000 feet of spruce and poplar have been sent from Warren to the pulp mills in Franklin this spring. . . .”151

As a paper town at the headwaters of the Merrimack River, Franklin was an exception to the regional patterns of industrial development. The Merrimack River was the heart of the textile industry, and even mill towns in central New Hampshire not on the river were predominantly textile towns. Paper manufacturing was closely allied to textiles but still demanded different machinery and different skills from its workers. In the 1870s and 1880s, the mills were the source of considerable pride. Franklin seemed to locals to be reaching its destiny. The town was at forefront of two industries, wood pulp and hosiery, and was significant for its role in starting both industries. Its industrial greatness seemed to have been foretold by two points: it was the birthplace of Daniel Webster, whose sublime greatness was rooted in the town’s soil, and that it was at the headwaters of the Merrimack, New England’s great industrial river. Indeed, it seemed fitting that W. F. Daniell owned the land around the confluence of the Winnipesaukee and Pemigewasset Rivers, what locals called the “Crotch.” By the 1890s, people in Franklin liked to say that the Merrimack began, “Back o’ Warren Daniell’s barn.”152 This was true geographically, but townspeople took it as a point of pride that the Winnipiseogee Paper Company was the uppermost industry on the Merrimack.
Bellows Falls

In 1869, Bellows Falls greeted W. A. Russell enthusiastically. Development in the village had always depended on capital from outside the village, and community leaders had no anxiety about development by people from outside the community. The prosperity of the village had been faltering for more than twenty years, and community leaders were eager for anything that would bring prosperity. The canal, used from navigation from 1802 through the 1840s had been unusable for more than a decade. The village had been home to a paper mill from 1802 until 1846, when it burned and the business failed. The canal was a fine potential source of power. It created a fifty-two foot drop, but most of the power was unused. There were small shops—a gristmill, sawmill, peg mill, furniture and scythe snath factories, and a machine shop and foundry—but nothing of the scale of the Daniell, Aiken, Sulloway, or Franklin mills. The scythe snath shop and machine shop, as well as the Hartford Sorghum Machine Company, a manufacturer of sap evaporators working out of a livery stable on Bridge Street, were forerunners of important industries. The scythe snath factory would enlarge and remain in town until 1923, and the Hartford Sorghum Machine Company would change its name to the Vermont Farm Machine Company in 1872, and would become the largest farm machine company in the country. There were ruins of mills—the foundation of the paper mill that had burned in 1846 and the textile mill that had been under construction when the Panic of 1837 stopped work. In 1869, however, Bellows Falls offered great potential. There was a dam, even if it needed to be rebuilt, a canal that only needed to be improved, and a canal company, that like the Turners Falls Company, could be changed from a navigation to a power company. The power company was in a transitional state, having been sold twice in several years. Further, the potential waterpower was impressive, and certainly enough to turn many turbines.

The potential power of the Connecticut was one reason mill owners had not used the river: the power was more than any shop needed. The canal in Bellows Falls had helped control the power, but there were more mills on tributaries to the Connecticut than there were on the river.
itself. The area’s first paper maker, Bill Blake had started on the Cold River in Alstead, New Hampshire, and eventually moved to the Saxtons River.\textsuperscript{157} Similarly, there were woolen mills on the Saxtons River, in Cambridgeport, and in the village of Saxtons River.\textsuperscript{158} There were also mills on the Williams River, north of Bellows Falls in the village of Bartonsville. In 1861, Albert C. Moore built a straw wrapping paper mill there and operated it for eight years, until the flood of October 1869 changed the course of the river and left the mill idle.\textsuperscript{159}

Floods were a persistent worry. The Connecticut tended to flood less than the smaller rivers, but as long as mills were small and had modest demands for power, developing the waterpower did not justify the capital expense of building on the Connecticut. The size of the operation the Russell envisioned, and the waterpower that the pulp grinders demanded, justified the expense of developing the dam and canal in Bellows Falls. The tendency of the smaller rivers to flood—and even change their course—further justified developing the waterpower in Bellows Falls.

The river flooded only a week after Russell signed his first lease in 1869. Russell’s arrival and spring freshet of 1869 came in the same issue of the \textit{Bellows Falls Times}. In the middle of April the river, swollen by the melted snow upstream, burst over its banks. On April 23, 1869, the \textit{Bellows Falls Times} reported, “The old paper mill site near the grist mill, and owned by Jabez Hills, has been leased for ten years, to a couple of gentlemen from Massachusetts, W. A. Russell and Gustavus B. Maynadier. They have already commenced erecting a building thereon, for the manufacture of paper material, or stock out of poplar, are said to be enterprising men, and their project will be a desirable acquisition to the business of the place.”\textsuperscript{160} In another column, in an article titled “The Flood of 1869--Damage to Railroads, Accidents, &c.” the paper reported again, “The old paper mill site, just rented to new parties for a mill, is entirely under water, and of course all work on the foundation for the new building is suspended.”

Damage caused by the flood was relatively minor. The worst damage was to the firm of Tarbell and Tolman, who operated a lumberyard and sash and blind factory. The flood swept
away lumber that they stored close to the river. The small shops, particularly the scythe snath shop, had their first floors flooded and had to suspend business. Irish families living in shanties by the Eddy (which the newspaper reported included the John Brosnahan, Mike Finn, and Patrick Cray families) had to tie down their shanties to keep them from being carried away. The Vermont Valley Railroad at the southern end of the village washed out, taking a southbound train from Montreal with it. The railroad tunnel passing under the town Square flooded and rail service had to be suspended. Townspeople blocked the tunnel with sandbags to prevent water from the canal further damaging the mills “under the hill.” In the end, however, the flood, though dramatic, was less severe than townspeople expected. The water came to about eighteen inches of the high water mark, set in 1862.

The damage to the pulp mill was minor. The new foundation was underwater for a few days, and work could not proceed until two weeks later. Ideally, a site would have both excellent waterpower and be immune to floods, but in this case, the flood was not catastrophic. It slowed the work on the pulp mill for a few weeks, but soon Russell was building at full speed. He had begun work on the foundation immediately, and by May 7, he had begun again and had the timbers for the frame of the building on the ground. He worked steadily through the summer and into the fall.

In October, when the mill was nearly ready to open, torrential rains caused the Connecticut to flood again. While water levels on the Connecticut did not reach even the April levels, the flood caused much more severe damage and killed people in Brattleboro, the West River valley town of Jamaica, and the Black River towns of Springfield, Reading, Weathersfield, and Felchville. At the worst part of the storm, the Bellows Falls Times reported, “The rain not only fell in torrents, but entirely repudiating all ordinary forms of storms or showers seemingly turned into thousands of water spouts, and for over half an hour these spouts poured down upon us more water than was ever known to fall before in same length of time.”

The worst of the damage, however, was not on the Connecticut, but on the Saxtons and Williams Rivers, farther north on the Black and Quechee River, and south on West River. The
swollen rivers washed away dams and bridges, flooded mills, and washed out roads. The village of Bartonsville received severe damage, for the storm caused the Williams River there to change course, leaving A. C. Moore’s paper mill without waterpower. According to the Times, the damage in Bellows Falls was almost more comic than anything else. After the storm, the Connecticut was covered with pumpkins and corn, washed from the farmers’ fields. A bear that lawyer J. D. Bridgman kept in a cage on his trout pond above the village was swept down the hill and into the river, where someone extended a pole and rescued it. The Connecticut did not rise even to the level of the freshet of the previous spring, and it crested three feet below the high water mark of 1862. The worst damage, again, was to Frost and Derby’s Scythe Snath shop and Tarbell and Tolman’s sash and blind factory and lumberyard. For the second time in the year, the boom holding the logs at the sawmill broke and Tarbell and Tolman lost their stock.¹⁶³

Within the space of six months, Russell had two tests of the safety of his waterpower, and came through both unfazed. The mills on the surrounding streams all suffered, but the mills in Bellows Falls were relatively safe. It appeared that Russell had found waterpower that was both abundant and safe. On November 12, 1869, about a month after the second flood, the Bellows Falls Times announced that the construction of the pulp mill was completed and that the mill had gone “into operation last week.” The construction of the mill and the reconstruction of the dam was, as the Times wrote, “under the direction and in charge of Mr. E. P. Dolloff, of Lawrence, Mass. . . .”¹⁶⁴ Dolloff built the mill, installed the machinery, improved the canal, and rebuilt the dam, and operated it under the direction of Russell and Maynadier.

At first, the operation was small, employing “about twenty-five hands.” If the number of workers per grindstone was the same as it was in Franklin, the Bellows Falls mill would have had fifteen stones, and made between three and four tons of pulp per day. The mill would run “throughout the year,” barring low water in the summer (when mills traditionally shut down for repairs) and ice in the winter. The employees would work two shifts, or “tours” as paper makers called them, around the clock. Despite its modest size, the mill caused a bit of excitement locally. The newspaper reported that the mill had “attracted many visitors,” who watched the wood being
ground and formed into large sheets of pulp, called “laps” by paper makers. The reporter wrote, “The wood (poplar, no other is used) is ground upon stones, and is fed into the machinery as you would feed a stove, and in a very short time comes out in large sheets of paper pulp, ready to be put into bales and sent off to the paper mill where it is mixed half and half with rags and manufactured into paper.”165 The paper did not report who bought the pulp. There was no paper mill yet in Bellows Falls. There were mills south of Bellows Falls, in Putney, and then farther south in Holyoke and Springfield, as well as Russell’s main mill in Lawrence.

The newspaper editor was understandably excited. His purpose was to boost the interests of the village: he would not have reported indifference. Yet, the paper reported the excitement of spectators at the mills with such consistency over the next few decades that the enthusiasm seems sincere. The amount of work that Russell undertook, improving the canal, rebuilding the dam, and developing the mill district, and the amount of capital he had already invested in the project, portended good fortune for the village. The newspaper concluded, “There has been built up the past season, a larger business interest in this village than before for a long time, and is not only valuable of itself, but also for the promise of the future enterprise of the canal property which is likely to follow.”166

In Bellows Falls, Russell followed the conventional wisdom that Carl Hofmann noted in his Practical Treatise, for he chose waterpower that was abundant and apparently free from danger during floods.167 Russell undertook the building with determination and vision, and more important, plenty of capital. Unlike the mill in Franklin, where Russell worked with local mill owners as well as a paper trading firm for his capital, the mill in Bellows Falls seems to have been a family affair. W. A. Russell was the guiding force of the mill, but he had the financial backing of his father, William, his uncle, Willard Russell, and his brothers and first cousins, all of whom were engaged in the family’s mills in Lawrence. In 1871, the Bellows Falls Times began to refer to the family simply as the “Messrs. Russell.”168 Russell took control of as much of the operation as possible. So far he only leased the mill property and water rights, but he controlled the Canal Company. In the summer of 1869, he bought a controlling interest in the company, and
was elected its president. As the reporter in the *Times* put it, Russell and Maynadier were “men of enterprise as well as means.”

The development of Bellows Falls was considerably more challenging than the work in Franklin. Dolloff improved the dam and canal enough to provide power to the pulp mill, but both the canal and the dam needed more substantial rebuilding, especially after withstanding two floods in the space of six months. Bellows Falls had no mill buildings in which Russell could set up shop; he had to build whatever he needed, and he had to blast the solid rock at the base of the falls to build foundations. Jabez Hills leased the mill site and waterpower to Russell for ten years, so at least for the duration of Hills’s life (he died in the fall of 1871), Russell did not have complete control of the industrial district of the village. While Russell was setting up the Winnipiseogee Paper Company and making newspaper for the *Boston Herald*, in Bellows Falls he was improving the dam, clearing debris from the canal and deepening it, clearing the Island, and blasting rocks. In many cases, the *Times* was quick to point out, he helped with the manual labor himself.

Russell’s most pressing problem was the canal. This was Bellows Falls’s greatest asset—without it the falls were useless for anything but shad-fishing or sightseeing—but it had been undercapitalized since its construction seventy years before, and increasingly since the railroad had replaced it as a means of transportation in the 1840s, its owners had allowed it to go to ruin. With the pulp company working, Russell set to making improvements on the waterpower. He began work in May 1870, when he contracted with a lumber company for two million board feet of logs to be used for rebuilding the dam. The drive began down the Connecticut about May 20. The dam builder, S. Dockman of Lawrence, Massachusetts was at work by the end of July. He and a group of about eighty men diverted the water from canal, leaving the mills idle, and began clearing and deepening the canal. They worked through the summer, finishing in the middle of September. The rebuilt dam and canal, the *Times* predicted, “will add largely to the water power of the canal.”

Russell was eager to create in Bellows Falls the sort of concentration of industries and
skilled workers that Franklin enjoyed, and the improvements to the canal were part of this plan. In February 1871, the Times advertised the improvements in the canal to “capitalists and enterprising men.” The paper reported, “There has never been so good an opportunity for starting business, or investing capital in manufacturing in this place, as at the present time. The managers of the Canal Co. by the rebuilding of the Canal, have brought into the place a large amount of waterpower not now in use, and to which shops and manufactories could be attached or built, for almost any purpose.” It concluded, “Particularly we would call their attention to the fact of the abundance of waterpower when so many mills and factories are stopping or in want elsewhere.” Russell ran the Bellows Falls Canal Company like the Franklin Falls Company, selling mill sites and erecting buildings for potential industrialists. He particularly wanted to clean up the area around the gristmill, scythe snath shop, and pulp mill, by replacing the haphazard little shops with modern, well-planned and constructed buildings, and by providing mill sites and power to larger enterprises.

In March 1871, the Times reported the plans of the Messrs. Russell for the spring. Most important would be the construction of two paper mills. One would be fairly small, built by A. C. Moore, whose mill had been left useless when the Williams River changed its course in the flood of October 1869. The plans for the other mill were still vague. The reporter for the Times noted, “Another mill will also be built by other parties, but it is not decided who will carry on the business or the kind of paper they will make.” Clark and Chapman, founders and machinists, had announced the previous spring that they were moving to Turners Falls, and Russell announced that their shop would be enlarged and their work would be continued by a firm from Lawrence, Osgood and Barker. The reporter concluded his article by assuring the readers, “The above projects are not imaginary but are already being carried out by the enterprising proprietors and give good promise of the business ahead.”

It was obvious that the Russells, as the Times put it, “mean business,” for they were not only blasting rocks for foundations, but were installing a steam drill on the rocks on the eastern side of the canal, for the second paper mill. The Times described the spectacle of the drill:
The New England Wood Pulp Co., have put in a steam drill on the rocks east of the saw mill, which seems to work finely. It is driven by steam brought in iron pipes from the engine at the pulp mill a distance of some 300 feet. The last few feet the steam is conducted in a rubber pipe or hose. It was put in operation on Monday and attracted probably a larger crowd than ever assembled before on those rocks.\(^{180}\)

The Times was impressed with the Russells’ seriousness and energy. The amount of work and money they were investing in the village—and the fact that they were physically reshaping the industrial district of the village—was irrefutable proof that the village was finally living up to the potential that the falls promised. The Times was consistently impressed with the Russells, whom the paper praised, noting they “talk but little, but execute much.” They “bring with them,” the paper noted, “the true Bay State enterprise.”\(^{181}\) Albert N. Swain, the editor of the paper had been the editor and publisher of the Times since 1856, and had heard over the years a steady refrain of complaint that the waterpower in Bellows Falls was going to waste. He was quick to point out in columns the disappointment over the cotton mill that had been started in the 1830s but had never risen above its foundation.\(^{182}\) The ruins of that foundation were both a picturesque feature of the riverbank and an embarrassment, a reminder of the failed schemes that prevented Bellows Falls from transforming itself from a small railroad and market town into the industrial city that waterpower should have allowed. Bellows Falls in 1871 was trying hard to live down a reputation for poverty. For example, when in March of 1871 a corpse washed up on the banks of the Connecticut in Brattleboro, twenty miles south of Bellows Falls, the paper noted humorously, “A wag at Brattleboro says that the fact that there was a small sum of money with the dead body recently found at that place, is evidence that the body did not come from Bellows Falls!”\(^{183}\)

It was evident, to A. N. Swain at least, in the spring and summer of 1871 that the fortunes of Bellows Falls were improving, thanks largely to the enterprising spirit of the Messrs. Russell. By July of 1871, it was becoming clearer what the Russells were doing on the rocks along the canal. While they were building A. C. Moore’s paper mill, they were raising a large building, one hundred by forty-two feet, with three-stories on the north end and four on the south. Into this building they would move the small woodworking shops—a chair factory, Tolman’s sash and
blind works, a “wood shop,” and a turning shop—that had formerly been spread out on the lower reaches of the canal. Russell provided the shops with waterpower. With the small shops concentrated into one building, Russell could then shut the water out of the canal, and improve it once again. This time, he removed the old locks, converting the lower end of the canal into a flume for conveying power to mill sites. The Times described the work. “Soon all the canal,” it reported, “from the old lower locks up to the lower guard gate will be one continuous flume, and below the old sash and blind shops, it is covered tight like a pent-stock. This will give a large amount of space for storage or other use if wanted, and already one half of it is completed and makes a very respectable Hoosac tunnel to look at inside.”

With the improved waterpower, the canal was ready to provide power to A. C. Moore’s mill, the second paper mill, and other mill sites that the Canal Company had yet to develop. The improvement of the flume, and removal of the locks divided the industrial district into two distinct sections. Local people had long called the area around the locks as “under the hill,” but the flume formalized the division between “under the hill” and the island. Mill Street descended the bank at the South end of the Square, giving access to the mills “under the hill”—including the pulp mill, wood working shops, foundry and machine shop, and A. C. Moore’s new mill, while Bridge Street, heading east from the South end of the Square, gave access to the mills on the Island.

Besides the improvements to the canal, the Times also reported on the organization of the two paper mills. A. C. Moore’s mill, which he operated with Charles H. Shepley, of Fitchburg, would be a fairly small operation: he would make straw wrapping paper on the cylinder machine he had used in his Bartonsville mill. They simply moved and enlarged one of the old shop buildings. The other paper mill, for which the Russells had installed the steam drill on the rocks east of the canal, was much more impressive. The Times described it:

The plan of the other paper mill for which a foundation has been blasted out of the rocks during the season, has been considerably enlarged since our announcement of it in the spring. Instead of being built of wood it will be of brick and the walls are already commenced, and when completed will probably be the largest paper mill at least in this
section of New England. It is 170 feet long and 45 wide. An ell 30 by 40 is also to be built to it for the steam boiler and drying purposes of the mill. It is understood that the Messrs. Russell will carry on the business of this mill and that they will manufacture both manilla and print paper.  

The scale of the Russells’ new mill was impressive. It was larger than the two mills in Franklin combined, and of more substantial construction. The paper reported that the industrial section of Bellows Falls was undergoing a complete transformation. “Most of the old landmarks,” the Times gushed, “will soon disappear . . .” from the Island. The effusive boosterism of the Times was hardly an exaggeration.

The Times was effusive, and it continued its praise of the Canal Company in its next issue. The company had developed, besides what it was already using for the mills and shops, “several fine privileges, which with the abundance of waterpower, make them among the best in New England.” The paper continued:

Several of the best sites for a factory are still left, among them the old factory foundation, and another very excellent one between the two paper mills. With the never failing water drawn directly from the new Canal, it is a manufacturing privilege rarely equaled anywhere. Improvements on the sites will be exempt from taxation for five years, besides the advantageous terms which have been secured with the railroads for freight from this place to Boston and New York. We believe it to be a rare chance for manufacturers and, desiring always to note those things likely to contribute to the welfare of our village and the building up of its material interests, we invite all such to come here and look for themselves. We are sure no better opportunity can be found at this time in New England.

Russell had manage to secure rates on the railroad that made shipping from Bellows Falls to New York or Boston cheaper than from Lawrence or Lowell.

One critic, a correspondent who signed himself “Harry’s Boy,” viewing Bellows Falls from the industrial center of Rutland, was not impressed with what he saw. He admitted that the village was cute, and “laid away . . . prettily and carefully” in the narrow valley, like a “piece of ham” between “two pieces of bread.” It was a place, however, where people “learn to labor and to wait.” Harry’s Boy wrote:

For more than a hundred years it has been the delight of the residents to expatiate on the tremendous water power which the Connecticut presents to the capitalist.—Before steam came to play so important a part, the Connecticut amounted to a great deal; but the people hereabouts do not take steam-power into account, for they cling to the falls—the water-
power—and the want of enterprise of New England people in putting the water to turning
and twisting a few hundred, or a great many thousand spindles.\textsuperscript{189}

The correspondent had been watching Bellows Falls for thirty years, serving as some sort
of assessor: it was his task to make an annual visit to Bellows Falls to “look at the foundation of
the big cotton mill which was to have been, but which has never been built.”\textsuperscript{190}

The problem Harry’s Boy saw in the development of industry was that the people of
Bellows Falls were small-minded, provincial, gossipy, superstitious, lazy, and gullible to
schemers who promised much but delivered little. The village, and the villagers, he argued, had
changed very little in thirty years. They still gathered in the Square in the morning “to discuss the
merits and demerits of their neighbors.” They were inordinately proud of their meager
accomplishments. They still spoke with “a great deal of local pride” about a steamboat that made
a run north from Bellows Falls about 1831. The boat, Harry’s Boy claimed, ran aground in
Charlestown, N. H., twelve miles above Bellows Falls, and spent the rest of its life tied up. The
stockholders, he wrote, were still “anxiously waiting” for “a new steamboat to take the place of
the old one.” Similarly, the “go ahead people of the village” still pointed to the old and
dilapidated canal “with as much pride and satisfaction as a modern Greek points out the Colussus
of Rhodes.” The fact that no boats, or rafts of logs or shingles passed through the locks was
unimportant for “the memory of the busy scenes once there enacted is is sufficient in the eyes of
the legal voters to atone for their present quietness.”\textsuperscript{191}

The problems of the village could mostly be attributed to the character of the people.
Bellows Falls was the sort of village, Harry’s Boy claimed, where residents thought the
construction of a “guide board” on the highway was needless expense, because “everybody in
town knows the roads well enough”; where “sewing circles” condemned young families for not
having children, or for having too many; where a man was considered miserly if he did not have a
codfish on Friday, and extravagant if he did. The one improvement in the life of the village that
the correspondent saw was that the banker now did business in the bank, instead of from his
favorite fishing spot on the canal. “Years ago,” he wrote, “one wanting money on his own or
another’s paper, was obliged to visit the foot of the canal, where, seated on a pine log, the cashier of the bank, from a pocket equally filled with fish hooks, fish worms and bank bills, discounted the farmers note.” Finally, Harry’s Boy condemned the village’s conservatism, its “pull-back notions.” He concluded, “Imagine yourself a hundred men pushing a good idea ahead, and you have something pleasant to look upon; but change the scene to a hundred pulling it back, and you have a faint view of Bellows Falls—minus the idea.”

Harry’s Boy seemed ill informed for 1871; if there was opposition to the Russells, this is the only hint of it in the Times. In his visit to the cotton mill foundation, he doubtless noticed the steam drill working a few rods away, nor could he have missed the fact that the dilapidated locks on the canal were gone—the Times published a notice that the work on the flume was completed the week before it printed the letter from Harry’s Boy. Still, his concern, that business in Bellows Falls had seldom amounted to anything more than scheming, was justified—the stern-wheeler, canal, and cotton mill foundation were ample evidence—but he failed to notice that business leaders of the village, including A. N. Swain, J. D. Bridgman, and James H. Williams, the bank president, were eagerly “pushing a good idea ahead,” and that the chief promoter of the idea, W. A. Russell, spent his time building while remaining silent about schemes for the future.

Certainly for Swain, the energy and determination of the Russells was prodigious. They finished the work of removing the canal locks at the beginning of August, but by the end of the month began more canal work. This time the paper announced, “The Messrs. Russell have decided to open the old and unfinished canal begun in 1836 and leading east to the old factory foundation. To do this they have to blast many feet through solid rock and the work is already begun. This will open and make available one of the very best waterpower privileges in New England.” With the increase in waterpower and the construction of the two paper mills, the Messrs. Russell were quickly transforming Bellows Falls from a village with a small pulp mill into a village that was chiefly identified with pulp and paper. Except for brief shutdowns because of ice or construction, the pulp mill had worked steadily since November of 1869. Russell added machines to it in the spring of 1871, adopting the system of making pulp in wet boards instead of
laps. The Times commented that the “the long line of cylinder machines, with girls, laying, packing, and counting at the end,” made the pulp mill “appear like a complete paper mill.”

Within the space of two years, the pulp mill had become an important part of village life. When, for example, the Russells reopened the canal in August, the paper commented, “the whistle of the pulp mill resumed its original sovereignty this Thursday morning.”

Finally, in November of 1871, A. C. Moore and Charles Shepley announced that they were almost ready to open their mill. For the first time in twenty-five years, a mill in Bellows Falls was making paper.

The business interests of Bellows Falls received an unexpected boost in September of 1871, when Jabez Hills died. Hills had effectively controlled the fortunes of Bellows Falls since the old paper mill burned, and although he had been generous to Russell, his death potentially opened up more business opportunities. Hills had allowed the industrial development of the Island, but he also owned much of the Square, including the ruins of the American House hotel, which had burned in 1857, as well as other valuable commercial property. The death of Hills created opportunity, and on February 1, 1872, the town of Rockingham registered Russell’s deed to the Hills property in the industrial district of the village.

There was another flurry of industrial building in the spring of 1872. The first change was inauspicious. For several years, the Hartford Sorghum Machine Company had made sap evaporators on a small scale in a barn owned by the hotelkeeper, Charles Townes. In February of 1872, the company changed its name to the Vermont Farm Machine Company. In the same month, three paper manufacturers from Putney, Vermont, John T. Moore, John Robertson, and Charles E. Robertson, bought a mill site under the hill, between the new Moore and Shepley mill and the gristmill, on the site of the old foundry building. Russell built a new foundry and machine shop for Osgood and Barker, and connected it to their new, 170-foot long mill on the Island. In April, the Arms family (Edward, Aaron, and Otis), merchants from Bellows Falls, and O. H. Black announced that they would build a paper mill—called the Rockingham Paper Company—to the east of Moore and Shepley’s mill.

The new mills took shape through the spring, summer, and fall of 1872. The largest mill,
the Fall Mountain Paper Company, as the Messrs. Russell now called it, was nearing completion. By the end of April, they had installed much of the machinery for the mill—the beater engines, Jordan refiners, bleaches, and probably at least one cylinder machine—and the mill was making paper. They were installing “Fourdrinier machinery which includes numerous and very expensive brass press rollers some of which weigh a ton each.”\textsuperscript{203} The \textit{Times} made special note of the machinery, pointing out that it had been made in Russell’s shops in Lawrence, and had parts that his engineers had invented, such as the automatic steam regulator, which adjusted the speed of the paper web according to the heat of the drying cylinders. The paper declared that the mill would have “the very best machinery (it is probably not too much to say) in the world.”\textsuperscript{204}

Besides finishing the paper mill, the Messrs. Russell were increasing the size and production of the pulp mill. In June W. A., William, and Willard Russell joined with the local bank president, James H. Williams, to form the Bellows Falls Paper Company.\textsuperscript{205} They bought and enlarged the pulp mill, adding machines for the manufacture of cardboard. The paper noted proudly, their “business enterprise never seems to tire.”\textsuperscript{206} At the same time the new Fall Mountain Paper Company mill was nearing completion, work was progressing quickly on the other new mills. The Rockingham Paper Company was larger than either the A. C. Moore and Shepley or the Robertson and J. T. Moore mill. Measuring 150 by fifty feet, it had a larger footprint than the main block the Fall Mountain mill. The \textit{Times} reported that Arms and Black were building it in the “most solid manner.” The Robertson and Moore mill was smaller: the front block of the mill was of frame construction, and the rear block—the machine room of the mill—was built of brick. The \textit{Times} declared that despite its modest size, it would “be a smart one for business.”\textsuperscript{207} It began operation in October as a manilla paper mill; by the end of December, the Rockingham Paper Company was also turning out manilla paper.\textsuperscript{208}

These first mills were arrayed in a crescent shape from the base of the falls to the Eddy. On the Island, to the east was Russell’s large paper mill; across the flume to the west was Arms and Black’s Rockingham Paper Company; west of that, and canted to the south, was Moore and Shepley’s mill; to the south of that mill was the Robertson and Moore mill; south of that mill was
the gristmill and the woodworking shops; east of the gristmill was the pulp mill, with the Scythe Snath shop south of that. Architecturally, the mills lacked unity. The industrialists planned and built them individually without thinking of any sort of overall plan. If Harry’s Boy thought that the villagers clung to the falls, the mills presented that appearance. More precisely, they clung to rocks at the base of the falls and along the top of the Eddy. The growth of the mills over the next decade only increased that appearance, for the mills grew not so much by planning as by accretion.

The smaller mills under the hill changed little over the next few years. They improved their operations, turning out better quality and larger quantities of paper. A. C. Moore and Charles Shepley began making a fine quality white tissue paper. Virtually all the growth was in the mills owned by the Messrs. Russell, whose business enterprise really did seem inexhaustible. At the end of 1872, they added a large ell on the south end of the Fall Mountain mill, and built a second pulp mill for the Bellows Falls Paper Company. Over the next summer they built a large, brick storehouse at the southern end of the Square on Bridge Street. In June of 1873, they built a four-story building at the southern end of the mills under the hill, and into this they moved the Vermont Farm Machine Company, which had kept cramped quarters in a livery stable on Bridge Street.

In the summer of 1873, the Fall Mountain Paper Company was in full production. After experimenting with colored poster paper, by August they were producing newspaper, supplying the New York Herald and the Baltimore American. In August, Russell hired as “resident proprietor” of the new mill a paper maker probably with the most experience in making groundwood newspaper of anyone in the country, his friend from Franklin, A. H. Fisher. The Merrimack Journal noted his departure, writing that he had “gone to Bellows Falls, to take charge of William A. Russell’s splendid mill in that place, with an annual salary of $2500.”

Bellows Fall’s economic condition seemed charmed. W. A. Russell, almost single-handedly, was transforming the village into a major manufacturing center, planting mill buildings and physically reshaping the landscape. Russell had woken the village from a “Rip Van Winkle
sleep of twenty years,” as the East Douglas, Massachusetts Herald put it in 1872. The paper continued, noting that the village, “is giving indications of future greatness. It has long been celebrated for the beauty of its natural scenery, making it a favorite place of resort for summer visitors, and it is yet to become celebrated for its manufactures.” In 1873, the paper industry seemed immune to economic downturns. Building continued and manufacturing increased; at least that was what the newspaper claimed.

The paper, however, gave mixed messages. It announced in November of 1873 that the financial panic had not hit Bellows Falls, but eventually it had to have an impact on the village, for the village’s prosperity rested on its ability to sell its products. Four years after Russell began the industrial development of Bellows Falls, the fortunes of the village were already closely tied to those of Boston, New York, and Baltimore. If people could not pay for paper, the mills could not make it. In times of financial hardship, mills had to decrease production, cutting hours and occasionally shutting down machines. At the beginning of December, the paper admitted, “Moore and Shepley’s mill, we believe, is the only one in this place that has, up to present, continued to run on full time.” A month later, the paper reported, “We are beginning to see through the panic. People are again talking of building another season, and with the opening of spring, our village is likely to begin another building campaign.”

In 1875, however, the major industrial building slowed. The Russells enlarged their paper mill by increment rather than large projects. The company still undertook one large project: the construction of a new pulp mill, measuring forty by ninety feet. Even in hard times, however, the plant bustled, and by 1875, it had become an inscrutable maze of buildings haphazardly clustered along the canal and below the falls. In September, the Times reported, “This mill has become so extensive, that it has a labyrinth of avenues of ingress and egress through its entire 500 feet of length.” By 1876, the Fall Mountain Paper Company employed 125 people. In June of 1876, the Times reported that Paper Mill No. 1 of the Fall Mountain plant made fifty-six tons of paper in a week, including eighteen tons of manilla and thirty-eight of newspaper. The mill also produced three tons a week of cardboard for the Dennison
Manufacturing Company, a producer of cardboard tags. The *Times* consistently reported the bustle of the mills, noting in 1877, for example, “The Fall Mountain Paper Co. are importing large quantities of paper stock from Europe, and some days a whole procession of teams loaded with jute in bales may be seen going from the depot to the mill.” But growth of the plant came with building wings onto existing buildings more than in building new mills. In 1877, the company enlarged Paper Mill No. 1 with an addition eighteen by 100 feet to its western side. The *Times* commented, “This will be filled with machinery and make it the largest paper mill in the country, reaching from Bridge Street to the river or some 130 by 500 feet.” Finally, in the summer of 1879, the Fall Mountain Paper Company announced that it would replace its original pulp mill with a new, more substantial one. This began a second building campaign.

By the end of 1879, the *Times* reported that local industry had recovered from the depression that followed the Panic of 1873. The *Times* noted, “There has probably not been so busy a time in this place since 1873, as the present, especially in the finishing work on the new houses and buildings. The Fall Mountain Paper Co. are employing over 300 men inside and outside of their mills, and for small jobs workmen are scarce.” The major project was a new building for the Vermont Farm Machine Company. The *Times* noted in November of 1879, “It is to be four stories, brick, and is situated at the mouth of and over the old canal locks. The third story is now well under way, and over twenty men could be counted at work on it any day this week.” Although still small, the Vermont Farm Machine Company was becoming the village’s second industry, and its sap evaporators (used by many farmers making maple sugar) cream separators, and churns were receiving good notices. In 1879, the *Times* noted, “After three years’ trial the Cooley Creamers are pronounced the best apparatus for raising cream known to dairymen. . . .” In May 1879, the *Times* reported that the company employed between twenty and thirty men, and shipped between ten and twenty-five cream separators per day. The company was busy enough that it had outgrown the frame building at the southern end of the canal that had been its home since 1872. In 1878, the company threatened to move to a better location in Connecticut, and W. A. Russell, in his role as president of the Canal Company, agreed
to build the company a new building to keep it in town.\textsuperscript{230}

At four stories, the building would be the tallest one under the hill. The \textit{Times} noted in October that a flurry of bricklayers and hod carriers were building a foundation over the canal; by November three stories had been completed.\textsuperscript{231} The following summer the \textit{Times} wrote proudly of the completed factory:

All persons interested in the dairy and agriculture in general should pay a visit to the Vermont Farm machine Co.’s new buildings, where they may rest assured they will receive a hearty welcome and courteous treatment from all. . . . So much for Vermont enterprise. . . . None will regret the time spent in going through their shops, even if desiring to make no purchases.\textsuperscript{232}

In 1880, the paper mills grew northeast of the Vermont Farm Machine Company, along the banks of the river toward the falls. At the end of the 1879 and beginning of 1880, the Fall Mountain Paper Company built a new mill adjacent to the old textile mill foundation, drawing power from the flume that had been started for that unfinished mill. In February 1880, that flume burst, flooding the new mill.\textsuperscript{233} With waterpower opened up to that part of the Island, the firms of A. C. Moore and Aaron Arms as well as John Robertson and John T. Moore began to build mills. The \textit{Times} reported, “Messrs. Robertson, Moore & Co., began work on the foundation for their new mill on Tuesday, and with their work and that of Moore & Arms on their new mill, the site and surrounding of the old factory foundation of 1837 is a very lively and busy place, including some cannonading in the blasting of the rocks.”\textsuperscript{234}

The construction of mills for Moore and Arms and for Moore and Robertson marked a maturing of the mills. Immediately Russell and the Canal Company recognized that the increasing business of the mills created substantial congestion in the Square. The mills were convenient to the railroad, but teams had to pass through the Square to Mill Street, descend a steep hill, and cross the railroad to get to the mills. Moreover, the new mills by the old factory foundation were virtually inaccessible from the Square. To fix this problem, the Canal Company excavated the riverbank and added fill to make room for a new access road. The paper noted, “A large portion of the teaming for the mills will be done on this road way and thus save much of it
from being crowded into the Square.”

The building also changed the organization of the mills. Moore and Arms sold their old mill to Wyman Flint, a merchant who had operated a peg mill under the hill through the 1860s, and A. H. Fisher, who retired from the Fall Mountain Paper Company. Moore and Arms continued to build in 1881, adding a building for finishing, packing, and shipping. In 1881, John Robertson and John T. Moore dissolved their partnership. Robertson, working with his son Charles E., kept the new mill, where they made manilla tissue paper. John T. Moore continued to operate the old mill, making toilet paper, according to the Sanborn fire insurance map of 1885. With this corporate change, the assortment of mills under the hill and on the Island reached their final form. The Fall Mountain Paper Company was the largest manufacturer, while Moore, Arms and Thompson (Arms retired in 1891, leaving the firm named Moore and Thompson, which it remained until 1932) became the second-largest paper mill. Eventually the Robertson Paper Company became the third largest, while the John T. Moore, Wyman Flint, and Willard Russell mills remained small.

The Willard Russell mill was an exception to the rule of smaller mills. Willard Russell was W. A. Russell’s uncle. Like his brother, the elder William Russell, he had worked in Franklin early in his career, but unlike William, he worked in the Crane hand-made paper mill, and was for a time a partner in that mill. Willard, and his son, George K. Russell, were among the Messrs. Russell, but in 1873, they bought the Rockingham Paper Co. In the middle of the 1870s, the mill fell on hard times, for the Times noted in 1876 that the Russells would not operate the mill at night. Like the other small mills in town, the Willard Russell mill specialized in manilla papers. In 1878, the Times reported, “Willard Russell & Co., make some of the best wrapping paper to be had anywhere. For printer’s use it is especially strong and excellent.” In 1879, however, Willard, by that time over seventy years old, sold his interest to George K. Russell and retired. In 1881, George K. Russell built a pulp mill to supply his paper mill, the only pulp mill in town that was not part of the Fall Mountain Paper Company. The mill would stay outside of the much larger company until 1892 when George K. Russell retired.
The work of the Fall Mountain mill in the 1880s involved filling in the basic plan of the mills, enlarging and improving the plant. The Fall Mountain Paper Company replaced the original pulp mill in 1881. They added a skylight to one mill to brighten the machine room, and enlarged boiler rooms, adding to the steam used in the drying rolls and to heat the mills. By the end of 1882, they were forced substantially to rebuild the finishing room of one of the paper mills, after a fire caused $15,000 worth of damage.

As in Franklin in this period, coverage of building in this period focused on the size and magnificence of buildings and machinery. In 1883, for example, the Times reported,

A new chimney is now being laid for the Fall Mountain Paper Co., which will be by far the largest and tallest here. It was originally planned to be eleven feet square at the base and 120 feet in height but we are credibly informed that on completion it will reach nearer 140 feet, while the old one now standing beside it is only about 60 feet high. It is to supply draft for five new boilers which are to replace the three now in use and when it is completed the old chimney and boilers will be removed.

Builders soon discovered that the size of the base of the chimney would not allow it to rise to 140 feet, but still the paper commented, “The new chimney to the Fall Mountain Paper Mill looms up like Bunker Hill monument. It is now about 115 feet high and will only be carried up a few feet higher. . . . The few who have been to its present height say the view from it is exceedingly fine.” A photographer working for Frederick J. Blake, the leading photographer in town by this time, was one of the people who made the ascent, and he documented the view.

The next year, the paper reported, the company erected another smokestack, this time 115 feet. In 1885, the Times reported the spectacle of the boilers connected to this new chimney, noting the machinery in detail:

The Fall Mountain Paper Co. have just finished setting the last boiler in their new boiler house, furnishing a steam “plant” at which it is very interesting to look. The large double boiler, before mentioned, under which chips are used for fuel is in successful operation and a smaller one beside it is nearly ready for use. At the other side of the room are two large coal burners and between the two sets there is a small boiler in which the water used is heated by steam, from which the water is pumped into the boiler by a large double piston pump. In case this should fail for any cause, all the boilers can be filled by a steam injector. All four boilers are connected with the large chimney built last summer in which for a safe-guard against carelessness or accident, is placed an automatic steam damper, which shuts off the draft when the steam reaches a certain amount of pressure. It can be set at any desired point, but we believe is now arranged so as to be entirely closed at
seventy pounds pressure, except a small space at the edge to let out the gas and some of the smoke.\textsuperscript{253}

This detail, and the sense of scale and intricacy of the boilers was characteristic of what David E. Nye called the rhetoric of the technological sublime. The size, power, and inscrutability of the mechanics were all important aspects of this form of the sublime. The paper machines too continued to attract this type attention. In 1885, for example, the paper described a new Fourdrinier that the Fall Mountain Paper Company was installing:

The Fall Mountain Paper Co are placing in one of their mills what is believed to be the largest paper machine in the country. It is to be a Harper Fourdrinier machine over 140 feet long. The drive rolls are 54 inches in diameter and over 90 inches long. This machine is designed to for news paper, and makes three sheets at a time. It will cost about $20,000. And is a good representative of the enterprise that sets it in operation.\textsuperscript{254}

Here the size was important, but the cost was part of the sublimity of the machine. Even the beater engines that supplied pulp to the machine seemed sublime. The \textit{Times} reported, “The Fall Mountain Paper Company have just added two Gould Beating Engines to their mills. They are the largest sized Gould Engines manufactured and are to supply pulp for the new machine that is being set up this summer.”\textsuperscript{255}

The mills reached another level of maturity in 1885. By that time, the various paper companies had finished their improvements and had mostly reached their final form. The last major construction in this period was a new office built by the Fall Mountain Paper Company. The company had already built an irregularly shaped single-story building for storing paper stock, and by the end of 1885, it had added a second story. The \textit{Times} announced on December 17 that management had moved from its office in a storage building that fronted Bridge.\textsuperscript{256} The office gave a dramatic view down the river.

The eastern side of the mill complex was mostly complete. In 1890 the Fall Mountain Paper Company built a ground wood pulp mill beside the Robertson Paper Mill at the northeastern limits of the complex.\textsuperscript{257} The growth in the mill complex by this time, however, was taking place under the hill. In 1888, the company added a second story to two of its paper machine buildings.\textsuperscript{258} At the same time, the Vermont Farm Machine, with a workforce of 150
men, working around the clock, had outgrown its quarters again. The *Times* reported,

They have become so cramped and so short of room for their works that they are forced to at once consider the question of new quarters, even to the extremity of removing from town. This last must not be permitted if possible to arrest. Let us furnish a field here for them somewhere large enough their business, though it may grow to furnish two continents with their creamers.  

W. A. Russell responded to this threat again, this time organizing a building association that would raise money to build the Farm Machine Company new quarters. Russell, recognizing the value of the present shop for future expansion, decided to resettle the Farm Machine Company north on the Island, onto land that had served as a trotting park and gardens for the Island House resort hotel.  

With the Vermont Farm Machine Company relocated, Russell began to build a Sulphite pulp mill. It was in operation by the summer of 1889, and was gradually enlarged.  

Sanborn maps show that it took its final form between 1891 and 1896. Sanborn maps, produced every five years from 1885 until 1912 show that by 1891 the paper mill complex was mostly complete. As in Franklin and Turners Falls, after the Fall Mountain mill was merged into the International Paper Company, it remained virtually unchanged until the 1920s. Even in the other mills, changes were minor. The most dramatic change was a new office and storage building for the John T. Moore mill built in 1908. In 1916, Moore sold his mill to the International Paper Company, but by that time the Company was gradually shutting the big mill down, converting it from newsprint to coarse grades of paper using only cylinder paper machines.  

In thirty years the pulp and paper mills grew from infancy to maturity. In 1869, wood pulp technology was still in its experimental phase, at least in the United States. Voelter had made and patented machines, but American manufacturers had not yet figured out how they would use the technology, and they had not made enough wood pulp paper to be sure of a market for it. The stories how manufacturers developed the technology, risked fortunes, and ultimately developed markets are classic tales of late-nineteenth-century entrepreneurialism.  

Turners Falls, Franklin, and Bellows Falls had different approaches to this
industrialization although they used the same technology and were connected through common people. Both Bellows Falls and Turners Falls were linked to Franklin. In Turners Falls, Alvah Crocker had learned the paper trade in Franklin, and Franklin capitalists, namely George Nesmith invested in the new village. Moreover, Bulkley and Dunton, the paper sellers in New York, invested in both places. Similarly, Bellows Falls was linked to Franklin through the Russell family, and from 1869 until 1892, the Russells owned controlling interests in mills in both towns.

The industrialists, however, approached mill building differently in each town. Some of the reason for this was doubtless geographical. The Winnipesaukee River had no single falls, but a mile and a half of rapids that allowed the Franklin Falls Company to build a series dams. This kept the industry in town decentralized. There, W. A. Russell and W. F. Daniell used an industrial infrastructure that had been built beginning in the 1820s and enlarged in the 1860s. Russell built mills by buying and enlarging old mills, and then gradually building new ones at several places on the Winnipesaukee, east of Franklin Falls. On the Connecticut River, the waterpower companies started with old navigation canals, which, when they were converted for power, created one shear drop. This power source created distinct industrial districts. Despite this, the industrial districts in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls developed very differently. Turners Falls resembled industrial cities such as Holyoke more than Bellows Falls. The canal in Turners Falls created a strip of land between the canal and the river. Because Turners Falls was a new village in the late 1860s, engineers laying out the village and mill sites could design the village from scratch. Moreover, the lay of the riverbank and canal encouraged a linear development, with industry neatly arrayed along the length of the village. Turners Falls was a planned village, and both the village and its industry followed the design of their designer W. P. Crocker, who was by training a hydraulic engineer.

Developers in Bellows Falls probably could have worked out a similar orderly design, but they chose not to. While the falls in Turners Falls formed a right angle in the river, in Bellows Falls they were part of an oxbow. The mill district was mostly within the bulge created by this oxbow. The falls created a rocky flood plain that developers blasted for mill sites. When W. A.
Russell built his first pulp mill in Bellows Falls, he did not own the land, but had to build on a mill site that he only leased. The shape of the land—and the extent to which he could reshape it—but also financial conditions and his own larger interests guided his development. The result was that the mills in Bellows Falls developed with the appearance of a disordered maze of pulp and paper mills. The Fall Mountain Paper Company plant was massive: the Bellows Falls Times estimated in 1899 that the floor space of the plant was about 200,000 square feet.²⁶⁴ Russell’s Fall Mountain Paper Company was the dominant mill, but by the 1890s, a total of six companies shared the land at the south end of the Island and under the hill. The Times described the mills in 1899, noting that the smaller mills were “Clustered around the original mill, like children around a parent. . . .”²⁶⁵ Bellows Falls, wrote J. H. Walbridge in the Times, was the “great paper-making center of northern New England.”²⁶⁶

Of the three towns, Bellows Falls had the largest paper mill complex. In 1885 the Times reported that it was the largest wood pulp paper producer in the country, and the second largest paper producer, after Holyoke.²⁶⁷ In terms of taxes, the paper mills and waterpower companies—which were in all cases controlled by the management of the paper companies—were more valuable than any other single industry. None of the towns, however, was a single-industry town. Franklin was significant as a pioneering producer of hosiery and as a producer of knitting machines and the latch needles those machines used.

Bellows Falls, J. H. Walbridge wrote in the Times, “is a paper town, . . .” but Russell recognized the importance of a diversified local economy.²⁶⁸ The Vermont Farm Machine Company was the second industry in town. By 1900, the company employed 200 people and produced the biggest selling cream separator in the country.²⁶⁹ The village supported several other industries, including Osgood and Bradley’s machine shop, which manufactured paper machinery and Derby and Ball scythe snath factory. Other industries came and went: in 1893, William A. Hall, a nephew of W. A. Russell and a former machine tender and foreman for the Fall Mountain Paper Company, founded the Casein Company of North America at the south end of the village; in 1908, P. H. Gobie’s Bellows Falls and Vicinity Illustrated advertised a pulp
In 1875, Albert Derby, one of the owners of the scythe snath factory, also opened a watch key factory, and various times different companies operated clothing factories. There were other mills and factories convenient to the village. In 1891, the firm of Guild and Wetherbee opened a small manilla paper mill just south of the town line between Bellows Falls and the town of Westminster, and adjoining the Casein Company. West of Bellows Falls in the hamlet of North Westminster, Sidney Gage operated a basket factory. The various other industries, however, were small compared with the paper mills. For example, in 1893, the Fall Mountain Paper Company paid $437,000 in local property taxes, the Canal Company paid $125,400, Moore and Thompson paid $83,000, and even W. A. Russell paid $45,700, but the Vermont Farm Machine Company paid $10,000.

Turners Falls was more like Franklin than Bellows Falls in terms of the relative importance of industries besides paper. Alvah Crocker was perhaps more opportunistic than other industrialists. While a paper maker by trade, Crocker was chiefly a promoter. Russell was a paper manufacturer who went in search of mill sites with adequate potential for making wood pulp, but Crocker want to build a town that would exploit the waterpower of the falls and at the same use the railroad connections through the Hoosac Tunnel. The first industry in town was the John Russell Manufacturing Company—the cutlery. The fact that Alberto Pagenstecher approached Crocker with a proposition to build a pulp mill was a boon to Crocker, but it was not his original goal. Still, paper became the village’s most important industry, but even that was diversified. Between the 1870s and the consolidation of International Paper in 1898, the village had three paper mills: the Montague Paper Company, the Turners Falls Paper Company, and the fine paper mill of the Keith Paper Company. After the Montague and Turners Falls mills were merged into International Paper, there were still three paper companies in town, for in 1895, the Marshall family built a mill for fine tissue paper. In 1899, that mill became the mill of the Esleeck Manufacturing Company. The business leaders of Turners Falls, however, did not treat the cutlery as a secondary industry. The officers and directors of the Turners Falls Company, the Keith and Montague Paper Companies, and the Russell Cutlery consisted largely
of the same people.

The paper towns developed in tumultuous economic times. Financial panics, depressions, and even just soft business conditions weighed heavily on the towns, particularly Turners Falls. The *Turners Falls Reporter* complained that business conditions in the 1870s accounted for the village’s failure to become a city. In 1893, the same editor commented on the importance of money to the village: “We all came here from the four corners of the earth to lasso an untamed waterpower with the express view of making a dollar and a good many of us have seen a big town rise from a wilderness of scrub oaks. . . .” This crass attitude hid the fact that the mills were sources of considerable local pride, and that people looked at the mills with wonder and admiration. The size and complexity of the mills, as well as incomprehensibility of their technology accounted for their appeal. Beyond this sense of wonder, townspeople were proud of the mills because of the distinctiveness and prosperity they brought to the villages. The products of the towns—whether newsprint, ledger paper, Shaker socks, cream separators, or cutlery—were used around the country and even internationally. At home they were focal points of vibrant and growing communities.
NOTES


3 Lyman S. Hayes, The Connecticut River Valley in Southern Vermont and New Hampshire (Rutland, Vt.: The Tuttle Company, 1929), 302-305. This book is a collection of essays originally published as an occasional column in the Bellows Falls Times. This account of Russell's arrival is more detailed than the one Hayes published in his systematic town history. See Lyman S. Hayes, History of the Town of Rockingham, Vermont, Including the Villages of Bellows Falls, Saxtons River, Rockingham, Cambridgeport and Bartonsville, 1753-1907, with Genealogies (Bellows Falls, Vt.: Town of Rockingham, 1907), 417-418.


5 Ibid., 164-165.


7 Hayes, History of Rockingham, 279; “Important Sale,” Bellows Falls Times, June 20, 1866, 3; “Local Matters,” BFT, Oct. 9, 1868, p. 3.

8 Hayes, History of Rockingham, 288.


11 The earliest reference to the Franklin Falls Company in deed records is February 3, 1863. The author of a historical article in the Souvenir Directory of 1895 wrote that the company built the Franklin Mills (a woolen mill operated by M. T. Stevens) the same year. Merrimac County Deeds, vol. 175, p. 14 (February 3, 1863); Souvenir Directory of the City of Franklin (Franklin Falls, N. H.: Towne and Robie, 1895), 179; Alice M. Shepard, The History of Franklin (Tilton, N. H.: Sant Bani Press, 1996), 353.


14 “The New City--The Dutch Dam--the New Dam,” *Amherst Express*, Nov. 19, 1866, reprinted in *Turners Falls Reporter*, July 12, 1899, 1; Charles W. Hazelton, “Early Days of Turners Falls,” typescript essay. Greenfield, Massachusetts Public Library, p. 4. Hazelton went to work for William P. Crocker, a civil engineer and brother of Alvah Crocker, in September, 1867. He worked with Crocker on the dam of 1866, and continued with the Turners Falls Company throughout his career. Hazelton did not date his essay, but he refers to the closing of the International Paper Mill in 1936, and Hazelton died in 1936 or 1937.

15 Ibid.

16 Charles W. Hazelton listed the members of the company: “Besides Col. Crocker, in Fitchburg, he had with him among others, George F. Fay, Gardner S. Burbank, Rodney Wallace, and Otis T. Ruggles. In Lowell, he had Benjamin F. Butler, J. C. Ayer and George W. Nesmith. In addition to these he had Moses Steven of Andover, Charles A. Stevens of Ware, Thomas Talbot of Billerica, Alexander H. Rice of Boston, Oliver Ames and Oakes A. Ames of North Easton. Also Edwin Bulkley and William C. Dunton of New York. A little later he had B. N. Farren and R. N. Oakman of Montague.” Hazelton, p. 3. William C. Dunton, of the firm of Bulkley and Dunton, was president of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company when he died in 1884, *Franklin Transcript*, July 11, 1884, p. 2.


18 Ibid., 47-51.


25 Ibid.


32. Ibid.


36. Ibid.


44. “Griswold and Sons Mill,” *Turners Falls Reporter*, January 1, 1873, p. 2.


“Death of The Hon. Alvah Crocker,” *Turners Falls Reporter*, December 30, 1874, p. 2


Ibid.


“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” *Turners Falls Reporter*, August 1, 1900, p. 2.


Ibid.


Hurd, 324-325.

Shepard, 328.


74 Hofmann, 375.

75 “Franklin and Vicinity,” MJ, October 17, 1879, p. 3.


77 Ibid.


79 Hofmann writes, “The object of boiling rags is to extract or destroy the fatty, glutinous and coloring substances surrounding the pure fibre, which is needed by the paper-maker.”


84 Shepard, 434-435.

85 “Franklin and Vicinity,” MJ, July 16, 1880, p. 3.


91 Shepard, 445.


94 “Franklin and Vicinity,” MJ, July 16, 1880, p. 3.

97 “About Home,” FT, June 6, 1884, p. 2.
98 Weeks, 234.
100 “About Home,” FT, December 3, 1886, p. 2.
108 “Local Brieflets,” FT, February 14, 1890, p. 4.
109 “Well Done! Result of the Town Meeting on Tuesday,” FT, March 14, 1890, p. 1.
113 “A Busy Season,” FT, April 10, 1891, p. 2; “Franklin’s Busy Season,” FT, May 1, 1891, p. 2; FT, June 12, 1891, p. 8.
117 “Local Mere Mention,” FT, August 14, 1894, p. 8.
118 “PAPER MILL TRUST. Many Companies in New Combination. Winnipiseogee Paper Company Paper Co is Among the Number,” FJT, January 14, 1898, p. 1.

119 James Hibbert, “Knitting-Needle”, U. S. A. (Jan. 9, 1849),


124 Souvenir Directory, 179.


128 Shepard, 353-355.


130 Shepard, 357-358.


134 Ibid.


136 Hurd, 323.

137 “About Home,” FT, September 12, 1884, p. 2.


141 “City Mere Mention,” FJT, September 21, 1900, p. 1.

142 “Leading Business Men of Franklin,” advertisement in the Franklin Public Library.

143 “Mayo Knitting Machine Co.,” FT, Feb. 28, 1890, p. 2; “Well Done! Result of the Town Meeting on Tuesday,” FT, March 14, 1890, p. 1; “Local Mere Mention,” FT, December 12, 1890, p. 2.


150 “Franklin Facts and Fancies,” MJ, May 18, 1883, p. 2. A penstock is a pipe leading from the dam to the turbines.


152 Souvenir Directory, 171; Moses, 155; “No Danger of Disaster,” FT, June 14, 1889, 1.


155 Lovell, 61, 53, 48.


157 Hayes, 412.

158 Ibid., 369, 371.

159 Ibid., 372; Rockingham, Vermont Deeds, vol. 23, p. 20 (Dec. 20, 1861); “Second


162 “Second Flood of 1869--'A Most Disastrous Freshet," BFT, Oct. 8, 1869, p. 2

163 Ibid.

164 “Local Matters,” BFT, Nov. 12, 1869, p. 2.

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

167 Hofmann, 378.

168 The Bellows Falls Times first used the term in its “Local Matters” column on July 21, 1871, and continued to use it until July 9, 1875.

169 “Local Matters,” BFT, Nov. 12, 1869, p. 2.


172 Hayes, History of Rockingham, 278, 288.


175 Ibid.


180 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 14, 1871, p. 2.


183 “Local Matters,” March 31, 1871, p. 2.


185 Ibid.

186 Ibid.

187 Ibid.


190 Ibid.

191 Ibid.

192 Ibid.


203 Ibid.

204 Ibid.


Ibid.


“Local Matters,” BFT, June 6, 1873, p. 2.

“Local Matters,” BFT, June 27, 1873, p. 2.


“Local Matters,” BFT, Dec. 5, 1873, p. 3.

“Local Matters,” BFT, Jan. 9, 1874, p. 3.

“Local Matters,” BFT, July 9, 1875, p. 2; Sept. 10, 1875, p. 2.


“Local Matters,” BFT, June 9, 1876, p. 2.


Ibid.


235 Ibid.


241 “Local Matters,” BFT, May 12, 1876, p. 2.


245 “Talk About Town,” July 14, 1892, p. 7.


247 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 28, 1881, p. 2; June 8, 1882, p. 2.


264 Walbridge, 7.
265 Ibid.
266 Ibid., 6.
268 Ibid., 51.
269 Walbridge, 10-11.
270 Hayes (1907), 427.
CHAPTER 4

PAPERMAKING

Because the paper towns were industrial centers, work was central to their identities. The prosperity of the towns relied in large part on the process of turning blocks of wood into sheets of paper. This chapter examines three aspects of this work. First is the state of papermaking technology in the nineteenth century; second is the impact of this technology on the craft mentality of the workers; finally, this chapter examines the dangers of papermaking and other industrial work in the paper towns. Papermaking was different from other industries in that the artisanal mentality survived mechanization. Papermakers embraced technology, suffered little loss of prestige. This strong artisanal mentality hindered the growth of labor unions; organization took hold only after the consolidation of the International Paper Company. Townspeople lived according to the rhythms of the mills. Shift changing whistles punctuated life in the towns. The newspaper could mention machines and parts of the plants without explanation. This suggests that work in the mills was familiar enough to townspeople that they did not need explanation. The dangers of mill work were also part of the common culture, for newspapers frequently carried reports of injuries. Over the thirty years between the founding of the mills and the consolidation of the International Paper Company, the mills changed greatly, as did the nature of work. These changes from mechanized to fully industrialized mills, and from papermakers as skilled craftsmen to the same people as industrial workers, were essential to the changes in the sense of place in the paper towns.

Pulp and Paper Making

In the 1860s, the paper industry was in the middle of a long period of mechanization. Until the 1830s, papermaking was an artisanal craft. Papermakers still did the most important
part of their craft—forming sheets of paper—by hand. Manufacturers gradually adopted papermaking machines in the 1820s and 1830s, and by 1845, there were only two handmade paper mills left in the country.¹ Papermaking was distinct from other industries, however, in that it was at least partly mechanized almost from the start. Dard Hunter noted that the third papermill built in the country (in 1729), the Willcox mill in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, used mechanical stampers to break down rags into pulp.² Moreover, paper was always made in mills: a single artisan could not make paper in any quantity adequate for anything but very limited use. Artisanal papermaking was labor-, capital-, and power-intensive. From the start it had a proto-industrial organization.

Paper consists of vegetable fibers that have been reduced to pulp and formed into thin sheets. Papermaking consists of three major phases: the preparation of the pulp, the formation of the sheet, and the finishing of the final product. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries papermakers gradually mechanized these processes to keep up with the growing demand for paper. Pulp preparation was the first process to be mechanized. Pulp is simply vegetable fibers—almost exclusively rags before the 1830s—that have been macerated to separate the fibers from dirt, fats, and other debris. Before the use of machinery, workers pounded the rags in mortars. By the sixteenth century, European papermakers had adopted stamping machines. Before the American Revolution, most American papermakers used these machines. The advantage of this method was that it did not cut the fibers, and the resulting paper was particularly strong.³ The disadvantage, however, was that the process was slow and cumbersome. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, papermakers in Europe began to adopt a machine called a “Hollander” or “beating engine” (figure 4-1). This was an oblong vat with a roller. Metal bars were embedded in the roller and on the bottom of the vat. As the roller rotated it pulled a mixture of fibers and water (called “stuff” by papermakers) between the bars, gradually pulling and separating the fibers. This was a quicker process than stamping the fibers, but it tended to break them, and the result was a weaker paper than that produced by the older method. American papermakers adopted beating engines by the 1770s. While inventors gradually refined them, the
machines remained the same in principle.

The papermaker was the most skilled worker in a paper mill, and his position was the most prestigious. Carl Hofmann, author of *A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture of Paper in all its Branches* (1873), described the work of a papermaker (or “vatman”) in a handmade paper mill (figure 4-2). From the beating engines, workers transferred the stuff into a vat. Hofmann wrote,

The paper-maker stood alongside of this vat, and dipped a wooden frame covered with a wire-cloth into it, taking therewith, by a clever movement, enough pulp to form a sheet of such thickness as he wanted. While the water was dropping through the wire, he shook the frame in all directions to make the fibres intertwine and felt themselves, thereby forming a compact sheet of paper.

The size of the sheet was determined by the *deckels*, which formed an elevated border all around it. Their adjustment; as well as the whole operation of making the sheet, required great skill; the paper-makers of old had therefore just cause to be proud of their trade, as everything depended on their ability and judgment."
The papermaker’s skill was subtle, depending on what appeared to the observer as a sleight of hand. In 1884, for example, a correspondent to the Franklin, New Hampshire Transcript wrote of his impressions of the papermaking process in the town’s handmade paper mill fifty years before. He wrote,

Queer works they did in it. Men with aprons on stood on two sides of a great vat of very nasty water or some kind of a half liquid compound shooting a big sieve from one to the other across the vat under water, a slight of hand performance very confusing to boys, and occasionally turning the sieve bottom up upon a great thick wet cloth.5

Once the sheet had formed, the paper-maker handed the mould to an assistant, called a “coucher,” who stretched the paper onto a piece of felt. The coucher created stack, or “post” of alternating sheets of paper and felt. When the post sufficiently high, the coucher put them into press to remove excess water. He repeated the process, putting the paper between dry felts and

applying pressure, until the paper was dry enough for finishing.

Finally, a third hand, called a “layman” removed separated the paper and felts and prepared it for drying or finishing. Printing paper, which did not need a smooth or glossy finish, was simply carried it to loft at the top of the mill for drying. Printer’s ink was thick and waxy, and paper would not absorb it; because of this it did not need to be coated or “sized.” Thus, early nineteenth-century printing paper had a soft, felt-like texture. Writing paper, however, had to be able to take liquid ink without absorbing it. In mills making hand-made paper, papermakers sized the paper with gelatin, dipping sheets into a vat, and pressing them between felts to remove the excess. Paper that required a hard, glossy finish was further finished with a “plate calender.” This process was similar to pressing the posts of paper and felt in that workers created stacks of paper, called “quires,” with twenty-five sheets for printing paper and twenty four for writing paper (twenty quires made a ream). The sheets of these quires were laid between copper or zinc plates. These stacks were then passed between press rolls repeatedly until the workers had created the desired finish.6

By 1800, inventors in Europe worked on the problem of automating the work of the papermaker. The solution was to replace the vatman’s wire moulds with a continuous, moving wire belt. Just before 1800, Nicolas-Louis Robert, a French papermaker, invented a machine that consisted of a wire belt that passed along a frame, gathering stuff from a vat. As the belt moved the frame of the machine shook, felting the fibers. 7 Robert was unable to pay the fee for a patent, and eventually sold the rights to a pair of English stationers named Henry and Sealy Fourdrinier. They patented the machine, and it retains their name (figures 4-3 and 4-4). Hofmann wrote of the Fourdrinier,

The paper-machine has not, like the steam engine or locomotive, gone forth in a comparatively finished state from the brain of one favored man. It has required the life-long labor of many talented mechanics and manufacturers to change the ancient papermaker’s vat and form into the complicated mechanism, which now, on exactly the same principles, produces millions, where only thousands of pounds could be turned out before.8
Inventors gradually refined the mechanism and developed machines to work with the basic ourdrinier mechanism. In the 1820s, they added press rolls to remove water from the paper and soon after added heated drying cylinders, so the paper would not have to be cut in sheets and hung in lofts. They refined the vat or “stuff chest,” adding pumps to regulate the flow of pulp to the wire. Under the wire, they added suction pumps to draw away water before the paper passed to the press rolls. In the 1860s, they added belts made of felt (and called simply “felts”) to guide the paper onto the press rolls. About the same time, they added finishing machinery.

The first part of finishing was “sizing” the paper, or sealing the fibers so they would not absorb liquid writing ink. In non-mechanized mills, a worker simply passed sheets of paper through a gelatin bath. This gelatin coating was called “animal sizing.” Engineers were able to mechanize this process of drawing the long web of paper through the sizing with rollers, but the process was labor intensive, and papermakers looked for alternatives. The most practical was to add a sizing to the pulp. This was generally rosin (called “vegetable sizing”) dissolved in a
solution of soda ash. As the paper passed over the machine and drying cylinders, the particles of rosin filled in the pores of the paper, making it less absorbent. This required less labor and was cheaper to produce than surfaced sized paper, but it was weaker. By the 1870s, most high quality writing paper in the United States still used gelatin surface sizing.

Figure 4-4. Fourdrinier, Hofmann, Plate 1, after page 194.

The other major process of finishing the paper was to pass it through a calender. This compressed the fibers and gave the paper a glossy, polished finish. Workers finished sheets of paper with a plate calender. This consisted of a stack of paper alternating with plates of zinc or copper. When the stack was sufficiently high, the worker applied pressure with a press. On a paper machine, which produces a continuous roll, or “web,” of paper, inventors developed a machine that consisted of a stack of cast iron, and later polished steel, rolls called a “super-
calender” (figure 4-5). Hofmann described the operation of the calender:

The machine-tender takes the paper from the last dryer by hand, puts it between the uppermost pair of rolls, and guides it all through the stack. The object of this operation is to compress the web, and especially its surface, so that the pores or hollow spaces between the fibres will be filled up, and the whole mass solidified.

Paper, like other materials polished in a similar manner, acquires thereby a smooth, glossy appearance.

He continued, noting the danger of the process:

The machine-tenders lead the paper by hand round the rolls far enough to make sure that it will pass in the right place, and it requires a calm, collected mind, a quick eye, and nimble fingers to withdraw the hands always at the right time.

Most machine-tenders have had their fingers drawn in or nipped, and the hands of many will carry the mark made by the calenders to the grave.11

Figure 4-5. Super-Calender. Hofmann, 225.

Fourdriniers developed gradually. Papermakers found that the machine made superior paper. Many believed that paper made on a fourdrinier was superior to handmade paper in that the texture and thickness of the paper was more consistent. It was a complicated and expensive
machine, and small papermakers, and those specializing in cheap grades of paper, could not justify the cost. Indeed, the fourdrinier was not the first paper machine adopted by American manufacturers. They opted instead for the simpler “cylinder” machine (figure 4-6). With this, the wire was part of a cylinder, and as the cylinder rotated in a vat, the pulp adhered to it. The drying cylinders and other parts except this vat and cylinder arrangement were identical to those on a fourdrinier. The apparatus was simpler a fourdrinier, and the machines were cheaper to build and operate, but they made inferior paper. The cylinder could not shake to felt the fibers. “The fibres will therefore,” wrote Carl Hofmann,

 deposit themselves on the wire-cloth only in the direction in which the paper moves, that is, lengthways. Paper made on a cylinder is in this respect inferior to that made on a Fourdrinier wire, which being shaken sideways, causes the fibres to intertwine themselves in all directions. Cylinder paper has all its strength in the direction it has travelled over the machine, will split easily lengthways like wood, and with more difficulty across the grain or fibres.\(^\text{12}\)

Figure 4-6. Cylinder Machine. Hofmann, 197.
The relative simplicity of the cylinder made it attractive to American papermakers hoping
to mechanize their mills. The first cylinder machine was patented in England in 1809. In 1817,
Thomas Gilpin, installed a similar machine in his mill on Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania, and
five years later, John Ames built a machine in Springfield, Massachusetts. Subsequent cylinder
machines followed Ames’s model. American paper manufacturers gradually adopted the new
machinery in the 1820s and 1830s. Before 1830, manufacturers had installed machines in mills

Manufacturers adopted fourdriniers slowly. The first machine in an American mill,
installed in Saugerties, New York in 1827, was built in England. In 1829, American machine
companies started making fourdriniers, but they caught on slowly. Berkshire County
papermakers started to install cylinder machines in 1827, but did not adopt fourdriniers until the
early 1840s. In Franklin, New Hampshire, Kendall O. Peabody mechanized his mill in Franklin,
New Hampshire from the beginning in 1827, with a cylinder machine, and soon added a second.
When he and Jeremiah Daniell rebuilt the mill after a fire in 1837, they added a fourdrinier. In
the 1840s, as the American economy recovered from the Panic of 1837, the pace of
mechanization quickened, and by 1845, all but two of the eighty-nine paper mills in
Massachusetts had been mechanized.

Improvements in mill technology, transportation, and economic conditions in general
exacerbated the perpetual shortage of raw materials. The problem of an adequate supply of pulp
stock had plagued papermakers since the end of the eighteenth century. Rags were the traditional
stock, but they presented papermakers with a couple major problems. The most important
problem was supply. Especially in the United States, rags were perpetually scarce. Papermakers
imported increasing amounts of rags, particularly from Italy, but in times of economic hardship
such as the 1830s and the 1850s, rags were beyond the means of some papermakers. Rag buyers
had to be on the lookout for unscrupulous dealers who added water and foreign articles to the
bales of rags. In 1886, Charles T. Davis warned in his technical manual, *The Manufacture of
Paper*, of the “many tricks and frauds practiced in making the bales” and noted that even the most
“lynx-eyed and experienced buyer often find numerous weight-giving substances in the interior of the bales after they are opened.”15 Papermakers looked abroad for new sources of rags, turning increasingly to Egypt and India. In 1856, the Syracuse Standard published an issue that the editor claimed was made from rags stripped from mummies.16 A secondary problem was that rags were a source of disease. Papermakers worried particularly about small pox and cholera. They demanded that rag dealers, especially in countries such as Italy, Spain, Egypt, and India, where, as Davis pointed out, “Cholera is liable to become epidemic,” boil their rags or treat them with sulphuric acid.17

The chief concern, however, was cost. This problem became particularly serious during the Civil War when there was an increasing demand for paper. Davis notes at the beginning of 1862, newspaper cost eight cents per pound; by the end of the year the cost was seventeen cents. By 1864, newspaper cost twenty-eight cents a pound. Between 1862 and 1864, the cost of fine book paper increased from thirty to forty-five cents a pound.18 Papermakers were therefore, enthusiastic to find new pulp stock.

Papermakers knew that they could use other substances besides textile fibers. In 1794, Matthew Lyon, the papermaker and pamphleteer from Vermont who in a few years would be charged under the Alien and Sedition acts, made news and wrapping paper from bark of basswood trees.19 More celebrated on an international level were the experiments of the English papermaker, Matthias Koops, who pioneered recycling paper. In 1800, Koops published a book titled Historical Account of the Substances which have been used to Describe Events, and to Convey Ideas, from the Earliest Date, to the Invention of Paper. On the title page he noted that the book was “Printed on the first useful paper manufactured solely from straw.” Koops’s purpose was to show that England did not have to be dependent upon imported rags for its paper supply.20 He concluded the book with an appendix to demonstrate that paper could also be made from the hardest part of wood alone, destitute of its pith or bark.21 He concluded the book with a challenge, that, “if any of the suggestions here stated, as to the application of the manufactured material should be thought unreasonable, experiments of some able manufacturers will prove, that
this Paper can be again converted into a substance, more hard and durable than any wood of natural growth."

In the United States, papermakers first turned to a large-scale use of alternative fibers in 1828, when William Magaw of Meadville, Pennsylvania began to make paper from straw. In 1837, when the financial panic and subsequent depression made textiles prohibitively expensive, Lyman Hollingsworth of South Braintree, Massachusetts began to make wrapping paper from old manila rope. As papermakers began to use manila, however, they imported the fiber mostly from India and Scotland. Manila had the same potential problems of price and availability as rags, but straw and old rope were easy to work with, requiring much less effort and time to break them down into their constituent fibers. Pulp makers simply needed to wash and boil the straw in a caustic soda solution before breaking it down and mixing it with water. Papermakers seldom used straw as the sole ingredient, but would mix the fiber with rags. Straw quickly became a popular fiber for making cheap grades of paper, particularly wrapping paper. By 1860, straw accounted for about twelve percent of the fiber consumed by American paper manufacturers.

Before the introduction of straw and manila, grades of paper depended largely on grades of rags. Writing and printing papers were made from the best rags; wrapping paper from soiled and poor quality rags. Rag sorters separated rags by color and quality. Paper mills generally made several grades of paper. For example, a letterhead from the Peabody and Daniell mill in Franklin, New Hampshire, dated 1848, listed “News, Letter, Post, Pot and Cap Papers” (figure 4-7). All but the first were grades of writing papers. The letterhead is a receipt for paper sent to
Abel Lowe, the postmaster of Lebanon, New Hampshire and shows that he had ordered wrapping, “Clarke’s Cap,” “Letter P. &. D,” and “Letter Eagle” paper. Fine book and writing papers were made from fine white rags. By the 1860s, the introduction of new fibers, cylinder, and fourdrinier machines enlarged the variety of grades of paper. Hofmann devoted an entire chapter to various grades of paper that these new fibers and machines facilitated. He started with bank note paper, a fine rag paper made on a fourdrinier and distinctive for the red silk thread mixed into the pulp. Bond paper was made from the “best of white linen, and especially the cuttings of white, pure, flaxen threads imported from Scotland and Ireland.” The pulp was made slowly, staying in the beater engines for as much as seventy-two hours. The paper was sized twice: with rosin in the pulp and then with “animal size” once the paper was dry. It was not calendered, but the “sheets are … laid between fine pasteboards, alternating with them … [and] subjected for a considerable time to a strong pressure, whereby they obtain what is called a dead finish.”

These were the finest grades of paper. Hofmann continued, discussing lesser grades. He noted tissue paper, a type of paper made possible by machine manufacture. The fibers used in tissue paper had to be strong: Hofmann wrote that manufacturers used “hemp-bagging and a small proportion of cotton canvas.” Hofmann wrote that cylinder machines were ideal for tissue paper. These machines were equipped with copper drying cylinders (Hofmann noted that the thin paper would stick to iron cylinders) and a small calender consisting of three rolls.

Hofmann described the manufacture of manilla paper, which was used for “common tissue, wrapping paper, tags, and all kinds of bags, from the ordinary ones up to flour bags. …” Hofmann noted that by 1873 manilla was in short supply and papermakers frequently used jute butts instead. Some paper manufacturers made a “bogus manilla” of “old wrapping paper and straw colored with Venetian red. …” The stock was boiled in either a solution of “milk of lime” (calcium hydroxide) or caustic soda (sodium hydroxide). Manufacturers used either a fourdrinier or cylinder machine, but Hofmann noted fourdriniers were poorly suited to heavy grades of manilla paper.
Hofmann described a variety of other grades of paper: collar paper (a strong, spongy paper made on a cylinder machine), tobacco paper (containing fibers from tobacco stems and used for rolling cigarettes), cotton waste paper (used in some grades of writing paper as well as blotting paper), cardboard, roofing paper (what today is more commonly called “tar paper”), and parchment paper (rag paper that has been treated with “diluted sulphuric acid.”20 He showed that by the early 1870s, paper manufacture had become a larger and more varied industry than it had been a couple decades before. Fine rag paper was still the leading paper in that it was what papermakers took the most pride in. Hofmann noted in his introduction that papermakers frequently spoke “in utter contempt of straw, wood, and other substitutes.” He wrote, “’Rags are
yet King! We made add that they will probably always remain king, if that dignity depends on their permanent superiority over all other substances as the material for the best and most valuable kinds of paper."

By 1870s, new fibers had revolutionized the paper industry. Straw, manilla, jute, recycled paper, cotton waste, and even tobacco were used to make paper for a wider variety of applications than ever before. Papermakers and inventors gradually came to terms with the new fibers. Generally, papermakers working with rag stock favored beating the pulp slowly in a standard beating engine. Hofmann wrote that beating was ideally a slow process, because slow beating produced pulp with long fibers. Faster beating tended to cut the fibers. This was fine for fine grades of paper, but the inferior grades did not justify the expense of long beating.

Papermakers developed machines that produced usable pulp quickly and helped refine the inferior fibers of straw, jute, and recycled paper. The most successful of these machines was the Jordan Refining Engine, or simply the “Jordan” (figures 4-8 and 4-9). The Jordan was similar to the beating engine in that a roll with metal bars forced the pulp against bars embedded in the case of machine. It was different, however, in that it was a closed, conical machine and not an open tub. The machine worked quickly, the roll turning at between 200 and 300 revolutions per minute; centrifugal force pulled the pulp through the engine. This was not suitable for fine paper, but for the grades of paper that used the new fibers the machine increased the speed of pulp production and made pulp that was uniform and free of impurities. The Jordan was particularly valuable as manufacturers started to experiment with wood pulp.

Rags had an increasingly limited use for fine writing and printing papers. Still the supply was insufficient to keep up with the demand, especially for cheap printing papers. Papermakers increasingly experimented with fibers. By 1886, Charles T. Davis listed plants that were potential sources for fiber. His list is two columns on twelve pages, a total of about 950 items.

In 1870, one adventurous paper maker made pulp by breaking the meat of fish in bichloride of mercury and alum. Joel Munsell, a nineteenth-century chronicler of the paper industry, noted that fish made a particularly tough and strong paper. The most attractive and potentially plentiful
pulp stock, however, was wood. The problem with wood was the work involved in breaking down the fibers. People experimenting with grinding wood had generally been unable to make pulp that could produce a strong paper. Grinding wood by placing the end of a log against a stone made a fine powder of the wood. Grinding the wood by moving the stone parallel to the grain of the wood also produced a weak fiber.

A German inventor, Freidrich Keller (1816-1895), however, solved the problem of how to grind the wood. His solution was to develop a method of holding a block of wood against the stone in such a way that the stone would rip the fibers from the block, producing a pulp that had fairly long fibers and that would thus make a strong sheet of paper. In order to keep the wood positioned, the stone had to be encased in iron. Openings the iron casing, called “pockets,” allowed worker to feed the machine.

Keller invented the process in 1843, and made a small amount of paper in his workshop. In 1846, one of his relatives showed a piece of the paper to Heinrich Voelter, the director of a large paper mill in Bautzen, Dresden, and Voelter offered to buy the rights to process. Keller and Voelter formed a partnership and began to work on perfecting the machinery. By 1852, the
process was developed well enough that Voelter started manufacturing paper from a mixture of
groundwood and rag pulp. In 1856, Voelter found that he could produce a high quality of pulp if
he placed the block of wood parallel to the axel of the stone. With this innovation, the Voelter
grinder produced a quality of pulp that was good enough to attract the attention of other
papermakers. Keller, had been forced to sell his rights to the patent because of insufficient funds,
so the machine bore only Voelter’s name. Voelter took out patents for the machinery in Europe
in 1856, and in the United States in 1858 (figures 4-10, 4-11, 4-12).³⁴

Figure 4-12. “Voelter’s Wood-Pulp Plant,” Davis, 165. The grinder is in the upper left, and the
paper machine is on the right.

The Voelter grinder gradually became popular in Europe. A large mill in Belgium was
the first mill after Voelter’s to use the grinder.³⁵ Even though Voelter had patented the machinery
in the United States, it took almost a decade for papermakers to start making groundwood pulp.
Nineteenth-century writers attributed this tardiness to conservatism. Papermaking was a
traditionally oriented craft, with families of papermakers who passed their skills from generation
to generation. Moreover, groundwood took a considerable capital investment. Voelter wrote in 1865 that one of his grinders required forty horsepower to make 500 kilograms of pulp in twenty-four hours. Voelter thought that the grinding machine should be attached to the paper machine, making grinding, pulp preparation, and papermaking a single process (figure 4-12). Thus, for Voelter, papermakers wishing to use his machinery needed a large amount of power. For the wood to be soft enough for the stone to rip the fibers from the block of wood, it had to be green. Charles T. Davis summed up Voelter’s recommendations for groundwood mills: “Voelter recommends... the building of pulp mills only, where suitable woods can be had at low prices, with ample water-power, cheap labor, clear water, and where the produce will be consumed in the neighborhood.” For mills to take advantage of the new technology, they had to be built new, with ample space to add the grinding machines to the paper machines. This required capital, which was in short supply in the American paper industry in the 1850s and early 1860s.

Another problem was the supply of wood. At first Americans used only poplar because it produced good fibers and was easy to grind. Another advantage of poplar was that it grew plentifully in the Northeast, but was too soft either to burn or use for building. Davis wrote, “Voelter recommends … the building of pulp mills only where suitable woods can be had at low prices, with ample water-power, cheap labor, clear water, and where the produce will be consumed in the neighborhood.” For mills to take advantage of the new technology they had to be built new, with ample space to add the grinding machines to the paper machines.

After the Civil War papermakers became increasingly interested in adopting new technology. In 1863, Voelter secured the services of an agent, named Louis Prang, in Boston. Initially Prang was unable to interest papermakers in the Voelter grinder, but in 1866, Alberto Pagenstecher, a German industrialist who had made a fortune in South American railroads, was looking for businesses in which to invest. A friend, Theodore Steinway of the piano manufacturing family, suggested he look at the Voelter grinder. Rudolph Pagenstecher, Alberto’s son, investigated the machinery and imported two machines, setting them up in a shop in Curtisville, Massachusetts, in the heart of the Berkshire County paper manufacturing area. In
1867, the Pagenstechers produced their first wood pulp. They found an eager buyer in Wellington Smith of the Smith Paper Company of Lee, Massachusetts. In 1868, Rudolph’s brother, Albrecht joined the firm. Albrecht Pagenstecher became one of the most important promoters of the new technology, while his father, Alberto, provided the capital to develop the industry.  

The Pagenstechers soon found that the waterpower of the Curtisville mill was insufficient for the amount of pulp they needed to make for the business to be profitable. Albrecht Pagenstecher went looking for sites that fit Voelter’s recommendations. He found two areas that had ample water and wood, and where he could also attract workers. The first was Lake Luzerne, New York, upstream from Glens Falls. Pagenstecher soon found that even this location was insufficient for his needs and he quickly moved to the adjoining villages of Corinth and Palmer’s Falls. According to Weeks, other mills, in Lawrence and Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Norway, Maine, and Lanesville, Connecticut also installed Voelter machinery in 1867 and 1868. Lawrence and Fitchburg were particularly important. Alvah Crocker, who was then improving the waterpower at Turners Falls, was a leading paper manufacturer in Fitchburg. The principal owner of the mill in Lawrence was W. A. Russell, who soon would build mills in Bellows Falls, Vermont and Franklin, New Hampshire. By 1869, Hunter notes, Russell had bought exclusive rights to the Voelter patent for New England. Russell might have bought rights to the patent, but the Pagenstechers built pulp mills in Massachusetts, notably Turners Falls, where they worked closely with Alvah Crocker.

Russell and Pagenstecher made an important alteration in Voelter’s pulp-making process in that they separated pulp preparation from papermaking. Their first mills, in Bellows Falls, Turners Falls, and Franklin, made only pulp; they did not begin to make paper from the pulp in those villages until 1870 and 1871. In 1869, manufacturing wood pulp was a risky undertaking. Papermaking was a conservative craft, and promoters of woodpulp were uncertain that they could make a new type of pulp profitably. Building the mills required a large capital investment, in building new buildings and installing large and complicated machines. The Voelter machinery
required a great amount of power; installing the machines at the end of the papermaking
machines would have increased those requirements. If Russell and Pagenstecher had followed
Voelter’s recommendations, they would have had to build very large buildings, suitable for heavy
machinery; they would have had to rebuild and re-excavate canals on a larger scale than they
were doing anyway; and they would have had to do all of this without knowing if they could sell
the pulp or paper made from the pulp.

To begin with, then, Russell and Pagenstecher and Crocker made only pulp in their new
mills in Bellows Falls, Franklin, and Turners Falls. Russell began with small mills in Bellows
Falls and Franklin. In Turners Falls, Pagenstecher and Crocker began on a much larger scale,
building a mill that measured two hundred by fifty feet, and with twenty-four grinders. The
Pagenstecher and Crocker mill was the largest of the original groundwood mills, and
consequently received much attention early on. In 1873, Carl Hofmann described the work at the
Turners Falls mill to explain the Voelter process.43

In 1873, the Turners Falls Pulp Company was the largest groundwood manufacturer in
the country. Twenty-four grinders in two rows lined the two-hundred-foot long walls of the one-
story building. These early grinders, according to Hofmann, had four or five pockets. Sorting and
refining machines were in the middle of the building between the rows of grinders. The mill ran
on 1,000 horsepower. This ran the mill at a capacity of five tons of pulp per day, consuming
about eight cords of wood. By Voelter’s estimates, 1,000 horsepower should have been sufficient
to grind about thirteen tons of pulp, but the sorting and refining equipment, as well as the
machines that formed the pulp into cards, also took power. Voelter’s estimates were generous: by
the estimates of Charles T. Davis a thousand horsepower, divided among twenty-four stones was
sufficient to grind about ten tons of pulp.44

Hofmann used the Turners Falls Pulp Company to explain the Voelter process. The mill
used green poplar logs. Voelter recommended fir or pine “for their felting power,” but poplar had
the advantages of being soft, light in color, relatively free of sap, and virtually useless for any
other purpose.45 First the logs would be cut into thirteen and one-half inch lengths, corresponding
to the thickness of the grindstone. Circular saws then split the logs once or twice, depending on the thickness of the logs. Workers cut out any exposed knots in the wood with axes. The waste from this preparation would be used to fire the steam boilers. Workers would feed the logs into the pockets on the grindstones. As the stones ground down the wood a system of screws, worked by gears, held the wood securely against the stones. A steady stream of water reduced friction and washed away the fibers as they were torn off of the logs. The water washed the fibers over screens—called “splinter moulds”—sorting the fibers according to their various consistencies. Pulp that was too coarse to fall through a screen, passed to a refining machine, which consisted of two sandstone grindstones, set up like the millstones in a gristmill. The refiner crushed the fibers and sent them back to the grinding machine. The fibers circulated from the grinders, through the splinter moulds, and through refiner until they were of sufficiently fine consistency. From the grinders the fibers passed into a stuff chest, which fed a machine that was essentially a cylinder paper machine. The machine formed the pulp into a thick cardboard. Finally, a worker cut the pulp from the machine. He packed the cards of pulp into barrels. The pulp had to remain damp, containing about sixty percent moisture, or else it would harden and be useless.

The Voelter process was a compromise in that it gave papermakers a cheap and plentiful supply of pulp but with serious drawbacks. The pulp was not a pure fiber, but contained the “incrusting substances or intercellulose of the wood.” The pulp, Davis pointed out, was not “a real pulp, but rather a semi-flour of wood. …” It could not be used alone, but had to be mixed with textile fibers. Paper made from groundwood pulp could not be “sized,” or treated with a substance to keep it from being absorbent. That meant that the paper could be used only for printing, which used a thick and sticky ink. The pulp had to be kept damp, but the traces of remaining sap made the pulp ferment easily, heat up (creating a danger of fire), and turn a reddish brown.

Despite its disadvantages, groundwood pulp was a solution to the problem of pulp shortages. If it was inferior from the perspective of fine writing and book paper manufacturers, it was useful for cheap grades of printing paper. Newspaper publishers, when they finally adopted
it, found that it was superior for newspaper, and worked in the presses better than paper made from any other pulp. Still Russell and Pagenstecher and Crocker had a challenge ahead of them to insure that their investment paid off.

Papermakers knew that textile fibers would have good felting power and would produce strong, durable paper, but they did not know how well wood pulp would felt. Davis wrote that despite the need for more plentiful pulp, papermakers, still remembering the failures of paper manufacturers who had overextended themselves in the 1850s, were reluctant to put much capital in an untried pulp.\textsuperscript{48} When Russell, Crocker, and Pagenstecher found in the early 1870s that they had a hard time selling pulp, they started paper mills that would buy the products of their pulp mills. Russell began the New England Pulp Company before the Fall Mountain Paper Company and manufacture pulp for two years before he started to build his paper mills.\textsuperscript{49} In Franklin, Russell kept his first pulp mill separate from the Winnipiseogee Paper Company from 1870 to 1876.\textsuperscript{50} Similarly, Pagenstecher and Crocker built the Montague Paper Company to buy pulp from the Turners Falls Pulp Company.

If papermakers were conservative, so were printers, who were reluctant to use wood pulp paper, for fear that it would jam their presses and damage their type. Pearson C. Chenney, a paper manufacturer and governor of New Hampshire testified to the federal Senate Committee on Education and Labor that Russell’s agent finally tricked the \textit{Boston Herald} into using wood pulp paper in the early 1870s.\textsuperscript{51} Chenney testified that he and other paper manufacturers, who “had no knowledge of what could be done with wood,” thought that his mill at Franklin “would ruin him.” Chenney continued:

Mr. Russell completed his mills at Franklin, but after manufacturing the pulp, he could not find a paper manufacturer who would buy a pound of his wood pulp, because they did not believe in it—they had no faith in it, and he was compelled to buy a paper-mill in order to make a good test of it, which he did in Franklin, right beside his pulp-mill, and made the test, and a successful test, and showed a very good paper. After the paper was made he found great difficulty in selling it.

Finally, Russell’s selling agents, the firm of Kendall and Rice, simply replaced the wood pulp paper for the rag paper, without telling the publisher of the \textit{Herald} “the nature of the paper.”
Kendall and Rice substituted the rag pulp paper again in the next order:

The “Herald” people came to Mr. Rice in some displeasure, and asked him why he could not send such paper as he had sent the month previous. He told them that he could do so if they preferred it, and they said they did. They said that it worked very well—very much better than the other. So he told them that the next order they gave him he would send some of that paper. The next month he again delivered 500 reams of the wood paper, and that was used and gave great satisfaction. But I think they were using it for six months before they knew that it was wood paper.  

Groundwood pulp proved a valuable stock for cheap grades of printing paper, and helped revolutionize the newspaper industry. It had a major problem in that it was not a pure fiber in the way that rag stock was. No amount of washing or beating could separate the fibres from the rosin and ligneous matter. Even for newsprint groundwood could not be used alone, but had to be mixed with purer fibers. Hofmann put it,

The fibres produced in this way cannot be pure cellulose, but are surrounded with the incrusting substances or intercellulose of the wood. Though they may have some felting power, they cannot be considered as a substitute for hemp or linen, or even for chemically-prepared fibres of wood and straw, but only as a convenient material which adds to the bulk and weight of the paper without requiring any preparation.  

Voelter suggested mixing rags with the groundwood pulp in a proportion of three parts rag pulp to one part groundwood. This was hardly enough to solve the problems of rag shortages. A better alternative was to develop a way to digest the wood with chemicals to dissolve the ligneous matter. Papermakers had experimented with preparing pulp by boiling wood in chemical solutions since the 1850s. In 1852, an English inventor developed a process using caustic soda, and in 1854, Hugh Burgess introduced the process in mills on the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia. Soda pulp, while strong, was of limited usefulness because the process turned the pulp brown. Thus it made good wrapping paper, but was not suitable for writing or printing.

In the 1850s, papermakers began to experiment with using sulfuric acid to digest the wood. Weeks wrote that an American inventor by the name of Benjamin C. Tilghman, “experimented with a solution of sulphurous acid to dissolve the intercellular matter of wood, leaving the fibres to be turned into a pulp suitable for the making of paper.” Tilghman
eventually abandoned his experiments, but in 1870, Weeks wrote, two inventors, Carl Daniel Ekman of Sweden and George Fry of England, successfully produced paper using bisulphite of lime. In the United States, Charles Wheelwright, a paper manufacturer in Providence, Rhode Island, first produced sulphite pulp using the Ekman process in 1882. He worked with George E. Marshall, superintendent of the Montague Paper Mill in Turners Falls, Massachusetts and improved the technology. In 1883, William A. Russell experimented with, and finally received the rights to the patents of, an Austrian implementation of the Ekman process. The process was cumbersome and expensive in terms of capital investment. It involved barking the logs, cutting them into chips, and steaming them in a lead-lined, sealed tank for as many as eighteen hours. When the chips reached boiling temperature, workers introduced the bisulphite solution and raised the temperature eventually to 244 degrees. When the cooking process was finished, workers opened the digesters and the force of the steam expelled the pulp into a tank called a “blow pit.” The acid solution drained and finally the pulp was washed thoroughly to remove all of the resin and ligneous matter—this left only long cellulose fibers. The process was complicated, for mistakes would turn out paper that, like paper made from soda pulp, was brown. The sulfuric acid solution was dangerous and difficult to work with, and the digesters in which the wood was boiled were cumbersome. In 1886, Charles T. Davis wrote of the sulphite process, the “apparatus employed in working these processes is much too cumbersome and expensive for general use…”. Manufacturers gradually solved some of the problems with the digesters. Most importantly, in 1890, George F. Russell applied for a patent for lining for digesters. Digester lining had been made of lead or bricks. Russell’s innovation was to use Portland cement and porcelain tiles. This lining weighed less than the bricks and was less expensive than lead. The Russell digester made the manufacture of sulphite pulp economical for cheap newsprint. George F. Russell was related to W. A. Russell, who controlled the rights to the patents. W. A. Russell’s sulphite pulp mill in Bellows Falls, built in 1889, was an early implementation of the these digesters.
Changes in the Nature of Work

The introduction of wood pulp machinery was an important step in the mechanization of the paper industry. By the 1880s, mills producing large quantities of cheap grades of paper on cylinder or fast-moving fourdriniers were very different from the their artisanal predecessors. Still, papermaking was a conservative craft and the artisanal mentality persisted. Mechanization had been a gradual process. Papermakers had willingly adopted machines that could reduce physical exertion and simplify their work. Paper machines required considerable skill to operate well, and skilled and experienced workers were still required to produce high quality paper.

Hofmann wrote, “It seems that a population of trained paper-makers, connected with the trade by family tradition, is, notwithstanding the substitution of machinery for hand-work, as valuable as ever. It is only natural that mills, in which even the most trifling operation is conducted by men, who bring to their work not only their own, but also the experience of generations before them, should excel in every respect.”

The degradation of labor caused by mechanization, was gradual. Paper mills were expensive to build and run, and manufacturers had to strike a balance between economizing on labor costs and maintaining incentives for skilled workers to remain in the mills. Hofmann estimated that a mill had to earn in a year at least the same amount as the capital invested in it. A prosperous mill earned at least twice its capital investment annually. Manufacturers could not afford to let their mills stand idle. Wages in the American paper industry were generally higher than those in Europe. Hofmann wrote that the management of the mills should be benevolent. He wrote,

Justice, kindness, and liberality never fail to be appreciated by the mass of the workmen, although there may be some exceptions, but their strongest efforts are only brought out when they find that the interests of the mill are identical with their own. Even the best men will do more work by the job than by the day; their labor is their capital, and they do not want to spend any more of it than the wages justify.

Skilled workers worked two shifts, called “tours” (pronounced to rhyme with “hours”). They alternated weeks of thirteen-hour days with weeks of eleven-hour nights. Hofmann justified
this strenuous schedule noting, “The principal operations of a paper-mill require supervision only, and very little labor. …” Still the increasing speed and capacity of the mills made the work more and more arduous. This was relieved somewhat by the prestige that the papermakers enjoyed, and by the fact that they did feel that their interests were the identical to those of the management. The unskilled, or semiskilled workers, from teamsters and firemen to attendants in the pulp mills, were the majority of the workforce, but lacked the status and recognition of the papermakers. As the Voelter grinders, and later chemical digesters, transformed the mills into large, modern industrial plants, the ranks of the unskilled workers grew and the strenuousness of their work increased.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, papermakers identified more with management than with unskilled workers. Mill owners and managers in Bellows Falls, Turners Falls, and Franklin were experienced papermakers. Alvah Crocker in Turners Falls, W. A. Russell in Bellows Falls, and W. F. Daniell in Franklin, New Hampshire had all learned their trade from the bottom up in the mills in Franklin. They had had artisanal training, and they respected the traditions of the industry. Carl Hofmann, who advocated the rationalization of the industry, did not question the importance of tradition and respect for the artisanal mentality of the workers. He recognized that “progress in the arts and sciences and their application to our manufacture” have allowed manufacturers “to improve considerably on the old systems,” yet he admitted,

If a choice must be made between a man of science and one of experience, the latter deserves the preference, as he knows at all events what he has seen and done before, while the theorist will have to waste much money in learning by his own experiments what the paper-makers know from the experience of past generations.

We have the greatest regard for the traditions handed down from one paper maker to another, because they represent a knowledge acquired by years of toil, which has stood successfully the test of time. Hofmann wrote in 1873, but at least some of this respect for tradition remained through the final decades of the century.

The artisanal mentality, and the rigid organization of the mills, remained important even as the mills grew in size and production increased. The position of papermaker—or machine
tender—continued to hold the most prestige of any position in the mills. While paper machines
had reduced physical exertion, they still required skill. The mills depended on the machine
tenders’ knowledge of how the machines ran and their judgment for the speed, the flow of pulp,
the operation of the suction pumps, and so forth. Machine tenders were not the only skilled
workers in the mills—back tenders (the second hands on the machines), the third and even fourth
hands were all skilled positions, as was the beater engineer, who prepared the pulp—but the
machine tenders were the most prestigious and powerful. They set the speed of production,
controlled—and even hired and fired—their crews, and retained their old title of papermaker.73
Before 1900, paper manufacturers had generally been papermakers; indeed, the line between
papermaker and manager remained thin. While machine tenders were a step above the other
workers, they had risen to their positions by working their way up. Back tenders, third hands, and
beater engineers could all hope to join the ranks of the papermakers. This concern with prestige
slowed the growth of labor unions, for the small, elite of papermakers were reluctant to throw
their lot in with the other workers. Unity among the workers was impossible. A skilled
papermakers’ union could not develop until the machine tenders would join with the other skilled
workers. This craft mentality would complicate organization even into the twentieth century.74

Manufacturers recognized that contented workers were essential to the success of the
mills. Through the end of the nineteenth century, the mills were vital parts of the communities.
Workers and employers would meet in shops or on the street and would argue over town
government every March at town meeting. It would be tempting to think of labor relations in the
late nineteenth century in paternalistic terms. Certainly there are examples of paternalism—gifts
of turkeys to workers at Christmas, or prizes of beer or cigars for winning baseball teams—but
these reflect attempts to affirm the shared interests between workers and employers more than
coercion or exploitation.75 There is little evidence of heavy-handed social control. Except in
Turners Falls, paper manufacturers did not provide housing. No manufacturer attempted to
interfere with his workers’ religious or ethnic associations. W. A. Russell, W. F. Daniell, and
even Alvah Crocker, focused on providing jobs and paying wages, but did little to control their
workers. They recognized, as Hofmann did, that good working conditions and high pay, were the best incentives. Hofmann argued that economic stability was the greatest stimulus for sobriety and productivity. “The first step” to the goal of having a reliable, industrious, skilled workforce, Hofmann wrote, was “saving money.” He continued,

If the workingman can only be once brought to save a part of his earnings he soon finds pleasure in doing so, and stops wasting his surplus for intoxicating drinks. We have induced men, who used to spend a large part of their wages in liquor, on whom temperance speeches and moral teachings had no effect, to save money, then to buy a homestead and improve it; they have become better husbands and fathers, and more valuable to the mill and to the community at large.  

This was social control in terms of motives, but it was hardly heavy-handed. The mills were centerpieces of the communities, but the mill owners left the communities to develop. Turners Falls was the exception here, because the town had to be built at the same time as the mills. There the paper companies had to build housing simply so workers had places to live, but even there, the paper companies remained relatively uninvolved in the workers’ lives.

Before 1900, the mill owners were actively engaged in their communities. These owners were especially conspicuous in Bellows Falls and Franklin. Even while they were housed opulently, overlooking their mills, they tried in many ways to appear not too distant from employees. They were paper manufacturers but they—or their local biographers at least—pointed out that they had been papermakers too. The Franklin Transcript reminded its readers in 1890 that W. F. Daniell had begun working in the his father’s mill as an apprentice at the age of fourteen. The paper noted,

At the age of fourteen years he returned to this town and entered his father’s mill as an apprentice. He worked there until he was twenty-five years of age and had mastered the trade in all its branches. As a journeyman he received the sum of $1.25 per day which he found sufficient to provide for the needs of himself and his young wife and child.

Similarly, Alvah Crocker had worked his way up from the position of rag collector to that of vatman at Franklin’s handmade paper mill, a generation before W. F. Daniell. W. A. Russell, the son of a machine tender at the Peabody and Daniell mill, had served his apprenticeship at the same time as W. F. Daniell.
More directly than the manufacturers, the mills’ general managers were practical papermakers whose managerial duties hardly took them away from the shop floor. Hofmann had pointed out the necessary skills of a manager. “The manager of a paper-mill,” he wrote, “should have a knowledge of mechanical engineering, of applied chemistry, of commerce, and of book-keeping, and above all must he thoroughly understand the process of making paper in all its details, however insignificant they may seem.” This was a tall order. Even in the early days of mechanization, there had been some specialization in the mills’ management. Traditionally, paper mills had been partnerships, with one partner focusing on business and the other on papermaking. In Franklin, businessman Kendall O. Peabody had turned to papermaker Jeremiah Daniell in the 1820s. Similarly, despite his experience and training, W. A. Russell, as a manufacturer, allied himself with practical engineers and papermakers, including the inventor, Gustavus Maynadier and the machine tenders, Albert H. Fisher and Albert C. Moore. This was even more pronounced in Turners Falls, where Alvah Crocker had long since given up making paper himself. Crocker was old enough that, like his contemporary the elder William Russell, he had been trained as a vatman, and not a machine tender. Setting up the Montague Paper Company, he turned to a machine tender-turned mechanical engineer, George Marshall. Marshall had had a broad range of experience making paper in the South and Midwest, and had worked with Crocker’s brother, S. E. Crocker in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

These local managers became more important as the mills became more complex and mill owners became more distant from the workers. The workers expected, in the language of the day, to be treated in a “manly” way, and they rewarded managers who behaved in what they considered manly ways: with straightforward honesty and respect. A manager who could also show bravery around dangerous machinery and dams and a willingness to get his hands dirty, was particularly popular among the workers. Like the owners, most of the managers or superintendents had risen through the ranks, and had become managers from the position of machine tender. Only one of the managers in Bellows Falls and Franklin had joined management from the counting house instead of the shop floor. This was Alonzo N. Burbank, whom Russell
had hired for the Winnipiseogee Paper Company, and who would become treasurer of the Fall Mountain Paper Company. Burbank, along with Russell and Hugh Chisolm of the Oxford Paper Company in Rumford, Maine, would be the driving forces behind the consolidation of the International Paper Company. Burbank represented the future: he was a professional manager with a background in business but not in the craft of papermaking.

Burbank was notably different from Albert H. Fisher, another resident proprietor who moved from the mills in Franklin to those in Bellows Falls. Fisher was representative of the older generation of managers who had risen through the ranks. He was perhaps unusual in that he had briefly been a mill owner but became a manager when Russell bought his mill in 1870. Fisher’s mill was small enough that he had been both mill owner and machine tender, so his change in title was hardly a change in status. He was essential to Russell’s success, for he had made the first practical run of wood pulp paper for Russell, and his technical expertise remained important for Russell during the formative years of the Winnipiseogee and Fall Mountain Paper Companies.

Fisher was a popular manager both in his time in Franklin and in Bellows Falls, where he moved in 1874. In later years, when Fisher returned to Franklin for a visit, Omar Towne, editor of the Franklin Transcript, described him as “genial.” Towne described him as easy-going and down-to-earth, even after he had become “well supplied with this world’s goods.” In Bellows Falls, Fisher was particularly popular among his workers. In 1876, when Fisher was the superintendent of the Fall Mountain Paper Company, the Bellows Falls Times reported, “an occurrence indicating very friendly relations and harmonious feelings between workmen and employers at the Fall Mountain Paper Mill. …” The Times reported:

The mills had been stopped for the day and Mr. A. H. Fisher, the resident proprietor, with a number of workmen were attending to some arrangement in one of the mills that was to occupy a brief time, when suddenly the men dropped off, but before quite “alone in his glory,” he was invited to the shipping room of the large mill where many of the employees were assembling as well as some “outside” friends. Mr. F. Caruthers immediately addressed Mr. Fisher, informing him in a humorous manner that a strike was prevailing among the employees, not however for higher wages but with reference to keeping their time. In behalf therefore of the employees, and as indicating fraternal relations between them and their employers, and with their hearty wishes for a merry and happy Christmas, he handed him a gold watch and attachments warranted to keep true
time! Mr. Fisher was taken by entire surprise, and appeared as though he wanted some place for escape, but soon recovered and responded by expressing his surprise. …

In expressing his appreciation, Fisher said that “as the relations between them had always been cordial and harmonious they might always so continue.”

Workers in Turners Falls and Franklin also gave gifts to managers, but Fisher seems to have been particularly popular. These “cordial and harmonious” relations were key to Fisher’s popularity. He exemplified the manly respect that the workers expected. By 1876, Fisher was well on his way to becoming a wealthy paper manufacturer. He would retire from the Fall Mountain Mill in 1881 to form a partnership with Wyman Flint, the senior manufacturer in Bellows Falls; they would buy one of the town’s small mills. Until he retired, Fisher kept an office inside the Fall Mountain mill, and occasionally worked alongside the men. He understood the process of making paper and was not afraid to take risks. For example, in 1879, when the flashboards on the Bellows Falls dam needed repair, Fisher gathered four workers and went out on the dam to do the repairs himself. The Times reported, “when the ice parted and all were likely to be cut off from any safe retreat. Mr. F. promptly took in the situation and crossed the chasm, making it is said, the best leap in the records of athletic sports. The others followed and fell into deep water but were all fish-ed out safely, after having a glowing water bath!” This sort of daring endeared Fisher to his workers. Paper mills were dangerous places to work, and it was cheering to see a manager take the same risks that the men took every day.

Fisher was hardly the only manager to receive tokens of affection from the workers; the tradition of gift giving seems to have been fairly common in the paper towns. In 1885, for example, employees of the Franklin Falls Pulp Company (the groundwood mill managed by W. F. Daniell’s son, Harry, though independent of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company) gave their boss a “costly wolf skin overcoat for Christmas.” The following year, employees of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company gave their superintendent a chair for Christmas. The Transcript reported:

Last Friday evening the fat and jolly Superintendent of No. 2 pulp mill, M. V. Streeter, was hastily summoned from his residence on Pearl St., to his place of business. He was
then rushed into the presence of his employes, where they presented him with an elegant easy chair. It was a great surprise, but the recipient proved equal to the occasion, and thanked the donors for their generous recognition.89

This incident is notable for its context. At the end of 1886, the Knights of Labor were conducting an organizing campaign in Franklin. The Knights made little progress among paper mill workers, but Franklin also had two hosiery mills and one woolen mill, so they had some hope of getting a foothold. The Transcript was generally supportive of the Knights. The week after this article was published, the Transcript announced the Knights’ fundraising efforts for a reading room, and commented, “The money will be used for a laudable purpose.”90 The paper denied that there was any necessary antagonism between labor and capital. With Chicago’s Haymarket Affair in recent memory, this was a tumultuous time. Indeed, the Transcript had reported the Haymarket Affair in Chicago the previous May.91 The gift by the workers to their superintendent underscored the point that whatever tensions there may have been elsewhere there were no major tensions in Franklin’s paper mills.

Even in Turners Falls, which was more of a factory town than the others, workers occasionally gave gifts to their managers. For example, in March 1886, carpenters making repairs to the Montague Paper Mill gave their foreman a “costly silver watch.”92 The Turners Falls Reporter did not tell the occasion for the gift. These examples of gift giving underscore the relative lack of tensions in the paper towns. This would seem that much more remarkable by 1900, when workers would become increasingly alienated from management. For the time being, at least, the workers and management were both part of a single community, and these traditions of gift giving underscored the shared interests within the community.

Another indication of the friendliness between the paper mill workers and manufacturers were the annual papermakers’ balls. Many of the social clubs and fraternal orders in the paper towns held annual balls, but the papermakers’ balls became particularly important. The mills in Bellows Falls were the most consistent, holding balls every year from 1876 until at least 1891, after which time the balls became union affairs.93 Papermakers in Turners Falls held balls during the 1880s.94 In 1904, the ball in Turners Falls also came under union jurisdiction. Coverage of
the balls in Franklin was spotty. The *Franklin Transcript* reported on two balls, in 1892 and 1893, but the Franklin Public Library preserves a program from a third ball, in 1895.  

The balls were a cooperative effort between workers and employers. All departments of the mills were represented, from upper management, to office staff, skilled, and unskilled workers. For example, at the Papermakers’ ball in Franklin in 1895, Harry W., Eugene S., and Warren F. Daniell, Jr, represented the Daniell family. James T. and Elias Ayles, both superintendents, served on the committee of introduction, as did E. M. Perkins, overseer in one of the paper finishing rooms. The office staff organizing the dance included bookkeepers Michael J. Nevins and E. G. Peabody, as well as clerk, Joseph A. F. Nevins. Five members of the committees included workers: paper finisher Charles E. Douphinett, as well as F. C. Ferrin, S. F. Hoyt, and R. C. Partington.  

The balls were elaborate and formal affairs, usually held in the fall or winter months. They were carefully planned, the halls were elaborately decorated, and organizers hired the best bands that were locally available. In 1878, for example, the papermakers in Bellows Falls looked to Keene for a quadrille band, but hired George B. Wheeler, a local musician and operator of a steam laundry, as prompter. Wheeler would soon launch a local band, which would be a fixture of local celebrations into the twentieth century. Papermakers’ balls would continue into the twentieth century, at least in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls, but in the 1890s became union events, sponsored by the United Brotherhood of Paper Makers.  

**Industrial Accidents**  

Paper mills were dangerous places, as were all nineteenth-century mills and factories. The mills ran by waterpower, which was transmitted to the machines by systems of belts, shafts, and pulleys. The machines required constant vigilance and were unforgiving of the slightest misstep. None of the villages relied entirely on paper manufacture, and the other industries were just as dangerous. The hosiery and woolen mills as well as the needle factory in Franklin, the cutlery factory and cotton mill in Turners Falls, and the Vermont Farm Machine Company in
Bellows Falls all relied on the same sorts of power transmission as the paper mills, and all had machinery that could be similarly dangerous.

By the 1870s, manufacturers and millwrights had long since settled on transmitting power from the turbines to the machines by systems of belts, shafts, and pulleys. They had determined that this system was fast, quiet, and efficient in that it wasted little energy through friction. Carl Hofmann noted in his *Practical Treatise* that shafts and belts were ideal for transmitting power to paper machines, and that “cog-wheels” should be “used only where they cannot be avoided.” He continued, “Pulleys and belts are preferred because their shafts can be placed at nearly any distance from each other, because they are subjected to no breaks which cannot be quickly mended, and because they work without noise.” Hofmann explained that some friction was necessary, because the belts had to grip the pulleys, but using long, narrow, fast-moving belts, could minimize that friction. “A long belt,” he wrote, “is pressed to the surface of the pulley by its weight, but a short one must be stretched more, in order to lay equally as tight, and it will consequently wear out sooner; long belts are therefore more durable and work better than short ones.” Belts worked most efficiently and with the least tension at high speeds. Engineers and millwrights designed the system of power transmission with efficiency in mind, but this made the mills dangerous. Workers were constantly in near proximity to the fast-moving belts and exposed moving parts of machines. A moment of distraction could be fatal; the majority of the accidents in the mills—at least those reported in local papers—were related to the power transmission systems and not the machines themselves.

The nature of mill accidents varied from painful and inconvenient to gruesome. Sometimes a moment of carelessness would lead to days or weeks of “enforced idleness,” as the *Bellows Falls Times* put it in 1882. In 1870, for example, the Greenfield *Gazette and Courier* reported, “A man by the name of Yanter had his heel caught under a belt in the cutlery works, one day last week, and will be laid up several weeks in consequence.” In the same column, the paper reported a second accident, noting the dangers of the factory’s distractions: “On Thursday, as August Wagner was at work upon some shafting overhead, in the same establishment, the man
who was holding the ladder upon which he stood, became a little frightened at the noise and motion of the machinery and let go his hold. Wagner fell, striking upon his back and sustaining severe injuries.”

Again, in 1872, the Turners Falls Reporter noted, “Anthony Disselttle, while at his work at the Cutlery on Monday, got his leg shattered by being caught by the belt and thrown violently against the stone at which he was grinding. He wanted to stop the stone, and incautiously tried to throw the belt off the sheaf with his foot, when the belt caught it, breaking his leg instantly.”

The Cutlery was the first operating factory in Turners Falls and the largest factory in any of the towns until the paper mills were operational; thus, there were reports of major injuries in Turners Falls before there were in the other towns. By 1874, the Fall Mountain Paper Company mill in Bellows Falls was fully operational, and the Times reported injuries. On July 3, 1874, the paper reported, “Thomas Tote, a workman in the Fall Mountain paper mill, had an arm broken on Tuesday last, by falling and getting it caught in a pulley.”

Two years later, the Times reported that James McNamara had been “caught in a revolving shaft.” Luckily, “nearly every vestige of clothing [was] torn from his body,” and “he escaped serious injury, though somewhat bruised.” The Times reported that the same day, Angus Beacon, a worker in the pulp mill, had cut off a thumb, but that a doctor was trying to graft it. The paper noted, “The same day one or two other persons in the mills had narrow escapes from serious accidents, making it appear in the mills as though, occasionally, there was a Turkish fatality for accidents.”

In Franklin, the Sulloway and Aiken hosiery mills and the Franklin Mills woolen mill were almost as important as the pulp and paper mills. In the 1870s and 1880s, these mills, and even the Winnipiseogee Paper Company, hired children as young as fourteen years old. In April 1879, the Merrimack Journal reported that a “shocking accident” had occurred at the Sulloway hosiery mill. The paper reported that Bertie Bushman, a boy of fourteen was injured when his pants were caught in pulley. The force of the belt threw him against the floor, breaking his thigh and collarbones and inflicting serious head injuries. In July 1880, the Journal reported a similar accident involving another fourteen-year-old boy at the Aiken hosiery mill. Three months
later, another boy, this time at the Winnipiseogee Paper Mill suffered a similar accident. The

*Journal* reported,

A sad accident happened at Paper Mill No. 1, in this village, last Saturday. Charles Bean, a boy about 14 years of age, employed in the mill, attempted to put on a belt which had run off the pulley, when, by some chance, his sleeve caught in the machinery pulling him down to the shaft, while a set screw at every revolution tore through the flesh on the under side of his arm. The sinews and flesh of the arm were frightfully torn, before he could be extricated. Dr. Nichols attended the suffering lad. For a day or two his recovery was doubtful, but he is now on the mending hand, with a possibility that he may yet recover the use of his arm. Many of our readers will recall Charlie as a bright, intelligent lad, who was prominent as one of the actors in the opera of “Red Riding Hood,” some months since. He lives with a widowed mother, to whose support his wages contributed, and the charitably disposed will find this a fitting opportunity for the exercise of their liberality.¹⁰⁷

Accounts of injured children were rare. Youth and inexperience may have accounted for some of the injuries, but machines were dangerous even for people with ample experience. In June 1882, the *Bellows Falls Times* reported that Charles Martin, a foreman in one of the pulp mills had attempted to adjust a belt with a broken broom handle. The stick, the paper reported, “was hurled against him with such force as to make a large rent in and to pierce through the scrotum, inflicting a severe and painful wound, but not particularly dangerous unless a serious inflammation should supervene.”¹⁰⁸ Even mill owners were not immune to injury. In July 1882, A. C. Moore, of the firm of Moore, Arms, and Thompson, was injured while working on a belt. The paper reported,

Albert C. Moore, of Moore, Arms, & Thompson last Friday was assisting in mending a belt at the paper mill. The belt was riveted and he was holding it while a workman was cutting the rivets with a chisel. A quick, sharp blow hurled a piece of the metal, with great force directly into the eye of Mr. Moore. The eye was very painful and no relief being derived from treatment here, he went to Boston, Tuesday morning to have it attended to.¹⁰⁹

The gruesome detail of these accounts was characteristic of the newspapers’ coverage. The papers emphasized the power of the machinery and its ability to distort the human form in freakish ways. The accounts were also illustrations of the workers strength and endurance; they are remarkable for their frankness and lack of sentimentality. The amount of detail in the stories is almost voyeuristic; ultimately the repetition of the stories is what makes them remarkable, for
the agony of injured workers is palpable. For example, in September 1883, the Merrimack Journal reported on an accident in one of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company mills in terms that must have made the paper’s readers cringe:

Anjus Boulissiex, a French-Canadian employed in the upper paper-mill, met with a terrible accident on Wednesday afternoon about 2:30. He went underneath the floor to put on a belt, and braced his right foot against a pulley to aid him. When the shafting started his foot slipped through the pulley and his leg was wound tightly around the shaft. He was a remarkably plucky man, for he said when he heard his bones crack and saw his flesh break he grabbed hold of the pulley and held fast, and in that position he was found. It was necessary to take down the line of shafting before he could be removed. His leg, close to the body, was wound like a cord around the iron. Dr. C. B. Nichols was at once summoned and immediately amputated the remains of the leg.

Similarly, in June 1886, the Turners Falls Reporter reported bluntly, “Charles Sauer, a workman in the cutlery, had his long and handsome beard pulled out by the roots, by getting it caught under a belt on the wheel he was working at.”

Belt and shafts were the most dangerous machinery in the mills, but the mills had many other dangers besides these. Every part of the papermaking process, from hauling logs out of the river to shipping the finished rolls of paper, was dangerous. Especially in Bellows Falls, the lumberyards could be particularly treacherous. On August 3, 1876, for example, the Times reported the death of Patrick McAuliffe in the lumberyard of the Fall Mountain Paper Company, at the north end of the village of Bellows Falls. McAuliffe was at work hauling logs from the Connecticut when a cog on the hoist gave way. The Times explained,

The apparatus for doing the work has a roller which is turned by an iron bar. A cog in the ratchet wheel broke, and McAuliffe was just in position to receive on his head the full force of the blow from the bar as the roller snapped back. Mr. McAuliffe was 44 years of age, a steady, faithful hand and much esteemed by his fellow workmen. He leaves a wife and six children, the oldest child being a daughter of some 15 years, besides brothers and sisters. Immediately after the accident many persons assembled near the body, among whom were his family, upon whom the sudden death of the husband and father came with such terrible force, and it was of course a distressing scene, and is a very sad case.

McAuliffe, the Times was eager to point out, lived a respectable and sober life, a point that added to the pathos of the story. The paper reported, “He will also be buried with the honors of St. Patrick’s Temperance and Benevolent Society of which he was a member.” In 1881,
another accident happened at the same place. This time the worker, L. M. Goward, fell, “from the shoot or slip in which the logs are drawn from the river.” Goward suffered a severe concussion. The *Times* noted that he was severely injured, lying in a comatose state nearly all night.”

Five years after this accident, another one happened in the same place, though causing more serious injuries. John B. McLeod, employed by the Fall Mountain Paper Company, fell from the shute head downward some thirty-five feet, striking on his face, followed by a heavy log which struck the ground first, and then bounded upon his shoulders crosswise. The log was so heavy as to require three men to remove it, and but for the fall being broken he must have been killed instantly. Dr. Allbee, Gosselin and Campbell were called and he was removed to his home before he was conscious, having no remembrance of anything from the time he fell till he found himself in bed. His limbs were paralyzed and his injuries are internal. Yesterday he vomited blood a good deal and the physicians are as yet unable to say whether his injuries will prove fatal.

Falling was a danger inside the mills as well as out, and in industries besides paper manufacturing. Workers occasionally had to climb to high places, where there was little protection in case they lost their footing. In December 1879, for example, Rufus Cass, a worker in the Vermont Farm Machine Company, at the south end of the mill complex in Bellows Falls, was killed when he “fell through the scuttle from the fourth story to the basement, a distance of 36 feet.” The article continued, “It was a terrible fall, his arms and legs were broken, a severe cut across the throat and internal injuries. He was unconscious and died at 12 ½ o’clock, about 2 ½ hours after the accident. The cut on his throat was probably caused by striking the hook of a chain hanging in the basement.” The *Times* noted that Cass had been unsteady all day, and had fallen “at another place on the building only some ten minutes before the accident, but he appeared to recover and it did not attract further attention till after the fatal fall.” His age, sixty years, probably contributed to his condition.

Many of the injuries by falling usually lacked the drama of those by machines, and warranted little more than a sentence. In October 1881, the Bellows Falls *Times* reported, “Wednesday forenoon, Garrett Pierce, a workman in the Fall Mountain Paper Mill, while in the stock-house, fell from the platform some fifteen feet and was seriously injured.” No bones appear to be broken, but his injuries appear to be internal, and though in a critical condition it is
hoped his case will not prove fatal.” In June 1882, the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* noted, James Brown fell from a ladder while painting the other day and broke his arm near the shoulder. Dr. Coy attended him. The same physician was called in last Wednesday morning to see a man who had fallen upon some gearing at the Montague mill. He found that James McAllister had been seriously injured, among the hurts being an arm broken in several places.  

Similarly, in 1891, the Franklin *Transcript* reported, “Peter Tukey fell from a staging at the sulphite mill last week and was unable to work for several days on account of injuries received.” In August, 1893, the Bellows Falls *Times* reported a pair of accidents in the Fall Mountain Paper Company’s plant: “Tom Usher fell down a flight of stairs at the Fall Mountain mills one day last week and broke his collar bone. … Patrick Brickley fell from a ladder at the Fall Mountain mills Sunday and struck on his head, quite seriously injuring him.”

This matter-of-fact reporting was as remarkable for its occasional insensitivity as the more detailed descriptions of injuries by belts and shafts. In 1893, for example, the Bellows Falls *Times* reported on an injury, combining the frankness of the paper’s characteristic reporting with disdain for the Eastern European immigrants that were just beginning to settle in the village. The paper reported, “A Hungarian with an unpronounceable name fell down an elevator shaft at the Fall Mountain works Tuesday afternoon. No bones were broken, and it is thought he escaped internal injuries, but he is quite badly bruised.” This blunt reporting style continued into the twentieth century. In 1903, Franklin’s *Journal-Transcript* reported, “Wm. W. Buchanan, overseer of No. 2 pulp mill fell about 10 feet last Thursday and a log fell on his chest causing quite painful injuries.” In August 1905, the Bellows Falls *Times* reported, “While employed in Nos. 4 and 5 machine room of the International Paper Company Sunday Raymond White fell 20-feet or more from a ladder and severely injured the heel and ankle of his left foot.”

More common than falls, though less dramatic than injuries from belts and shafts, were injuries from the paper machines themselves. The machine tender faced fewer dangers than the rest of the crew. The back tender, however, had to guide the wet paper from the wire onto the press rolls, and because these press rolls were heavy, they carried some danger. At least in the
1870s, paper was transferred from the wire of the fourdrinier to the felt, by hand. The drying cylinders were even more dangerous, because heavily and heated. They notoriously temperamental, and the attention they demanded opened the tenders up to injury. Hofmann wrote of this,

It may be supposed that these cylinders, being held and driven by cog-wheels, will be forced to run steadily whether they are balanced or not; but it can easily be shown that this is not the case. We shall suppose, for example, that the cylinder has a heavy side or point, that its in motion, and that the heavy side occupies just now the lowest possible position. On its way up from there, the cogs of its driving-wheel … are pushed forward by the cogs of the next connecting-wheel, … which thus sustain the extra weight, and move the cylinder as if it were well balanced; but on the way down, during the second half of the revolution, the heavy side will run ahead of the pushing cogs of the neighboring wheel … as far as the play between the driving and driven cogs permits.\textsuperscript{123}

The result of this imbalance in the cylinder would cause the paper either to stretch or to bunch up. In attempting to fix problems of this sort, the tender could easily fall against a cylinder, or even simply brush it with a hand or arm and would thus sustain painful burns and crushed arms, hands, or fingers.

Injuries of this sort happened with some regularity. For example, in 1881, the \textit{Bellows Falls Times} reported,

J. W. Cauger, a machine tender in the Fall Mountain Paper Mill, had his left arm so severely burned on Tuesday evening, that it will disabled him from work for some time. He was at work about the machine when he slipped and fell, his arm being caught between the felt and the dryer and held so securely that it was impossible for him to extricate it, and it was nearly a minute before the machine could be stopped so that he could remove his arm from the hot dryer against which it was so tightly pressed.\textsuperscript{124}

Similarly, the Franklin \textit{Transcript} reported in 1886, “Burt Cate, employed at No. 2 paper mill, was severely burned Tuesday by his left arm coming in contact with the dryers.”\textsuperscript{125} Again, in 1890, the \textit{Transcript} reported, “George Raynor had his right arm severely burned by its coming in contact with the dryers at No. 1 paper mill.”\textsuperscript{126} In 1890, the \textit{Turners Falls Reporter} noted, “Arthur Strahan had his hand jammed in the dryers in the Montague Mill last week.”\textsuperscript{127} Finally, in 1900, the \textit{Reporter} noted that a worker named William Pollard had an arm crushed in the dryers at the Montague Mill, and that he would probably have to have the arm amputated.\textsuperscript{128}

More dangerous than the dryers were the calenders. Both plate calenders and super
calenders could be dangerous. On plate calenders, the passage of the plate and paper stacks through the press could be dangerous. For example, in 1895, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier reported, “James Mullen, a workman at the Keith mill, met with a serious accident, Thursday morning, having his arm caught in the plate callender [sic]. The flesh half way to the elbow was completely stripped from the bone and hung from the finger tips, and the palm of the hand badly cut. No bones were broken.”

By the 1890s the mills in the villages in this study generally made paper in rolls, and plate calenders were largely obsolete. The mills continued to make some grades of paper that required plating, and the “plater girls” remained an important group, particularly in Bellows Falls, where they were instrumental in the success of the strike of 1907. But paper in rolls required finishing with a super-calender. The super calenders were the most dangerous part of the paper machine, for until about 1885, they had to be fed by hand. With machines running at a rate as fast as 200 feet per minute, the tender had to feed the paper around the rolls without allowing it to gather on the floor. Inevitably, workers would suffer crushed and even lost fingers. Hofmann explained the process, “The machine-tenders lead the paper by hand round the rolls far enough to make sure that it will pass in the right place, and it requires a calm, collected mind, a quick eye, and nimble fingers to withdraw the hands always at the right time.”

Engineers and machine tenders tried to find solutions to the problem of lost fingers and crushed hands. In 1878, the Bellows Falls Times reported that Lucius Harlow of Holyoke but formerly of Bellows Falls had “invented and constructed a patent calender feeder, for paper mills.” Still by the 1880s, the speed of paper machines was limited largely by the need to feed calenders by hand. William A. Hall, a nephew of W. A. Russell and machine tender in the Fall Mountain mill, explained, “I was a tender of No. 1 machine, and had worked it up to 200 feet per minute, then an unheard-of speed, but at that we stuck, for few could pass the paper through the calenders without loss of a few fingers.” In 1885, Richard Smith working at the Fall Mountain mill invented a pneumatic feed for calenders, an arrangement by which “wind from a fan was blown through to conduct the paper from roll to roll.” Hall noted that the first feed was crude, causing the paper to cool unevenly, but
that it allowed the machines to run at over 200 feet per minute.\textsuperscript{132}

Automatic calender feeds took a few years to be developed and generally adopted, and through the 1880s and 1890s calenders remained the most dangerous part of the paper machines. This appears to have been especially the case in Franklin, where newspapers reported calender accidents more frequently than did newspapers in other towns. Accidents were frequent enough that the reporting of them was usually brief and sometimes even sarcastic. In 1881, for example, the \textit{Merrimack Journal} reported, “Mr. John J. Hardenburg recently slipped his finger into a calendering machine at paper-mill No. 2, the other day, and now thinks the machine is better fitted for the use it was originally intended for.”\textsuperscript{133} A couple months later, the Bellows Falls Times reported, “Saturday forenoon James Higgins, an employe [sic] in one of the paper mills, had two of the fingers on his right hand quite severely jammed by being caught in the calender rolls.”\textsuperscript{134} In October 1881, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier reported, “Three smashed fingers ornament Frank Spencer’s hand since his encounter with a super-calender in the Montague mill last week.”\textsuperscript{135}

The papers were characteristically matter-of-fact in their reporting; the bluntness of the stories, usually reported in one or two sentences, added to their gruesome impact. In 1882, the \textit{Merrimack Journal} reported a particularly gruesome story of an accident with a calender:

\begin{quote}
Capt. George N. Cheever met with a very serious and unfortunate accident on Thursday about noon. He was engaged in wiping the rolls of a calendering machine at the upper paper-mill when his right hand caught in the ends of the rolls and instantly the best parts of all his fingers and thumb dropped on the floor, except the middle finger, which probably went on the outside of the roll. Dr. Nichols attended him.\textsuperscript{136}
\end{quote}

The newspapers’ accounts reflect desensitization. These stories were common enough that they were greeted with a sense of tedium. In 1883, the \textit{Merrimack Journal} reported “Mr. Elias Ayles, Jr., is another of the victims of those insatiate machines at the paper-mill, having the ends of his thumb and finger pulverized on Wednesday evening. It is a familiar trade-mark where paper mills are.”\textsuperscript{137} In 1885, the Franklin Transcript reported in 1885, “John Chase found last Saturday that the calender rolls at No. 2 paper mill were true to their time honored custom and
has been wearing his hand in a sling.”

Even after calender feeders had been invented, the machines were still dangerous. In November 1892, the Franklin Transcript reported, “Louis Martin got two fingers of his right hand between calender rolls at No. 1 paper mill last Friday and they were badly jammed.” In August 1896, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier reported, “Wilbur Haskins, while working on a paper machine in the Montague mill, Monday had his left hand caught in one of the calenders, jamming [sic] two fingers quite badly.” Finally, in March 1899, the Franklin Journal-Transcript reported that Byron Hutchinson, a former Franklin resident who had taken a job at a mill in Bellows Falls, had returned to recuperate from an accident with a calender.

Few people seemed to complain about the dangers of the mills, at least in the newspapers. In Bellows Falls in the 1880s, Lyman S. Hayes represented Travelers Insurance, which insured workers. A decade later, the Winnipiseogee Paper Company insured its workers against injury, a practice that the International Paper Company stopped after it bought mills. Workers occasionally sued the paper companies over their injuries. In 1891, for example, the Bellows Falls Times reported, “Edward Geno of Rutland, aged 17 years, who has been employed in the Fall Mountain paper mills for some time, was caught on a shaft which he was oiling last Thursday night, and whirled around until one leg was broken in the thigh and one shoulder pulled out of joint. All his clothes were torn off and he was bruised somewhat beside the broken bones.” Three years later the Times reported that Geno had filed a suit against the paper company. The paper reported, “The suit is for heavy damages, and it is alleged that the boy will be a cripple for life.” In July, 1898, Franklin’s Journal-Transcript reprinted a story from the Bellows Falls Times reporting that the family of Michael Kennedy sued the International Paper Company, charging that “carelessness of one of its employes [sic],” had caused Kennedy’s death. In 1899, the Journal-Transcript reported that David Herbert, a former pulp mill worker had filed a suit against the International Paper Company over the loss of an arm. The paper reported, “It is alleged that the accident was due to a breach of duty on the part of the company in not providing suitable machinery.” Generally, however, workers took the injuries in stride, relying on
family, friends, subscriptions for charity, and insurance policies through fraternal organizations to see them through hard times. The workers were proud of the skill that was necessary to run the mills. Required skill and danger—the sublimity of the machines—appealed to the workers’ producerist ethos. The ability to manage machines without injury, and for that matter the occasional missing fingertips, were marks of the “productive labor,” which Jackson Lears notes was a “badge of manliness and personal dignity.” \[148\]

This idea began to break down in the 1890s, as papermakers began to organize into labor unions and take up the cause of the eight-hour day. As machines became larger and faster, and as mill production had to keep up with a highly competitive field, workers began worry about the safety of the mills. Thus, workers began to sue companies for liability in accidents. In Franklin, particularly, where the paper unions were strongest, some of the strongest voices in the union leadership came from people who had suffered injuries. George Raynor was an early advocate of the unskilled Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers, and Charles Bean remained active in that union even after he left the mill and opened a movie theater. Archie Mahan, a prominent member of the skilled International Brotherhood of Papermakers (and a fine pianist) lost three fingers to a cutting machine called a “doctor” in 1903. \[149\]

By 1900, papermaking had changed considerably from the way it had been a few decades before. Wood pulp technology had revolutionized the industry, making paper cheaper and more abundant. The quality of the paper decreased, but the capacity of the mills greatly increased. Papermakers tried to maintain their artisanal identity, but the pace of work and the quality of life in the mills gradually declined. This was exacerbated in the 1890s, as the paper industry, like other large industries in the country, underwent a rash of consolidations. The relationships between the mills and their communities decayed once the mills were no longer independent, and their operations were overseen from the boardrooms of distant corporations. At the same time, workers, recognizing the threat of these consolidations to their statuses, eagerly joined the growing labor unions. Charles N. Bean and Archie Mahan were active in the unions.

The relationship between injury and organization seemed particularly strong in Franklin,
home to both Bean and Mahan. Further, John P. Burke, International President of the Pulp and Sulphite Workers from 1916 until the 1960s, seems to have been inspired to become active in organized labor and in socialist politics, by the accidental death of his father in 1901. In April of that year, Burke’s father Michael was at work on the dam near pulp mill at the eastern edge of Franklin Falls. The Journal-Transcript reported that he,

> with four other men went out to remove the flashboards on the first dam above Sanborn bridge on the Winnipiseogee river. The high water made this a difficult task and while trying to hold one end of the board he was thrown into the water. The force of the current carried him over the dam and down the river. The body was seen pass under the railroad bridge and then all trace of it was lost. Mr. Burke’s companions summoned help and a diligent search was instituted and continued during the day but the body could not be found. An effort will be made to draw the water off Sunday morning so that the search can be resumed under more favorable conditions.  

The following Sunday, when the mills were shut down, mill superintendent, W. E. Everett, arranged to hold back the water in the river at dams upstream. As the water level lowered, police and firemen were prepared to search the riverbank. Finally, a passing bicyclist spotted the body. Burke was buried solemnly. Father Timon, the pastor of St. Paul’s Roman Catholic church celebrated a requiem high mass and, the paper reported, the church was richly decorated with “floral offerings.” John P. Burke was seventeen years old when this happened. He went to work in the mill three years later and soon became active in the unions. He became a socialist, an advocate of industrial unionism, an admirer of Eugene Debs, Big Bill Haywood, and the Irish socialist, James Connolly.

The development of labor unions, appeal of socialism, and liability lawsuits were all indications of the changes in craft of papermaking. By the time of Michael Burke’s death, American papermaking had become completely mechanized and dominated by large corporations. The product of the mills in Franklin, Bellows Falls, and Turners Falls, was mostly a cheap grade of newsprint made from groundwood pulp. Instead of independent mills, the dominant mills in each town were part of the International Paper Company. The company’s goal was to make newsprint in sufficient volume to remain dominant in an increasingly competitive industry. The quality of paper from a craft perspective, as well as the safety of the workers,
seemed to be secondary concerns. Certainly workers remained proud of their work, but this pride mattered less as papermaking ceased to be a craft.
NOTES


2 Ibid., 162.

3 Hofmann

4 Ibid., 12.

5 “Reminiscences of Franklin,” Franklin Transcript, Feb. 8, 1884, p. 2.

6 Hoffman, 216-217.

7 Hunter, 343-344; Hofmann, 114.

8 Hofmann, 114.

9 Hunter, 565; Hofmann, 149.

10 Hofmann, 82-83;

11 Hofmann, 162.

12 Hofmann, 199-200.

13 Weeks, 174-178; Hunter, 15-16.


15 Davis, 107.


17 Davis, 100.

18 Ibid., 37-38.

19 Munsell, 52.
20 Matthias Koops, *Historical Account of the Substances which have been used to Describe Events, and to Convey Ideas, from the Earliest Date, to the Invention of Paper*, (London: T. Burton, 1800), 10.

21 Ibid., 85.

22 Ibid., 88. The copy of Koops’s book in the SUNY School of Environmental Science and Forestry is in remarkably good condition, and shows that the paper was durable. The texture of the straw paper is coarse, while the wood paper is smoother.

23 Hunter, 549.

24 Munsell, 168.

25 Hofmann, 313.

26 Ibid., 314.

27 Ibid., 315.

28 Ibid., 321.

29 Ibid., 316, 322-4, 333.

30 Hofmann, 10.

31 Hofmann, 109-111.

32 Davis, 65-76; Hunter, “Chronology,” 27

33 Munsell, 216.

34 Carruthers, 107-111.

35 Ibid., 113.

36 Ibid., 116.

37 Davis, 308.

38 Davis, 308.

39 Carruthers, 118.

40 Ibid., 119.

41 Weeks, 238.


43 Hofmann, 307-308.

44 Davis, 164.

45 “Felting power” refers to the ability of the fibers to interlock and form a strong web of paper.

46 Davis, 164.

47 Ibid.

48 Davis, 61.


51 Quoted in Davis, 58. Davis does not give the date of this testimony.

52 Ibid., 58-59.

53 Hofmann, 309.

54 Carruthers, 111.

55 Weeks, 226; Hofmann, 300-301.

56 Weeks, 230.

57 Hunter, 392.


60 Weeks, 230-231; Hunter, 27.

61 Ritter and Kellner.


McGaw, 41-43; 96-103.

Hofmann, 377.

Ibid., 381.

Ibid., 383.

McGaw, 306.

Ibid.

Hofmann, 383.

McGaw, 98-100; Burns, 58-61.

Burns, 59.


Hofmann, 384.


"Pride of Franklin. Names of Men Prominent in Public Affairs," Franklin Transcript,

80 Hofmann, 383.


85 "Local Brieflets," *Franklin Transcript*, November 6, 1891, p. 8.

86 "Local Matters," *Bellows Falls Times*, December 29, 1876, p. 2.

87 "Local Matters," *Bellows Falls Times*, January 9, 1879, p. 2.


89 "Taken By Surprise," *Franklin Transcript*, December 31, 1886, p. 2.


93 The *Bellows Falls Times* announced the "third annual ball of the paper makers" on October 11, 1878, p. 2. The fifth annual ball took place on November 19, 1880 (*Bellows Falls Times*, November 18, 1880, p. 2); "Talk About Town," *Bellows Falls Times*, January 1, 1891.


96 Program, Paper Makers' Ball, 1895, Franklin, N. H. Public Library.

97 "Local Matters," *Bellows Falls Times*, October 11, 1878, p. 2.

98 Hofmann, 364.

99 Ibid.

100 "Local Matters," *BFT*, May 18, 1882, p. 3.
"Turners Falls," GG&C, Aug. 1, 1870, p. 3.

Ibid.

"Leg Broken," TFR, July 17, 1872, p. 3.

"Local Matters," BFT, July 3, 1874, p. 3.

"Local Matters," BFT, July 14, 1876, p. 3.

"Franklin and Vicinity," Merrimack Journal, April 19, 1879, p. 3.

"Franklin and Vicinity," Merrimack Journal, October 22, 1880, p. 3. Several decades later a Charles H. Bean was active in the Franklin local of the Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers Union as well as the proprietor of the local movie theater.

"Local Matters," June 8, 1882, p. 3.

"Local Matters," July 13, 1882, p. 3.


"Turners Falls and Vicinity," TFR, June 23, 1886, p. 3.

"Local Matters," BFT, August 3, 1877, p. 3.

Ibid.

"Local Matters," BFT, Oct. 6, 1881, p. 3.

"Local Matters," BFT, Oct. 7, 1886, p. 3.


"Talk About Town," BFT, August 31, 1893, p. 4.


“City News and Notes,” FJT, May 7, 1903, p. 4.

Hofmann, 153-154.

"Local Matters," BFT, April 28, 1881, p. 3.

“About Home,” Franklin Transcript, Feb. 21, 1890, p. 2.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” Turners Falls Reporter, April 15, 1891, p. 4.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” Turners Falls Reporter, April 15, 1891, p. 4.


Hofmann, 162.

“Local Matters,” BFT, June 14, 1878, p. 3.


Merrimack Journal, Feb. 11, 1881.

“Local Matters,” BFT, April 21, 1883, p. 3.


Merrimack Journal, May 12, 1882,

Merrimack Journal, June 22, 1883.

Franklin Transcript, June 26, 1885.

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Franklin Journal-Transcript, March 3, 1899. The editions of the Bellows Falls Times around this date do not survive.

“Local Matters,” BFT, April 15, 1880, p. 3.

Franklin Journal-Transcript, Sept. 16, 1898, p. 5.

“Bad Accident,” BFT, May 28, 1891, p. 5.


Franklin Journal-Transcript, July 22, 1898, p. 5.


150 "THROWN FROM DAM. Sad Ending to the Life of Michael Burke," FJT, April 12, 1901, p. 1.


CHAPTER 5
DESCRIPTIONS OF THE VILLAGES

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the lay of the land in the paper towns. The sense of place of the towns came not from intentional creation, although the towns’ boosters certainly tried to shape a sense of place. Rather, as John Brinkerhoff Jackson points out, the sense of place was a “vernacular” appreciation of the qualities of a place. The exceptional quality of life in a place came from the appreciation of the commonplace. To understand this vernacular we need to try to understand the layout, natural setting, and development of domestic and public spaces. This chapter is a description of the towns and their natural settings as they developed in the late nineteenth century. The towns developed rapidly, with the explosive growth of the mills, but also with the development of commercial and residential districts. Between 1870 and the first decade of the twentieth century every section of the towns changed. This was most dramatic with Turners Falls, for the village grew from rocky, undeveloped land, but even Bellows Falls and Franklin changed dramatically. This chapter assesses the physical growth of the communities and sets up the discussions of daily life and conflict of the following chapters.

The defining characteristics of the paper towns were their waterfalls. “Falls” was part of each village’s name, and even after Franklin became a city, townspeople still called the industrial center “Franklin Falls.” Each village was in a rugged, glacial valley. This limited growth, for each village was constrained by rugged natural walls. If larger cities could spread outward, the river valley industrial villages had to grow upward. Thus each town had several levels. This was particularly noticeable in Bellows Falls, where glacial eskers formed natural terraces. These terraces defined four distinct levels. The Connecticut Valley at Bellows Falls was particularly narrow, emphasizing this vertical development. The plane on which Turners Falls was built was broader, but the village still had three levels. Franklin Falls, built at the confluence of the Pemigewasset and Winnipesaukee Rivers lacked the bluffs that formed the other terraces, but the
village still developed in a stratified way, with the levels connected by steep streets.

A traveler entering any of the villages is struck by the sense that he or she is descending into town. Each village is mostly surrounded by hills; without these hills there would have been no falls, upon which the villages depended. Again, this is most dramatic in Bellows Falls, where the 900-foot Fall Mountain (or Mt. Kilburn) with its rocky outcropping called “Table Rock,” looms over the village. The feeling of being surrounded is less dramatic in Turners Falls, where there is a broad and level stretch of land leading south from the village to neighboring Montague City and eventually Cheapside, on the south end of Greenfield. The hills in Franklin are not as steep as those in the Connecticut Valley, but they still define the constraints of the industrial village. The valley is vaguely triangular, with the winding Winnipesaukee passing over more than a mile of rapids as it enters from the east, the Pemigewasset, descending from the north over Eastman Falls, and the two rivers swirling together at what townspeople called the “Crotch,” forming the Merrimack at the southern end of the village.

The hills helped define the separateness of the paper towns from the surrounding areas, and so did the rivers themselves. There were approaches to each of the villages that did not require crossing a bridge. In Bellows Falls, travelers from the north and west did not need to cross bridges; in Franklin travelers could approach the village from the south; and in Turners Falls, they could travel from the village of Montague. But eventually in each town, a person would have to cross a river. In Bellows Falls travelers from the south (coming from Brattleboro) crossed the Saxtons River, and travelers from New Hampshire passed through a covered bridge (the Tucker Toll Bridge) over the narrowest part of the falls. Similarly, travelers from Boston on the Cheshire (later the Fitchburg and later yet the Boston and Maine) Railroad crossed the Connecticut on a bridge that paralleled the Tucker Toll Bridge, and those from the north, coming from Claremont, New Hampshire, crossed the river over the Sullivan Railroad Bridge. Until 1905, many people passing between Bellows Falls and the suburban community of North Walpole, New Hampshire walked across this bridge, for there was no highway bridge in the northern part of Bellows Falls.
The main approaches to Franklin were also across bridges. The main commercial street of Franklin Falls is Central Street. Because most of the village was inside of the oxbow on the Winnipesaukee, there were bridges at either end of the street. The Sanborn Bridge connected the village to the east, and the Daniell Bridge connected the village to the western approach. On the west, a second bridge, called the Republican Bridge connected Franklin Falls to the village of West Franklin, the old population center before industrialization. This Republican Bridge, named in honor of the Jeffersonian Republicans in 1802, was the village’s most important connection with Concord and the White Mountains. Until 1892, when the Franklin and Tilton Railroad connected Franklin Falls with rail lines to the east, all freight entering or leaving Franklin Falls had to pass over the venerable covered bridge to the nearest railroad line in West Franklin.

The same was true in Turners Falls. The population center and shire town of Franklin County was Greenfield, on the opposite side of the Connecticut River; so too was the main highway to Boston. While travelers could approach Turners Falls from the rural parts of Montague, most of the traffic came from Greenfield. The railroad connections to Turners Falls were branch lines that crossed the Connecticut at the Cheapside section of Greenfield. By highway, three of the four main approaches to Turners Falls crossed the Connecticut. Travelers could approach the village from Cheapside and Montague City using the same bridge as the branch line of the Vermont and Greenfield Railroad (later Fitchburg and later yet the Boston and Maine), or they could enter the center of the village across what was called the “Lower Suspension Bridge.” Finally, by 1876 they could continue north to what is now the French King Highway, or Massachusetts Route 2 and cross the “Upper Suspension Bridge.” The hills surrounding the villages, as well as the bridges helped set the paper towns apart from the surrounding countryside.

Topography defined how the villages could develop. The riverbeds, the lowest levels of the towns, provided land for mills. The business districts were beside the mills. In Bellows Falls and Turners Falls, they were on a terrace the mills, while in Franklin, which was built inside an oxbow at the end of the Winnipesaukee, mills were at either of business district and behind it to
the north. Houses and tenements, churches, and schools occupied levels usually above the business districts. There were important exceptions, in Turners Falls, where there was enough land for developing housing on either side of the business district. A neighborhood known as the “Sand Patch” or simply the “Patch,” developed south of the business district but also on the same level. Significantly, it was separated from the main part of the village by the main power canal, and was only accessible by crossing a bridge. In Franklin, tenements and other workers’ housing developed across from the mills along “Bow Street,” following the oxbow in the river. Finally, in each town, tenements occupied the upper floors of some of the commercial buildings.

The towns were similar in some respects, but the shapes of the valleys and the choices made by developers made them distinctive. Developers had to work within the work within the limits of the topography, but they also had constraints of landownership of earlier generations. In each town developers had to work with the waterpower companies, and those companies undertook important parts of the development themselves. In Bellows Falls, the Canal Company, founded in the 1790s, owned land that was important for industrial development, but they also owned large tracts of land in what would be residential areas in northern and western parts of the village. This shaped the housing developments, for the company only gradually sold off its land in these residential areas. Franklin was in a similar position, for its Franklin Falls Company, founded in the 1860s, owned land as well as tenements. In both places, however, the waterpower companies were reluctant to undertake large housing developments. The towns were emphatically not built on a Lowell model. Even in Franklin, company housing was haphazard and insufficient for the demand.

Turners Falls was notably different from the other towns in that it did not exist before the period of industrialization. It was a planned community, laid out by an engineer, William Crocker. The Turners Falls Company could trace its history back about as far as the Bellows Falls Canal Company, but when Alvah Crocker bought the company in the late 1860s, he made it not only a waterpower company but also a land development company. Development in Turners Falls depended on the company, and while Crocker and his associates were eager to sell land to
potential homeowners and enterprising capitalists, those builders depended on the company for village infrastructure such as roads and a village water supply. William Crocker designed the town in a grid, superimposed even on topographical irregularities including a steep bluff in the middle of the village. Turners Falls was unique in this sort of development, for it was not constrained by earlier development and landownership.

This is an overview of the similarities and differences of the towns. They were unique and distinctive, with important differences in layout and development. The landscape was shaped gradually through the years of the villages’ development. Set into this environment were the industrial, commercial, religious, civic, and residential buildings that became the stage settings for the little dramas of everyday life that contributed to the towns’ senses of place.

Bellows Falls

Most travelers entering Bellows Falls would have followed the Connecticut River into town (figures 5-1, 5-2). They could have entered from the west, from the village of Saxtons River five miles away, but the population centers were mostly to the north and south. From either direction they would have noticed that the village was located where the river turned to east, forming a bulge of low, rocky land along the riverbed. They doubtless would have noticed the short canal that bypassed the falls and provided a fairly straight connection by water, north to south. The canal created an artificial island, encompassing most of the land within the bulge in the river. In the nineteenth century, the Island was an important section of town, providing land for the railroad lines, yard, stations, and for industry. In the center of the Island was the Island House, a resort hotel that was opulent in its day in the 1850s and 1860s but on the decline by the 1870s. Near the Island House was the Tucker Toll Bridge, and Bridge Street connected the Island with the business district. There was a narrow strip of land west of the canal but on the same level townspeople referred to simply as “under the hill.” This designation, still remembered by some in the village, dates at least to 1802, when the canal was completed, for it appears in the deed for the first paper mill, built that year.² Like the Island, this was prime industrial land.
The “hill” to which this description referred was the first terrace. The railroad—the Vermont Valley and later the Rutland—passed along the base of this terrace. Two of the village’s main streets run along the top: Westminster Street is on the south end of the village and Rockingham Street is on the north. These two streets descend slightly in the middle of the village to form what is called simply the Square. This long block forms the business district. The Square is actually L-shaped, with Bridge Street forming the bottom and southern end of the L. Two smaller streets descend from the Square: Canal Street on the north connects the Square with the northern part of the Island and the railroad station; Mill Street on the south end descends sharply to the site of the paper mills, the grist mill, and the Eddy at the base of the falls.

Westminster and Rockingham Streets form the eastern boundary of the residential and commercial parts of town. In the early nineteenth century, Westminster Street was prime land for fine houses. Before the Civil War, a line of Federal-style mansions overlooked the river. One of these was the Tucker mansion, later owned by Edward and Hetty Green, heirs of the canal fortune. Another was the Atkinson house, built by John Atkinson, who had built the canal (the house was later owned by James Williams, cashier of the Bellows Falls Bank, and is now the Fenton and Hennessey Funeral Home). A third one of these old mansions was also connected with the canal fortune, although in the 1860s most townspeople knew it as the home of William Conant, a furniture builder and merchant. In 1870, this house was moved to make room for a new mansion and was converted into tenements, a purpose it still serves. By the 1870s, Westminster Street was home to a new generation of local elite, as paper manufacturers began to build mansions overlooking their mills below.

Defining the western edge of the village in the 1870s was a long residential street called Atkinson Street. It starts at the southern end of the village at a fork with Westminster Street. Westminster turns east, following the edge of the terrace, and Atkinson passes through the western side of the village. At this fork, Westminster Street also meets the end of the Saxtons River Road, leading west to that village, five miles away. Westminster Street meets Rockingham Street at the northern end of the village. At this intersection, meets not only Atkinson, but also
the end of the Saxtons River Road, leading west to that village, five miles away. Atkinson Street was the longest street in the village, and its most important residential street. The street meets Rockingham Street at a fork at the northern end of the village.

The land contained within Atkinson, Rockingham, and Westminster Streets was the main residential part of the village. The land contained several cross streets, including Hapgood, South, and Henry Streets in the southern end of the village. School Street is the longest cross street and divides the village into northern and southern halves. Starting at an intersection on Atkinson Street, it passes east toward the Square. At the edge of the terrace above the Square, it intersects with the short Church Street, and travels down a hill to Westminster Street. In 1885, School Street descended the steep hill to the Square; the sidewalk on this street was a flight of stairs.\(^3\) By 1892, these stairs had been widened and substantially improved. By the beginning of the twentieth century townspeople knew them as the Forty-Four Steps, and postcard publishers printed images of them.\(^4\) They are still an important landmark in the village. Before the 1870s, School Street was where most of the village’s major merchants and manufacturers lived.

Starting at School Street, and traveling north between Atkinson and Rockingham Streets is Green Street. Named for Henry Atkinson Green, a distant relative of the canal builder John Atkinson and a merchant, the street was already thickly settled in 1869, particularly on the western side.\(^5\) Some of the land on the western side was still owned by the Canal Company (a steep hill on the property made it unattractive for housing); in 1884, the company sold much of this land to St. Charles parish, which built a church at the top of the hill. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Polish immigrants formed a second parish north of St. Charles, but also on Green Street.

Before the 1870s, this was the basic outline of Bellows Falls. In 1869, the most densely populated parts of the village were School and Green Streets in the north, and Henry and South Streets in the South. Before the construction of the mills there was little demand for housing, but the situation was beginning to change, even before the Russells began to build their mills. In 1867, Immanuel Episcopal Church celebrated the completion of a substantial new building.
Designed by Richard Upjohn, whose commissions had included Trinity Church on Wall Street in New York, the building is a handsome English gothic church built of gray granite, with a polychrome slate roof. Townspeople had watched it being built for five years. Perched on the terrace above the Square, it was a grand sight when it was finished and was not yet blocked by the Town Hall. In 1869, a week before W. A. Russell arrived in town, the Times noted construction of several public buildings and quipped, “The fact that so many public buildings are going up in this place this spring and summer, corporation building, ‘custom house and post office,’ and the Association building, indicates and unusual amount of enterprise for this place, and suggests that this ‘city’ will soon require among its offices, a ‘superintendent of public buildings.’”

The village had much to do to keep up with the demands of growing industry. Buildings in the Square had burned in 1857, 1860, and 1868. Rebuilding was progressing, but there were still major scars in the streetscape, especially on the western side and southeastern corner. Besides the Island House, which was open only for summer trade, there was no hotel that was convenient for business travelers. Charles W. Towns, who also ran the Island House, would not undertake the construction of a hotel in the Square until 1872. The worst eyesore in the Square the old American House hotel on the southwestern corner, which had burned in 1857 and still lay partially in ruins until the building season of 1872. In 1871, the Bellows Falls Times complained in a list of “Village Nuisances” of the “thirty-eight different smells which it is alleged arise from the old American House barn.”

The Square could not be thoroughly rebuilt as long as Jabez Hills was alive. Born in New Ipswich, New Hampshire in 1788, Hills moved to Bellows Falls in 1805. He worked in a store, and served twenty years as postmaster, retiring in 1830. After that time he kept a set of hay scales on the south side of the Square. A miser, he lent money and took deeds as collateral. He never purchased real estate, but by the time of his death in 1872 he had accumulated most of the property on the western side of the Square, including the old American House, as well as the mill privileges that he finally leased to W. A. Russell in 1869. He lived in a room in the back of a commercial block and dressed in clothes from the beginning of the century. Town historian
Lyman Simpson Hayes wrote that he wore “an English queue and knee buckles, as many Americans then did,” and a battered, “greasy” top hot. He collected tin pans and rusty nails on his solitary walks around town, a target for boys throwing “sticks and old boots.” Years after his death, townspeople still told stories of how he loaded his possessions in a trunk every spring, and hid on Fall Mountain to avoid paying taxes. After he died in 1871, his property was valued at over $20,500, including $560 of gold coins hidden in a tin teapot.11

His death finally opened a large part of the Square for redevelopment, and soon after his estate was settled, an heir named Hales W. Suter announced that he would build a commercial block on a lot at the intersection of Bridge and Westminster Streets and beside the path that would become Mill Street.12 The block would be designed by William Pitt Wentworth, son of local merchant Asa Wentworth, who had gone on to work for Richard Upjohn as supervising architect of Immanuel Church. Wentworth had also designed a new French Second Empire style mansion for manufacturer Wyman Flint on Westminster Street. The Suter block was an important building in Bellows Falls’s post-Civil War commercial building boom and joined other new blocks on the Square, including the Union Block, with its public hall, and the new hotel built by Charles W. Towns, also proprietor of the Island House. It would present an image of stability. Its three stories were grand and severe; its heavy lintels and sills, and corbeled panels gave it the somber look of a transitional Greek Revival and Italianate building. In a commercial district that had been repeatedly ravaged by fire, the Suter block looked permanent and impenetrable.

Commercial development, like industrial development, had to be accompanied by housing if the community was going to grow. H. W. Suter and J. D. Bridgman, his local partner, would be the prime movers in the development of housing in the village of Bellows Falls. The Canal Company land along Atkinson Street was out of the question for development, and without it the next best plot for domestic development was on the terraces above the main residential district, on land owned by the Hapgood family. The Hapgoods were one of the oldest families in town, and owned a considerable amount of land in the southern part of the village; their terrace above the south end of the village was ideal land for modest houses. The land consisted of fifteen
acres of level ground.\textsuperscript{13} It was bounded on three sides by the edge of the terrace, and on the west by Oak Hill, where the town owned land for a cemetery. St. Charles Catholic church also had a cemetery at the bottom of Oak Hill, and Cornelius L. King, a summer resident with an old Greek Revival mansion overlooking the southern end of Westminster Street, kept a field there.

Bridgman and Suter bought the plane from Charles Hapgood in June of 1872, and in July, the \textit{Times} reported that they would start developing the land.\textsuperscript{14} The paper printed a letter from Bridgman and Suter addressed, “To those wanting homes in Bellows Falls.” They began,

\begin{quote}
It is said every day, why don’t they build tenement houses in Bellows Falls? Why are there not more houses to rent? More than fifty families were literally turned out of the place this season, for want of house to live in. They were ready to pay good rents, yet there was not room for them.

We invite laboring men to come and do our work, our mills and factories furnish employment for large numbers of craftsmen, but when they come, they are immediately told they must shift for themselves, and they are fortunate indeed if they find feeding and lodging places.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Their purpose was to advertise lots on Hapgood’s Plane, but their letter was as much a criticism of conditions in Bellows Falls as it was an advertisement. Tenement houses, they argued, “though objectionable in some respects, would lessen the evil somewhat, if we had them, but they are not built—worse still, they are not being built.” They continued,

\begin{quote}
And though we are showing a good degree of enterprise and activity in opening and developing the business capacities of the place, still we are made sensible every day that our capitalists commenced at the wrong end, they should have built homes first, workshops afterwards. … Workmen and business men generally prefer their own homes: they have in such case the privilege of gratifying their own notions of comfort, conveniences and ornament: \textit{they satisfy themselves}, thereby they become better workmen, they make better citizens. Our interests, material and social, require us to afford all possible opportunities for our business men to obtain homes for themselves.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

With that in mind, Bridgman and Suter announced that they had bought Hapgood Plane and were carving it up into building lots. Their terms were generous: “These lots are offered only to those who wish to build upon them, and at fair living rates with every prospect of increased value. The prices of course will vary according to the size and location of the several lots.”\textsuperscript{17} Bridgman and Suter expected that the lots would be mostly for mechanics’ cottages, but they wanted to remain open to opportunity. The property included lots along the brow of the terrace, facing two
directions. On the south side of the lot, the terrace dropped steeply into what was called the “basin.” This was farmland surrounded on four sides by steep hills. The Saxtons River passed through the basin, with a dramatic, picturesque effect.

Bridgman and Suter recognized the greatest need was for modest housing, but they wanted to control the nature of the development—their goal was not to have speculators build tenement houses, or for people to build shanties, but to make Hapgood Plane a neighborhood with respectable houses. They reserved the right to approve plans, but offered to build houses. Finally, they offered financing:

The plan of the house must be approved by us; this however, is only for the purpose of avoiding the erection of cheap and undesirable buildings. … We will sell house lots and the purchaser of each can erect such house as he chooses [sic], provided it shall not be a cheap, unsightly one. And a part or whole of the purchase money to remain unpaid from one to three years, if desired, and will advance to the purchaser five, ten or fifteen hundred dollars towards building his house, in such sums as he wants. The purchase money of the land, and the money loaned, may remain from one to three years, with yearly payments. …

If a person will advance $1,000, we will build him a house according to a specified plan, not to cost over $3,500, and give the person three years or more to pay for lot and house, the purchaser to occupy the house after completion, making payment of the interest and part of the principal every year, treating the $1,000 as the first year’s payment.

A plan of lots and plans of houses can be seen at the office of J. D. Bridgman. 18

It was late in the season in 1872 by the time Bridgman and Suter were ready to sell lots, but they opened the 1873 building season in a timely fashion, publishing an advertising circular in the Times. They described the land, noting its views as well as a picnic grove at the northwest corner of the lot and noted that the lots would be good for “mechanics and others.”19 They also offered “cheap lots with big gardens,” in the next, ideal location for housing, across the river in Walpole, New Hampshire. By August, the Times noted that Bridgman and Suter had sold three lots, “fronting the basin.” The paper reported, “We have seen plans of the buildings which are to be very neat cottage dwellings with mansard roofs.”20 A birdseye map of Bellows Falls published by L. R. Burleigh in 1886 shows six houses on Terrace Street fronting the basin, of which two have mansard roofs. One of these houses still stands. It is a modest, one-and-a-half story cottage.
A second similar cottage remains on Center Street, which Bridgman and Suter opened in August 1873. By the end of September, Bridgman and Suter had sold twelve lots on the terrace, and workers were digging foundations. The *Times* announced that Bridgman and Suter had sold a lot for “a very nice two story French roof dwelling. … The building is to have a tower and when completed according to the plans will be as fine a building as is in this place.” This would be the most elaborate house on the terrace and would necessitate opening another street, called Front Street.

The development of Hapgood Plane was a start, but it was not adequate for the growing demand. After Hapgood’s terrace the next most attractive area was the northern part of the town of Walpole, New Hampshire. In their spring circular of 1873, Bridgman and Suter advertised building lots in what would soon be the village of North Walpole. But North Walpole had a distinct disadvantage: the community would develop as a suburb of Bellows Falls, yet it was inaccessible save by the Sullivan Railroad bridge. Only one bridge connected Bellows Falls and Walpole, and that was the Tucker Toll Bridge, owned by heirs of the Canal Company (Atkinson) fortune, principally Edward H. Green and his wife, Hetty. The only other connection between Walpole and Bellows Falls was the Sullivan Railroad Bridge, which crossed the dam. In good weather when there were no logs in the river, people could cross by boat, but like walking across the railroad bridge, that entailed at least some risk. This made development awkward, and the claims of a rapidly growing suburb were ambitious. Nevertheless, North Walpole grew. In 1877, when the village was officially named North Walpole by the Post Office, the *Times* reported,

> The buildings have become so numerous in North Walpole, that from Rockingham street [sic], on this side when lighted in the evening, they look like a little city. The foundation of the Catholic church has been built and the people over there seem to be pushing forward their village in an enterprising manner. The Catholic portion of the population hold meetings in the school house, and will probably so continue till their church is built.

North Walpole was growing despite its inaccessibility; a road bridge would not connect Bellows Falls and Walpole until 1905.

By the middle of the 1870s, the main areas of growth in Bellows Falls were the south end
of the village, between the intersection of Westminster and Atkinson Streets and School Street, on Hapgood Terrace, and in North Walpole. There was still much available land, and the newspaper continually called for more construction. In June 1877, the *Times* proposed extending the housing on Hapgood’s Terrace west and north:

> The village is now mainly growing at the south end. There is more room for population here than is generally supposed. The Terrace and those fields west, belonging to J. H. Williams and Col. King, north of the new cemetery grounds, are all easily accessible for building purposes and there is room enough here alone for more than 2000 population. When they are occupied South Street will be the centre of the city.  

King’s Field, west of the terrace and nestled into the base of Oak Hill, and Williams Terrace, north of King’s Field would not develop right away. Col. King, a Civil War veteran who usually wintered in Europe or Washington, D. C., spent summers in Bellows Falls and continued to maintain his land and mansion until his death in 1893. Much of Williams Terrace was a pine grove that served informally as a picnic ground and would eventually become the village playground. The terrace north of Williams Terrace was both attractive and available. In 1882, lawyer and real estate agent George A. Brown began to develop housing. The terrace overlooked the end of School Street, and School Street was extended up the steep hill and onto the terrace. By 1892, the village had built a flight of stairs ascending to the new neighborhood. Lacking a better name, it was called simply “New Terrace.” Hapgood’s Terrace became “Old Terrace.” The *Times* reported, “Eight new houses are being constructed on the ‘new terrace,’ back of the primary school house, a new street has been opened and there is promise of its being an important ward in our growing ‘city.’”

The modest mechanics’ houses on the terraces were not what Bellows Falls needed most. However unattractive they may have been, the village needed tenements. Even in hard times, demand outpaced supply. In the spring of 1875, the *Times* commented, “It was supposed there would be plenty of tenements, if not some to spare, this spring, but we learn that there is little or no difficulty in renting, indeed they are taken up readily and further, there is actually a scarcity of the better sort of tenements and buildings, especially those where the tenants can occupy the
ground floors.” In April 1878, the paper reported again, “The demand for tenements in this place is beyond the supply. A few more of the right kind would be immediately rented, and last week a workman wishing to settle here with his family nearly gave up the hunt for a house before finding one.” Two years later, Bridgman, acting as real estate agent now and not as developer, wrote to the Times,

MR. EDITOR:--Will you please say to those who have anything to let fit to live in, that I would like to know of the places and terms, so I can refer to them the numerous applicants for houses and tenements who are calling upon me daily almost hourly for house room. For accommodating parties in this matter the present season, I shall make no charge whatever—I dislike to turn away those wanting places by saying I know of nothing to let. J. D. Bridgman.

The paper commented, “The demand for tenements in this place this spring is such that, if twenty-five houses were built and ready, they would soon be occupied.” The paper warned that real estate agents were seeking arrangements across the river in Walpole, “provided arrangements can be made with the Cheshire railroad to carry them each way morning and evening.”

By the end of the 1870s, some of the land owned by the Canal Company at the north end of the village was starting to open up for development. In 1875, the Canal Company sold a lot on Church Place, behind the Methodist Church (at Atkinson and School Streets), to Malcolm Finlayson. The company never made a grand announcement of selling land, and no developer like Bridgman and Suter undertook the enterprise of developing it. Rather, this land gradually became the center of the village’s tenement district. In September 1877, the Times reported, “Atkinson street [sic] which used to be known as ‘back street,’ has grown to be the most populous street in the village and with the growth of this place is also becoming central. Another street is gradually opening parallel and west of it besides the extension across from other streets.”

This Back Street never became a through street. At the north end it consisted of Brosnahan and Poplar Streets; the southern end was Church Place, so named because it was behind the Methodist Church. In 1878, the Canal Company sold a lot to John Cray, establishing the street as an Irish neighborhood, and locals called it Kerry Avenue. In 1884, Child listed thirty-three people on the street, living at five addresses. The names include Costello, Cray,
Doyle, Driscoll, Finn, Higgins, Hughes, Joyce, Keefe, McCarty, Murphy, Nolan, O’Brien, O’Donnell, three versions of the name “Walsh,” and Wolf. Child lists one person, Alexander McLoud, with an address of Carey Avenue. By 1891, the northern edge of Kerry Avenue, now so-called on the Sanborn fire insurance map, was marked by the Shamrock Hose Company. This neighborhood differed from Old Terrace in that it grew with little planning. There is little mention in the Times of construction in this area; the houses were not the sorts of homes to which boosters wanted to call attention. In 1893, the Times reported the construction a tenement building on Kerry Avenue, a six-tenement building built by Stephen J. Cray. This seems to have been the first of the wood-frame three-story tenement houses, which over the next decade would become common, especially in the northwestern part of town along the streets and alleys that collectively made up Back Street.

The complaint of the housing shortage continued into the 1890s. In 1891, the Times still implored people to build tenements. In February 1891, the Times reported, “Tenements are scarce. The demand far exceeds the supply. It would be a good investment for someone to build a number of single tenement houses. A desirable class of tenants would be glad to pay good prices for them.” This problem was exacerbated in 1891 when the Fitchburg Railroad announced that it would start basing its trainmen out of Bellows Falls. The Times reported,

The demand for tenements has heretofore exceeded the supply and the addition to population will make it still more brisk. There is a plenty of some sorts of tenements, but some families do not like the sort which can be found in quantity. They want something which coincides more with their ideas of a private home. Happily for the town this class is growing larger and consequently the demand for such homes is increasing. Now why can’t some of our capitalists, or the capitalists of some other town, build some cottages with all the modern conveniences of civilization to be used by one family only. It would be useless to construct such cottages as are used at summer resorts, but substantial, well built houses suitable for a family of from three to seven persons. A dozen such could be rented before night. They are wanted, aye, needed. Tenement houses with two to six families are not the ideal home. People, especially working people, want privacy and quiet in their homes since they can’t have it in their busy daily intercourse with the business of the world. The capitalist or capitalists who will build such houses will find that he has made a paying investment. Who will begin this good work?

The 1891 season was disappointing, however, and by the end of the building season, the Times noted, “It is impossible to get a tenement in town now. Applications have come in from a number
of people outside who wish to move in but the agents had no place to give them. It would seem that some building would be necessary.”

Tenements remained scarce in Bellows Falls into the 1890s, but the pace of building on the old Canal Company land along Kerry, Brosnahan, and Laurel Avenues increased. The Sanborn Insurance Maps of 1896, 1901, and 1906 show a steady increase in this part of town. Construction peaked in 1903, when seventy-five tenements were opened. After that development dropped off as the growth of the village stagnated. In 1904, only thirty-five tenements opened, and by 1905, only nine were built. Finally, in 1906, the Canal Company continued to sell land along the northern end of Atkinson Street even as construction slowed. The Times complained of a housing shortage only once more in April 1907, when it reprinted an article from Bradstreet’s Vermont Trade Report noting that tenements were scarce in Bellows Falls. Bradstreet reported,

Whereas early in the year there were plenty of tenements to rent now it is difficult to find a vacant house. … It was less than two years ago when there was talk of 150 vacant tenements in Bellows Falls. What has filled these tenements? There have been no new industries, so the increase in demand must be due to the natural growth of what industries we have.

The basic outlines of Bellows Falls were laid out long before the period of industrialization. The natural terraces on the western side of the falls separated the sections of the village. Industry, naturally, was closest to the river and business and municipal buildings directly above the mills in the Square. The largest terrace, between Westminster, Rockingham, and Atkinson streets, had the finest houses as well as churches and schools. The upper terraces were developed as housing for mechanics and merchants of modest means. North Walpole, New Hampshire, which was developed at the same as Hapgood’s, or Old Terrace, had a similar character. Tenements were on the margins of the village, with the largest area west of Atkinson Street in the northern half of the village, another smaller area along Westminster Street, between the southern border of the village and the beginning of Atkinson Street, and finally in the upper floors of commercial buildings on the Square. The neighborhoods were not always strictly defined, especially after the first decade of the twentieth century. Bellows Falls was a small
town, and even the wealthy lived near the workers. There were several fine, large homes on Old Terrace, and eventually there were three-story tenement houses as well. Similarly, there was some workers’ housing scattered among the fine homes on Hapgood, South, Henry, and School Streets, in the southern half of the village.

Franklin

Before Franklin received its city charter in 1895, it contained two villages and several hamlets (including Webster Place at the south end of town around Daniel Webster’s Elm Farm, a summer community on Webster Lake, and Maplewood, which by 1895 was developing as a well-to-do suburban community on the southeast side of town). The original village of Franklin, later called West Franklin, ran north and south following the western bank of the Pemigewasset River, from Eastman Falls in the north to just below the “Crotch,” where the river joined with the Winnipesaukee to form to Merrimack. The village had grown since the first decade of the nineteenth century as a market village. It was conveniently located on the highway connecting Concord (about fifteen miles south) with the White Mountains. The Northern Railroad, later a division of the Boston and Maine, followed this road. Roads from the west connected it with Salisbury, Andover, and industrial centers in Newport and Claremont. To the east, a road connected the village to the mill town of Laconia.

Although West Franklin had ample waterpower, it was primarily a market village and a stopping place for travelers. Chance Pond Branch, which drains Webster Lake in the western part of town into the Pemigewasset provided waterpower for sawmills, and beginning 1874 for the Franklin Needle Company. The considerable waterpower created by Eastman Falls, however, remained undeveloped until 1902. The village was important as a stopping place. In the northern half of the village a large, federal-style hotel, called the Webster House between the 1840s and 1900, accommodated travelers (and briefly during the Civil War, Dr. Vail’s Granite State Water-Cure Institute). West Franklin (figure 5-3) had been the population center of the town before expansion of the paper industry, and as the industrial village of Franklin Falls
developed, it remained a prosperous part of town, especially at the south end. In the center of West Franklin was the Congregational Church where Daniel Webster kept a pew. On the opposite side of South Main Street was the Christian Church, which had split from the Congregational Church in 1838.\footnote{46}

Even more important as a landmark than the Webster House or the Congregational Church was the covered bridge that connected West Franklin to Franklin Falls. The original bridge across the Pemigewasset River was built in 1802, and named the Republican Bridge. Franklin was informally called Republican Village (in the town of Salisbury) in the same period.\footnote{47} The bridge that crossed the river during the period of this study was a long covered bridge built in 1824, but still called by the old name. Directly across the Republican Bridge was the beginning of Central Street, the main street of Franklin Falls. Travelers still had to cross a second bridge, originally called the Federal Bridge and later the Daniell Bridge, to enter the main part of Franklin Falls. On this land between the Pemigewasset and Winnipesaukee above the “Crotch” was the old Daniell Paper Mill, the seed of what became the Winnipiseogee Paper Company. The Jeremiah Daniell lived nearby in a fine home on Central Street. He owned the land between Central Street and the Crotch: townspeople liked to say that the Merrimack River began “back o’ Warren Daniell’s barn.”\footnote{48} A. W. Sulloway, W. F. Daniell’s brother-in-law and owner of one of the village’s hosiery mills, lived nearby in a mansion overlooking the sharpest part of the oxbow in the Winnipesaukee.

The area around the mill was called informally “Paper Mill Village” and contained not only the paper mill and industrialists’ mansions but a few tenements and modest workers’ houses. This area was the western end of Bow Street, one of the most important streets of workers’ housing. Bow Street follows the oxbow of the Winnipesaukee, running the entire length of Franklin Falls, from Paper Mill village to the eastern end of the village at Sanborn Bridge. Paper mills were at either end of the street, at both intersections with Central Street. The street provided room mostly for modest single-family homes, but there were large tenement buildings at either end, convenient to the paper mills. The Aiken Hosiery mill and machine shop was near the
eastern end of the street.

The densely populated part of Franklin Falls lay on the opposite side of the Winnipesaukee, between the Daniell and Sanborn Bridges. Central Street runs almost due east through the village for a little less than a third of a mile. Central Street remains at about the same level as the Winnipesaukee, so the commercial district is on the same level and adjacent to the mills. Mills defined the limits of the commercial district on Central Street: the paper company and the Sulloway hosiery mill shared a dam at the western end, and another mill of the paper company was at Sanborn Bridge at the eastern end.

Franklin differed from Bellows Falls notably in that the various companies, including the Franklin Falls Company, the two hosiery mills, and even the Winnipiseogee Paper Company owned housing for their workers. In Bellows Falls, W. A. Russell avoided company housing and relied upon local developers to keep pace with the demand for housing, but in Franklin he seems to have inherited company housing. This made Franklin similar to other towns and cities—such as Manchester, Lawrence, and Lowell—downstream on the Merrimack. The Franklin Falls Company built and acquired tenements when it formed in the 1860s, although after 1870 it does not seem to have built new housing. A map in the Franklin Public Library dated December 20, 1870 is a “Plan of Franklin Falls Company’s Dwellings” (fig. 5-4). It shows a total of twenty-six dwellings in several places in Franklin Falls. These include old houses, notably a boarding house formerly owned by the Crane family, Franklin’s first family of paper makers. Across what was then called “Main Street” (it did not become Central Street until 1872) was an old tenement house called the “Tontine,” so named because, like the later Syndicate Block, it had been built by a group of investors. Other houses had been built specifically as mill houses; these included three houses of the old “Yellow Row.” Photographs in the Franklin Public Library show that these were double Cape Cod houses, similar to the Tontine. Like the Tontine, these dated to an earlier period of industrialization, and were built as workers’ housing for the Yellow Mill of 1822. More recently built tenements included a line of ten double houses called the “White Row.” These houses had been built to house operatives for the Old Stone Mill, the hosiery mill
near the Sanborn Bridge that was built in the 1850s.\textsuperscript{50} 

The Franklin Falls Company owned its tenements at least until 1892, for they appear on the Hurd map of 1892.\textsuperscript{51} By 1886 they ceased to be operatives’ houses specifically and were opened as general tenements. The Franklin Transcript reported in April 1886, “The tenements composing what is known as the Row, above No. 2 pulp mill, have been given up by the Franklin Mills and the Franklin Falls Co. have placed them in the hands of D. Ned Davis who will have charge of the rentals.”\textsuperscript{52} By this time they had become an embarrassment and were noted for overcrowding. In 1884, the Franklin Transcript noted, “Many would be surprised to learn the number of people who find homes in the twenty tenements on that street. According to the latest computation there are one hundred and nineteen persons.”\textsuperscript{53} In 1895, the \textit{Souvenir Directory of the City of Franklin} lists fifty-nine people living in the White Row, with sixteen in a house owned

![Figure 5-4. Plan of Franklin Falls Company’s Dwellings, 1870. Franklin Public Library](image)
As in Bellows Falls, housing in Franklin was scarce. The Franklin papers reported tenements being built and remodeled, but supply never kept up with demand. In 1882, the housing shortage in Franklin reached a point that the *Merrimack Journal* undertook a campaign to encourage townspeople to build tenements. In April, for example, the *Journal* noted, “Some go-ahead capitalist ought to build about twenty model tenement cottages, which would be as good investment as is ordinarily made in the country.” A month later the paper pleaded again, 

The dearth of houses still continues and each week adds to the number of families who are in doubt as to where to find shelter. A manufacturer from the lower part of the state told the writer the other day that nowhere in the state were there manufacturers who cared less how their employees lived than here. That is a nice reputation to have. … It would pay some capitalist from out of town to come here and build a block of model tenements.

Finally, in October, the paper reported, 

Tenements and boarding-houses are still exceedingly scarce in this town. An individual who visited thirty-seven houses in one day last week, could find eight rooms for lodging, a place to board, nor a tenement. This could not probably be said of any other town in the state. When money only commands 4 per cent. at banks and in governments, and from 6 to 18, and in a few cases 30 per cent. Is realized from houses, it would seem to be business foresight to invest in new houses which could be readily rented.

No large-scale building program started, however. In 1891, the *Transcript* was still reporting, “Tenements are very scarce, it being almost impossible to find a vacant one.” Two years later, the paper noted again, “Tenements command steady prices, with a tendency to advance. A local carpenter says there is a demand for 50 new houses.”

The perpetual housing shortage forced some of the corporations to build tenements and boarding houses. In 1882, despite Russell’s misgivings, the Winnipiseogee Paper Company converted an old public hall into a boarding house. By 1892, the paper company owned six tenement or boarding houses near the lower (“Daniell”) mill, and Walter Aiken owned twelve houses near his hosiery mill. Finally, in 1896, Alvah Sulloway built a boarding house for his hosiery mill. This was the closest Franklin Falls ever got to the Merrimack Valley model of operatives’ housing, but the house was for textile operatives. The *Transcript* reported
enthusiastically:

The new boarding house which Hon. A. W. Sulloway has erected near the Sulloway mills is a model of convenience. It is very tastefully finished throughout, is heated by steam, lighted by electricity and has hot and cold water on each floor. There is a large dining room pleasantly located, furnished with wood tables, and a commodious sitting room for the boarders and a smaller one for the family. The kitchen arrangements are first class and in the nicely cemented basement there is a laundry and other conveniences. There is a bath room on the second and third stories, and each of the 24 sleeping rooms contains good furniture. The floors are hard wood and the finish throughout is natural wood, making the interior attractive. There is a broad piazza on the front of the house, a nice place for a summer evening. It is intended that employees of the mill will be given the preference when the house is open for business, and it is safe to say that working people in no other place in the state have a better house in which to live than the one which Mr. Sulloway has just completed.61

By 1895, Franklin had developed more densely packed working class neighborhoods than either of the other towns. The heart of the working class neighborhood was Bow Street, Franklin Falls’s longest and most populous residential street. Uphill, south of Central Street, there developed another working class neighborhood. The first of these was connected to Central Street with three streets: School Street, which begins at the Sulloway Hosiery Mill before turning and traveling east, and Franklin Street, which starts in the middle of Central Street and turns after a block to meet School Street at a right angle, and Prospect Street, which starts opposite the paper mill at Sanborn Bridge at the eastern end of the central business district. The most densely populated part of the neighborhood was a quadrangle formed by School Street on the North, Winnipiseogee Street on the South, Elkins Street on West, and Rail Road Avenue on the east. High Street bisects the neighborhood. Elkins and Franklin Streets formed the heart of the neighborhood. Like Bow Street, this was a workers’ neighborhood and was crowded and rough. Franklin Street was home to some of Franklin’s most notorious illegal saloons. In 1886, Franklin Street was the scene of one of the worst incidents of violence in the history of the village, when John Galligan, the owner of one of these saloons was kicked to death in a brawl.62 The neighborhood was also heavily ethnic. St. Paul’s Catholic Church is on High Street. Other churches are in the neighborhood as well: the Baptist and Freewill Baptist churches are on Church Street, a short street that travels from Central Street southeast to Franklin Street and the
Methodist Church is on Franklin Street.

The lower end of Prospect Street was the northeastern boundary of the neighborhood. A cluster of houses and tenements were crowded onto the steep hillside that rose from Central Street. This section grew rapidly in the 1890s, when it became the right-of-way for the Franklin and Tilton Railroad, Franklin’s rail connection to the east. Rather than build a grade crossing on Central Street, engineers laid out the railroad so it crossed the Winnipesaukee River on a tall trestle and entered the village well above Central Street. Between 1892, when the railroad was built, and 1895, when a map was published in the *Souvenir Directory of the City of Franklin, N. H.*, streets gradually opened.

With the opening of the railroad another neighborhood began to develop. Set off from the Franklin Street neighborhood by a steep hill, this was a neighborhood of single-family homes. The neighborhood was bounded on the west by Prospect Street and on the east by Pleasant Street and the bluff over the Winnipesaukee River. The neighborhood itself was a grid of five by five streets, named mostly for trees: Oak, Pine, Beech, Elm, Myrtle, and Orchard. The finest houses in the neighborhood were on the south end, along Beech Street and the short, one block Auburn Street. The finest house in the neighborhood, at the corner of Prospect and Beech, belonged to E. H. Sturtevant, Treasurer of the Franklin Needle Company. South of Beech Street, the hill rose steeply, about 350 feet, and the land was never developed. The last bit of development on the south end of town was along Prospect and View Streets. Perched on the side of the otherwise undeveloped hill, the location provided views of Mt. Kearsarge to the east; by the 1920s this spot was the location of the Mojalaki Country Club.

This was the extent of the development on the hill south of Central Street. The hill north of the village was more sparsely settled. Access to the hill north of the village was across the Sanborn Bridge on the eastern side of the village. Besides Webster Place on the extreme south end of town of Franklin, this was the oldest part of town, settled by the Sanborn family during the American Revolution. The Sanborn family cemetery is on this hill. Central Street continued east of the central business district, climbing what was called Willow Hill.
Sanborn and Pearl Streets climbed further and defined the nineteenth century limits of a small neighborhood of two-story homes. West of Sanborn Street, Walter Aiken built his fine home, overlooking his mill on Bow Street. The housing was more sparse than that of Bow, Franklin, or Elkins Streets, but by the 1890s, this was workers’ housing, particularly workers in the Stevens woolen mill, but also in the Sulloway mill and the pulp mill that stood at the base of Willow Hill. As the pulp mills developed east of Franklin Falls, Willow Hill gradually made a transition from a fairly well to do area to tenements.

The Daniell, Sulloway, and Aiken families all lived close to their mills, but Franklin’s other leading families lived at some distance from the commercial and manufacturing districts. South Main Street in West Franklin remained an attractive place for the town’s elite, as did the outskirts of Franklin Falls, on the hill south of Central Street. Workers generally lived close to the mills. Company housing was next to the mills, but even privately developed houses and tenements on Bow Street or on Franklin and Elkin Streets were close to the mills. In Bellows Falls industrialists, professionals, and merchants lived in fine houses on the southern end of the village, overlooking the mills. In Franklin, only the Daniell and Sulloway families (who lived on the land the Daniell family had owned since the 1830s) lived a short walk from the mills. Topography was perhaps a reason for this. The rugged terrain on either side of the Winnipesaukee River limited development. The tenements and workers’ houses were built in places that afforded enough land for the dense neighborhoods. Unlike the Bellows Falls Canal Company, the Franklin Falls Company did not stand in the way of development. It had owned tenements since its founding, and if it did not actively built more housing, it id not reserve a large portion of the town for future development.

Turners Falls

Bellows Falls and Franklin were both settled well before their post-Civil War development, but there was no village of Turners Falls until the late 1860s. The disadvantage of this was while in other towns old houses or upper floors of commercial blocks could be converted
into tenements, everything in Turners Falls had to be built from scratch. This presented distinct advantages. W. P. Crocker, the brother of the village’s founder and engineer by training, laid out the village. The Turners Falls Company led the development because it had to. For a decade beginning in 1866, the Turners Falls Company systematically developed the village, first building the dam, but then excavating the canal, laying streets, and building mills and other buildings all at the same time.

Turners Falls is about fifty miles south of Bellows Falls and has a similar terrain. The hills around the village are not as steep as those in Bellows Falls, the valley is wider and more serpentine, and the riverbed tends to have more sedimentary than metamorphic rock. As the Connecticut winds its way south from the Vermont border, it abruptly turns to the northwest in Erving, at a place identified by a rock in the river called French King Rock. From French King Rock the river forms an Oxbow, traveling northwest, abruptly southwest at Turners Falls, and then southeast to regain its path south at the hamlet of Montague City, west of Turners Falls. The village of Turners Falls and Montague City are contained within this oxbow.

The original plan (fig. 5-5) for Turners Falls called for five avenues, lettered A through E, running parallel to the Connecticut below the falls. Shorter streets, also lettered, ran parallel to these avenues where the lay of the land allowed such development. Between Avenues A and B, for example, was L Street; between Avenue A and the river was J Street. On the south end of the village, the original layout called for streets beginning at the river lettered D through T. Numbered streets ran perpendicular to these lettered streets and avenues. Beginning at the falls, the plans called for nineteen streets. The blocks were short between numbered streets and long between lettered streets and avenues. Alleys bisected the main blocks lengthwise.

The original plan for Turners Falls was a grid superimposed on a rugged landscape. The hills in the village were rocky outcroppings, not the soft gravel contours of the terraces in Bellows Falls. The terrain limited the execution of the engineer’s rigid grid. Avenue A was designed to be the main business street of the village, and it was built according to the plan. Avenues B through E were not built. In the central business district the main lettered streets
besides Avenue A were L and J streets. The main part of the village never extended much beyond Ninth Street. The core of the village was a rectangle formed by L and J Streets (bisected by Avenue A) and First and Ninth Streets. From the beginning of the village, a second neighborhood developed. Beginning west of Avenue A, and cut off from the rest the village by the main canal, this neighborhood ran from Tenth to Seventeenth Streets. The main street of the neighborhood was G Street. It paralleled the canal. The original plan called for the neighborhood to be bounded by mills on Eighteenth and Nineteenth Streets; these were to draw their power from a secondary canal that connected the main canal to the river. Neither the mills nor the canal were built; Fifteenth Street became the southern boundary of the neighborhood. This neighborhood was connected to the rest of Turners Falls with bridges, and developed an identity that was distinct. Called the “Patch,” it was heavily Irish from the outset, and early developed a reputation as a rough part of town.

This was the early development in Turners Falls. By the middle of the 1870s, builders had ceased to follow the original grid plan, and subsequent developments, uphill from the old the older settlements, followed the topography. Thus, a winding hillside southeast of the intersection of L and 3rd Streets, was the location of Prospect Street. With a dramatic view of the falls, this became the finest street in the village. Behind Prospect Street were two more curving streets, Center and Park. South of this neighborhood, and at higher elevation, High Street followed the contour of another hill. A birdseye map of the village drawn by O. H. Bailey in 1877 (fig. 5-6) shows houses on the High Street, but the neighborhood behind these houses developed gradually into the twentieth century.

The original plan for Turners Falls was ambitious, but even by 1877, the Bailey Map showed that Turners Falls was developing modestly, not as a new city, but as an industrial village. To be sure, the plan for future development was even more ambitious, with nine avenues, but the actual development was more modest. The basic grid plan was still in place, with long rectangular blocks bisected with alleys, but now Prospect, Center, High, and Park Streets (called “Railroad Street” because it followed the proposed route of a railroad branch line), had been laid
out following the contours of the topography.

Turners Falls was a planned village, and its builders hoped to avoid the problems of older cities and villages. Avenue A, the main street of the village, was particularly wide, with room for decorative trees; the builders specified that the commercial blocks that would line “the Avenue” would be substantial and made of brick. Even off the Avenue, they encouraged builders to build of brick rather than wood. This, as well as the grid plan, would make the village more resistant to fire than other manufacturing villages—this became even more important after the Chicago fire of 1871 and the Boston fire of the next year. From the outset, Turners Falls would look more like a city than the other paper towns did. The brick construction not only protected against fire, but gave a planned, rational appearance to the town.

There was certainly shoddy construction at the outset. Particularly on L Street, the early buildings were quickly thrown-up frame structures. At least one of these buildings survived into the twenty-first century. This was a large, two-and-a-half story building at the corner of L and 2nd Streets, called locally the “Bee Hive.” Built about 1870 (it appears on the 1871 Beers map), by carpenter, John La Point, it had a broad front of twelve bays. A drive bisected the first floor, giving access to an interior courtyard. Walking through into the courtyard revealed an intricate network of porches, balconies, and exterior stairs. It stood for more than 130 years, but even in its early days was the sort of building that the Turners Falls Company discouraged, a fire trap designed for overcrowding.

Partly to discourage this sort of building, the Turners Falls Company and the various other corporations, including the Russell Cutlery, the Turners Falls Pulp Company, the Clark and Chapman Machine Company, the Keith Paper Company, and the Griswold cotton mill, built tenements from the outset. Never meant to be the sole source of workers’ housing, and never able to keep up with the demand for housing, these company-owned tenements were meant to give the community a leg up. In September 1870, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier took account of a season’s building:
Many dwellings have been erected during the summer, and several of a more substantial character than those previously put up. The Pulp company have just completed a brick block of five houses which would be an ornament to any city, and the Cutlery Company are now commencing a brick block 401 feet long, which is to be two stories high with French roof. It will be divided into two houses, accommodating forty families, and will be in every way a first class building. Sixty days will witness the completion of the brick work, which is under the direction of R. B. Campbell, who laid the first brick at Turners Falls and has charge of some of the best work of the kind performed there. He is a thorough mechanic and possesses unusual skill, as the many fine specimens of his work there testify.\(^{68}\)

These tenements would give a sense of order to Turners Falls that was lacking in the other paper towns. The construction of these tenements also suggested that the Turners Falls Company was more interested in social control, or at least inspiring edifying behavior, than either any of the community leaders in Bellows Falls or Franklin. The paper reported that the Turners Falls Company had granted the Methodists 1200 feet of land on Seventh Street for a church, and offered, “land to any society disposed to build.”\(^{69}\) The Turners Falls Company thus took an assertive approach. This was necessary. In other places, such as Rumford, Maine, which developed in the 1880s, industrialists also built houses, simply because there was no housing stock. This gave a more managed, rational tone to the communities, whether Rumford or Turners Falls, than the older, less planned villages had.\(^{70}\)

Turners Falls had higher hopes than Bellows Falls or Franklin. Through the 1870s, both the Gazette and Courier and Turners Falls Reporter were determined that Turners Falls would be a city. Not until the early 1880s, after the village had weathered the depression of the 1870s and still saw soft business conditions, did boosters recognize that the village’s prospects were more modest. Turners Falls was also a new village, and its developers could learn from the problems of other towns. Turners Falls was the only one of the three villages that was planned by a civil engineer, and it was the only one that was laid out before it was built. Company housing was one way to make sure workers had convenient places to live. Moreover, it assured that the Turners Falls Company had control over the development and conditions of the town. It would assure potential developers that tenement houses like the Bee Hive were not desirable. This rational development placed a burden on industrialists who had to think of building tenements, but it gave
the village an urban feel, with wide thoroughfares and consistent rooflines in the central business district. This was precisely the goal of the builders.

The papers always gave at least brief notice to the construction of tenements, stressing their style and quality. In 1873, the Gazette and Courier noted, for example, “Lawrence Powers is building on Third street a fine brick block, three stories high, with a store on the ground floor and tenements above. This block was begun but ten days ago, is now entirely roofed, and will be ready for occupancy August 1.” Every January, the Turners Falls Reporter published a list of building in the village. For example, in 1880, a particularly good year, the Reporter had a long article on its front page, with a cut showing the mills and village from the Gill side. The article was titled, “Improvements in Turners Falls During 1879. List of New Buildings and the Causes Which led to Their Erection.” It began with a discussion of the state of the mills, and followed with a list of buildings. The editor described the year’s building campaign systematically:

Dwight Kellogg, last spring finished a brick block, 39 by 50 feet, three stories high, and L 20 by 25 feet on the corner of Avenue A and Third Street. The lower story is divided into two stores, one of which has for some time been occupied by James A. Gunn & Co., grocers, and the other will soon be occupied by a dry goods man. The upper stories are occupied by Mrs. Hagar as a boarding house. Campbell & Hazelton were the contractors for the brick work, and G. A. Moore did the carpenter work.

Geo. L. Manchester has built a 2 ½ story brick block, with granite trimmings, 25 by 50 feet, on Third street. A roomy workshop is in the basement, a handsome sales room on the ground floor, and there is a tenement above. The brick work was done by the day and Hitchcock & Farnsworth had the contract for the woodwork. …

Mrs. O’Donoghue built a two-story-and-a-half brick block on Fourth street, 26 by 35 feet, slate roof, John LaPoint, contractor. …

Chester N. Davis has begun to build a two-story double tenement house on Second street, with a large barn in the rear. …

Two years years later, the Reporter again announced a successful year under the headline, “A Boom! Another Year’s Growth. The New City Strikes Along! As Manufacturing Increases, so the Town Increases!” Despite the decision by one of the Crockers not to build another fine paper mill (which Cecil Bagnall, editor of the Turners Falls Reporter, noted would have created a “boom to the place as its great and wise projector, the Hon. Alvah Crocker
anticipated at the return of good times”), the Montague Paper Company had made about $60,000 worth of improvements, and had increased its capital to about $400,000. Joseph Griswold, who had been building his cotton mill for ten years at this point, had doubled his number of looms, which was impressive enough that Bagnall ignored the fact that the mill was still running at less than one-third of its originally projected capacity. The article contained the usual comprehensive list of buildings. In a description of a new brick saloon and tenement house, built by Gottlieb Pfefferle at the corner of L and Fourth streets, Bagnall even listed the tenants. Patrick Welch had built a brick block with a store and tenement of nine rooms on the Avenue; P. J. Laughlin had built a frame tenement house on Railroad Street, with carpentry work by John LaPoint, for Rev. Coon and Eugene Taft; Joseph Beebo had built a three-story brick tenement house on Canal Street, with brick work by Joseph Morreau, and carpentry by the owner. These were good years for Turners Falls, and the paper was proud to see the town take its place among the rising cities, but not every year was so good. In 1884, for example, editor Bagnall, characteristically acerbic, simply commented, “We omit the list of new buildings this year, because the people were so thoughtless as to omit building any to speak of the past year.”

Turners Falls was planned at least to be a modern, rational, and efficient industrial city. By the middle of the 1880s, Cecil Bagnall and other business leaders found that it was simply an industrial village not unlike its more chaotic neighbors to the north. It had similar problems. If the company was limited in enterprising spirit, individual builders still could not keep up with the demand for houses and tenements. Turners Falls had a housing shortage like Bellows Falls and Franklin, but it ended sooner than in the other villages. In 1879 and 1880, Bagnall called for more the construction of 100 new tenements, and four years later he still complained that the village needed a “score” of houses and tenements. By the spring of 1889, the Turners Falls Reporter and Greenfield Gazette and Courier disagreed about the need for housing. The Reporter noted, “Tenements are plenty and cheap,” but the Gazette reported, “A large number of houses are being built this spring to supply the urgent demand for tenements.” In any case, Turners Falls had emerged as an industrial village, more like Bellows Falls and Franklin than
Holyoke or Springfield.

Nevertheless, the village developed beyond the plans of the Turners Falls Company. The company could not keep up with demand, and enterprising builders had to contribute to the housing stock. Thus, along the side streets and L Street, and in the Patch on the south end of the village, frame houses and tenements mixed with the brick construction, and carpenters like John La Point kept up a steady trade. As in the other villages, the wealthy residents of the village chose to build in places with dramatic views of the river valley. W. P. Crocker superimposed a grid on the rugged landscape of the village, but he never executed the design completely. He built a house for himself on Prospect Street, which notably broke with the grid plan and followed the edge of a hill. Thus, the Turners Falls Company never controlled the development of the village absolutely. As in the other villages, builders worked within a set of limitations presented by the landscape, and relied on entrepreneurial initiative for development.

The rivers, falls, and mountains contributed much to the character of the paper towns, but the built environment provided the stage settings for daily life. From the 1870s to the 1910s, the towns developed and changed rapidly, and in the late 1920s, they began another phase of development. Developers defined the physical layout of the towns, but also the basic power relationships of the towns. The towns had distinct neighborhoods of mansions (generally on a prospect with views of the mills), middle class housing, mechanics’ cottages, and tenement buildings. The size of the towns and persistent housing shortages complicated the development of ethnic neighborhoods. There were of course exceptions: Kerry Avenue (Church Place) in Bellows Falls and the “Patch” in Turners Falls. But there was not enough room or a great enough housing stock to make these neighborhoods solid ethnic enclaves. In Franklin, the neighborhoods of workers’ houses had no discernable pattern of ethnicity, at least judged from names in city directories. Moreover, the towns were small enough that the houses of the wealthy could never be very far from the tenement districts. This intimacy was a salient characteristic of the towns.
NOTES

1 Jackson, 158.


5 Beers Map.


7 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 16, 1869, p. 2.

8 Hayes, 1907, 391.


13 “To those wanting houses in Bellows Falls,” Advertisement, BFT, July 19, 1872, p. 3.


15 “To those wanting houses in Bellows Falls,” Advertisement, BFT, July 19, 1872, p. 3.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.


25 “Local Matters,” BFT, June 1, 1877, p. 2.


28 “Local Matters,” BFT, March 26, 1875, p. 2.

29 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 19, 1878, p. 2.

30 Letter to the Editor, BFT, March 4, 1880, p. 2.


34 Child, 327.


41 “Building Record $75,000. Not a great deal in the Building Line in 1905--Nine new tenements Have Been or will be Opened,” BFT, Jan. 4, 1906, p. 1.


Shepard, 127.

Shepard, 268, 343, 344.

Granite Monthly, 154.

Shepard, 127.


“Shall the Tontine Go?” FT, May 16, 1890, p. 2.

Garneau, 515.


Hurd.


Souvenir Directory, 175.


A correspondent, who signed himself “Wood,” wrote about the Boston fire to the
Turners Falls Reporter, “Words are inadequate to convey to you the faintest idea of the awful grandeur of the scene, or the desolation which the fire fiend has spread in the heart and wealth of our city.” (“Our Boston Letter,” TFR, Nov. 13, 1877, p. 3). The Boston fire made A. N. Swain in Bellows Falls comment that the fire would change architectural styles in his town. He wrote, “Mansard roofs are at a discount since the Boston Fire,” BFT, Nov. 15, 1872, p. 3.

67 An article in the newsletter of the Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity described the building its Nov., 2004 edition (after the building had been torn down) as “a rundown, uninhabited four story wreck that Turners residents called the Bee Hive. It had become an eyesore that invited break-ins.”


69 Ibid.


74 Ibid.

75 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Jan. 14, 1884, p. 3.


A sense of place comes from shared experiences in a common environment. Local historians, boosters, and photographers looked around them to define distinctive aspects of their communities, but sense of place was not easily controlled. Some of what makes a community distinctive is the repetition of experiences, whether annual floods, accidents, the annual arrival of rivermen driving their logs to markets, or even the annual rituals of sports and public celebrations. The paper towns owed their existence to the falls that generated the power for industry. People were fascinated by the falls for more than their industrial and economic value. Their sublimity continued to attract not only the attention of visitors but also the fascination of local people. The rhythms of life around the falls were essential to the local sense of place. Through the late nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth, as the towns became increasingly complex, the shared experiences of the natural rhythms of life around the rivers were important to the senses of place and community. Industrialists, merchants, professionals, and skilled and unskilled workers all could hardly be unaware of the seasonal rhythms and occasional extraordinary natural event. They all heard the crash and roar of water when the ice went out of the river; they watched with anticipation as river levels rose; they heard by word of mouth or read in the newspapers of drownings; and they waited with a mixture of excitement and dread for the arrival of the rivermen in the late spring or early summer.

Ice and Freshets

The falls were at their most sublime during times of high water. In the spring, as snow melted upstream from the falls, pressure gradually increased under the ice on the river until it finally broke up and was swept over the falls. The sound of the breaking ice and the rush of the water could be heard throughout the villages, and frequently became a spectacle, or at least a
newsworthy event. For example, in 1870, the *Bellows Falls Times* covered the melting ice at the end of a particularly harsh winter. The previous year had seen two floods, one in April and another in October. The river had frozen, but thawed in February, leading to fears of another flood.\(^1\) After another cold spell, the river finally thawed in April. The result was particularly dramatic in the eddy at the foot of the falls. The *Bellows Falls Times* reported on the “Eddy Exhibition,” noting the dramatic shapes in the ice (figure 6-1).\(^2\) On April 22, the *Times* reported, “the falls are quite grand, but no damage has been done at this point. …”\(^3\) The *Times* advertised stereographs of ice taken by P. W. Taft.

![Figure 6-1. Ice in the Eddy, P. W. Taft stereograph, 1870. Author’s Collection.](image)

The newspaper kept close watch on the ice in the river, frequently noting when it first covered the river in the winter and when it “went out” in the spring. In January 1874, it reported that the ice had broken up in the river twice during the winter, a sign of a particularly mild winter.\(^4\) The following year, in March, the paper reported the thickness of the ice above the falls, noting, “The ice in the river above the dam five paces from shore is two feet thick, at ten paces it measures 18 inches, mid way 2 ½ feet thick.”\(^5\) In November 1875, the *Times* reported the beginning of winter: “The eddy closed over with ice Thursday night, the quickest and earliest of any time we remember. The ice formed in three detachments, one on each side and another in the
middle, and united just as if it undertook a quick job.”

The ice “going out” of the river could be a grand spectacle. As snow melted upstream, pressure gradually increased under the ice until it finally broke and quickly washed over the dam. In 1880, the Bellows Falls Times reported, “The ice in the Connecticut River above this place, broke up and began to pass over the dam above the Sullivan railroad bridge at about 3 o’clock Saturday morning, and cleared in about six hours. The ice was very rotten, and was ‘fine cut’ after passing the Falls. . . .” Sometimes, the ice broke up quietly and moved quickly over the falls. The Turners Falls Reporter noted in 1884, “The ice went out of the river on the sly last night.” The papers reported the date of the ice going out, keeping account of the overall state of the weather. In 1886, a particularly warm January thaw broke up the ice early in Turners Falls. The Reporter noted on January 6, “The ice in the river went out, yesterday, something that has not been known in January before. The water was quite high, and the cracking and crumbling cakes make quite a sight.” The following year, the ice remained on the river until April and finally went out when the temperature hit ninety degrees.

In Franklin, the Winnipesaukee, Pemigewasset, and Merrimack rivers did not break up in quite the same way as the Connecticut—the papers in Franklin did not report the ice going out rapidly—but the Pemigewasset above the “Crotch” did occasionally have impressive ice jams. The Winnipesaukee was famous for neither flooding nor running dry. The Franklin Transcript noted in 1884, “It is a wonderful river, the best in New England. Never high, never low, never muddy; water enough to move a world of machinery, and as it goes frolicking on through Franklin, it may be used over and over again and again in the distance of a single mile.” The Pemigewasset did flood, but dams and Lake Winnipesaukee controlled the flow of water on the Winnipesaukee River. The Winnipesaukee is only about fifteen miles long, but the Pemigewasset is about sixty-five miles long and drains a large area of the White Mountains. This made it susceptible to periods of high and low water.

In 1885 a jam was impressive enough to warrant photographs, one of which was sold as a postcard more than twenty years later (figure 6-2). In 1900, a jam at the Crotch caused flooding
that shut down mills and caused considerable damage.\textsuperscript{13} Workers in the old Peabody-Daniell paper mill, by that time International Paper Company Mill Number Two were forced to move rags in storage at the mill, and the Sulloway Hosiery mill on the opposite side of the Winnipesaukee reported $3,000 of damage to that mill. Finally, the jam was blasted and the water receded. The following week, the Franklin \textit{Journal-Transcript} reported that grocer W. S. Stewart had views of the jam for sale.\textsuperscript{14} In 1908, another jam on the Pemigewasset in Bristol, north of Franklin, flooded the railroad line and stopped traffic. The \textit{Journal-Transcript} reported,

The ice covered the tracks for about three quarters of a mile and to a depth varying from five to ten feet.

The wooden bridge over the Smith river was moved from its foundation between eight inches and a foot by the force of the jam. ... The force of the ice jam twisted the rails at the bridge and snapped off telegraph poles.\textsuperscript{15}

Figure 6-2. “Ice Jam Winter of 1885,” Postcard. Author’s collection.

The river freezing and thawing was an important part of the communities for the freezing indicated the severity of the winter and the thawing marked the coming of the Spring season of log drives and potential floods. The spring freshets were also spectacles, anticipated and witnessed by many townspeople. This caution and watchfulness was partly practical: high water
posed a considerable threat to industry and personal property. A severe flood in Bellows Falls in 1862 became a benchmark by which later floods were judged. 16 Only the construction of a dam across the railroad line where it passed under the village square saved the shops “under the hill.” In 1869, the village witnessed two floods, though damage in Bellows Falls was slight. Again, workers took the precaution of building a dam across the railroad line. In April of 1869, the damage was mostly to a sash and blind factory, which lost much lumber, and to shanties south of the falls that were occupied by Irish immigrants. The residents were forced to secure the shanties with ropes, but still had to flee. 17 In October, a more severe flood caused by heavy rains again flooded the river valley, this time severely enough to change the course of the Williams River, north of Bellows Falls. The damage in Bellows Falls was again slight, though the Times humorously reported the sight of the Connecticut jammed with floating corn and pumpkins. 18

These floods demonstrated to people in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls that the Connecticut was fairly safe and that, while tributary streams might flood, the Connecticut valley would remain safe and dry.

The Connecticut was safe partly because townspeople were watchful. In 1883 and again in 1888, the spring freshets encouraged comparisons with the floods of 1869. In 1883, the Times reported that W. A. Russell personally supervised safety precautions at the Fall Mountain Paper Company, ordering a telephone line to be installed connecting the mills to the Post Office in North Walpole, New Hampshire, where people had a clear view of the rising water. The Times reported,

Hon. W. A. Russell has been here during the past week, giving his personal and close attention to the work of riprapping the east bank of the Connecticut river near the dam and railroad bridge to prevent damage. Mr. Mills of Lawrence, Mass., a civil engineer in hydraulics, has also been present to aid in the same work. George W. Russell and Mr. Burbank of Boston, treasurer of the Fall mountain paper company, have also been present. 19

The paper assured its readers, “Present high water is not as bad as it was in 1869.”

In 1888, a severe blizzard in March combined with a sudden rise in temperatures to eighty-seven degrees in May caused the Connecticut to rise rapidly. Mills were forced to suspend
work, and the mills closest to the Eddy, south of the Falls, flooded. The paper noted the best place to observe the flood:

Over on the east side of the canal, off the old stone wall built in 1837, and the mills of John Robertson & Son, Moore, Arms & Thompson, etc. was the grandest view of bounding water. On these rocks the rapid water from the falls about would bound 29 to 30 feet. The damage is not much and mainly from the suspension of business for a few days, and as the water has already fallen several feet, apprehensions are subsiding.  

![Image of train wreck](image.jpg)

Figure 6-3. Train Wreck, Rockingham, Vt., April 7, 1888, F. J. Blake. Author’s collection.

The high water inspired the local news reporter for the Times to look back to coverage of the floods of 1869, and the paper reprinted the notice from 1869 that W. A. Russell had leased the water power in the canal. In April, however, the runoff from the melting snow undermined railroad tracks north of Bellows Falls in the town of Rockingham, causing the wreck of a Vermont Central express train. The wreck, which killed the fireman and beheaded the engineer, was covered in the New York Times and Boston Globe, and Fred Blake sold photographs of the scene (figure 6-3).  

In Turners Falls, spring freshets attracted many visitors to the Falls. In 1888, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier reported that the Howes Brothers had views of the high water for sale (although none of these views seem to have survived).  

In 1895, the Turners Falls Reporter
noted that the high water had brought the village into the “public eye.”

The Gazette and Courier reported that the high water had forced the Montague Paper Company to shut down, but noted, “The high water, the past week, although destructive, was a grand sight. Many came from other towns to see the falls.”

Turners Falls and Greenfield were in the throes of a controversy over the construction of the streetcar line between the two villages, and this sort of spectatorship suggested the potential for tourism in Turners Falls. Indeed, the streetcars did facilitate sightseeing in the dramatic seasons of high water. In 1900, the Turners Falls Reporter noted, “The placard on the street cars, ‘High water at Turners Falls’ brought a good many sightseers from the shiretown to the cataract. Some wag suggested the legend, ‘A new saloon in Turners Falls’ would create a demand for extra cars.”

After 1900, enthusiasm for viewing the high water continued. Amateur photography and postcards encouraged spectatorship of high water and the ice going out of the river. In 1905, Bellows Falls and North Walpole dedicated a bridge connecting the villages in March. The bridge immediately became a landmark and an object of civic pride. Technologically the bridge was impressive, and it demonstrated to the communities, if not the broader public, that the villages were modern and progressive communities. The week after the dedication, however, the ice went out of the river and immediately threatened the bridge’s abutments. The Times reported on the “grand spectacle” of the ice going out, but noted that the new bridge was “marred” by the ice. The freshet broke the boom at the head of the canal and at one point rose to the level of thirteen feet above the top of the dam. The paper noted, however, that the freshet was “a splendid sight.”

The next winter, Bellows Falls and North Walpole took precautions to strengthen the bridge’s foundations, adding a steel structure to the top of the abutments as a baffle for the ice. In January 1906, the ice went out of the river early. The Times reported, “The ice has gone out and the new bridge is still standing. The water was not over the abutments so the ice did not even press against the protections. At any rate the latter were there in case the water was as high as it was last year.”

The Fall Mountain mill and spectators in the village braced themselves for the
next thaw in March, but the expected spectacle never happened. The paper reported on April 5, “The ice in the Connecticut River went out sometime between midnight and daylight this morning, but made no showing because most of it had been worn so thin during the past week.”

In 1907, the ice going out of the Connecticut was particularly impressive. The Times reported,

The ice in the Connecticut river broke up Friday morning and all day was watched by many people. This year was quite out of the ordinary in two respects. The river has not been so low when the ice went out for over 20 years and the ice has not been so thick for a great many Springs. These two things made the sight a wonderful one. The huge cakes of ice 24 inches thick and more in depth and often many times larger than a good sized dwelling broke into small pieces as they slide over the dam, like so much paper. After breaking up here and being churched together through the rapids and the falls the great field of thick ice was broken into very small pieces. People watched the flow from Rockingham Street, the new bridge, the Boston & Maine Bridge and the toll bridge.

The falls at Bellows Falls had always been described using the rhetoric of the sublime. By 1907, as the mills were on the decline and the years of blasting had significantly tamed them, they still had the power to fascinate local people. Significant in this story is the comparison of the ice going over the falls to “so much paper.” Here the Times combined the technological and natural sublime: if there was anything people in Bellows Falls could visualize, it was the movement of paper.

This was a significant time, for as townspeople turned out to watch the ice go out of the Connecticut, the International Paper Company ominously reported that the Fall Mountain Mill would no longer produce newsprint. This news marked the end of an era in a town that had once been the world’s largest producer of newsprint. At the same time, tensions between management and labor were on the rise, as other mills of the International Paper Company were being put onto three shifts, but the Fall Mountain Mill was not. In this context, the spectacle of the ice was a welcome diversion. Even as the community was changing, and even starting its decline, the river could still impress: people could still be thrilled by the sublimity of their surroundings.

The interest in high water and breaking ice actually seemed to increase in the first years of the twentieth century. In 1908, the Times again reported a dramatic February freshet. An ice
jam north of Bellows Falls caused a large amount of water to gather, and when the jam finally broke, the water rushed over the falls. Heavy rains followed, flooding the village streets to a depth of as much as a foot. On February 15, attention turned to the Saxtons River, flowing east from the Green Mountains. The Times reported, “The greatest trouble came Sunday, when the rivers were on a rampage. Saturday morning the Saxtons River rose rapidly and the ice broke up.”

A jam formed about a mile west of Bellows Falls, near Sidney Gage’s basket factory in North Westminster. The Times continued,

> The meadows were flooded and the electric car tracks covered, hindering the car service. Fearing the consequences of the jam if not broken, a gang of men were set to work on the jam and succeeded in making an opening to let the pent up waters through. This alone saved a much greater damage. A high wall of ice was left, making a remarkable sight witnessed by a large number of people during the day.

The threat of the freshet on the Saxtons River was mostly to the basket factory, houses in the “Forest” and the farm in the basin. In Bellows Falls, a flood would have threatened factories at the south end of the village, including the Blake and Higgins paper mill, as well as houses near the mouth of the river. As the danger on the Saxtons River passed, attention again turned to the Connecticut, where, as the Times put it, the “fun” started with an ice jam “opposite the Bellows place, a short distance above here.”

This caused the river to flood over a big territory. The meadows were deeply submerged and the place resembled a big lake. The jam broke at about 7:30 o’clock, going down with a mighty rush. From that time until 10:30 the river rose rapidly. It was eight or ten feet higher at 9 o’clock Sunday evening than at noon that day. At 2:30 a.m. the waters had receded considerably and Monday morning the river was about the same as it was Sunday noon. The ice broke up at about 7:30 o’clock Sunday evening and continued to flow all night. At its height the sight was a magnificent one and was witnessed by hundreds from every point of vantage. The tossing flood of great cakes of ice, glistening in the moonlight, made a grand sight.

View photographers documented floods in the first decades of the twentieth century as they had done for decades. Freshets showed the falls at their most dramatic, and they were the sort of event that people wanted to commemorate with souvenirs. At a time when dams carefully controlled the flow of water into the canal with the use of flashboards on the dams, photographs stress the sublimity of the falls: the falls defy control. The falls, usually rugged, with the water
diverted into the canal, are furious in these photographs. A real photo postcard from Turners Falls, dated March 28, 1913 shows the falls in such a condition. Taken from the Montague Paper Mill, looking upriver to the dam, the image shows the water cresting over the dam at eleven feet, six inches. The photograph captures the churning water and the spray as the water passes over the falls. The island in the middle, the feature that gave the falls their Indian name of Peskeompskut is submerged. The perspective from the mill allows the photographer to get close to the water. There would be more floods, notably in 1927 and 1936. Both would stimulate the publication of souvenir booklets. The 1927 flood was the most severe to hit Bellows Falls, as the tributaries of the Connecticut flooded and devastated much central Vermont. In Bellows Falls, the volume of water was such that the river cut a new channel, washing out the approach to the arch suspension bridge. In Turners Falls, the 1936 flood was similarly devastating for it inundated the mills. With both of these floods, the destruction was such that people could hardly appreciate the sublimity of the falls. The experience of the sublime at the falls rested on the sense of impending destruction and there was nothing impending about these floods. In the 1920s and 1930s, as the mills were being converted from running mill turbines to...
generating hydroelectricity, and power companies built massive floodgates on the new dams, and created substantial setbacks (or flooded land) above the falls. With these changes engineers effectively conquered the falls. Whatever hint of the sublime spectators had now depended on engineers opening floodgates. Thus, the views taken in the first two decades of the twentieth century capture the force of the falls in a way that would soon be lost.

Drownings

The newspapers showed that people were eager spectators of human dramas at the falls: the falls were sublime in part because they were dangerous, something that periodic drownings affirmed. Surviving the falls was virtually impossible. There were a few exceptions: in 1879 Paul Boynton, a professional swimmer dressed in a rubber lifesaving suit swam the entire length of Connecticut River, over both Bellows Falls and Turners Falls.\textsuperscript{34} In 1892 a boat with three rivermen was swept over the dam. One of the men was killed, but the others were able to swim to the shore before they reached the narrowest part of the gorge.\textsuperscript{35} These were exceptions.

When people, from carelessness, inexperience, or the effects of alcohol ventured too close to the falls their fate invariably was death. In July 1872, for example, the \textit{Greenfield Gazette and Courier} reported, “On Sunday, James Driscoll, who worked in the Cutlery, in a partly intoxicated state, took a boat with one oar above the dam, got into the current and was carried over the dam and drowned. His body could not be found.”\textsuperscript{36} Similarly, in June 1874, the \textit{Bellows Falls Times} reported:

James Griffin was last seen on Saturday afternoon in an intoxicated condition, in a boat on the river, above Sullivan Railroad Bridge. It is known that the boat went down over the dam and the Falls and his hat has also been found in the river below. A story prevailed Saturday evening that he had been found on the bank in some bushes and also in Nims’ barn, but they did not prove true. His habits have been such that it was at first thought he was playing a trick, but not having been heard from since, the prevailing belief is that he was drowned, and if so the water is so high that the body may not be found for some time."\textsuperscript{37}
The lay of the land in Franklin was such that this type of accident was less common than it was in other towns. While Bellows Falls and Turners Falls had one major dam and set of falls, Franklin had a mile of rapids with dams at various points. In Bellows Falls and Turners Falls the dams were convenient to the central business district, but they were less so in Franklin; Bellows Falls was the most dangerous in this respect.

The river was an important place for recreation. Both Bellows Falls and Turners Falls had been important places for fishing since long before people of European backgrounds lived in the area. Shad, pike, and eels were some of the falls’s chief attractions. Fishing, however, could be dangerous. In 1872, the *Bellows Falls Times* reported that William Kiniry, son of another William Kiniry, was drowned in the eddy in the river below the mills. The churning water made the eddy a good place to fish, and young Kiniry was an enthusiastic fisher. In May 1872, less than two months before he was killed the *Times* reported that he had caught as twelve-and-a-half pound pike. Sadly, William’s death was the second one for his family: a year earlier, in April 1871, his brother had been killed by a train.

Sometimes people simply miscalculated the risk in swimming or boating the Connecticut. In 1875, the *Times* reported that John Kirk, an Irish immigrant who worked for the Fall Mountain Paper Company, drowned Saturday afternoon in the Connecticut river, below the mouth of Williams river, while bathing. It appears that a party of several persons were bathing at the time in Williams river, and that he went to a point below in the Connecticut and having divested himself of clothing went into the water alone. He could not swim, but was traced by his tracks to where he entered the river, and where it was by a few feet into deep water, of which he was probably not aware.

The mouth of the Williams River is several miles north of town, but the current in Connecticut was still difficult to navigate. Once drowned, his friends hoped to recover the body before it went of the falls. The *Times* reported that his only relative was a cousin, a James Hennessey, but that he had a mother in Ireland. His friends were not lucky, and his body was finally found on the riverbanks below the dam and the Sullivan Railroad Bridge.

Probably the most dramatic drowning in the village’s history happened fifteen years after
Kirk’s drowning. On October 2, 1890, the Times carried the headline, “Carried Over the Dam. Three Young Men Start on a Fishing Trip that was Fraught with Great Danger to Two, and Death to One of Their Number.” The paper reported that James Barry, Edward Kane, and James Harrigan, all paper mill workers, had gone fishing and that Barry had been carried over the dam in his skiff. The paper reported that Barry insisted on rowing even though he had only recently immigrated from Ireland and was thus unacquainted with the currents above the dam. The Times reported:

After pushing from the shore it became at once apparent from his actions that he was a novice at the oars, and although there was but a slight current at this place, he was not able to get control of the boat, and it was floating steadily down stream toward the dangerous dam. His comrades soon made efforts to get the oars, but still Barry insisted that he was capable of managing the boat, and that he would have it all right in a minute; but those minutes were precious time wasted, and when he finally was ready to relinquish them it was too late, for the boat was by that time just on the point of going over. Kane and Harrigan jumped from the boat, one on either side, and were fortunate enough to be able to catch on to the flash-boards, to which they clung until the loggers were notified and came down with one of their boats and rescued them from their perilous position. In the meantime, young Barry, who had remained in the boat as it went over, was thrown from it, and although he was seen below the dam still holding to one of the oars, he soon sank and was seen no more.\(^{42}\)

The Times was sympathetic, noting that Barry had immigrated only three months before, and that he left a “widowed mother in Ireland.” The reporter took pains to point out that despite rumors, there was no evidence that Barry or the others were intoxicated.

Townspeople kept watch for the body, but it did not surface for more than two weeks. Currents in the falls tended to push objects to the bottom of the channel where they could become lodged in the rocks. Barry’s body finally surfaced below the mills. The Times reported that Levi Welch, “a workman in one of the mills under the hill, who was out in a boat watching the river for the body of James Barry … discovered a human body floating in the eddy.”\(^{43}\) Welch recovered the body and towed it to the shore. The paper reported that it became something of a spectacle with curious onlookers examining it. The paper described the body:

Owing to its mutilated and bloated condition, for a long time it was not recognized as the remains of young Barry. The body was entirely nude, and both legs were gone from about eight inches below the knees; the skull had been crushed in, and part of it was gone; and the body showed other marks of rough usage, which at first gave the
impression that it was the body of someone who had met his death from some railroad accident or through foul play.

It was not till a semi-official examination had been made by the selectmen and physicians, that it was decided to be Barry’s body. They found a small bit of cloth, perhaps 4 by 1 1/2 inches in size, partly embedded in and attached to the break in the skull, which, on comparison, was found to correspond exactly with the material of which was made the mate to the shirt that Barry had on when he went over the dam. It will be remembered that Barry had only been in this country about three months, and he was wearing one of the shirts he had brought from Ireland, which were of a peculiar texture and pattern; in fact, quite different from any to be found in these markets.44

Similar accidents happened in the other villages. In 1890, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier reported that James Martin, a seventeen-year-old boy, “missed his footing while crossing on some logs, and fell into the race-way and was carried by the strong current into the river. An expert diver searched for the body, Sunday, but without success; and Monday it was found by a river man, lodged between some logs.”45 In 1898, the Turners Falls Reporter reported that Jacob Lutolf, “a well known German” had drowned near the Montague Paper Company’s woodpile. The Reporter noted, “The body was found floating on the water, near the wood-pile, some distance below where the drowning probably occurred, by a Bohemian, Mr. Swators, who was fishing for driftwood.”46

In Franklin, many people crossed the Winnipesaukee River at the dams, rather than the highway or footbridges. In 1895, the Franklin Transcript ran an article under the headline, “Through Floodgate. Dashed Against the River Rocks by Current. Woman’s Narrow Escape from Frightful Death. Badly Bruised but No Bones Were Broken.”47 The paper reported that Mrs. Cora M. Kimball, a worker in the finishing room of one of the Winnipesogee Paper Company’s mills slipped as she stepped onto the plank across the top of the dam. The paper reported:

The strong current carried her through the floodgate and dashed her down among the rocks and the river below. … Scott Taylor, son of Frank L Taylor, happened to be passing on Bow street, and witnessed the accident. He bravely rushed to the rescue, and taking Mrs. Kimball from the water carried her to the shore. The force of the water and contact with the rocks had torn nearly all the clothing from her body. Further assistance soon arrived and she was taken across the street to S. F. Morgan’s, partly unconscious and badly frightened. No bones were broken and no severe injuries received, which seems almost a miracle. However she does not care to again pass through a similar experience.48
Log Drives

Examples of the destructive power of the falls affirmed people’s perceptions of their sublimity. Drownings underscored the falls’ sublimity. Moreover, the people who made their living on falls, took on these sublime associations. This was particularly true of the rivermen who drove logs down the rivers every spring and summer. Lumbering consisted of two important phases, with separate crews for each. Lumbermen, loggers, or choppers (the term “Lumberjack” was not used in the East except by writers of popular literature such as Holman Day and Stewart H. Holbrook) worked through the winter cutting trees. In the spring, rivermen loaded the logs into rivers as soon as the ice went out, and drove them to markets downstream. Lumbermen could also be rivermen, but they were not necessarily; the jobs required distinct sets of skills. The river drives had a direct impact on the paper towns, for they supplied raw materials to the mills, passed through the towns, and provided an annual period of excitement. The appearance of the rivermen was an event that people variously looked forward to or dreaded.

The days of the great log drives were mostly passed by the late nineteenth century. In the East, the great drives of rafts of large pines had peaked before the Civil War. There were concerns that Northeastern pine forests would give out as early as the 1830s, and by the 1850s, spruce was beginning to replace pine as the major type of log being harvested. But the combination of postwar urban growth and development of wood pulp technology sparked the resurgence of lumbering, particularly on the Connecticut, but to a lesser extent also on the Merrimack. Connecticut River drives began in 1869 and continued until 1915, by which time lumber companies stopped driving “saw-logs” (building lumber rather than pulp wood). Pulp wood continued to be driven into the 1920s, but this too ended by 1927, when the mills in Bellows Falls closed and the power was converted to hydroelectricity.

Log drives had been an important part of the life of the communities, and the reappearance of the drives in the late 1860s made many people in Bellows Falls and Franklin wax nostalgic. In Bellows Falls, for example, the Times reported the first appearance of rivermen in town for many years in 1869:
Their presence here last week brought out many reminiscences of former days from the older residents, who say that forty years ago occasionally two hundred rivermen would concentrate at this point at one time, their rafts accumulating above the dam and waiting their turn to get through the locks. Sometimes in the night, the lock tender would be bribed to let some one through with his rafts, whereby he would be enabled to get his lumber to market ahead of his turn.—At other times the men would work hard all day, and then spend most of the night in ring wrestling. Generally some musicians would be found among them, and on one occasion, they got out a couple of fiddlers, and over a hundred men danced in the Square nearly all night.51

The freewheeling nature of the rivermen was one of their chief attractions. Richard G. Wood, in his *History of Lumbering in Maine, 1820-1861*, portrayed lumbering as an aspect of the American frontier.52 This image of lumbermen and rivermen as semi-civilized rugged individualists goes back to the beginning of nineteenth century.53

In May 1869 the *Bellows Falls Times* carried a long article about the rivermen, on the first drive people had seen on the Connecticut in many years. The drive was conducted by O. F. Richardson, of Clinton, Maine. He supplied logs for the dam that was being built in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The drive attracted considerable interest, and the *Times* reported on the spectacle:

The men were daring and courageous, and occasionally some exciting scenes occurred while they were getting the timber over the Falls and through the rapids below. One man was swept into the swift rapids about opposite the old factory foundation, and for an instant he was thought to be lost, but he soon recovered himself without an injury, even throwing an axe he had in his hand at the time on to some timber so that it was saved. ... It was currently reported that two of them went over the dam in a boat just above the Sullivan Railroad bridge, but the facts were they risked themselves to the falling point and then jumped upon some rocks, hung to their boat and swung it round, and got aboard again below, a feat quite daring enough as it was. ... It was surprising to see how quick they would sometimes dig out a “jam” with their hooks. Their boots were shod with iron spikes or corks, and if any of the logs were inclined to turn or roll as they stood upon them, they traveled like a horse in a threshing machine and universally kept themselves “right side up.”54

The reporter seemed surprised at their civility, noting that one “bought a lot of maple sugar ... to send to his home in Maine” and commenting on the quality of their food. He wrote, for example, “we will testify a cordial word for them, as superior cooks, as we accepted an invitation from the contractor to dine, and did partake of a farewell lunch with them at the ‘wharf,’ which was good enough for a festival or a banquet.” The article concluded,

During the week of their stay here the conduct of the men was excellent and made a very favorable impression. If these are a specimen of the lumbermen of Maine, we heartily congratulate the old Pine Tree State, on the manner in which she brings up her rivermen.
Much of the time while here, they had a good audience from among our people, who were attracted by the novelty of their doings, so that it formed quite an exhibition.\(^{55}\)

The *Times* reported the log drives every year, sometimes noting only their approach and departure. Frequently, however, the drives were sufficiently exciting to attract audiences. In 1873, the *Times* reported,

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The river men have been through some exciting scenes in the Falls during the past week, and met with some accidents. Several large jams have formed under the toll bridge, which they have readily cleared, but others were so interwoven as to make the work of driving them through very difficult and at times hazardous. Michael Gillespie has had one ankle badly sprained, being caught between a log and a rock. He belongs in Calais, Me. Eben Spencer of Bangor, was severely injured in the breast and body, and on Monday afternoon, William Done fell into the rapids under the logs and was carried some forty feet, when he appeared from the timber, and though considerably bruised, his injuries are not serious. The escapes are still more numerous and sometimes create some amusement. On Tuesday a rope attached to a log in the rapids, came near sweeping some half dozen men into the current, but they were sufficiently Agile to ‘dance the rope’ and all escaped. As a consequence of these exciting scenes the river men have had good audiences at the bridge during much of the time the past week.\(^{56}\)
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The following year, the *Times* reported that high water had helped the drive clear the falls quicker than usual. The reporter explained,

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This year the logs did not lodge in the Falls as last year, and in the eddy the river men accomplished a feat not done by any of their predecessors. They built a boom on the north and west side of the eddy and attached seven boats in a line, each with a crew of half a dozen men, at the east end to the rapids, who with their oars working with much uniformity, and aided by another set of men on the boom who, pushing with long poles as if rafting, soon started the thousands of logs which had collected there. Over forty men were engaged in this performance and as success crowned their efforts, there was of course some cheering. They had quite an audience on the banks of the river, and it was regarded as ahead of the regatta at Saratoga.\(^{57}\)
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In Bellows Falls, reporting of log drives remained consistent over several decades. The paper reported the bravery of the rivermen but also the curiosity of the spectators. Some years, the drive went quickly and received little comment; other years the paper commented more extensively. Some years several drives went down the river. For example, in 1885, the *Times* reported on four drives: “The Connecticut folks are waiting for 20,000,000, Van Dyke 18,000,000, and the Nulhegan Company 12,000,000. Several New Hampshire mills are also waiting for their stock, with no immediate prospect of supply. Tom Beattie made use of the high water in March to get 8,000,000 out of Paul stream into the Connecticut. …”\(^{58}\) This was the first
mention of the Van Dyke drive. By the end of the century, George Van Dyke would be the major saw-log lumber operator on the Connecticut (pulp wood went down the river in a separate drive operated by the Fall Mountain and Montague Paper Companies).

The *Times* was never critical of the rivermen, even when the drives blocked the river for recreational uses or shut down the mills for want of power. Historians Stewart H. Holbrook and Robert E. Pike, both former lumbermen, remembered Bellows Falls for its hospitality. North Walpole, where the Fall Mountain mill had a sawmill and stored much of its lumber, was a popular place for the lumbermen, for New Hampshire, unlike Vermont, was fairly free in licensing saloons. North Walpole, according to Holbrook, also had a reputation for brothels, a point not brought out in the local paper. Holbrook remembered a “camp follower” named “Old Colorado,” who set up a tent convenient to the river camp. The *Times* did not report on any of this until the drives were on the decline. The “rum holes in North Walpole” were notorious enough without the lumbermen that the *Times* hardly needed to blame them for whatever trouble came across the river. The rivermen provided the village an annual spectacle, for which people were as eager to turn out as they were for the annual appearance of the Whitmore and Clark traveling minstrel shows or Stetson’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

The river drive in 1893 was particularly dramatic, for the season started wet, with high water. Van Dyke drove 70,000,000 board feet of lumber down the Connecticut, an unusually large amount. The Fall Mountain Paper company would drive its logs behind Van Dyke, but the *Times* was hopeful that the drives would pass Bellows Falls by July 4. By the time the drive was expected in Bellows Falls, however, the water in the river had dropped and the weather had turned dry. It stopped at White River Junction, forty-five miles north of Bellows Falls. The rivermen struggled crossing the falls, for these were the conditions that caused logjams. This made the drive particularly exciting. The *Times* reported,

Log jams are frequent in the river, and the drivers have the noisy part of a Fourth of July celebration every few minutes. Lots of fun for the spectators, but the workmen don’t seem to appreciate it any more than a blind man does a funny picture. Strange how tastes differ.
One of the logmen, rode through the rapids below the falls on a log Tuesday night. He was out in the river trying to start a jam, when it moved out. But the water will have to be more lively than it is now to wet him, for he rode through as easily as a cowboy would ride a wooden horse at the merry-go-round.  

The *Times* hoped that the drive would pass by July 4, because members of the Bellows Falls Boat Club hope to hold a regatta as part of the village’s celebration.

Franklin was also friendly to the lumbermen, although river driving on the Merrimack was on the decline by the 1870s. Pike claims that river drives on the Merrimack ended in 1860 with the death of Nicholas G. Norcross, the leading lumber operator on the river. He claimed that after Norcross’s death, “nobody else came along” who could drive the river. This is not entirely true, though the drives were less dramatic than in Norcross’s time. In 1872, a drive undertaken by Norcross’s successors made a reporter for the *Merrimack Journal* think back nostalgically to the 1840s. N. G. Norcross revolutionized river driving on the Merrimack in 1844, when he bought much of the timberland along the Pemigewasset River, north of Franklin. Before this time, logs were driven as rafts, but Norcross started driving smaller spruce logs instead of white pine. He drove these smaller logs as a mass, and sluiced large amounts of lumber over dams. The style of drive was different from the great pine drives of the past, but they were still a spectacle that people in the village eagerly watched.

The *Merrimack Journal* reported the arrival of the “Norcross drivers” in 1872. “They are a tough, muscular body of men,” the paper noted, “and welcome visitors to their quarters with hospitable decorum.” The *Journal* described particularly the drive’s “wangin cart,” in which the cook carried supplies: “Their food is abundant, in great variety and cooked in a most excellent manner. Their beans and doughnuts beat the world.” The *Journal* found much to praise with the rivermen because the company that employed them kept them “under admirable discipline,” furnishing money only to pay bills, and thus preventing them from spending it on liquor. The men were commendable for their athleticism and their agility breaking log jams. The *Journal* commented, “It is wonderful to see how the hundred men now on this jam will take up in their hands and toss about a big log like it were a fence pole. And then how quick they will strike out the key stone that fastens a jam, and when the mighty mass begins to tumble and roll like a thing
of life how their practiced feet always light in the right spot."

In Franklin, as in Bellows Falls, the rivermen were important to local history. In January 1874, a correspondent to the *Merrimack Journal*, who signed himself “Uncle John,” again reminisced about the early lumbering on the Pemigewasset and Merrimack. He noted that even at that time stumps and roots from the “loftiest and grandest pines that ever waved and ‘whispered’” were still visible on the eastern side of the Pemigewasset. Uncle John recorded a story of an attempt to drive a raft of logs over Eastman Falls, just above the “crotch,” where the Pemigewasset met the Winnipesaukee. In 1816, he wrote, Stephen and John P. Clark of Franklin tried to run rafts over Eastman Falls:

To look at those tumbling cataracts at high water at this time, it seems perfectly reckless for two men to have tried to manage a raft of heavy green logs, even at the most auspicious and much less at a bad pitch down this winding, rapid, rocky passage. But they dared. The first and second rafts went safely over and down into calm water, but the third went to pieces. Stephen, who could not swim, took to one of the logs, and if he had been left to himself might have been saved. He sat astride the log, as it went like lightening down stream.

The trouble came when spectators on the bridge in Franklin village tried to help, by pulling Clark up from the river with a rope. Rebecca Robinson, who was still alive in 1874 and was presumably a source of the story, found a rope, which spectators lowered. Clark grasped the rope, but the spectators, instead of simply dragging him to the riverbank, tried to raise him to the bridge. Uncle John wrote, “With tremendous muscular, and endurance, he held fast till almost up, a height of forty feet, crying out, ‘O God, I am gone!’ as he went down. One of his legs was found months afterwards on the shore several miles below.”

The Norcross drives had very little of this sort of excitement. Norcross worked with smaller logs and did not drive them as rafts. His organization was modern and efficient. The rivermen camped north of West Franklin, above the villages, and seemed to do little in West Franklin or Franklin Falls. In 1878, for example, the *Merrimack Journal* reported in its local news column simply, “The usual spring drive of lumber has made its appearance in the Pemigewassett, and it presents a scene of life and activity. Some seventy-five men are engaged in driving the timber to market.” The drives were fairly small. When drives on the Connecticut
were upwards of sixty-five million board feet of logs, those on the Merrimack were between and eight and twelve million feet. While more than 300 rivermen could work on Connecticut drives, only seventy-five worked on the Merrimack.

Like the Bellows Falls Times, the Merrimack Journal was little inclined to criticize the rivermen. They attracted spectators in Franklin as in the other towns. In the late 1870s or early 1880s, local photographer, B. N. Poor published several images of the rivermen in Franklin (fig. 6-5). The Merrimack Journal’s tone was lighthearted, if occasionally sarcastic. In 1872, the report of the arrival of the Norcross men in Concord, New Hampshire, on their way north was the harshest of any report through the years. The Journal described the men: “They are a hardlooking and active set of men. As they passed through Concord no less than twenty of them were noisy and brawling drunk. It will be well for our police force to exercise especial diligence during their stay here; also for any retailers of the ‘ardent’ (if such there be) to practice extra caution.” In 1881, the paper joked about the excitement the rugged and romantic rivermen caused, noting, “The river-drivers will soon be here, and these words, adapted from a poem by Lord Byron, will, probably, fit some occasions: Maid of Franklin, ere we buss, tell me, will you

Figure 6-5. Rivermen in Franklin, B. N. Poor, Stereoview. Author’s Collection.
make a fuss? O lumberman, ere you risk your life, tell me, will you inform your wife?”

In 1883, the *Journal* reported a case of drunkenness, noting, “One of the Davis & Sargent river drivers got too much tangle-footed bug-juice aboard on Wednesday, and broke a sidelight at the Webster House in an endeavor to force an entrance.”

By 1882, the *Journal* reported that the days of the long drives were numbered. The paper reported that Davis and Sargent, successors to the Norcross company, had a drive of over ten million board feet that year, but commented, “This will probably be the last drive down the river, as the Pemigewasset Valley railway will carry lumber hereafter.” The prediction was wrong. In 1883, the *Journal* reported that Davis and Sargent had a total of five million feet of logs, mostly spruce and pine, “waiting for the drive to begin.” The drive was short, lasting only two or three months, “according to the state of the water.” By 1885, the *Franklin Transcript* reported that there would be no drive that year. From that time forward the drives were irregular. By 1888, the Winnipiseogee Paper Company had started shipping its poplar by rail, and the drives were only pine and spruce saw-logs. The *Franklin Transcript* reported,

“The rivermen found but little difficulty in passing through Franklin this year. They made the quickest time for many years. There was 5,000,000 feet of lumber in the drive, about three-quarters being which pine and the rest spruce. It is made into box boards at Lowell and some of it is used for building purposes. Sixty-five men are employed and Charles Roberts is boss. George Brown has been a log-driver nearly 40 years and he is as lively as a cricket yet.”

Increasingly, the logs that once had been driven down the Merrimack were hauled to the Connecticut or tributaries of that river. Logs once driven to mills in Lowell now went as part of the large Van Dyke log drives to Holyoke, or with the Champlain Realty Company drives, which also went down the Connecticut.

Newspapers, at least in Bellows Falls and Franklin, accepted the rivermen, recognizing the excitement they brought to the villages, and excusing the occasional trouble with “tangle-footed bug juice.” In Turner’s Falls, Cecil Bagnall was more critical. He was intolerant of alcohol consumption, as well as the rivermen’s tendency to fight, and he objected to the rivermen stopping townspeople from using pleasure boats on the river and occasionally shutting down the
mills.\textsuperscript{79} Bagnall’s chief concern, however, was the disorder they caused, increasing the problems the village already had with drunkenness, violence, and rowdyism. At every stop along the drive, from northern New Hampshire to Mt. Tom, near Holyoke, the rivermen had to sort logs, and every time logs were delivered, fewer men were needed for the drive. The men who were no longer needed were paid and discharged. Thus, in Turners Falls, as in the other towns, there were rivermen with money in their pockets and a desire to blow off steam in the local saloons.

Perhaps Turners Falls was more violent than Bellows Falls or Franklin. In Bellows Falls, the rivermen were mostly confined to North Walpole, but in Turners Falls the saloons were mostly in the village. The \textit{Turners Falls Reporter} complained of violence and drunkenness from the start; the addition of rivermen, a self-consciously tough group of people, only made matters worse. In a sense, however, Turners Falls created its own problem, for the Turners Falls Lumber Company was one of the first companies to conduct large log drives down the Connecticut. Enrico M. Perry, a Turners Falls resident, was boss of the drive in the early 1870s.\textsuperscript{80} Both sawlogs and pulp wood were essential to the growth and success of the village. The \textit{Reporter} followed the drives much like the other papers. In July 1873, for example, the paper noted, “They have lost one man who was drowned by the breaking of a jam.”\textsuperscript{81}

The \textit{Reporter} was interested in the size of drives, and their progress along the river, but this did not lessen its objections to the disorder that accompanied them. In 1879, for example, the paper commented, “The rivermen will pitch their tents at ‘The Narrows,’ on the Montague shore, this year, so as to be removed from the temptations of the village.”\textsuperscript{82} When the rivermen actually arrived, Bagnall noted that the distance of their camp from the village center did not prevent them from getting into trouble. He reported:

Turners Falls has never asserted its claims to be ranked among the famous watering places, but just now it is crowded with tourists, whose picturesque costumes and free-and-easy ways, as they decorate our street corners, attract universal attention. Their alleged business is “log driving,” but while waiting for the big drive, they devote their surplus energies to “quaffing the ruby” and otherwise enjoying the hospitalities of the place.\textsuperscript{83}

In August 1883, Bagnall reported that two rivermen agreed to a wrestling match at Colle
Hall, the village’s opera house. The match was a draw, the paper noted, but Bagnall reported, “The rivermen have been very quarrelsome among themselves this year, and every evening or so some dispute is settled in a pitched battle, when they pound their features out of shape, and occasionally a man so found among them not too proud to kick his opponent [sic] full of holes with his spiked boots.” Three years later, Bagnall warned his readers in May, “The largest drive of logs ever put into the Connecticut river is on its way downstream from the headwaters. By midsummer this village will be lively with rivermen.”

By the first week of August, Bagnall complained, “The rivermen are being paid off every day and much of the money finds its way into the saloon tills. The clothing man gets a little of it.”

Bagnall was eager to denounce anything that seemed to prevent Turners Falls from becoming prosperous. The village was poor, and drunkenness and violence were perpetual problems that the rivermen only exacerbated. Bagnall’s complaints of the rivermen focused mainly on violence. In 1887, he started the log driving season optimistically, noting that the rivermen had good water and winds for a quick drive. His hopes soon turned sour, for he reported on July 27,

The rivermen until last week Saturday seemed very peaceably inclined, but on the evening of the day mentioned the strain became too great for their capacity and they were obliged to slop over in a little brawl with the baseball clubs, who, being elated with the excellent exhibition of ball playing they introduced the natives of Turners Falls to in the afternoon, felt as though they had as much right to the place as anybody. Base ball clubs being handy, they were indulged in, resulting in not a few sore heads and bruised faces.

Another complaint Bagnall had against the log drives was simply that the booms in the river prevented people from boating. At each stop, logs would have to be gathered into booms and sorted. The logs for the paper and lumber companies were gathered in their own booms, and the others were sent along the river to Mt. Tom, Holyoke, Hartford and other places downstream. This kept the river busy for weeks when the summer weather was at its best. Booms also tended to break, and if a boom broke in Bellows Falls broke, the logs would have to be gathered in Turners Falls. In 1873, a boom broke in Turners Falls, sending logs all the way to Holyoke. In 1892, a broken boom in Bellows Falls sent logs to Turners Falls, and rivermen had to sort logs in
Bellow Falls to replace the ones they lost.\textsuperscript{90}

High or low water could complicate the booming process, causing either broken booms, unsafe conditions for the rivermen, or jams. In Turners Falls, the jams tended to occur at the Narrows, more than a mile upriver from the Falls. In 1897, high water broke a boom upriver from Turners Falls. The \textit{Greenfield Gazette and Courier} reported that that summer was the wettest in memory. In a front page article, the paper reported on the spectacle of a large log jam at the Narrows:

The long continued rain-fall and the rise of water in the Connecticut were occasion for anxiety as to the safety of the drive of logs coming down the river. The experience of a few weeks ago demonstrated that there was no sure reliance in the booms.

The logs were accordingly held back at the narrows, just above Turners Falls, that they might be properly “sorted” after the water should subside. A jam was formed of tremendous proportions.

By Thursday upwards of 20,000,000 feet of logs were collected, filling the broad bend above the narrows and piling up the sticks of timber like jack-straws. The people from all the country round flocked there to witness the unusual sight.\textsuperscript{91}

In 1909, Massachusetts addressed this problem of river driving preventing other people from using the river by passing a law that required rafting the logs.\textsuperscript{92} In 1909, the days of the great drives of loose logs ended; the last drive of long saw-logs on the Connecticut was in 1915.\textsuperscript{93}

The end of log driving on the Connecticut was caused by a number of things, including the development of hydroelectric power (beginning in 1912), the Massachusetts law requiring rafting logs (which became effective in 1910) and the dwindling supply of good saw-logs. Part of the decline of lumbering, however, was due to the tragic death in 1909 of George Van Dyke, the “lumber king of New England.”\textsuperscript{94} Van Dyke ran the Connecticut River drives autocratically. He was a bully who treated his competition, and even the owners of the dams over which he drove the logs, ruthlessly. He died in an automobile accident, while watching the log drive in Turners Falls when his chauffeur accidentally sent his automobile plunging over a seventy-foot cliff.

A native of Stanbridge, Quebec, just above the Vermont border, Van Dyke began as a lumberman and eventually bought mills in Maine and New Hampshire. The \textit{Turners Falls Reporter} noted in its obituary (presumably written by Cecil T. Bagnall), “His early education was
not exactly collegiate, having left school at eleven. He was graduated from the school of hard knocks in early manhood, and have been taking a post graduate course ever since. 

The Reporter admired Van Dyke for his rags to riches story. Bagnall seems to have been one of the few people who did like him. Van Dyke had worked as woodsmen and had passed through Turners Falls in 1873 as a riverman working for Henry and Lewis Bowman, and worked for them in a sawmill. He gradually accumulated lumber tracts in Quebec, in Coos County, New Hampshire, and in adjoining parts of Maine. By 1877, he invested heavily in a sawmill at the foot of Fifteen Mile Falls in McIndoes Falls, Vermont. In 1879, when New York financiers founded the Connecticut River Lumber Company, Van Dyke competed directly with them. The C. R. L. Co. built sawmills in Mt. Tom and Holyoke, Massachusetts, but found, as Robert E. Pike points out, that the best way to control Van Dyke was to hire him. He became the company’s general manager in 1884. In 1885, the Bellows Falls Times reported that the total Connecticut River drive was fifty-million board feet, of which the C. R. L. Co. had twenty-million, Van Dyke eighteen, and the Nulhegan Lumber Company of Bloomfield, Vermont and twelve-million. In 1886, Pike writes, Van Dyke convinced the directors of the C. R. L. Co. to buy him out and make him president of the consolidated company. Van Dyke now controlled the river drives on the Connecticut River.

Van Dyke had risen from the position of riverman to captain of industry in the space of thirteen years. The Turners Falls Reporter noted that he was “religiously hated from one end of the 400 mile stream to the other, was called a tyrant, unprincipled, an outlaw, and a coward.” Bagnall argued that there was little justification for these judgments. Bagnall complained that he was “harassed by petty lawyers and petty lawsuits, and New Hampshire is the spawning ground for both. …” Ultimately, he was abrasive and offensive, and seemed “to run over everything rough shod.” In Bellows Falls, Pike remembered,

One spring a millman at Bellows Falls swore that no matter what the others did, he was going to keep his wheels turning in order to get out an important order. George Van Dyke, who was in charge of the drive, told him he would give him twelve hours to shut down the mill. After that, he assured him, he would blow up his goddamned dam! The millman’s wheels stopped.
Pike remembered that B. N. Farren of the Turners Falls Company also argued angrily with Van Dyke.

Van Dyke was particularly ruthless in labor relations. In 1888 he broke a strike on the Upper Coos Railroad in northern New Hampshire, in which he owned a controlling interest, by personally commanding militia troops against the strikers. Robert Wilder, one of his workers who was interviewed later by the W. P. A., remembered that Van Dyke would wake up drivers in the morning by kicking them. Wilder said, “Such sleep as we get, we get on the ground. And then be waked up by a kick from Van Dyke’s boot, if he caught you at it. Guess, he never slept at all.” Wilder remembered that once when a logjam broke on French King rock near Turners Falls Van Dyke shouted, “[Never] mind the men, Save the peavies!”

Van Dyke died in August of 1909, while watching his logs being sluiced over the dam in Turners Falls. The *Turners Falls Reporter* reported,

He ordered his automobile driver, Frederick Hodgdon, to run the machine close to the steep bank below the site of the old saw mill at Riverside, so that he might get a better view of the action of the logs in a new sluiceway which the rivermen were trying out. In attempting to back out the driver seized the wrong lever, and the machine plunged over the embankment to the river bottom, a distance of 70 feet. The driver went with the machine and was fatally injured, so that death followed in an hour. Mr. Van Dyke sprang out instantly the machine started but was too near the bank, and fell to the rocks below, receiving many injuries, from which he died some ten hours afterward.

Robert Wilder remembered the rivermen cheering. He told the W. P. A. interviewer, “And, my, didn’t we cheer! ‘Never mind the man, save his matches!’ yelled somebody. And we all cheered again.”

The *Bellows Falls Times* reported the facts of the accident and noted simply, “Mr. Van Dyke was a familiar figure to the people here, having passed through this locality annually for a number of years.” The paper expressed more sympathy for Frederick Hodgdon, who had been scheduled “to be initiated last night in the local lodge of the K. of P.” It would not be until after the last of the drives in 1915, that a reporter in the *Times* would describe Van Dyke as a hero, but by then the reporter was reflecting nostalgically on the end of the great log drives. The *Turners Falls Reporter*, however, gushed in its praise of Van Dyke, writing, “Hidden from the world,
maybe gruff, imperious, domineering, ferocious, George Van Dyke was led by a subtle spirit of
the beautifully poetic gods of ancient Greece.”

A reason for Bagnall’s obsequious praise was
doubtless that he had strong local connections: his nephew, another George Van Dyke, had
married a woman from Turners Falls. More important than even Van Dyke’s local associations
was that Van Dyke was someone Bagnall could identify with: tough to the point of angering
people, but in Bagnall’s estimation at least, “disliked because he was not wholly understood.
…” Bagnall was also a gruff man who alienated many in Turners Falls, but showed occasional
hints that he had a warm heart. Bagnall wrote, “A few people … have been turning the man’s life
over in their minds, and have come to the well founded conclusion that whenever you find a man
of very superior merit, and usually with a generous heart for all but grafters.” Van Dyke’s
greatest failing was that he spoke with a “brutal frankness and he could make a thousand enemies
where he could find a friend.” “And yet,” Bagnall continued, “George Van Dyke had a big heart
stored away under that big waist-coat, and fine sensibilities that you can find only … in a true
man.” Bagnall listed Van Dyke’s good points: he was a “tireless worker” with “commendable
industry”; he was kind to his mother and built her a fine mansion in Littleton, New Hampshire;
and he hired gardeners and florists who sent flowers to Van Dyke’s church but also to families
when he heard of a death, and every year sent his mother flowers for her birthday—Bagnall
pointed out, that his “last offering” of flowers “contained 95 roses,” one for each year of her life.
Bagnall wrote that Van Dyke, “like any other gentleman, played poker. …” He remembered an
anecdote that Van Dyke had showed unusual kindness to an opponent in a poker game who
overextended himself, letting him keep the entire pot even though Van Dyke had won a
substantial amount. Bagnall concluded his eulogy of Van Dyke noting, with a typographical
error, “There was a sidelight on the better side of Van Dyke George.”

Robert Wilder was not
nearly as kind in his assessment. He told the W. P. A. interviewer, “God rest his soul in pieces!
Perhaps I shouldn’t have said that. What I mean is that I hope he’s in the blackest part of hell,
rolling iron logs with a red-hot peavey. And nothing to eat but beans and codfish either!”

The notoriety of George Van Dyke perhaps added to the element of spectacle in the large
Connecticut River drives, but the drives were spectacles regardless of the boss who ran the company. For people in northern New England, the rivermen were romantic figures, like cowboys in the same period. As the *Turners Falls Reporter* pointed out, they inspired children to want to imitate them. They drew crowds of spectators. Like cowboys in the West, their closeness to nature, their roughness, and their physical prowess made them admirable.

Rivermen were romantic figures, they also increasingly came under the attention of reformers. In 1902, the *Franklin Journal-Transcript* reported that a lumberman had been found dead in Northfield Depot, New Hampshire, north of Franklin, and had died of the effects of alcoholism and exposure. Beginning in the 1890s, the W. C. T. U. sent edifying reading material to the camps in lumber camps, and in 1906, George Van Dyke entered the Temperance campaign in a typically autocratic way, proposing to blacklist any lumberman who used alcohol. Typically, Van Dyke’s concern was not altruistic but purely financial. The *Journal-Transcript* reported, “He says he has lost thousands of dollars through the drunkenness of employees and hopes this will mitigate the evil.” The paper commented, however, “Probably he is too near the Canadian line for it to prove very effective, although men on the black list in other places do not appear to have great difficulty in procuring all the liquor they want. The sending of a few of the go-between purchasers to jail to await trial at the superior court will probably tend to a changed condition in the near future.”

If lumbermen were coming under the gaze of Progressive reformers, so too was the entire practice of lumbering. Increasingly, reformers hoped to address problems of irresponsible cutting. As early as 1891, J. B. Harrison, a retired Unitarian minister and Franklin’s resident Progressive journalist, wrote to the *Franklin Transcript* that forests needed rational management because they were important to the common good and not just manufacturers and lumbermen. Van Dyke died when Progressive complaints of lumbering practices were at a peak. Log drives seemed like throwbacks to an earlier age. Lumbering was inconvenient to mills and people using the river for recreation. As the economies of the paper towns started to stagnate, log drives only seemed to impede business.
In 1912, when the Van Dyke drive had cleared Bellows Falls, the *Times* reported, “The last log in the drive of the Connecticut Valley Lumber company passed the dam at 1 o’clock Sunday afternoon, and on Monday morning all the mills under the hill reopened after a few weeks’ enforced idleness.”¹¹⁶ Boaters in Bellows Falls complained of the debris left in the river from years of logging. The paper company changed its booms over the years and by the beginning of the twentieth century some of the piers that had been used decades before were no longer needed. They became nuisances for boaters. In 1908, the *Times* reported,

Many of the owners of boats on the river are having trouble with the old piers above the dam and boats are frequently wrecked on the treacherous logs and stones that in the time of such low water as a present lie hidden under the water. These piers are not now in use and are not necessary for any purpose. They were originally put into the river when logs were drawn up into the old mill yard on Rockingham Street and since that was discontinued have been of no value or use. The pier just above Fitzsimmons’ is the worst and, located at the gap in the boom through which it is necessary for all boats to pass, is a constant menace. The boat owners are determined to have these piers removed and action is to be taken at once.¹¹⁷

By 1915, the *Times* was increasingly inclined to look askance at the rivermen. No longer heroic figures who mastered the long logs and rough river currents, the rivermen seemed simply brutish. For example, the *Times* reported in 1915,

A husky logman called at the office of Dr. J. P. Lenehan in North Walpole a few days ago and asked the doctor to do a little something for a long cut he had sustained in his forehead when the butt end of a log dropped on him. The doctor wished to put in a few stitches but the logman allowed he did not care to have that done, saying a little dressing would be about all that was necessary. The doctor informed him that the cut would leave a bad scar. The logman smiled at that and informed the physician that a few scars, more or less, on his person would not trouble him in the least. The doctor dressed the cut and although it was an ugly one the logmen went out, took his pike pole and went to work, calmly shoving logs along the Connecticut River.¹¹⁸

In 1916, after the last drive of long logs had gone down the Connecticut, people in Bellows Falls were left with mixed feelings. In April, the *Times* published a long, nostalgic article, noting sadly the end of an era. The article began with a description of a boat the rivermen used, “tiny steam scow,” that was “wedge-shaped like a piece of restaurant pie” and looked like a “box on its lid and a smokestack projecting out of the box.” The article continued, “She was a rickety little craft, old, seemingly awkward, all lungs and no body,” but the boat dragged a boom
behind it, gathering up the last of the logs left in the river after the main part of the drive had passed down the river. In the boat were three men, including the boss of the drive, a veteran of thirty-seven such drives. The article developed a poignant image of the “the closing of a great history, the history of fifty years of risks and chances taken by great swashbuckling men in the open; a history not without an epic tang about it, and certainly not without an epic hero.”119 That hero was George Van Dyke.

The reporter recognized the economic conditions that put the lumber companies out of business. Lumber companies could work more profitably closer to the forests and send the cut lumber to market by rail. Moreover, lumber and river drives had not modernized, and used methods and machinery that were mostly unchanged in fifty years, and even longer. The steam scow was the most modern piece of machinery on the drive. “Modern science,” the reporter noted, “which has revolutionized industry after industry, has left the log drive pretty much as it was.”120 Lumbering was behind the times, and the modernization that finally put the drives out of business was perhaps, at least to people of the time, inevitable. Fatalism did not counteract the nostalgia of the reporter, who recounted the dangers and thrills of the drives. After they were no longer a threat to the tranquility of the villages, the rivermen again seemed heroic. The reporter described them as “bronzed and hardened as no other workmen were, swinging along the streets with a loud open country gait. …” The reporter continued,

Something of the rough and rather boisterous comradery [sic] of the camp clung to them, also distinguished their exploits even when they were completed in the police court. Loggers in the valley have even been known to wreck a saloon without malice and then pay the damage cheerfully afterwards, a practice long considered typical only of less effete civilizations. A strange rough and tumble, wonderfully alive existence, demanding courage, watchfulness, bold powers of resolve and quick resourcefulness both mental and physical in the men who followed it.121

The article concluded noting that George Van Dyke was the “archetype of the heroic virtues” found in loggers, powerful in physique and character.

The sense of inevitability in the passing of the days of the river drives hinted at the anxiety of people in Bellows Falls of the future. Lumbering operations had changed little in fifty years, and lumber companies would work more profitably by building sawmills closer to the
forests. The same could be said of the paper industry, especially in the old mills like those in Bellows Falls. In November, 1912, the village saw hints of future when the Russell family, still the principal owners of the Bellows Falls Canal, sold its interests to a company promising to develop the village’s water power for electricity. The new corporation promised to spend $1,000,000 in improvements in Bellows Falls, but critics feared that the development would be used more to exploit the resources of the village than to increase its manufacturing capacities. The mills were old and obsolete compared to newer mills such as one in Rumford, Maine, which in 1907 had the largest paper machine in the world. People in Bellows Falls were keenly aware of the fact that the International Paper Company mills were behind the times, and the changing uses of the river and waterpower seemed to foreshadow the end of an era for the industry of the town as much as it did for the lumbering operations. Perhaps as important, people were aware that decades of blasting by the lumber companies in the riverbed, and taming the flow of water, first by the mills and soon by hydroelectric dams and generating plants had robbed the falls of much of their sublimity.
NOTES


2 “The Eddy Exhibition,” BFT, April 8, 1870, p. 2.

3 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 22, 1870, p. 2.

4 “Local Matters,” BFT, Jan. 9, 1874, p. 2.

5 “Local Matters,” BFT, March 26, 1875, p. 2.


8 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, March 26, 1884, p. 4.

9 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Jan. 6, 1886, p. 4.

10 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, April 13, 1887, p. 4.


12 “No Danger of Disaster,” FT, June 14, 1889, p. 1.


23 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, April 17, 1895, p. 3.


25 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, April 25, 1900, p. 3.


30 “Change in IP Mills. Probably No Newspaper Will Be Made Here After This Year--Cardboard, etc., to be Substituted,” BFT, April 4, 1907, p. 1.


32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.


35 “Over the Dam. Three Logmen Carried Over in a Boat and One is Drowned,” July 28, 1892, p. 7.

36 “Drowned at Turners Falls,” GG&C, July 22, 1872, p. 2


40 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 14, 1872, p. 3; July 31, 1874, p. 3.

41 “Local Matters,” BFT, July 2, 1875, p. 2.

42 “Carried Over the Dam. Three Young Men Start on a Fishing Trip that was Fraught with Great Danger to Two, and Death to One of Their Number,” Oct. 2, 1890, p. 8.
“Body Found in the Eddy. Mangled Beyond Recognition, but it is Probably that of Young Barry,” BFT, Oct. 16, 1890, p. 8.

Ibid.

“Turners Falls,” GC&C, August 9, 1890, p. 4.


“THROUGH FLOODGATE. Dashed Against the River Rocks by Current. Woman's Narrow Escape from Frightful Death. Badly Bruised but No Bones Were Broken,” FT, August 29, 1895, p. 4.

Ibid.


Ibid., 22-23.


Ibid.

“Local Matters,” BFT, June 27, 1873, p. 2.


Pike, 227.


Ibid.


Ibid.

“Franklin and Vicinity,” MJ April 28, 1878, p. 2.


“Franklin Facts and Fancies,” MJ, April 14, 1882


“About Home,” FT, March 6, 1885, p. 2.

“About Home,” FT, May 18, 1888

Pike, 227, 247-252.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, June 18, 1879, p. 4.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, July 9, 1873, p. 2

Ibid.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, June 4, 1879, p. 2.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, August 6, 1879, p. 2.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, August 1, August 8, and August 15, 1883, p. 4.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, May 19, 1886, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, August 5, 1886, p. 4.


“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, June 18, 1879, p. 4.


“Log Drives are No More,” BFT, April 20, 1916, p. 8; Pike, 232.

“Tragic Death of George Van Dyke,” TFR, August 11, 1909, p. 3.

Ibid.

Pike, 248.

Ibid.


Pike, 248.

“George Van Dyke,” TFR, August 18, 1909, p. 1.

Pike, 202-203.

Ibid., 250.

Robert Wilder, Massachusetts
(http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html) “Save the Peavies.” A peavey is a
logging tool that consists of a spike with hinged hook on the end of a long pole. Named for
Joseph Peavey, a blacksmith from Bangor, Maine, it is used to turn logs (Pike, 278).


“George Van Dyke,” TFR, August 18, 1909, p. 1.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Oct. 17, 1900, p. 3.

“George Van Dyke,” TFR, August 18, 1909, p. 1.

Ibid.
Wilder.

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, July 24, 1889, p. 4.


Ibid.

Ibid.

“$1,000,000 Deal is Transacted. Bellows Falls Canal Co. and Fall Mountain Electric Light and Power Co. Passes from Russells to the Control of Chace and Harriman--Will Join Power with Vernon Dam Plant,” BFT, Nov. 28, 1912, p. 1.
CHAPTER 7
PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs suggest ways in which townspeople interpreted the world around them. A photograph is not an objective representation of a scene. A photographer, like a journalist or historian, selects and interprets his or her material. Therefore, photographs are useful not only to know the way things looked, but also what people thought of them. The photographers in this chapter did not generally make their images by commission. They made their images for sale. Thus, the images were intended to appeal to an audience. Many of the images would not have made sense to people who were not familiar with the communities. Their audiences were mostly local. In the 1870s and 1880s, newspapers frequently mentioned new stereographs or other photographs that were available in local stores. Certainly there were exceptions: images of the falls at times of high water, landmarks that tourists would have seen (for example, hotels or covered bridges), or important scenic attractions (for example the view from Table Rock in Bellows Falls or the headwaters of the Merrimack in Franklin). Most of the images, however, required a local knowledge for interpretation. They cover a wide variety of subjects, from scenery, to public and domestic buildings, to floods and snowstorms, and to local curiosities. In Franklin, for example, a photographer sold an image of a frozen fountain. Occasionally photographers even made images of tenement houses. Photographers took pictures of groups of people: Fourth of July and Labor Day parades, groups of workers, and baseball teams. These photographs became more common after 1900, as real photo postcards became popular. Because of their local subjects and popularity, photographs capture something of what Jackson refers to as the “vernacular way of recognizing the unique quality of the community we live in.”

The paper towns grew at the same as popular photography. In the 1860s, photographers began to take views of many parts of the towns. Over the next sixty years photographers
published views in books of views, as cabinet cards, stereographs, and eventually postcards. Photographers found a market for their views not only among visitors and travelers but locally. Photographers worked in all of the paper towns. Clarence L. Hunt, James B. Warren, B. N. Poor, and a Calkin worked in Franklin, though photographers in Concord, notably W. G. C. Kimball and C. M. Couch, also worked in the town. Beginning in 1882, Turners Falls had the Howes Brothers, who, though centered in the village, worked extensively throughout Western Massachusetts. The Howes Brothers were the most prolific of the local photographers, producing over 20,000 images in their careers, but they had a much broader working area than the other photographers and their collection of negatives has few images of Turners Falls. Eventually the brothers moved from Turners Falls to Ashfield, Massachusetts. Bellows Falls had P. W. Taft and briefly his son, Frank, as well as Frederick J. Blake. In Franklin and Turners Falls the photographers claimed to be simply photographers, but in Bellows Falls, Taft and Blake called themselves artists. Instead of working on commission, they took photographs on speculation, developing a trade in stereographs of local attractions. Bellows Falls was the best documented of the towns.

By 1868, the preeminent photographer in Bellows Falls was Preston W. Taft. Over ten years, he helped to define the important landmarks of Bellows Falls. He moved to the village in 1853 and set up shop as a general merchant. In 1856, he opened a Daguerreotype studio and gallery in a building on the south end of the Square (on the site later occupied by the Suter block). He made the transition from Daguerreotype to wet plate photography, and was active through the 1860s and into the 1870s. By 1868, he had expanded his business from portraits to stereographs, sold under the label, “American Views, Bellows Falls and Vicinity.”

Taft was at his creative peak between 1868 and 1878. In 1878, the Times announced that he had decided to “go west,” with his neighbor on Atkinson Street, Justus Lyman. The newspaper announced that Taft and Lyman would auction their houses and household goods, but Taft never made it past Saxtons River. He remained a photographer—Child lists him as such in his directory of 1884—but he seems to have turned over the artistic scenic work to his son,
Frank. But by the time he left town, P. W. Taft had developed a thriving business in his views of Bellows Falls, enough to warrant occasional notice by the *Times*. Babbitt and Hayes advertised in February 1877, for example, "For sale a fine lot of stereoscopic views of Bellows Falls and vicinity. They are good ones and taken by Taft."

Taft styled himself an artist, but his skills were self-taught. He had a good eye for peculiarities of composing stereographs and a knack for capturing interesting and timely scenes. He worked in the most dynamic period of Bellows Falls’s history, when the village leaders worked to define the community as it shifted from a sleepy railroad town to a bustling industrial center. He documented the natural beauties of the place, aspects of the community—including domestic and religious life—and industrial development. He captured scenes that were on the verge of changing. Some of this was certainly planned: the first pulp mill caused enough curiosity that it made sense to sell a photograph of it, but in his views of the river valley, he could not have known the extent of the future development.

Over the course of ten years Taft took at least 162 stereographs (based on numbers on the back of one of the cards), of which the Rockingham Free Public Library has about 130. They
systematically cover Bellows Falls and parts of Rockingham and neighboring Westminster.

Taft’s main interest was river views, specifically the Connecticut but also the Saxtons River; more than half of the stereographs preserved in the Rockingham library relate to the river, whether views on the river itself, bridges, or mills. Four photographs are of churches, three of the recently completed Immanuel Episcopal Church (figure 7-1); thirteen show various domestic scenes around town, houses of architectural or historical importance. Nine show a train wreck at Brockway’s mills (north of Bellows Falls) in 1869, in which a train almost plunged seventy-five feet down a gorge on the Williams River. Seventeen show various village scenes such as the Island House, buildings on the Square, a July 4 parade, and St. Agnes Hall, a girls’ school under the auspices of the Episcopal Church.

Figures 7-2a and 7-2b Bellows Falls From Table Rock. P. W. Taft. Author’s Collection

Between the summer of 1868 and spring of 1869, Taft climbed Fall Mountain to take a pair of stereographs from Table Rock. A penciled date on rear of the copy in the author’s collection bears the date August 21, 1872, but this cannot be the date the photographs were taken for they do not show the pulp mill, which was built between May and November of 1869. Further, by 1872, the east side of the Square would have been occupied by the Union Block (built in 1870), to the north, and Towns’s Hotel, a large block with a Mansard roof, on the South (begun
in 1871). The birdseye view consists of two photographs, one facing north and the other almost due west (figs. 2a and 2b). They were taken at the same time and from the same spot, for they can be combined to form a single image. They show most of the village, from Henry Street in the South to north of the village. The division between the photographs is the Island House, still prosperous, with its gardens intact. Soon the village would change dramatically, as the mills were built, the burnt district of the Square was developed, and houses sprang up especially on the south end of the village and in North Walpole.

These two birds-eye photographs show Bellows Falls poised for change. Taft captured important landmarks, some of which would soon be destroyed. There are the old landmarks of the village’s attempts at industrialization, the paper mill foundation, the sawmill, Clark and Chapman’s machine shop (in 1870 they would relocate to Turners Falls), the gristmill (which remained in operation even after it was surrounded by pulp and paper mills), and finally the foundation of the textile mill that had been started in the 1830s and abandoned unfinished during the financial panic of 1837. The northern view shows the Island House, the Tucker Toll Bridge and the two railroad bridges, as well as the railroad yard, freight and passenger stations. This view shows the cause for whatever fame and prosperity the village had known so far. In both views, what is remarkable is what is missing: the undeveloped land on the west of the village and across the Connecticut in North Walpole. As an overview of the village, Taft’s photographs are invaluable. The only other overall view of the village from this period is the Beers map published in 1869, but from surveys conducted the year before. While the Beers map shows locations and names, it lacks the visceral impact the three-dimensional images. The stereographs are powerful images: they evoke emotion, whether sentimentality of a cherished spot, the thrill of seeing one’s home in context from a distance, or the excitement of perspective, with almost a sense of vertigo from being perched on the edge of an 800-foot drop.

Much of the area was about to change, with the growth of factories, the rebuilding of the Square, and the development of residential neighborhoods. Soon North Walpole would be laid out, divided into lots and sold. Taft took several stereographs before the village started to
develop. He chose for his perspective Pine Hill, north of the Episcopal Church. This hill was an important landmark. The grove of Pine Trees, Lyman S. Hayes wrote, was what remained of a large pine forest. Now, mostly confined to the hill behind the Immanuel Church cemetery, it was a notable part of town, not only for its scenic beauty but also for its historic associations. It had been a camping ground for Abenaqui Indians, who had fished for shad in the Falls, and who still visited the spot on pilgrimages into the 1850s. The hill itself was interesting for its geology, for it was one of the terraces formed by glacial eskers. The north end of the hill opened into a spot where there were clear views of the river valley north, all the way to Mt. Ascutney, a peak of over 3000 feet forty miles north of Bellows Falls. This was a natural spot for taking stereographs: it was a high point, gave a dramatic view, and had sentimental associations. It was different from the dramatic view from Table Rock in that it revealed the tranquil river and pastureland that would be developed for the village of North Walpole. There is no white water in Taft’s views from Pine Hill. They were not sublime but picturesque, with hills, fields, and the glass-like surface of the Connecticut River.

Taft took at least two views from the north end of Pine Hill. One shows a view up the valley, with a clear view of Mt. Ascutney in the distance (figure 7-3a). As he did with his views from Table Rock, he perched himself on the edge of the hill, showing just enough of the ground in front of him to enhance the illusion of depth. The view faces slightly Northeast—the peak of Ascutney is a little to the left of center. At the bottom of the hill in front of him, on the far side of Rockingham Road, two stray pine trees hang over the riverbank. The river is absolutely calm: two trees on the far bank of the river as well as clouds are reflected in the water. On the far side of the river—what would become North Walpole, New Hampshire—are cultivated fields. Farmhouses and barns dot the valley along the Sullivan Railroad tracks. Taft captured the undulating hills on either side of the river, showing five distinct planes, from Pine Hill, to Fall Mountain, the mouth of the Williams River (on the Vermont side) ridges beyond, and finally Ascutney in the distance. The scene is placid and pastoral. Within a few years, the serene look of the valley would be gone, as North Walpole filled the foreground with houses. The stereograph is
notable for what it excludes: just to the right of the frame were the dam and the beginning of the rapids. The other view from Pine Hill used conventional landscape painting techniques (figure 7-3b). It has a dramatic foreground, with trees, twisted dead branches on the ground, and the rugged diagonal sandy hillside, where the side of the hill has washed away. The craggy foreground frames the placid river, calm enough to reflect the trees and fields on the far side.

The views from Pine Hill showed a serene aspect of the Connecticut valley, but this was deceptive. People who knew the area would know that just below the placid, reflective part of the Connecticut, the water raged as it tumbled down the rapids and into the gorge below the Tucker Toll Bridge. This view was thrilling: this is what had attracted attention to the area for a hundred years or more by 1870, and Taft adeptly captured this sublime aspect of the river.

In a pair of stereographs, taken during a spring freshet, Taft caught the river at its full fury (figs. 4a and 4b). Bellows Falls is not a shear drop, but a half-mile of rapids that go around an oxbow before narrowing to a gorge of two channels. The Tucker toll bridge was anchored to rock dividing the gorge. The best vantage for viewing the falls was just south of the bridge. This had long been a spot for admiring the falls. Taft covered the two channels of the gorge in separate stereographs. An effective stereograph has a long depth of field; the juxtaposition of
images, rather than the focus, gives the illusion of depth. The camera has to have a small aperture to create this depth of field, and this makes necessary long exposures. These long exposures are effective for waterfalls because they turn the water into a feathery blur, creating an illusion of movement. Taft’s views show the river running diagonally across the frame. He used the trees on the bank and the edge of bank to create the depth of the image. The Tucker Toll Bridge runs across the top of each image. The latticework of the truss and the narrow walkway on the outside of the bridge contrast with the raging water and emphasize the precariousness of the bridge and the sublimity of the falls. Of the two photographs, taken at the same time, the image of the east channel is the more effective. Most of the water passed through the west channel, but the shadows and the rugged look of the rocks makes a more satisfying composition than the greater torrent of the west branch.

This view was the main reason tourists visited Bellows Falls. This is the view that Samuel Peters described, where the river could allegedly float a bar of iron, and that only a drunk Indian could survive. Local people too watched the falls at high water, and the Times reported when the falls were at their most dramatic. The falls were the most important natural feature of the area: there would have been no village of Bellows Falls without the falls themselves. They
had a local appeal, but they also appealed to the tourists, who in the early 1870s were still summering at the Island House.

The most dramatic part of the Saxtons River was the falls in North Westminster, in what was called the “Forest.” Twin Falls (as they are called today), were an attraction, a dramatic view of water cutting through diagonal rocks. They were also historically important to the community, even though they were in the town of Westminster. Near the road that passes from Bellows Falls to Saxtons River (the two main villages in Rockingham), the Forest was more easily accessible to Bellows Falls than Westminster village. The usual view of the falls looks at them straight on. The narrow channel, diagonal rocks and double set of rapids makes a dramatic picture, but Taft chose to photograph the falls from a distance (figure 7-5). Between 1824 and the 1850s the Falls provided power for a paper mill and when Taft photographed them the dam and the remains of a stone bulkhead on the banks of the river remained. Taft photographed the falls to show the dam, in the middle of the frame, with the foundation of the mill in the foreground. The falls at a distance give a striking contrast to the dark banks and pine trees. The view, taken probably during a spring freshet, shows the falls and dam at their most dramatic.

Figure 7-5. Forest Falls, P. W. Taft., Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-6. The Island House, P. W. Taft. Author’s Collection
As a landscape photographer with a local expertise, Taft took some remarkable photographs. He worked at a time when the environment was about to change drastically. His images are unsentimental and direct; he seems to have been unconcerned with the prettiness of a scene. His image of the Island House (figure 7-6), for example, shows an unkempt garden in front of the building, just as his picture of Twin Falls shows the ruins of the old mill. He seems to have aimed to document a scene more than to create a pleasing composition.

In a few instances, Taft’s stereographs captured important news of the village. In 1869, he photographed Bellows Falls’s first pulp mill under construction. He could not have known, of course, that the pulp mill was the germ of a great industry—not even W. A. Russell could have been certain of that. An inscription written in pencil on the back of the copy in the author’s collection reads “Connecticut River below the falls; Mt. Kilburn or Fall Mtn.” (figure 7-7). The river and Cheshire Railroad at the base of the mountain occupy the middle of the frame. Fall Mountain itself occupies half of the frame; Table Rock is at the top, just left of center. Two mill buildings—the pulp mill and Wyman Flint’s shoe peg mill—are in the foreground. Off center, the mill buildings are not where the eye comes to rest. Taft captured the scene as people would have seen it from Westminster Street: the viewer looks over the buildings to rocks and rushing water of the river and the railroad at the base of Fall Mountain.

To the historian, the mill buildings are the interesting part of the image. Flint’s peg mill is an elongated Cape Cod house, with low eaves, steeply pitched roof, and gabled dormers. The pulp mill stands unfinished. It is a two-story building with a heavy stone foundation built over the riverbank. It has a shallow-pitched gable roof, but a symmetrical plan, with groups of three windows flanking the central entrance. When Taft took the picture, the building was unfinished. There are no sashes in the windows, and a millstone stands across the open doorway. From a historical perspective the composition of the picture is unsatisfying: one wishes that Taft had gone “under the hill” to take the photograph and had made the mills the center of his attention. But that is perhaps his point: he captured the view as townspeople would have seen it. The photograph is not ostensibly of the mills, but rather of the entire river scene. Taft aimed for as
much information as possible, from Table Rock at the top of the photograph to the peg mill at the bottom. The pulp mill occupies the bottom left hand corner of the photograph—it is marginal to the scene. As a flat photograph, the composition does not work, but as a stereograph it is very effective, for Taft captures the depth of the scene. The point of a stereograph is that it pulls the viewer into the scene. The depth of the image forces the viewer to look across and above objects (and even around objects if the illusion is effective). In three dimensions, trees on the bank occupy the actual foreground. In a two-dimensional photograph these are easy to ignore, but they are vitally important to the stereograph. The composition of a photograph is necessarily a compromise. Taft chose how to frame the photograph, but he was limited in what he could choose to exclude. A painter could have altered perspective or omitted objects, but Taft lacked that freedom. One wonders why he framed the composition as he did, why he did not center the buildings left to right. What was just out of the frame of the photograph? Was there something on the riverbank or in the river he wished to avoid?

Figure 7-7. “Connecticut River below the falls; Mt. Kilburn or Fall Mtn,” 1869, P. W. Taft. Author’s Collection

Figure 7-8. Bellows Falls Canal Company Sawmill, April, 1870, P. W. Taft. Author’s Collection
River conditions such as ice or high water were newsworthy. The Rockingham Free Public Library preserves images Taft took of the flood of 1869, including the swirling water in the eddy below the falls. A year later, at the end of a cold, harsh winter, Taft again went to the Eddy to take stereographs of the melting ice. In April, 1870, the Times reported on what it called “The Eddy Exhibition,” noting the melting ice and advertising Taft’s photographs (see figure 6-1). The handsomest of these views shows the Canal Company’s sawmill on the canal, with the ice gorge in the river behind (figure 7-8). The image is notable for its perspective. Perched on the edge of the bank, Taft looked down at the mill. There are no rocks in the foreground to give a feeling of stability; the bank falls away to the canal below. The photograph is notable because it shows the sawmill soon before it would be replaced by mills of the Fall Mountain Paper Company. Taft would not have known that at the time. The pulp mill was still in its infancy and the industrial development, while promised, was not assured. The interest for viewers at the time would have been the ice in the river: this was distinctive and worth preserving. The stereograph itself is dramatic. Taft successfully set up a shot of multiple converging lines. Runs for the logs passing across the canal into the mill form a triangle that is continued in the gable of the mill. The converging lines of the river form a larger triangle that is emphasized by the southern end of Fall Mountain and the terraces on the Vermont side of the river. In the river, the deep ice gorge makes a dramatic effect.

Taft’s most interesting images are his river scenes. These were his most marketable images: on the back of his later cards, his partial catalogue excluded most of his village and domestic scenes. He took several photographs, for example, of Immanuel Church, shortly after its completion in 1867. He photographed some of the oldest houses in town: the Alexander Campbell house in Rockingham village, the Tucker mansion on Westminster Street, the Morgan farmhouse on Rockingham Road at the north end of the village. He photographed St. Agnes Hall, a handsome Federal-style building and girls’ school run under the patronage of the Episcopal Church (figure 7-9). The building was one of the oldest houses in the village, built between 1800 and 1810. When Taft photographed it, it had only recently become a school. Unlike his views of
Figure 7-9. St. Agnes Hall, P. W. Taft. Author’s Collection

Figure 7-10. St. Agnes Hall, F. J. Blake, *Streets, Public Buildings of Bellows Falls, Vt.* (Bellows Falls, Vermont: F. J. Blake, 1885), plate 35.
the pulp mill and Island House, he does the building justice, showing its architectural highlights. In the photograph girls stand on the lawn and sit under trees. Even St. Agnes, though, was changing, for by the time Taft’s protégé, Frederick J. Blake, photographed it in 1884, it had been altered with piazzas (figure 7-10). Taft’s view, with the graceful lines of the old house still visible, and with the girls playing and sitting on the lawn, suggests an idyllic mood. Blake took his photograph in the austere early morning light of autumn, with trees casting long shadows from the east, but Taft’s photograph is in the warmth of a summer evening with the light filtering through the trees from behind the house.

![Figure 7-11. South End of the Square Looking East. Author’s collection.](image)

Taft took some stereographs of the Square, showing important buildings, such as the Mammoth Block on the south end, the Jabez Hills block on the West, and the effects of the fire of 1868 that burned the east side of the Square. One notable image shows the view of the Island House from the Square. Made possible by the fires that ravaged the Square in 1860 and 1868, the view is remarkable for it shows the contrast between the sparseness of the Square—the Oscar D. Gray commercial block beside a small harness shop—with the Island House rising majestically set against Fall Mountain (figure 7-11). A later photograph shows the second-empire
Towns Hotel, now blocking that view. The Square was not an impressive part of town when compared with the drama of the river or the serenity of the residential areas. In the years to come, as business developed, the Square would become more impressive. These views complete Taft’s catalogue. In ten years, he systematically covered the important parts of town, from the distant birdseye views, to the details of the river, other parts of the landscape, as well as houses and the business district.

Taft was at his peak between 1868 and 1878. By 1874, his son, Frank, was in business with him. Apparently sickly, Frank Taft left Bellows Falls in March 1874 for Michigan, “for his health.”9 By 1877, Frank was back in town setting up a studio of his own.10 His father by this time had moved into a new house on Atkinson Street, and worked from his home. Frank Taft set up a fine studio in J. D. Bridgman’s block just off the Square on Westminster Street. In September 1877, the Times reported, “Frank M. Taft’s new photograph rooms in Bridgman’s building are very nicely arranged for his business and include a waiting room besides those for business. He has the best of north skylight. His apparatus is all new and includes the modern improvements by which he will make a very excellent picture of your ‘phiz.’”11 Indeed, “phiz” pictures were Frank Taft’s main business. By the 1870s, photography had progressed from Daguerreotypes to small Cartes de Visites (usually about two and a half by four inches) and finally to the larger format Cabinet Cards (about four and a quarter by six and a half inches). Easily mounted in albums or sent through the mail, Cartes de Visites appealed to people in the sentimental years of the Gilded Age. Many of these photographs were of loved ones, friends and family. These photographs provided the bread and butter for local photographers. All of the paper towns had such photographers. Unfortunately, although the researcher or collector can connect them to a place by the photographer’s stamp on the heavy card stock on which the photographs were printed, unless someone had the foresight to identify the subject, most cannot be identified. Frank Taft’s studio was set up for this sort of photography. He took some stereoviews but was not as prolific as his father. In the summer of 1878, he proposed taking a “large photograph or bird’s eye view” from Table Rock. The newspaper reported and asked for
subscriptions. The Times explained,

The apparatus. . . will be somewhat expensive, but if a hundred pictures can be sold at three dollars each, the object will be secured. Mr. Taft’s enterprise and the excellence of his work, is already well understood in this place and is guarantee of a good picture, and there must be more than a hundred families in this village who will want such a picture to place in their homes, and we shall soon hope to hear of the success of the enterprise, in which case the negatives will probably be taken in September. 12

Taft raised the necessary funds, and his view of the village from Table Rock was published in the fall of 1878.

Soon Taft was training another photographer, Frederick J. Blake, who became, J. H. Walbridge noted, “one of the best artists in the state.”13 Blake became Bellows Falls’s finest photographer. Bellows Falls had watched Fred Blake grow up. He was the son of Seth M. Blake, a dentist. S. M. Blake had moved to Bellows Falls in the 1840s and had briefly edited John Weeks Moore’s Gazette, but became a dentist in 1847.14 In 1869, the Times reported of the future photographer, “Master Freddie Blake, a son of Dr. Blake, observed a horse in the tunnel on Monday, just after an up train below had whistled for entrance, when with commendable impulse he instant ran in and seizing the horse by the head led it out just in season to save it from trouble, and the owner is probably not yet aware of the escape of his horse.” In 1873, the Times reported that Blake was starting a business as a “painter and grainer.”15 Blake’s concerns were practical, but the next year, the paper reported that he had “won some celebrity as a painter,” and would soon “go to Claremont, N. H. … to take a few lessons in the higher styles of arts, in the studio of R. E. Miller, who has recently spent two years in Italy in perfecting himself in that art.”16 In 1876 the Times reported, “Fred J. Blake has just completed some fine art work that would be creditable to any artist. One is an oil painting and the other a very fine crayon portrait. They may be seen at the Store of Davis & Arnold where we are sure many friends of young Blake will not fail to look at them.”17 Later, the paper commented about “Young Blake,” “we cannot doubt that much fame awaits him as an artist.”18 The Times commented on specific works by Blake, including the works above and “crystallined oil portraits on convex glass which [are] very excellent and done at a moderate price.”19 In 1877, the Times reported, “Fred J. Blake has recently spent some days on
Mt. Kilburn, sketching the surrounding scenery and which he may put on canvas.”20 The paper reported over the next year that Blake had painted the scenery for halls in both Walpole, New Hampshire and Bellows Falls.21

In 1878, Frank Taft started exhibiting Blake’s paintings in his studio, and a year later Blake began to study photography under him.22 In 1882, Frank Taft announced his retirement, “for the benefit of his health,” and the Times reported that he had sold his business to Blake.23 Blake quickly started taking stereographs. By 1883, he advertised twenty-five stereographs on the back of the views. His stereographs are not as common as P. W. Taft’s; indeed, they are not catalogued in the major study of stereographs. His stereographs are in a different format than Taft’s. Taft’s are in the format of the American Stereographic Company: they measure three and five sixteenths by six and seven eights inches, are printed on orange cards with pink backings, and are labeled “American Views.”24 Their image size is three inches square. Blake’s cards measure about four and a half by seven inches, and the images are about three and an eighth by four and an eighth inches. The backs read simply “Stereoscopic Views of Bellows Falls and Vicinity. F. J. Blake, Artist.”

Blake’s photographs are carefully composed and beautifully finished. They lack the rawness of P. W. Taft’s, the precarious foregrounds, and sense that the camera was capturing exactly what spectators might have seen. Blake was self-consciously an artist and presented views that expressed not immediacy but a carefully prepared interpretation. A stereograph taken from Fall Mountain in 1883 (figure 7-12), for example, is clear and well defined. It is a concise document of the state of the mills and village. The large format allows Taft to give a thorough overview of the community in one shot. It lacks the sort of craggy foreground that Taft used to emphasize the depth of the image. Instead Blake uses only the river in the foreground. He shows the bottom of the falls, the last, small set of rapids. His long exposure emphasizes the movement in the water. The rest of the lower half of the image shows the industrial district. He shows every mill building with remarkable clarity.
There is perhaps no better photograph from the early 1880s. The 1883 season was important, for it started, in March with a fire “under the hill.” The Vermont Farm Machine Company’s building burned, along with the neighboring foundry of Osgood and Barker. The Canal Company owned the Farm Machine building. W. A. Russell vowed to rebuild quickly, and the photograph shows the progress of this building, with the walls already well underway. The paper mills in the stereograph are also in an interesting intermediate stage of development. Other buildings of the Fall Mountain Paper Company remain unfinished. The Square occupies a small section in the middle right of the photograph. The growing residential section of the southern part of the village occupies the third quarter of the image, from the bottom. This is unremarkable, except for the development of New Terrace, which had been started the year before. The top quarter of the view shows the broader context of the village with the hills rising in several ridges, and the Green Mountains in the distance.

By 1883, Blake was gaining reputation for his photographs. The Times noted, “He is a
‘fine art’ man, whether [by] the brush or the instantaneous stroke. …” He catered especially to local tastes. His assistant, Henry Hayward, was athletic in his work satisfying the local curiosity. The *Times* reported in September 1883, “Henry Hayward, of F.J. Blake’s picture gallery, went to the top of the new chimney of the Fall Mountain Paper Mill on Saturday and took some fine views of the village. As very few of our people made the ascent of 122 feet, to see how the village looked from that point, they will now have the opportunity by the pictures taken by Mr. Hayward, which will be for sale this week at Blake’s picture gallery.” Hayward and Blake were responding to the community’s curiosity about the mills that were then in a second period of rapid growth. The village was justly proud of the growth, and was also fascinated the sublime nature of the industry. The scale of the mills—and the 122-foot smokestack—attracted the fascination of the village. The mills were sublime: they were massive in proportion and their machinery defied understanding. The amount of ingenuity, much less capital, involved in their building was awesome. The ability of Blake to capture the mills and reduce them to an image on a glass plate was also awesome. What particularly fascinated the reporter for the *Times* was the clarity of Blake’s views. In November, 1883, the paper reported on Blake’s most recent photograph of the mills: “A very handsome picture of the mills has been made by Mr. Fred J Blake, which many have this week been admiring in the show window of George O. Guild’s store. It is considered by every one as one of the finest specimens of the photographic art.” The clarity of Blake’s photographs is remarkable. He used a fine lens that gave a wider angle of vision than Taft had used for his stereographs, and took the photographs with a very small aperture and long depth of field. In Blake’s surviving landscape photographs, the sun is usually at a low angle, throwing light onto the subject and casting long shadows. With his depth of field, wide angle, and striking light, the images do have an impressive realism. Blake’s art is a stark realism. He tried to recreate the landscape in fastidious detail. His compositions are careful but calculated to give a maximum amount of information, but his photographs seem devoid of humanity. Taking his photographs in the early morning or late evening gave him striking light but also settings without hustle and bustle. The views of mills from a distance, or birds-eye views
of the village do not show much of how people lived and worked. He shows the village in loving
detail but at the same time makes the village seem like a well-preserved ghost town.

We see this particularly in his greatest work, a book titled *Streets, Public Buildings and
General Views of Bellows Falls, Vt.*, published in December 1885. The *Times* announced that it
had received the book in February 1886 and commented, “The prints have been well chosen by
Mr. Blake, and the autoglyph print is very fine, and of course absolutely correct. It is Bellows
Falls illustrated for the first time in the ‘fine arts. …’\(^{29}\) Autoglyphs were a type of Collotype, an
early photomechanical process and were a trademark of W. P. Allen, of Gardner, Massachusetts.
The book is in an oblong sextodecimo format (6 5/8 by 9 3/8 inches), bound in a green fabric
cover decorated with “Bellows Falls, Vt.” embossed in gold. It contains forty-one plates, but no
text besides titles and a title page.

The book is an extension of the stereograph. The photographs are views: the emphasis of
the book is on looking at Bellows Falls, and freezing it at a moment in the fall of 1885. The
plates go from the general to the specific. The first four are birdseye views from Table Rock.
After these are a series of five views looking north and south. Two of these views are from Pine
Hill, showing North Walpole from almost the same spots as Taft’s stereographs of fifteen years
before. Two show the Tucker Toll Bridge. One view shows the paper mills from the Cheshire
Railroad tracks in North Walpole. These birdseye and river views are the foundation of the book:
they explain the reason for Bellows Falls and its economic basis. General views of the residential
streets follow, covering the major streets: Atkinson, School, Henry, Westminster, and Green.
Blake leads the viewer into the Square with a view of the intersection of Westminster and Church
Streets. Six views cover the Square itself, from a variety of angles. From the Square Blake leads
the viewer north along Rockingham Street and the river to the Sullivan Railroad bridge, and then
farther north to the “Four Pines.” These photographs might have seemed more appropriate with
the other river photographs, but from the perspective of a pedestrian, walking from Westminster
Street, north through the Square, they make sense. They reflect a local’s perspective of the
geography of the place, and a walk that many people would have been familiar as they passed
from the Square to their homes on the north end of the village.

From these street views, Blake becomes more specific, focusing on buildings. He starts with public buildings—the High School and two elementary schools—and continues with the village’s five churches, beginning with the Episcopal, and continuing with the Universalist, Congregationalist, Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist. The choice of the Episcopal Church as the first again suggests a local’s view, for the church was the home of the village’s elite. The village had been closely identified with the Episcopal Church since its founding. The photograph of St. Charles Catholic Church (which was completed while Blake was taking photographs for the book) is the only one that departs from a simple rectangular format: he presented all the churches vertically, but he presented St. Charles in a pointed frame, emphasizing the Gothic style of the church (figure 7-13).

![St. Charles Church](image)

Figure 7-13. St. Charles Church, F. J. Blake, Plate 31.
Figure 7-14. The Island House, F. J. Blake, Plate 34.

Figure 7-15. Birds-Eye View of Village from Mount Kilburn, F. J. Blake
From the churches Blake moves on to two landmarks: the Island House, a beloved landmark but by that time no longer prosperous (figure 7-14). Following this is St. Agnes Hall, now dressed up with fashionable porches with chamfered posts and gingerbread balustrades. From the school Blake moves on to a series of photographs of manufacturers houses: the Wyman Flint house (the first of Bellows Falls’s post-Civil War mansions), and then houses of John Robertson and A. H. Fisher, both, like Flint, paper manufacturers. These were examples of the finest homes in the village, and all distinctive. All on Westminster Street opposite the mills under the hill, they showed the wealth that the village had achieved.

The last three photographs in the book turn back to scenery. One photograph shows Saxtons River, with the millpond and covered bridge just before its confluence with the Connecticut at the eastern end of the Basin. The next image looks the opposite direction, back into the basin, showing the rocks at the outlet. Finally, the last photograph in the book is a view from the north end of Oak Hill of the north end of the village, North Walpole, and the Connecticut Valley north to Mt. Ascutney.

The Times commented that Blake’s views were “absolutely correct,” implying at least that this elevated them to the level of “fine art.” “Fine art” was a term that the Times used repeatedly about Blake’s work, from his early paintings in 1876, to his photographs in 1883, and finally to his book in 1885; the paper always used the term to describe the detail and realism of his work. The satisfaction in looking at Blake’s images comes from the close scrutiny they invite. More than simply viewing the scene, they invite the viewer’s gaze. In this way they are like stereographs, which force the viewer to look carefully and intently. Blake’s photographs lack the lenses and frame of a stereoscope to guide the gaze, but their detail is such that the viewer can hardly look less intently. Knowledge of the scene perhaps intensifies the gaze. In the first view in the book, a general birds-eye covering most of the village, the mills occupy the foreground, but the image is clear enough to allow the viewer to pick out details (figure 7-15). Almost every building of the mill complex is visible. The residential district is visible, and while the individual houses are small and recede into the distance, they are clear enough to allow the viewer to attempt
to discern familiar buildings. The familiar landmarks are all in the photograph, from the Tucker Toll Bridge in the lower left to the Island House, to Pine Hill and even the Four Pines in the upper right. Blake begins his book by inviting the viewer to climb to Table Rock with him to pick out the local, and perhaps personal, landmarks. The subsequent photographs extend this gaze around the broad curve of the river beyond the dam to North Walpole and the farms north of Bellows Falls in the second photograph, to the south end of the village, Old and New Terraces, and the cemeteries in the third, and to Sabin’s Basin and the terraces on the south end of the village in the fourth.

Blake captured a remarkable amount of detail. His images have a crisp focus that is lacking in Taft’s stereographs. Mt. Ascutney, for example, is only visible from Bellows Falls on a clear day, but it rises in the background of Blake’s views to the north. Blake’s view looking down Atkinson Street from the north end, is a bleak scene, with leafless trees in the late Fall, between the time when the leaves dropped and the snows fell. Close inspection, however, shows a dog sitting, apparently patiently at the edge of the little park at the fork of Atkinson and Rockingham Streets (figure 7-16). At a distance behind the dog, several people stand on the side of the road. A man in a bowler hat stands presumably to help give a sense of scale. The long exposure times necessary to capture the crisp focus of the images suggests that the man was an intentional part of the photograph, perhaps Blake’s assistant, Henry Hayward. In the views of the Square, the wide angle of the lens and low angle of the light give the images a cold appearance, but a close gaze reveals considerable life in the images: horses and carts outside of buildings, people standing in doorways, two men standing against Towns’s Hotel with their high-wheeled bicycles, even a man shingling the roof of the former Jabez Hill block (figure 7-17). The view of the Island House shows the man in the bowler hat, apparently posing, as well as a group of men and the dog, again, on one of the porches.

Other details invite the viewer’s gaze. Names of businesses are clearly visible in the images of the Square, including Blake’s own sign in the view from Westminster Street. Views of the river north of the village show the log booms. The view of Mt. Kilburn (Fall Mountain) from
the "Four Pines" shows the pines and mountain, the booms, the lumber yard and chute for

Figure 7-16. Atkinson Street, Looking South, F. J. Blake, Plate 11.

Figure 7-17. The Square, F. J. Blake, Plate 22.
removing the logs from the river, and the houses of “Rutland Patch,” the Irish shanties along the railroad tracks (figure 7-18). The photograph of the Methodist church shows houses of Kerry Avenue, with laundry drying behind the church even a new sewer pipe waiting to be laid (figure 7-19).

In March 1888, New England was blasted with a late-season snowstorm, the worst recorded in the region to that date. Work in the village came to a halt, as even the mills were buried. The snow blocked trains, effectively sealing the tunnel below the Square. The Times reported that three locomotives pushing a snowplow failed to the tunnel on the first try. The Times reported, “Finally they went back and soon returned with furious momentum, cracking through the south end and the crossing, and keeping up a good rate of speed were soon out of sight going south. The interest which had been created made it a grand triumph.” The village looked to Blake to preserve the memory of the event. He took six photographs showing the “snow blockade in the Square,” which, the paper commented, “are very fine indeed.” The event became a matter of public pride, a testament to the village’s perseverance, as well as a point of
rivalry against Brattleboro. The *Times* reported,

We did not suppose it possible to get so good views. We are not surprised that fifty copies of them were sold in a few moments last evening. Of the great drift opposite Towns’ hotel he has views of both sides, including the tunnel and also one of the south entrance and another taken from the corner of Holden’s store. These pictures will ever be a most interesting remembrance of the great snow blockade, and since looking at them we have no doubt we have beat Brattleboro! \(^{32}\)

![Figure 7-19. Methodist Church, F. J. Blake, Plate 33.](image)

Four of the photographs are preserved at the Rockingham Free Public Library. They are remarkable as memorials of the spectacle. They show people standing against the snow to give a sense of the depth of the drifts. In one, a man stands in a tunnel dug through a drift in front of Towns’s Hotel (figure 7-21). Blake shot one photograph from the front of the hotel, looking south to the Suter and Times blocks. In the foreground a man stands with his back to the camera looking across the Square to the Centennial block, dwarfed by the drift in front of him. A group of people stands at the corner looking toward the photographer. The man in the foreground helps Blake capture the drama of the scene (figure 7-22).
Figure 7-20. Blizzard of 1888, F. J. Blake. Rockingham Free Public Library.

Figure 7-21. Blizzard of 1888, F. J. Blake. Rockingham Free Public Library
Blake’s view of the Four Pines was one of his most celebrated images (figure 7-22). Frances Lovell recorded in her town history that this view was a favorite photograph for people in the village.  For his book of views, Blake had taken a photograph of the river from the pines on the bank above the railroad tracks north of the village, but he took another photograph of the pines somewhat later. The view is an individual one, mounted on heavy, gilt-edged card stock. It is a handsome view of the pines, river, and road to Rockingham village. Carefully composed, the image is characteristically Blake’s in that it shows no people but includes an intriguing amount of detail. The Four Pines are about in the middle of the photograph; another cluster of pines is in the foreground on the right side of the image. Between these groups of trees, Blake shows the Fall Mountain Paper Company’s log pile and saw mill on the New Hampshire side of the river. The photograph dates to the period between about 1889 (an advertisement for F. G. Pierce’s clothing store which opened that year is painted on a board in the foreground of the picture) and 1893, when one of the pines blew down. This image had a long life, for it was being reproduced as a
postcard fifteen years later, and was even printed on a souvenir china plate. The image helped to preserve at least the memory of the landmark even after the trees were dying.

Blake’s best work was on photographs such as the view of the Four Pines, those in the autoglyph book, and the views of the Blizzard of 1888. He continued to work into the twentieth century, dying in 1924. By about 1905, commercial photographers turned to postcards. Blake followed this trade to a point, at least by selling images to postcard publishers, but he does not seem to have published postcards himself. His photograph of the Four Pines was published by the Corner Drug Store in Bellows Falls, but printed in Germany. Similarly, Charles W. Hughes, in Mechanicville, New York, published a photograph of Hetty Green, the eccentric financier who kept a home in Bellows Falls. By the time postcards became popular, Blake had moved, for a brief time at least, to Rutland. In 1907, Blake returned to Bellows Falls and reopened his studio, this time in Charlie Gates’s garage. He lived in Saxtons River but now split his time between Bellows Falls and Rutland.

The days of stereographs and large-format scenic views were past by the time Blake returned to Bellows Falls. Postcards were now the rage, and while some of his images were published as postcards, Blake does not seem to have taken advantage of the growing market. The most prolific postcard photographer in Bellows Falls was Russell C. Bristol. Bristol lived a relatively short time in Bellows Falls. He was born about 1877; the 1900 Federal census lists him living in Vergennes, Vermont with his wife Adaline. By 1906, Bristol was well established in the postcard trade in Bellows Falls. The 1910 census lists the Bristols, now with two daughters, Gladys and Beatrice, living on Laurel Avenue, in Bellows Falls’s tenement district. By 1920, the Bristols had moved to Boston.

Bristol did his best work in Bellows Falls between 1905 and 1910, when “real photo” postcards were at their peak. These were simply photographs printed on 3 ½ by 5 ½ inch card stock. He sold postcards through A. H. Fuller’s pharmacy, and in 1908 contributed photographs to Lyman S. Hayes and P. H. Gobie’s *Bellows Falls and Vicinity Illustrated*. Like Blake, Bristol took scenic views, including birds-eye views from Table Rock, views up and down the river, and
details of the riverbed such as the potholes under the Tucker Toll Bridge. He photographed important landmarks. His view of the front of the Tucker Toll Bridge was a popular postcard, and like Blake’s view of the Four Pines, something of an iconic image of Bellows Falls (figure 7-23). But while Blake had an artist’s desire to control the composition of his views and consequently took almost sterile looking photographs, Bristol was much more journalistic in his approach.

The two photographers’ backgrounds and sympathies were also different. Blake had grown up in Bellows Falls and was an adolescent when the industrial development began. His father was part of the old business establishment in the village, and he grew into that role himself. His photographs celebrated the industrial, commercial, and domestic accomplishments of the village leaders. Bristol, on the other hand, arrived in town at about the age of thirty and made his home in the tenement district at the north end of the village. He set up his studio in the Gray Block, a commercial block on Bridge Street, on the east side of the Square, in the building where the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers kept their hall. Bristol seems to have been
sympathetic with the union, at least to the point that he covered the Labor Day parades and even wrote a congratulatory caption on one photograph in 1907.

Bristol frequently worked with the same sort of subjects as Blake and the Tafts. He was adept at taking photographs of the sorts of views that became conventional topics of postcards. He took photographs of major landmarks, including the Tucker Toll Bridge and Lawrence’s Mills, a dramatic set of falls on the Williams River a few miles northwest of the village (figure 7-24). He also took views of village scenes, including street scenes. His view of School Street was characteristic of these images. School Street is one of the main residential streets in Bellows Falls, and the photograph shows a pleasant, if unremarkable, tree-covered street (figure 7-25). On the card in the author’s collection, Nettie Howard, a domestic servant at Lovell’s Hotel (the Hotel Rockingham), wrote to her sister, Hattie Miller in Peterborough, New Hampshire, “Thought perhaps you would like this. We think it is fine.”

The Arch Bridge, a single-span arch suspension bridge connecting Bellows Falls and North Walpole was another of Bristol’s favorite topics. Bristol arrived in town at about the same time that the bridge was built in 1905. The Arch Bridge immediately became a source of community pride when it was completed. As the longest single span arch suspension bridge in

Figure 7-24. Lawrence’s Mills, R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection.
the country, it was an engineering accomplishment of which local people were tremendously
proud. The sense of accomplishment that came with the substantial engineer was increased by the
fact that building crews, wary that they had to complete the construction in the coldest part of the
winter before the ice went out of the river, erected the bridge in twenty-eight days.36 Bristol
photographed the bridge soon after it was finished (figure 7-26). Dating images is difficult
because cards had a long shelf life and usually the only dates are postmarks. This image shows ice in the river and snow on the hills in the distance. A copy of a retouched and colored version of the image in the author’s collection has a postmark of October 1905, suggesting that Bristol took the image soon after the ice went out of the river the previous March. The image had a long life: a version printed in Germany was published by the drugstore of Dodge and Gast, and in 1908, Lewis D. Rights used it to illustrate his report on the construction of the bridge in the Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers. 37 The Arch Bridge was an important, unique landmark that helped define the character of the village. Bristol photographed it repeatedly, and other photographers and postcard publishers created views of it. Its length and placement just above the dam at the beginning of the falls emphasized its sublime characteristics.

![Figure 7-27. Paper Mills, R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection](image)

The greatest examples of the technological sublime for Bristol and other postcard photographers and publishers were the mills. This was consistent with the work of the Blake and P. W. Taft. One such view is one of Bristol’s earliest views in Bellows Falls. Postmarked January 1905, the card shows the view of the mills from Westminster Street, looking north (figure 7-27). Taft had taken a view from about the same spot thirty-five years before, and Bristol’s view shows the dramatic change that had taken place since then. Taft’s photograph shows
construction, with workers laying rails, and the first mill buildings standing. The view from 1905 shows the riverbank crowded with buildings, with the smoke rising from the sulphite mill and partly obscuring Fall Mountain. Steam rises from a locomotive near the roundhouse of the Boston and Maine Railroad on the opposite side of the river. The smoke suggests that mills are bustling,
although someone familiar with the scene would be aware of the pungent odor of the sulphite mill.

Bristol took his finest view of the mills about 1907. About 1907, Bristol took another view of the mills, not from Table Rock as Taft and Blake had done, but from a spot partway up the side of the mountain (fig. 7-28). He took the photograph on a bright winter morning (Nettie Howard sent a copy of the card to her sister in February, 1907): the mills are brilliantly lit and cast strong shadows. The detail of the photograph is remarkable—when Underwood and Underwood photographed the mills a few years later, they used a lower vantage and afternoon light, resulting in a photograph that lacked contrast and definition (figure 7-29). But Bristol, familiar with the topography and sunlight in the valley, created an image that captured the mills beautifully. Bristol, familiar with the topography and sunlight in the valley, created an image that captured the mills beautifully. There is no smoke coming from the stacks, and the buildings seem particularly tidy. This image became a popular view more than just as a real photo postcard, for Valentine and Son, a large British postcard publisher reproduced it as a colored card.

Figure 7-30. Removing Drowned Houses from the Canal, R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection
Bristol took his scenic views beautifully, but they were conventional. This was the subject matter of scenic photography from the beginning, and it would remain the stock-in-trade of postcards throughout the twentieth century. These were the sorts of cards that tourists might buy as souvenirs. Bristol, however, photographed many scenes that were important purely for their local interest and that conveyed small bits of local news. For example, a scene of men pulling drowned horses from the canal while spectators watch from a livery stable is an example of the type of spectacle that was attractive to local postcard photographers (figure 7-30). The photograph illustrates a small news item, one that was interesting only on a local level. On the card in the author’s collection, Nettie Howard wrote to her sister, Hattie Miller, “These are the horses that were drowned.”

![Figure 7-31. Ruins of the Brown Block, R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection.](image)

Fires were also appealing scenes for postcards. Several major fires struck the Bellows Falls area in the time that Bristol worked in the village. On the morning of December 25, 1906, the Brown Block, a long commercial and tenement block on Canal Street, was gutted by fire. The block contained the Bellows Falls Bakery, an all-night restaurant, a fruit store, a cobbler, and the tobacconists, Exner and Holmes (figure 7-31). The fire started about the time midnight Mass at St. Charles church concluded. The *Times* reported, “The fire was witnessed by a big crowd,
Midnight Mass at St Charles church was out soon after the alarm rang and a large number of those who attended came down to see what was up.” The paper noted, “Photographs and postals of the fire were offered for sale as early as Tuesday morning,” the day of the fire.38 Bristol’s postcard, dated and marked with the time, 9:30 A. M., shows a group of people standing with bags, presumably their belongings, in front of the roofless block.

Figures 7-32a and 7-32b. Ruins of the Island House, Aug. 15, 1907. R. C. Bristol, Author's Collection.
In the early morning of August 15, 1907, the Island House burned (figures 7-32a and 7-32b). The Island House had fallen on hard times long before. The last mention of it being used as a hotel was in 1889, when the Times reported that it was open for summer business. Industry had gradually crowded around the hotel. The Vermont Farm Machine Company’s plant was built on some of the hotel’s gardens in 1888, and in 1891 Osgood and Barker’s machine shop was built directly behind the hotel. Still, the Island House was an important landmark, and a reminder of an earlier, opulent period in village history. It had been turned over to industrial uses. C. W. Osgood had bought the building in 1891. In 1907 it housed manufacturing facilities for Osgood, the printer P. H. Gobie, and the factory of Simmons, Hatch and Whitten, manufacturers of overalls.39

The Island House fire was a blow to the community of Bellows Falls because the building was a beloved landmark. The fire came at a tumultuous time, for the village had struggled through the first major strike in the paper mills. It also came at a time when there was a rising interest in local history. Lyman S. Hayes published his monumental town history in 1907, and as part of his campaign championing local history, orchestrated the restoration of the town’s eighteenth-century meetinghouse. The week after the fire, the rededication of the old meetinghouse was part of the village’s Old Home Day celebration.40 This celebration had as its aim to encourage former residents of the town to return at least for a few days of celebration, but also to encourage people to move home permanently. It was ostensibly a celebration of local history, and the Island House was an important part of that history. On a more practical level, the fire had an impact on the local economy at a time when local business leaders were worried about the health of the community. Not only did the strike threaten the economic health of the community but also the fire had an impact on four of the village’s industries. The Vermont Farm Machine Company, Barker and Osgood, and P. H. Gobie all found other quarters quickly (Gobie in the Charlie Gates’s Garage building), but the overall factory, the Times noted, “moved, bag and baggage, back to Boston.” The factory had employed between thirty and forty women, with a monthly payroll of about $2,000, “not a large amount,” noted W. C. Belknap, editor of the Times,
“but every little helps.”\textsuperscript{41} The fire contributed to the growing sense that Bellows Falls was stagnating. Belknap wrote, “Bellows Falls has long enjoyed the reputation of being one of the smartest business centers in Vermont. It still enjoys that reputation but it has not forged ahead in the last two or three years as many would like to have seen it.”\textsuperscript{42} There was empty factory space in town: a building formerly owned by the Casein Company of North America had been empty for three years. Housing construction had peaked and almost dried by 1907. Coming at a time when the village leaders and boosters were struggling to help Bellows Falls grow, the Island House fire was an unfortunate setback. To make matters worse, many in town blamed the slow response time of the understaffed volunteer fire department for the severity of the fire.

![Figure 7-33. Rockingham, Vt., After the Fire, R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection.](image)

Bristol was quick to photograph the ruins of the Island House. Early in the morning of August 15, he took photograph of spectators looking on as firemen sprayed a wall with water. Later, he took another shot, showing spectators, men in suits and hats and women in summer dresses, observing the ruins. On August 19, Nettie Howard sent a copy of this second card to her sister with a note, “thought you would like a picture of the fire.” The next day, she sent another card to her niece, Isabelle Miller with a note, “thought you would like a postal.” These postcards
suggest the importance of spectatorship, both in person—the people observing the ruins—and by proxy. The postcards were a means of spreading, or at least illustrating, the news for people who had moved away from town.

Eight months after the Island House fire, on April 13, 1908 a fire swept much of the old village of Rockingham, the old agricultural center of the town (Figure 7-33). Frances Stockwell Lovell incorrectly dated the fire to 1909 in their History of Rockingham. Called simply “Old Town,” Rockingham was a sleepy village, but still the center of much of the antiquarian interest in the town. The fire started in the village store and post office, but spread quickly, burning most of the village, about a dozen buildings, in three hours. The Times reported,

The business section of Rockingham, Old Town, dear to the hearts of many from its historical interests, and famed far and wide as a typical New England hamlet, with its cluster of ancestral homes, its rambling hotel, its ancient country store and its quaint old church, all filled with recollections of every generation since this town was first settled, is now but a memory. In the short space of three hours, it passed out of existence, swept away by the ravages of fire.

The fire spared the old meetinghouse, which was set above the main street on a hill. The Times noted that the church was “unscathed but like a jewel without its setting.” Destroyed were the store and post office, houses and barns, and a hotel owned by the Lovell family. This hotel, the Frances Lovell wrote, was once “the mecca of drovers on their long trip to Boston, herding [sic] their pigs, turkeys, cattle or sheep over the road, on foot or wing, as the case might be.”

On April 14, Bristol took a view of the ruins, which he captioned, “Rockingham, Vt. After the fire. Apr. 14, 1908.” Nettie Howard sent a copy of the card to her sister, postmarked the following day, but without a note. The card shows two chimneys with a man standing between them on the ruins of a house. Howard’s employer, Leverett T. Lovell (father-in-law of Frances), was among the people who had lost property in this fire, but she did not comment.

On March 26, 1912, the Hotel Windham burned, along with the Union and Arms commercial blocks, destroying most of the businesses on the east side of the Square (figure 7-34). This devastated the business district of the village, causing an estimated $250,000 in damage, destroying even Fuller’s pharmacy where Bristol sold his postcards. Still, Bristol was on the
scene at 6:15 in the morning to photograph the damage and fire fighters spraying the smoldering, though ice encrusted ruins of the buildings.\textsuperscript{46} This fire was a reminder of earlier fires that had destroyed buildings on the same site in the 1860s. The fire, like the Island House fire five years before had a serious economic impact on the town at an uncertain time. The economic life of the village was still stagnant, and even the paper mills, which had once been the engine of local prosperity were increasingly obsolete, compared to other mills in the International Paper Company. The hotel fire itself was a blow to the paper industry, and even warranted an article in the trade journal, \textit{The Wood Pulp and Paper Mill News}. On March 30, 1912 the journal comment, “Every traveling man visiting the paper mills at Bellows Falls always put up at Hotel Windham and will regret the disaster.”\textsuperscript{47}

![Figure 7-34. Windham House Fire, R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection](image)

The fire ultimately had a silver lining, for it brought new construction and attention to the business district of the village. At a village meeting at the beginning of April, townspeople passed resolutions vowing, “A new Bellows Falls will arise from the ashes.”\textsuperscript{48} Within two weeks, the property owners had approved plans for reconstruction—repairing the Arms Block, the least damaged of the three buildings, tearing down and replacing part of the facade of the Union Block, and rebuilding the Hotel Windham along the same lines as the old building.\textsuperscript{49}
Bristol, covering the fires, served an important journalistic role, but he also covered stories that were less dramatic than the fires. Between 1906 and 1909 he took a series of photographs of the Van Dyke log drives. One view shows the raft that carried the company’s cook shack (figure 7-35). Another shows a raft of horses, and a third shows workers breaking a log jam just below the dam (figure 7-36). These are particularly handsome cards, and capture the
log drives soon before they ended.

![Image](image1.png)  

Figure 7-37. May Belle,” R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection.

![Image](image2.png)  

Figure 7-38. “New Arch Bridge Across Canal,” R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection.

Some photographs showed even less dramatic stories. One photograph, for example, shows hotel and livery stable keeper, Leverett T. Lovell standing with a prized racehorse at his track between Bellows Falls and Rockingham Old Town. He wrote on the negative: “‘May Belle’ 2:15 ¼. Property of L. T. Lovell and Son, Bellows Falls, Vt.” (figure 7-37) This card was
also in the Nettie Howard/Hattie Miller correspondence, though Howard never addressed the card (presumably she mailed it in an envelope). She wrote, “Am going to write you in a day or two as soon as I can get time have no cook yet—all well. Write when you can and love to all, Nettie.” Similarly, in 1909, Howard sent a card to her sister showing a concrete bridge across the canal (figure 7-38). The card may have come from Bristol’s studio, but it was not up to his usual standards. The negative did not print fully, leaving an elongated white triangle on the right side of the card. The caption, probably not in Bristol’s hand, identifies the view: “New Arch Bridge Across Canal, Bellows Falls.” Howard wrote, “Here is a picture of our new bridge. Thought you mind [sic] like to see it.” The image would have been handsome if it had been printed better, but the bridge and canal are not remarkable (Bristol took a photograph of the bridge that was much better composed and printed than this other view). Again, the view is interesting more as a news item than for any esthetic reason. It allowed Nettie Howard, however, to keep her sister informed of the changes in the village.

Bristol specialized in group photographs. The library in Bellows Falls preserves photographs of workers at the scythe snath shop and the brewery on the New Hampshire side of the river. He photographed town celebrations, particularly Labor Day celebrations, fire department inspections in October, and finally musters and parades of the National Guard.

Bristol’s Labor Day photographs are remarkable in that he took the events seriously. The business leaders of the village accepted unions grudgingly at best. Lyman S. Hayes denounced them and denied that they could do any good, and W. C. Belknap tried to hide his disdain under a guise of condescending detachment, but Bristol covered the parades. In 1907 he photographed the Labor Day celebration that took place soon after the local union’s victorious fight for the eight hour day and wrote as a caption on the negative, “A bunch of winners.” The photograph was published in the Paper Makers’ Journal. He wrote, “Union Headquarters” on the negative of a photograph of the paper makers gathering in front of the Gray Block, where Bristol also had his studio. This photograph, taken in 1907 (it is undated, but shows the Island House still in ruins) shows the Paper Makers’ union at perhaps their proudest moment, basking in their recent victory.
in the strike that ended three weeks before. He published another card of the 1907 Labor Day parade captioned “Union Leaders,” showing an automobile carrying Paper Makers’ president Jeremiah T. Carey, while union members march across the arch suspension bridge from North Walpole, New Hampshire toward Rockingham Street.

![Labor Day Parade, 1908](image)

Figure 7-39. “Labor Day Parade,” 1908, R. C. Bristol. Author’s collection.

While Bristol seldom signed his work on the negative, preferring instead to print his name on the back of the card if at all, he did write his name on a negative of the 1908 Labor Day parade (figure 7-39). This photograph, taken from the Mammoth Block, looks north across the Square. The skilled paper makers stand in the foreground, dressed in white shirts and hats, as members of other unions still stand at attention, and the Grafton Cornet Band plays. The float of the “cutter girls,” young women who operated cutting machines and who had achieved a reputation of steadfastness and courage in the Paper Makers’ union, are shown entering the Square from Rockingham Street. Bristol not only covers the Labor Day parades, but his captions and compositions suggest a celebratory attitude. Bristol lived in the tenement district and seems to have identified with the workers.

After Labor Day parades, the largest village celebrations were town fairs, held in October. These evolved out of fire department demonstrations and competitions. Before 1910,
the village’s three hose companies had annually for races and to test their equipment. In the aftermath of the Island House fire the village reorganized the fire department and stopped hosting competitions. In 1910, the town started what became ostensibly a harvest festival (figure 7-40). The parade for the Bellows Falls Fair still included a procession of fire equipment but now also included agricultural displays. In 1912, the _Times_ noted, “Street fair day has come to mean much more to the people than mere exhibits, it is readily an old home day for the people of Vermont and New Hampshire who use Bellows Falls as a trading center. It is a day where the town and country folk commingle and exchange views and incidentally view the products of the farm. . . .”51 Through the 1910s, the annual fairs became increasingly elaborate, with floats and horribles, and in 1912, a “grand automobile and general parade.”52

Bristol attended the fairs, when they were firemen’s days and later street fairs when they were street fairs. They gave Bristol ample material, and the buildings in the Square gave him a good vantage from which to photograph the parades and demonstrations of the fire equipment.
The most striking images show crowds in the Square, but Bristol also photographed many of the
details of the fair, particularly carriages, floats, and “horribles.” One photograph, for example,
shows a man wearing a dress, with blackface makeup, pulling a child in a cart behind his bicycle
(figure 7-41). Another shows “Shorty” Smith, the tallest man in town, dressed in top hat and
livery coat, standing in front of a Moxie float—a carriage with a large Moxie bottle behind the
seat—with a girl sitting on the seat of the carriage (figure 7-42). A later photograph shows Smith
dressed as Uncle Sam standing beside a group of girls dressed in white and holding a large
American flag, doubtless part of the Americanization and Preparedness campaigns after 1914.

Bristol’s career in Bellows Falls spanned the period between 1905 and WWI. He
documented the local Company E of the Vermont National Guard. Founded in 1906, the
company was housed in an armory that stood on the brow of the hill above the mills, between
industrialists’ houses. In 1909, Bristol photographed Company E training at Barber Park (the
streetcar park near the village of Saxtons River), and in 1916 and 1918, he photographed soldiers,
first leaving for Mexico and later to fight in WWI. His photographs of soldiers leaving capture
important moments in the town’s history. One photograph, showing crowds of people waving
small American flags and surrounding the troops as they march in the parade captures the patriotic and pro-military spirit of the town better than blatant patriotic imagery would (figure 7-43). Bristol focused not on the bunting on the Hotel Windham, or on the flags flying from buildings on the opposite side of the Square, but on the soldiers and their friends and family. Similarly his postcard of civilians crowding the railroad platform captures the anxious excitement of the scene. A photograph of recruits, still dressed in civilian clothes, in April 1918, also captures the nervous anticipation of the soldiers. Bristol took the photograph from a low angle, looking up at the men and capturing the American and service flags flying from the second story windows on the Hotel Windham (figure 7-44). The ragtag look of the men is an interesting aspect of the photograph: a young man in a three-piece suit and fedora looks at the camera while
a man in a suit but with a cap and loosened tie looks to the side, as does another man in a suit and sweater and felt hat. Behind him a man in an ill-fitting jacket, cap, and with his belongings tied in a bundle rather than in a suitcase looks behind at three men talking to a police officer. This photograph is one of Bristol’s last photographs in Bellows Falls, for soon he would move to Boston. Like Taft in the 1860s, Bristol captured the town at an important transitional period. Bristol could not have known the extent of the impact of WWI on Bellows Falls, but his photograph of the recruits waiting to be mustered into the army captures the anticipation of great changes, perhaps not on a town level, but at least on a personal level for the recruits.

Figure 7-43. Company E Leaving for Mexico. R. C. Bristol. Author’s Collection.

Bristol’s postcards were remarkable for the ways in which they captured the sense of place in early twentieth-century Bellows Falls. All three of the village’s major view photographers captured important views of the village and surrounding area, but Bristol’s common touch was particularly noteworthy. This was partly a function of the medium: the clientele for postcards were generally, according to Robert Bogdan and Todd Weseloh, “ordinary citizens with disposable income. …”53 The clientele for real photo postcards tended to include few “cultural elites and the very rich. …”54 Despite his skills, Bristol did not claim to be an artist
like his predecessors. Blake and the Tafts had worked carefully to document and catalogue important landmarks, dramatic scenery, and the appearance of the village. They worked like the promoters of local history, attempting to define a sense of place. Blake particularly attempted to show the village in an idealized way. Bristol was less formal and more direct and timely. If he still created iconic images of the landmarks, he also captured views of the shared experiences that Jackson argued were at the heart of a sense of place.\footnote{The Tafts and Blake also captured the shared environment that had deep sentimental attachments, but the liveliness, and newsy and ephemeral qualities of Bristol’s photographs got closer to the vernacular appreciation of the landscape than did the work of his more formal forebears. Jackson argues that sense of place comes not from the environment simply but by people’s actions within the environment.\footnote{This portrayal of a place as a setting for shared experiences was precisely the sort of work at which Bristol excelled.}} The heyday of real photo cards in Bellows Falls was brief, lasting roughly the decade between 1905 and 1915. Bristol was the only major creator of real photo postcards in the village, and he seems to have left by the end of World War I. There were still many cards available, but

Figure 7-44. April 2, 1918, R. C. Bristol. Rockingham Free Public Library.
they were the colorful, mass-produced cards of major postcard publishers. Bristol competed with commercially printed, colored cards from the start. A. H. Fuller’s pharmacy, which sold Bristol’s cards, also sold these colored cards. Before 1905, Fuller sold “Private Mailing Cards,” the predecessor of modern postcards. These cards covered the same general topics as the real photo cards, but without Bristol’s journalistic interest. Published postcards had to be general enough that they could be printed in large quantities and have a long shelf life. They covered the main scenic attractions, landmarks, and other village views. The cards lacked the immediacy of real photo cards, instead giving an idealized view of the village. Still, they captured important parts of town in a colorful and frequently beautiful way.

The cards’ subjects were conventional. River scenes, showing the falls and the various bridges were common. The Tucker Toll Bridge remained a popular subject. For example, Valentine and Sons published a card showing the bridge, the Boston and Maine Railroad Bridge and the falls at high water, and other publishers printed similar images (figure 7-45). Similarly, the Arch Bridge was a common subject. The Detroit Publishing Company published a view of the bridge, looking up from dam, in 1907. Another publisher printed a particularly handsome card of the bridge, perhaps retouched from one of Bristol’s views, looking straight across the road.
toward New Hampshire (figure 7-46).

Postcard publishers also printed cards showing a variety of street scenes, similar to Bristol’s view of School Street. Many of these were probably based on Bristol’s photographs. Finally, the Square was the subject of many cards. The Windham Hotel, Town Hall, and Suter Block on the south end of the Square were all popular. The Square had one unique feature that
was also the subject of postcards: the Forty-Four Steps (figure 7-47). Because Bellows Falls was built on a series of terraces, the ascent from one level to the next could be quite steep. By the first decade of the twentieth century there were flights of stairs from the Square to the end of School Street, from Hapgood Place to Old Terrace, and from School Street to New Terrace. The Forty-Four Steps were the steps from the Square to School Street.

Franklin

By the time postcards became popular in about 1905, Bellows Falls had about a forty-year history of photography. The Tafts, Blake, and Bristol were remarkably skilled, and residents of as well as visitors to the village were eager patrons of their work. The popularity of photographs of local subjects suggests a remarkable local pride. View photographers in Franklin worked in Franklin from the 1850s onward, far fewer of their photographs survive. The Franklin Public library preserves photographs of the boarding house owned by the Crane family of paper makers, and another of Jeremiah T. Daniell, the paper manufacturer who died in 1864. In 1892, the Franklin Transcript referred to a photograph of “Paper Mill Village” taken in 1856. The Franklin Public Library preserves an early view of the mill (figure 7-48). Finally, the library preserves a later copy of a daguerreotype of the Old Stone Mill, the hosiery mill that burned in the 1850s. The photograph shows a black ribbon around the smokestack, hung by George Nesmith on the occasion of the death of his friend, Daniel Webster (figure 7-49).

By the 1870s, stereographic photographers worked in the town. In the middle of the decade B. N. Poor worked in the old village of Franklin (later called West Franklin). Franklin had fewer landmarks than Bellows Falls. The major subjects for stereographs were the Daniel Webster Homestead and his Elms Farm, which by the 1870s was the New Hampshire Orphans’ Home (figures 7-50a and 7-50b), the headwaters of the Merrimack River, street scenes, particularly Central Street in Franklin Falls but also Main Street in West Franklin, and finally mills. Of the mills the Sulloway hosiery mill was the most popular subject, even though the building in the 1870s was fairly small (figure 7-51a). Photographs of the paper mills are more
rare, although C. M. Couch, a photographer of stereographs, photographed the “upper” paper mill, or the old Fisher-Aiken mill (figure 7-51b) and the ruins the old Daniell Mill after it burned in July 1872. B. N. Poor was a local stereographic photographer, but Franklin, only about twenty miles north of Concord, was within the working range of photographers from Concord. By the 1870s, the major photographer making stereographs in Franklin was W. H. Kimball. Kimball lived in Franklin during the 1860s, and served the town in the state legislature, but by 1867 lived in Concord, where he served as state librarian. Kimball photographed the Webster Birthplace and Orphans’ home. By the 1870s, Nesmith and others recognized that the statesman’s birthplace had been incorporated into a larger farmhouse. Kimball made at least a couple of views of the farmhouse, and the wing that was the birthplace. He also made a series of views of the Elms Farm house, where the Webster family had moved in the 1790s. Kimball’s photographs are of high quality, but he was not as prolific in Franklin at least as P. W. Taft was in Bellows Falls.

Figure 7-48. Daniell Dam and Paper Mill. Franklin Public Library

Photographers in Franklin were not nearly as well documented as those in Bellows Falls. Dating photographs and identifying photographers is difficult. The *Merrimack Journal* and *Franklin Transcript* seldom reported on photography. A notable exception was James B. Warren.
In 1890, the *Franklin Transcript* reported that he had taken views of the new sulphite paper mill. The Franklin Public Library preserves copies of several of these (figure 7-52).

Figure 7-49. Stone Mill, 1852. Franklin Public Library.

Figure 7-50a. Daniel Webster Birthplace, W. H. Kimball. Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-50b. New Hampshire Orphan’s Home. H. A. Kimball, stereograph. Author’s collection.
Figure 7-51a. The Sulloway Hosiery Mill and Daniell Paper Mill. Franklin Public Library.

Figure 7-51b. The Fisher-Aiken Paper Mill, C. M. Couch. Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-52. Sulphite Paper Mill, J. B. Warren, 1890. Franklin Public Library.
By 1906, a real photo postcard photographer worked in Franklin. The photographer never signed his work, as Bristol did in Bellows Falls, nor was he as skilled as Bristol. His penmanship not as tidy as Bristol’s, but it was still distinctive. The cards were of conventional topics: he did not have Bristol’s flare for news. He made postcards of Central Street in Franklin Falls generally (figure 7-53), but specifically churches, hotels, the Carnegie library and town hall (figure 7-54), the confluence of the Pemigewasset and Winnipesaukee, and the Webster
birthplace. The images lacked flare, perhaps, but they were popular and were even retouched and reprinted by large publishers. His view of Central Street, for example, was colorized and published by Hugh C. Leighton. Similarly, a view of the Odell Hotel and another of the Island and Odell Park were published by Frank Swallow of Exeter, New Hampshire.

Figure 7-55. “Daniel Webster Birthplace, Franklin, N. H.,” Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-56. The Odell. Author’s Collection.
As in Bellows Falls, colored postcards were very popular in Franklin by 1907, and major publishers covered the city eagerly. The Webster Birthplace was by far the most popular subject because it was the main reason tourists visited the city. Early postcards show it in its unrestored condition, but many views were published after it was restored in 1911 (figure 7-55). The Odell Hotel (it regained its old name, the “Daniel Webster Inn,” when the proprietor, Herman Odell died, about 1909) was a popular stop for tourists traveling to and from the White Mountains, and that also naturally was a popular topic for postcards (figure 7-56). Franklin did not have a vista like the one Fall Mountain provided, but a view from Cemetery Hill, rising from the point of land between the Winnipesaukee and Pemigewasset Rivers, afforded a view of much of Franklin Falls (figure 7-59). Publishers favored street views, particularly of Main Street in West Franklin and Central Street in Franklin Falls. Public buildings, especially churches, the high school and town hall were popular subjects. Even the publishers that were not local—for example, Frank Swallow in Exeter, N. H. or Hugh C. Leighton in Portland, Maine—tried to capture local color beyond significant buildings. For example, after 1907 Leighton published a card showing men seining in the Winnipesaukee River near the Solloway hosiery mill (figure 7-57).

Figure 7-57. “Fishing in the Winnipesaukee River at Franklin, N. H.,” Author’s Collection.
Industrial views were as popular in Franklin as they were in Bellows Falls, but views of the paper mills were rare. Publishers chose instead to print cards of the Sulloway hosiery mill and the Franklin Mills of the M. T. Stevens Company (figures 7-58 and 7-59). Views along the Winnipesaukee River occasionally show a small part of the Winnipesaukee Paper Company’s Paper Mill B, but cards showing the façade of the mill do not appear to exist; nor do views of the paper and pulp mills upstream from Paper Mill B. The postcards show Franklin as a textile town, like industrial centers downstream on the Merrimack. By the time postcards became popular, the paper mills were on the decline. Paper Mill C, the old Daniell Mill, shutdown in 1908. Moreover much of the local plant was not visible to visitors. Still, surviving photographs show that the mills were easy to photograph, and Paper Mill B was an important part of the Central Street streetscape.

Photographers worked in Franklin as early as they did in Bellows Falls, although they did not work with the same thoroughness and artistry. No one in Franklin had the eye of P. W. Taft or F. J. Blake. While there are many photographs of street scenes, and even industrial sites, these photographs do not show the same fascination with the sublime—natural or technological—as the work of the photographers in Bellows Falls. Photographers were interested in the sorts of subjects that appealed to travelers, notably the headwaters of the Merrimack and Daniel Webster’s birthplace. When postcards became popular in the first decade of the twentieth century, Franklin was well covered, but no one had the journalistic spirit of an R. C. Bristol. Cards such as the one of men fishing in the Winnipesaukee are rare: postcard publishers focused almost entirely on landscapes and photographs of buildings. Moreover, although the paper industry remained the dominant industry before the twentieth century, it is poorly covered with popular photographs. Franklin lacked the vistas that Bellows Falls had: there is no equivalent of Fall Mountain; the falls are an extended series of rapids. Topography simply did not allow photographers to capture views of Franklin that had the same drama as photographs of Bellows Falls. Even the headwaters of the Merrimack were hidden “behind Warren Daniell’s barn,” as the Franklin Transcript put it. But Franklin also lacked photographers with the same enterprising
spirit as those in Bellows Falls.

Figure 7-58. “Sulloways Mills.” Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-59. “Franklin Mills.” Author’s Collection.
Photographers came late to Turners Falls. The falls had been recognized for their beauty at least since Edward Hitchcock had described them in the 1820s, but there was no village around the falls until the late 1860s. Several photographers in nearby Greenfield worked in stereographs, but stereographs of Turners Falls are rare. Between 1888 and 1894 Turners Falls was home to A. W. Howes and Company. The company consisted of three brothers, Alvah, Walter, and George Howes. Originally from Ashfield, Massachusetts, they lived peripatetic lives until finally settling in Turners Falls. The village was only a base from which they worked, and relatively little of their outdoor photography was of Turners Falls. Although thousands of their negatives survive, only a handful of the images are of subjects in the village. Many of the Howes’s photographs are of people at home or work (figure 7-60). The Howes Brothers took view photographs in Turners Falls, for the newspapers occasionally mentioned them. For example, soon after they opened their studio in Turners Falls, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier, reported, “Howe [sic] Brothers, our new artists, have taken a great many out-door pictures. Those of the Falls during high water are exceedingly good.” The Ashfield, Massachusetts Historical Society preserves more than 21,000 of the Howes’s photographs, but these early view photographs do not appear in it. The Howes continued in Turners Falls until 1894, when their company failed. When the brothers started to work again in 1896, they worked out of Ashfield.

Postcards enjoyed the same popularity in Turners Falls as they did in Bellows Falls and Franklin. As with Franklin, however, real photo cards are rare. Postcards of the Montague and Keith Mills were particularly popular. In Turners Falls, as in Bellows Falls, there was one set of falls and the mills were lined up neatly along the riverbanks, and the International Paper Company mill was the northernmost of these, directly at the end of the dam across the falls. The falls were the greatest attraction of Turners Falls. The best vantage to view them was from the spot on the Gill side suggested by Edward Hitchcock (figures 7-61a and 7-61b). Photographers could not take pictures from this spot without including at least the Montague mill, if not the Cutlery as well.
Views along the riverbed were the most dramatic. The Montague Mill, rising several stories above the river and following the right angle curve of the river, was a dramatic sight from the ground. One view shows rivermen breaking a logjam below the dam, with mill rising above them (figure 7-62a). A view looking north from below the Lower Suspension Bridge, was similarly dramatic (figure 7-62b). Finally, another viewpoint for the mills was across the power canal. The mills were on a thin strip of land between the canal and the river. The view from the river was more dramatic, but the canal gave a long perspective. A real photo postcard published before 1907 looks north to the Keith Paper Company (figure 7-63a). Another postcard looks south along the canal and parallel railroad siding toward the Russell Cutlery and Keith mill (figure 7-63b).

Many of the postcards in Turners Falls are conventional images of street scenes and public buildings. The cards do, however, convey local color. The village’s two suspension
bridges were popular subjects, as was Avenue A, the central business district. For example, one image of Avenue A shows a group of children in the foreground, with the tree-lined street and commercial blocks behind (figure 7-64a) Publishers found picturesque spots, including Prospect Street, overlooking the dam, upper suspension bridge, and village of Riverside. Factory Hollow, on Falls River in Greenfield, was a popular view, with the ruins of the Russell Woolen Mill (figure 7-64b). Factory Hollow was the first industrial development at Turners Falls. The Nathaniel and Francis Russell (who were younger brothers of John Russell of the Cutlery Factory) operated a textile mill north of the Connecticut River between the 1820s and the 1860s. After the Civil War, the buildings went to ruin, and the spot became a picturesque spot with sentimental associations.

The popularity of postcards peaked between 1905 and 1915. By the beginning of World War I, the golden age of the medium had passed. The Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act of 1909 imposed duties on imported printed materials. This, combined with the beginning of the war, cut off the supply of high-quality colored cards printed in Germany. Domestic publishers, such as Frank Swallow, took up some of the slack, but the American cards published after World War I lacked the beauty and charm of their pre-war German predecessors. Moreover, in Bellows Falls, Turners Falls, and Franklin, the communities themselves declined after the war. By the time the war was over, the days of real photo had passed. Certainly, postcards still portrayed newsworthy events, notably the floods of November 1927 and March 1936, but the days of local scenic photography had passed. Between about 1870 and 1915, however, the photographs captured not only an active interest in the landscape and built environment of the paper towns. They suggest a lively appreciation of the communities, of newsworthy or even mundane events, important or commonplace settings, and landmarks, some of which had little appeal beyond the purely local.
Figure 7-62a. “The Rapids, Turner's [sic] Falls, Mass.” Author’s Collection

Figure 7-62b. “Turners Falls Dam.” Author’s Collection.
Figure 7-63a. Keith Paper Mill. Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-63b. “Along the Tracks, Turners Falls, Mass.” Author’s Collection.
Figure 7-64a. “Log Jam at Turners Falls, Mass.” Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-64b. “Lower Suspension Bridge.” Author’s Collection.
Figure 7-65a. “Main Street, Turners Falls, Mass.” [Avenue A]. Author’s Collection.

Figure 7-65b. “Old Stone Mill, Turner’s Falls, Mass.” Author’s Collection.
NOTES

1 Jackson, 160.


3 Hayes, History of Rockingham, 767.

4 "Local Matters," BFT, March 29, 1878, p. 2.

5 Child, 480.

6 "Local Matters," BFT, February 16, 1877, p. 2.


8 "The Eddy Exhibition," BFT, April 8, 1870, p. 2.

9 "Local Matters," BFT, March 27, 1874, p. 2.


12 "Local Matters," BFT, July 26, 1878, p. 2.


14 Hayes (1907), 602.


16 "Local Matters," BFT, June 26, 1874, p. 2.

17 "Local Matters," BFT, Jan. 7, 1876, p. 2.

18 "Local Matters," BFT, Jan. 28, 1876, p. 2.


20 "Local Matters," BFT, Sept. 4, 1877, p. 2.


30 Ibid.

31 "News of Great Storm," BFT, March 15, 1888, p. 2

32 Ibid.

33 Lovell, 102.

34 Vital records, Bellows Falls, VT.

35 "B. F. News," BFT, March 27, 1907, p. 4.

36 Rights, Lewis D. “Erection of the Bellows Falls Arch Bridge.” *Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers* 61, (1908): 266.

37 Rights, plate 37.


43 Lovell, 262.


45 Ibid.


“Large Force of Men Start Rebuilding. Work of Reconstruction Underway at Fire Area--Hotel to be on Same Lines as Old--Part of Union Building to Come Down--Arms Block to be repaired,” BFT, April 18, 1912, p. 1.


Bogdan, 3.

Ibid., 4.

Jackson, 158.

Jackson, 160.

Bogdan, 14.

FT, April 8, 1892, p. 1.


“No Danger of Disaster,” FT, June 14, 1889, p. 1.

Howes, xiii.


Howes, xiii.

Bogdan and Weseloh, 14.
CHAPTER 8
ROWDYISM AND VIOLENCE

Rowdyism, drunkenness, and violence always troubled the paper towns. There is little indication that problems were more severe than in other industrial towns of similar size and social makeup, but the towns had enough problems to raise concerns. Community leaders in all the towns hoped their communities would grow and continue to prosper, and for this to happen the communities had to present a respectable face to the world. At the same, these leaders hoped that the communities would be pleasant places to live. Because of this, rowdyism and violence were a persistent source of anxiety. In 1870, the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* summed up the anxiety concisely, noting, “The liquor drinking and rowdyism incident to a new settlement and so large a proportion of the foreign element, are the only drawbacks to the prosperity of Turners Falls. …”

Newspaper editors were seldom overtly nativist, yet there was frequently an ethnic aspect to reports of disorder. To a point drunkenness and rowdyism were to be expected, and newspaper editors generally seemed to take the problems in stride, but as the villages grew, village leaders and local police tried increasingly to enforce alcohol laws and crack down on the problems. Town elites always treated rowdyism simply as a local problem, and one that could be controlled. The arrival of Polish immigrants beginning about 1890 increased anxieties. Generally, newspapers reported problems as individual incidents. Sometimes they reported incidents as ethnic problems, but they seldom reported them as problems of specific social classes.

Social class was a factor in rowdyism and drunkenness, although the newspapers were more inclined to report incidents as aspects of ethnic communities. The elite and middle class did not generally (if ever) get arrested for drunkenness or disorderly conducted. Occasionally, especially in Bellows Falls, police raided hotels and restaurants that catered to the elite. Newspaper reporters were eager not to portray workers as troublemakers, and took pains to
differentiate the sober and industrious workers from the troublemakers, what Roscoe Collins in Franklin called “mill skunks.” Collins complained of these mill skunks but he was careful to distinguish them from “Most of the operatives in the various mills [who] are respectable, well-behaved people. …”2 If drinking and rowdyism were parts of working class life so was temperance. Organizations like the Father Mathew Society were also part of working class life, as were healthy leisure activities, particularly sports.

Bellows Falls

A. N. Swain, editor of the Bellows Falls Times, was generally sympathetic with the village’s ethnic population. Indeed, after the Irish famine of 1879 Swain chaired the local Irish Relief Club.3 Still, when the village had problems with noise and drunkenness, he noted the ethnicity of the troublemakers. Sometimes he did this humorously. For example, in May 1869, the Times reported, “Several Irishmen, after due preparation with liquor, engaged in a pastime of light and heavy skirmishing on Monday, during which Jack Bohen was rolled down the bank south of Mammoth block, making good cylinder time. Capt. Taylor interfered with their pleasures, and broke them up. No severe wounds reported.”4 Further, in 1870, the Times reported an incident that appeared to be a “charivari,” a mock serenade celebrating a wedding. The Times reported under the headline, “Irish”:

On Sunday night a crowd of Irish collected at Mr. Corbally’s residence, as they said to give an “ould countrhy” serenade, supplied with old pans and stove pipe, commencing performance with the most hideous noises and groans, and then called for liquor. We understand that the bride handsomely and firmly informed them that she recognized no such actions, and soon after Capt. Taylor appeared when they all scattered like chaff. He however, made a grab and caught one which greatly accelerated the speed of the others, and there was no further disturbance.5

The occasion for this serenade was the marriage of Corbally’s daughter, Rosanna, to carriage painter, Barney Cannon.6

Noise was a persistent problem, but sometimes the disorder was more troubling, as drunkenness led to violence. In September 1871, for example, the Bellows Falls Times reported a
“Rum Riot and A Splendid Rum Row” that were started by John S. “Shoe Fly” Shufelt and Dennis Corrine. In April, 1872, the Times reported, “A Beautiful (?) Rum Riot occurred in the street on Fast Day, and was brought to a head at the depot, by James Higgins who threw a stone at and knocked down Patrick Kane, severely wounding him in the head.” Here, Swain showed restraint. The paper did not need to point out that the names of the combatants were Irish. Similarly, in 1874, the Times reported, “David Lynch overloaded with rum made an assault on James Cray, in one of the barber’s saloons.” Again, the Times refrained from pointing out the obvious fact that Lynch and Cray were Irish.

Stories of the effects of alcohol were common in the Times throughout the entire period of this study. Swain, like the editors in the other towns, was terse in reporting local news. He needed to report few details for a local readership. In January 1876, Swain reported vaguely that a young man had gone on a rampage on the terrace above the village, and that he was “crazed with rum.” As he did with stories of accidents, sometimes Swain used a humorous tone to report the stories. In March 1876, he reported,

Tuesday evening there was something of a rum riot, in which considerable free fighting and mauling are reported. Bat Ready was arrested and placed in the lockup for the night for safe keeping, and Wednesday morning he was fined $8 and costs, amounting to some $16, for drunkenness and disturbing the peace. He also disclosed on Brown & Griswold, as the place where he got his liquor and there were fined $10 and costs.

The stories of rum riots and drunks being given hefty fines did not hide the concern the paper had not only with the comfort of townspeople who wanted to be able to sleep undisturbed, but also with the safety of the village. In 1873, Swain complained,

We regret today that within the past few weeks there has seemed to be an increase of drunkenness, in this place, and if continued will certainly need the corrective power of law to suppress the nuisance. It is said that during a recent cold night the tunnel was half full of debauched whiskey drinkers, and had a train come along at that time, that even would have been swamped in the fumes of the … intoxicating liquors.

The railroad tunnel in Bellows Falls is one of the village’s important features, for the mainline of the Vermont Valley and eventually the Boston and Maine went under the village square (as it still does). This was a perpetual safety concern, for people or horses that might be caught in the
tunnel with an approaching train, or even because the sound of the trains occasionally frightened horses in the Square. In August 1880, the *Times* reported, “There came near being a tragedy in the Tunnel Tuesday afternoon where a man was found on the track in a drunken stupor and picked off a few moments before the arrival of a passing train.”

The *Times* increasingly railed against rowdyism through the 1880s. The problem areas in Bellows Falls were near the tenements on Atkinson Street at the north end of the village and in the Square, including Canal and Bridge Streets. The problem was frustrating, for the village seemed incapable of stopping violence and the annoyances of rowdies. The paper printed stories of fights and drunkenness, as well as the arrests and fines, but the work of the police and municipal court could not stop the rowdiness.

Of particular concern was rowdyism in public halls. In June, 1885, the *Times* complained, “Those who visited Union hall, Tuesday evening, were subjected to much annoyance before the entertainment began on account of deafening and almost continuous noise for half an hour and many of them asked the question whether something cannot be done tending to stop this disturbance at almost every entertainment.” In October 1888 the *Times* published a letter to the editor from a correspondent who signed himself or herself “Tax Payer.” The correspondent wrote, “Will you call attention to the disgraceful proceedings that occur in our streets every Sunday. All church goers, especially ladies, that pass through the Square are grossly insulted with indecent talk, rude comments, and the like. Rioting and drunken people are frequently seen. Will the cold weather freeze them out? Have we no remedy?”

F. H. Brown, in one of his first editorials after buying the paper from A. N. Swain, commented, “What is the matter with our police? Or rather what is the matter with our Bailiffs? Some one is surely not “all right.” … Will you see to it at once Mr. Bailiffs, that the disgraceful fights, that occur in the vicinity of the square Saturday night and Sundays be stopped. The communication elsewhere voices the sentiment of our people.” Community leaders ultimately could do little to control rowdyism. They could, however, work to enforce liquor laws.

While liquor was illegal in Bellows Falls, frequently it was not across the river in North
Walpole, N. H. To complicate matters, Walpole, N. H. was home to a brewery, called (in 1885 at least) the Bellows Falls Brewing Company and owned by the firm of Walker, Dewey, and Blake. Both Edson Dewey and Charles M. Blake were residents of Bellows Falls, as were Blake’s brother, John and Walter (photographer Frederick J. Blake was another brother). Its business office was in Boston, and it made beer primarily for that market, but occasionally the beer found its way to Bellows Falls.

The newspaper did not criticize the brewery, and the campaigns against alcohol were waged apparently disconnected from concern over its manufacture. Through the 1880s, police in the village of Bellows Falls and the town of Walpole, New Hampshire increasingly tried to control the sale and consumption of alcohol. In September 1880, the *Times* reported a raid that resulted in hefty fines: “The result of the liquor raid appears to be that one or two have been fined $50 or $75, for first offenses, and two or three others are held for appearance at court in bonds of $300 to $400.” Bellows Falls, however, was not the major source of the problem. Vermont had passed a prohibition law in the 1850s, and while it was only loosely enforced, it provided the framework for local enforcement. The law provided for town agents who had the authority to sell liquor for medicinal purposes. It would not be until 1903 that this law was repealed and replaced with local option licenses. The “rum holes of North Walpole,” however, were more troubling. New Hampshire did not have a prohibition law, and Walpole usually voted to license liquor and beer sellers. Still, unlicensed bars in North Walpole kept the police busy. The *Times* reported the various raids through the 1880s and 1890s. In 1882, the *Times* reported a raid on the “rum holes” in the same column that it announced a performance of “Ten Nights in a Barroom by the Sons of Temperance.”

In September 1887, Bellows Falls police raided several restaurants and saloons, arresting a Michael Murphy, owner of a saloon on Canal Street, George Hazelton, of Walter G. Blake’s restaurant on Bridge, and William Crowley, proprietor of the Island House and a “scientific boxer and notorious hard-hitting aspirant for pugilistic honors,” as the *Times* had put it in 1882. The fines were hefty, amounting to $114.50 each. The paper reported, “The liquor seized amounted
to some 60 gallons of all sorts, and town agent Amos Holmes adjudging it all unfit for medical use, it was forfeited and poured upon the ground last evening.” In this case, the raid was emphatically not an ethnic issue. Murphy and Crowley were both of Irish background, but Hazelton was not. Moreover their clientele was not necessarily working class. The Island House was on the decline. No longer an elite summer hotel, it was in its last days as a hotel, and would close after the summer season in 1889.

The raids in Bellows Falls hit even respectable businesses, but more colorful were those in North Walpole. By 1891, as raids on illegal bars increased, the same names began appearing repeatedly in the Times’s police log. In August 1891, the Times reported in a front-page story under the headline, “Liquor Raid. North Walpole Favored by a visit from the Officers”:

Again have the North Walpole liquor sellers come to grief. Last Monday Sheriff Perry, assisted by deputies W. S. Tuttle, S. O. Gates and J. H. Heald, visited the village and raided the places of Fred C. Doolittle, Emil Exner, John O’Connor, W. L. Crowley and one Brennan. Whiskey was found at Doolittle’s, Exner’s and O’Connor’s, but nothing but beer at Crowley’s and Brennan’s. Brennan was on this side of the river and the officers failed to secure him. The offenders were taken before Justice Holmes and Doolittle was fined $50 and costs amounting to $68.06. This time he plead guilty to keeping five gallons of spiritous liquors for sale.

Emil Exner was arraigned on a similar charge and plead not guilty, but the evidence of the officers was too strong for him and he retracted his plea and plead guilty. He is an old offender and was fined $50 and costs, amounting to $67.02. John O’Connor pled guilty to keeping ten gallons of ale and was fined ten dollars and costs, amounting to $14.02. The raid was as effective as any recently made by the officers.

Crowley, of course had been arrested before, although by 1890 he was respectable enough that he was visited by Warren F. Daniell of Franklin, N. H. when the industrialist made a campaign stop when was running for Congress. Emil Exner would become a respectable businessman in Bellows Falls, buying a large commercial block on Canal Street, where he kept a tobacconist’s shop. Crowley, Exner, and Doolittle either were or would be repeat offenders, and in the next raid in the North Walpole in December 1891, Exner and Doolittle were charged again, as was William Crowley’s brother, Dennis. The Times recognized that these raids would do little. The paper noted, “The revenues of a business which will stand such a drain for fines. But still the business keeps on and the golden stream flows across the big bridge unceasingly.”
kept flowing and the raids kept happening. In April 1892, the *Times* reported that police had raided two bars twice in ten days. Bartholomew Kiniry, one of North Walpole’s leading citizens, owned one of the places. Police arrested two people for selling liquor, one named Michael Monnihan and the other named Conners. The other place was owned by two men named Burnett and Costello, who were both arrested. Finally, in August 1893, the North Walpole police scored a minor victory, when they raided a saloon owned by Dennis Brennan. In two raids, the police recovered about fifty bottles of liquor that had been hidden in a wall. The paper reported that the raid had finally driven Brennan out of business: “Mr. Brennan, along with several others, has concluded that the liquor business is not profitable in North Walpole. The fines come with such regularity that both profit and capital are swallowed up by the courts, and for this reason he has consented to become a blue ribbon man, in practice at least.”

These accounts of liquor raids have a note of exasperated humor. Community leaders had little reason to hope that the raids would actually stop illegal selling of alcohol. The police might be able to put saloons out of business, but the *Times* was skeptical that the even successful raids would stem the flow of alcohol. Certainly, there was an element of social control to this—employers and community leaders wanted a sober, hard-working workforce—but there were also real concerns with community safety.

By the 1890s, community leaders in Bellows Falls worried about the influx of “new immigrants,” which in Bellows Falls included Germans, Greeks, Italians, Hungarians, and most important, Polish. These new immigrants seemed particularly exotic, and the newspaper editors greeted them with suspicion and confusion. Hungarian immigrants, particularly, confused the local reporter. In 1893, the *Times* referred to a “Hungarian with an unpronounceable name.” In November, 1892, when two workers got in a fight in the Fall Mountain Paper Company plant, the *Times* named the aggressor and identified the victim only as “a Hungarian”:

Pat Reil got into a discussion with a Hungarian at the Fall Mountain mills Saturday morning and hit him with a heavy lead weight, rendering him unconscious for a time. Reil left town immediately after the assault. A few days before he threw a hatchet at one of the other workmen and narrowly escaped hitting a cutter girl. Such characters are
becoming alarmingly numerous.\textsuperscript{26}

The week ending November 10, 1892 was particularly dangerous, for the Times reported a second fight, between Stephen Defonko and Frank Miller. Defonko struck Miller with a “spade, cutting one ear in two and quite a gash in his cheek.” The Times noted, “Defonko is a quarrelsome fellow and had been trying to pick a fight for several days.”\textsuperscript{27} These assaults were troubling and suggested ethnic tensions in the mills. The Times reported them seriously.

A. W. Emerson, who published in the early 1890s after Swain retired, did not shy away from publishing articles with ethnic stereotypes and sarcastic tones, particularly in covering the village’s newest immigrants. In February 1893, for example, the Times reported, “Two Germans got into a fight at the depot Sunday night and one of them was so severely punished that he had to be carried home. Monday he had the other combatant arrested for assault, and a fine of $3 was imposed. A keg of beer, looked at too frequently, caused the trouble.”\textsuperscript{28}

In August 1894, Italian immigrants were among the newest of the immigrants to arrive, although they never formed a large group. They found work in construction, particularly in masonry and excavation, but also as green grocers. The Times found humor in a group of Italians carrying kegs of beer from the brewery through the streets of the village:

An Italian relay race was an interesting scene on Westminster street yesterday. Two of them had been over to the brewery and got two kegs of beer on a wheelbarrow. They were anxious to get through the square as fast as possible and had members of their gang stationed along the street at short intervals to relieve the man who was doing the pushing. As they passed the Arms block the workmen greeted the Dagoes with a thirsty yell, and the way those Italians trundled their load past the men and up the hill was a caution, there being three changes in the motive power without losing a step.\textsuperscript{29}

The editor presented these stories partly for entertainment. Certainly, they suggested threats to social order and peacefulness in the village, but they were also supposed to be funny. Occasionally editors complained of “dull times” for local news, and in one case confessed that the local news had been “manufactured by the yard” to fill space.\textsuperscript{30} In the summer of 1893, as the country settled into an economic depression, the editor of the Bellows Falls Times complained that the “stagnation of business... [was] nothing compared with the reporter’s trade at the present time.” In the same column, the paper published a story lampooning the usual stories of fights and
ethnic tensions:

I saw a dog fight in the square last week that attracted quite a crowd. The dogs discussed the tariff question in several languages and were having an exciting time without any interference from the men who were looking on. Finally a lady marched out into the street and with several well directed kicks and cuffs separated the belligerent canines, and the crowd dispersed after giving the plucky woman a hearty cheer.31

Humor aside, Italian immigrants seemed as strange as other “new immigrant” groups. In 1906, a particularly exciting example of this exotic character of the Italian immigrants played itself out in a boarding house in North Walpole. On April 5, 1906, the Times ran a story under the headline, “Italian Feud Ends.” The paper reported that Joseph Bentlawen had “shot and seriously injured,” a fellow immigrant, Cardo Amico. The paper explained,

The affair was the ending of a blood feud of years’ standing. In the old days, both loved the same woman, and curiously all three met in America but the woman had married another man. About three years ago Amico grossly insulted her, and Bentlawen was bitterly angry upon hearing it. The men have come to blows at different times, and the feeling between them was intense. Thursday night both men met and after high words Amico left the room and started for the street. Without warning Bentlawen followed and fired five shots as his intended victim reached the road, the fifth shot striking the jaw bone and lodging in the right cheek. The wounded man dropped to the ground and Bentlawen leaped the fence and disappeared. He later walked to Rockingham and took a train from there to Rutland. At the last place, however, he was arrested, the police receiving word by telephone message. The prisoner was brought back here and has since been under confinement awaiting trial.32

This story played on Italian stereotypes, of passionate love lives, long-lived feuds, and violence. This sort of transatlantic feud puzzled the local reporter and doubtless many of the paper’s readers. Polish immigrants seemed even stranger. In March 1893 the Times reported, “A Polish priest from Webster, Mass., came here Tuesday to look up the Catholic Poles in this vicinity, and found about 20 in this town. He is to hold a service for them at St Charles’ church some day next week.”33 Gaps in newspaper coverage make following the development of the Polish community difficult, but by 1906 the community was firmly established, and by 1908, Lyman Simpson Hayes, the town historian and keen observer of local events, estimated that about 700 Polish people had settled in Bellows Falls and vicinity.34 The Polish population of Bellows Falls had become large enough that it received regular coverage in the Times. In January 1906, the paper reported, for example, “Peter Montwit, a Polander boy 10 years old, met with a serious accident
Sunday,” noting that he had suffered a fractured skull and wrist by falling off a car in the Fitchburg Railroad yard.\textsuperscript{35}

An injured child attracted sympathy, but much of the newspaper coverage was much less sympathetic. In February 1906, for example, the paper reported a “Polander Riot,” in a tenement on Bridge Street in Bellows Falls. The paper reported,

The Polanders made things lively for the police Saturday night and Sunday morning, when the were celebrating a wedding at the house of Frank Telegos, at the end of the arch bridge on Bridge street, and visiting countrymen were present in great numbers from Saxtons River and North Walpole to make the occasion a joyous one. At a late hour the crowd began to get noisy and wild, and the spirits were flowing pretty freely so that everyone alike creating a disturbance. Stephen White, the victim of the liquor-crazed crowd, was in his room, not taking part in the festivities. Going out into the hall he was pounced upon by the maddened Polanders, and for a time knives, bottles, glasses and every other sort of weapon flew around at a great rate. Many of the crowd were badly cut and bruised but the brunt of the attack fell on Dile and two other foreigners, John Williams and Anton Towing. Dile’s head was cut open in several places and when found by the police was so swollen he could not see out of his eyes. The scene at the police station during the trial resembled an immigrant station. The room was full of jabbing Polanders and most of the witnesses had to testify through an interpreter.\textsuperscript{36}

This article set the tone for much of the coverage of “Polanders” in Bellows Falls, focusing on issues of language, and portraying the immigrants as “mad” and “liquor-crazed,” and quick to fight with knives. The week following this account, the paper clarified the story, identifying “Dile” as Steven Dyer.\textsuperscript{37}

Stories of drunkenness and impulsive behavior dominated the Times’s coverage of the Polish immigrants. Weddings were the scenes of much of the violence, but the Times also reported the apparently random occurrence of instances of drunkenness and disturbing the peace. In July 1906, the Times reported:

The Corner Drug store was the scene of much excitement yesterday afternoon. A Polander, heavily under the influence of liquor, was in the store and began to make himself a nuisance. He was asked to leave and refused to do so, beginning to act worse. The negro porter of the store, with no effort at all, picked the man up off his feet and carried him out bodily. A big crowd had collected by this time and as the man began to show signs of fight, the porter began to call “Police” in a loud voice. This drew more people who thought there was a fight or someone was being robbed. Chief of Police Thompson came hurrying up at the call and arrested the fellow for drunkenness and disturbance, carrying him off to the police station where he slept it off.\textsuperscript{38}
The story is interesting in that neither the Polander nor the black porter, the hero of the story, was named.

Most of the coverage of the Polish immigrants focused on their impulsive behavior and wildness of their parties. In January 1907, the paper reported a wedding and gave details about the celebration afterward:

A Polander wedding was the cause of a three days’ jubilation at the bride’s home at 91 Rockingham street this week. Beginning Saturday and lasting through day and night, until Tuesday morning. The house was filled with brother and sister Polanders and their families, all bent on celebrating the event in fitting manner. Some of the customs are queer. The bride is seated in the center of the room and everything floats around her. Floats is appropriate here, because the refreshments flowed so freely that floating was possible. And all of the time a monotonous playing is kept up on accordians or some similar instrument, the entire company joining in as the spirits move.\(^{39}\)

This suggests that the *Times* was at least trying to come to grips with the Polish customs, even though the portrayal was demeaning and focused on the excesses of the celebration. A few months later, the paper covered a fire that could have destroyed much of the village’s business district. The paper reported that a Polish resident of one of the tenements over the Surprise store on Westminster Street (a brick building attached to the Suter or Corner Drug Store block) had knocked over a lamp while he was drunk:

The two floors are occupied by Polanders and from appearances one of them was drunk and in his carousal tipped over a lamp. This set the mattress and bed clothes afire and most of the other inflammable objects in the room were ablaze. Upon entering the room they saw on the floor in a stupor the drunken Polander, his clothes in flames. They seized things to smother the flames and when they were extinguished his legs from the hips down were terribly burned, the flesh hanging in shreds in many places. Other parts of his head and body were also badly burned.

The Polander was removed by his fellow countrymen to another room in the block, suffering terrible agonies.

When Mr. Gately [Chief Fire Engineer] called at the place today to see how the man was he could not be found, and as none of the Polanders could speak English, he could not learn what had become of him. It is supposed that his friends have taken him away and will care for him.

It was very fortunate that the fire was discovered when it was. The whole east side of Westminster street with the exception of this block is of wood and the worst fire trap in town. A fire with much headway would be apt to sweep over quite an area.\(^{40}\)
Again, the inability of the Polish to speak or understand English exacerbated the problem.

The stories of drinking and fighting among Bellows Falls’s newest immigrants implied a sense of dismay that had not been seen with other immigrants. The Poles seemed more foreign and incorrigible than their Irish and French Canadian predecessors. The editor of the paper, by this time the measured and conservative Willis C. Belknap, did not go so far as to dismiss the Poles entirely, but he did publish the opinion of the Commissioner General of Immigration. In January 1907, the *Times* carried a story under the headline, “Tremendous Tide of Immigration,” which included excerpts of the report of the Commissioner General. The report pointed out the shift in immigration patterns, that in 1906, 17,950 Irish, 15,218 English, 3,281 Swedish, and 3,010 German immigrants entered the country while 265,138 Austro-Hungarian, 273,120 Italian, and 215,655 Russian immigrants entered. Belknap quoted the report, “It is evident that the physical and mental inequality of the aliens we are now receiving is much below that of those who have come in former years.” He added a comment:

There is where the danger lies if there is any danger. As long as the immigrants come from the Teutonic races, races with natural capacity for self government, we have little to fear. The Slav and Latins are a different proposition. They and their ancestors for numberless generations have been held beneath the heel of a tyranny and monarchy, and the have neither desire nor capacity for self government. America, however, will continue to receive them and trust to the common school to develop the instinct in their children and children’s children.\(^{41}\)

Belknap was ambivalent, for he hoped that the so-called “new immigrants” could learn. He prefaced the article with the comment,

That America can receive to her shores the continuous steam of immigrants that she does, and her free institutions not suffer impairment is the wonder of the world. Every year the stream grows larger, and no serious effort is made to stem it. In fact America is rather proud of its increase in population from immigration, and the country as a whole seems to prosper more and more.\(^{42}\)

Still, he recognized the fear that the new immigrants were racially inferior to the old immigrants.

Belknap reflected the more widespread fears that the new immigrants were racially inferior, but not to the point of rejecting the immigrants. He was not a supporter of the nativism of groups like the American Protective Association, which had been active in New Hampshire a
decade before; at worst, he was ambivalent. The year 1907 was a watershed in the history of Bellows Falls, for in that year, the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers staged a strike, ultimately winning the eight hour for workers in the original wood pulp mills that were becoming increasingly obsolete. In the aftermath of the strike of 1907, the community leaders in Bellows Falls seemed to soften in their opinions of the Polish.

In February 1908, Lyman S. Hayes, who was as adamant in his opposition to organized labor, wrote an article for the *Brattleboro Phoenix*, which was reprinted in the *Bellows Falls Times*. Hayes lavished praise on the Polish. Noting, “our citizens know but little” about the newest immigrants, he reported the findings of an investigation by “one of the missionary societies to ascertain facts in regard to our conditions surrounding ‘the stranger within our gates’.”

Poles, he reported, were the second largest immigrant group in Bellows Falls, coming in behind only the Irish. Among workers in the paper mills and at the Vermont Farm Machine Company, there were “176 Poles, 37 Greeks, 17 Russians, nine Italians and seven French, all men.” Estimating the number of women, both at home and working in occupations besides the major industries, as well as children, Hayes reckoned about 700 Poles living in “Bellows Falls and its suburbs.” He noted that Polanders were divided into two groups: Poles and Lithuanians, “each speaking a different language and not being able to understand the other.” Hayes reported that the Poles generally lived in crowded conditions in tenements close to the mills, “principally on Bridge, Island, Canal and Rockingham streets, and in North Walpole. The women take as many boarders as they can accommodate and the tenements occupied by them are greatly overcrowded.”

Notwithstanding their living conditions and their problems with language, Hayes reported that they were assets to the community:

The men are thrifty and as workmen compare favorably with other nationalities, paying their bills promptly and saving money to send back to the old country. In one instance a man has accumulated $700 for this purpose.

The men are quick to learn and the children are great imitators. The children attend our public schools, seem anxious to learn, and one is already in the high school. The women seem to care less than the men to learn our ways, possibly because there are no factories in which they work, remaining in their homes and seeing less of American ways. The
women are especially loath to learn our language or change their customs and they live here much the same as in their old homes.\textsuperscript{47}

Notable here is a point that Carroll D. Wright had made a few years earlier in an article published in the \textit{Franklin Journal-Transcript}, that the mills had a civilizing effect.\textsuperscript{48} The fact that men were eager to work impressed Hayes.\textsuperscript{49} Because they were new to the community, and because of their problems speaking English, the Poles were ideal workers. The fact that they wanted to make and save money was also encouraging, for they could not send money to Poland if they were on strike. Rather than being inferior and threats to the community Poles could be an antidote to the problems of organized labor. In any case, Hayes saw the Poles as potentially important members of the community and hoped that the various problems—including the women’s reluctance to assimilate and the overcrowding of tenements—would be easily solved. Hayes reported that the Catholic Church was beginning to look after the needs of the Polish immigrants. He noted that because of language differences the Poles did not “enjoy the churches here” and reported that the Poles were visited by a priest “several times a year,” and that “they are already talking of building a church of their own.”\textsuperscript{50} In 1909 the Poles organized a parish, and in 1910 built Sacred Heart church.\textsuperscript{51}

Hayes’s sanguine assessment of Poles was perhaps premature, for they proved to be eager supporters of the organized labor, in Bellows Falls at least (in Turners Falls union organizers found the Poles difficult to organize). When the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers struck in the summer of 1908, the \textit{Times} reported that many of the 250 strikers were Polish common laborers who objected to the reduction in daily wages from $1.65 to $1.63.\textsuperscript{52} Organizers found Polish workers in Bellows Falls enthusiastic union members.

After 1908, coverage in the \textit{Times} suggested that Poles were gradually being accepted as citizens in Bellows Falls. Coverage of violence still tended to be sensational, though police logs showed a mixture of ethnic and Yankee names. In July 1910, the \textit{Times} reported on the front page, “Poles Cut Loose and One Slashed. Housewarming Party Ends with Battered Head and Seven Arrests—Melee Attracted Hundreds.”\textsuperscript{53} The incident was simply a drinking party that
turned into a fight on Old Terrace. The coverage, however, showed that the Poles had not yet overcome the stereotypes of drunkenness and violence, and the report still poked fun at the Poles for speaking Polish. The paper reported that the excitement began “after 5 o’clock Sunday afternoon, when Charlie Brown, a Pole, ran from Pine to Atkinson street, shouting at the top of his voice and his face and head covered with blood.” The spectacle developed quickly, but the paper reported it with a tone of ennui: “It was the old story, a beer fest in a Polish tenement, with the usual result.” Onlookers called the police, and the police chief, W. S. Severance, and Deputy Sheriff Frank Phelps answered the called. The paper reported,

Both arrived at about the same time. There was a large crowd outside, witnessing the battle outdoors.

The officers dashed into the tenement where eight or nine Poles, in drunken disorder were pushing one another about, and raising another Tower of Babel. … The officers, forming six of the Poles in line, led them down Henry street to the Square and locked them up at the police station, with a small sized mob following. Chief Severance led the squad, while the deputy sheriff followed in the rear stirring the laggards on. The officers then went back and arrested John Williams, a Pole, who it was claimed, was at the house at the time of the fight. In a team Brown, swathed in bandages, was brought to the station and the excitement of the day was ended. 54

The spectacle of the mile-long parade through the major streets of the village was comic. The reporter’s tone was one of weariness at the repetition of the disorder that the village had seen any number of times before. Seven people were arraigned in the municipal court, including the hapless Charlie Brown. At the arraignment, the suspects and physician argued about the cause of Brown’s injuries: “The Poles claimed Charlie fell downstairs; Charlie said he was hit on the head with a bottle while the physician was under the impression that the head showed an ugly knife wound. The police noticed blood on the second floor … and along the stairs.” Ultimately, the paper concluded, the greatest victim was the English language. The reporter wrote that during the arraignment, “the English tongue was murdered and otherwise assaulted. …” 55

The acceptance of the Poles in Bellows Falls came gradually. The portrayal of the Poles as short-tempered, violent, and hard drinking was persistent, even as the immigrants became well established. Stories of violence continued. In December 1910, the Times reported, that “Thomas
Lichovobin, an Austrian Pole, and George Kaffis, a small-sized Greek” had been involved in a fight in one of the International Paper Company mills, and that the fight had continued into the middle of the Square. The paper attributed the cause of the fight to “race difficulty.” The paper reported,

The Pole and the Greek swapped pet names for a while whereupon the Pole is said to have struck the Greek in the head with the pail. Things quieted down and after work the talk was resumed at the Square with the result that the Pole slammed a hot one to the Greek’s eye. Then the battle was on. The Greek picked up a stick and gave the Pole a resounding whack on the left side of the head, cutting a three-inch gash. The two men then got busy and when several citizens attempted to interfere the Greek took to his heels and ran up Westminster street and over to School street and made his escape. The Pole went to the police station where his scalp wound was dressed.56

In 1912, the *Times* reported a story with the headline, “Four Shots Fired by Drunken Pole.” The paper reported that an intoxicated worker in one of the pulp mills had blazed “away at random.”57

The stories were sensational and reflected the anxieties of many in the village over the newest immigrants. Ultimately, the Preparedness campaign of the years leading to American involvement in World War I softened opinions of the Poles. The *Times* began to note some of the complexities of the Polish community and to point out that some of the immigrants had cultured and interesting backgrounds. In May 1915, the paper reported the death of a Russian Pole named Seweryn Wierzbicka, who had gone by the name of Jim Bob Wilson. Wierzbicka had an interesting past, the paper reported:

In Poland he had served in the Russian army and had been a commissioned officer. He came to Bellows Falls and was employed in the mills. Because of his mastery of languages, including several used by Slavic races, besides German, French and Italian, he was several times called upon by the local police to act as interpreter. Jim Bob kept in close touch, reading journals published in various languages, with the viewpoints of the European editors in regard to the war and other topics and freely talked and expressed his opinions to his English speaking friends. At the time the Czar promised the Polish people the many things that he did at the opening of the war the interpreter was not loath to say that the Polish residents of Bellows Falls held no confidence in the promises.58

Wierzbicka’s background was perhaps surprising for readers of the *Times*, and he was adept at winning sympathy by choosing to call himself after the president. The war brought much sympathy in Bellows Falls to the plight of the Polish: at the end of the war, Frederick L. Thompson, primary owner of the Moore and Thompson Paper Company sold the his interests and
retired—for a time at least—in order to devote his time to working on relief efforts in Poland. In 1921 wrote letters to the *Times* from Poland, and the following year lectured on his experiences to an audience Franklin.\(^59\) The First World War had destroyed whatever opposition there had been to the Poles in Bellows Falls.

**Franklin**

Franklin, like Bellows Falls, experienced growing problems with rowdyism as soon as the mills started to grow, and newspaper editors led campaigns against the behavior, but only rarely did Franklin’s papers identify the ethnicity of the rowdies and criminals. The papers were more inclined to attribute the problems to youth than ethnicity. By 1875, storekeepers in Franklin Falls were already complaining of “young rowdies who infest our sidewalks and insult ladies and annoy gentlemen.”\(^60\) In March 1875, the *Merrimack Journal* reported that storekeeper, G. W. Sawyer had filed a complaint against the rowdies and had had Sammy Campbell, a child of sixteen, arrested. The *Journal* reported, “He was confined in the lockup but a few hours, being liberated through the earnest pleadings of his mother. As it was he just escaped being shipped off to the reformatory. This should be a warning to him and to the rest of his crew that our citizens will no longer tolerate the nuisance of their rowdyism.”\(^61\)

The young rowdies were not so easily quieted, for a month later the paper reported another incident. Townspeople complained of children playing marbles and using profane language near the churches on Sunday mornings. Finally, the *Journal* reported, “Police officer Burleigh … arrested four lads, whose names we refrain for the present from giving, for disorderly conduct. …”\(^62\) They were arraigned before a local judge. The article concluded, “No defense could be made, and the lads were mulcted to the amount of $10 each and costs. We presume they will hesitate long before engaging in such pastimes again on the Sabbath, especially at a cost of $17 apiece each time.”\(^63\) The problem in these incidents was not ethnicity—without names readers could not know the children’s ethnicities—but youth. Still, rowdyism was a growing
problem because Franklin was growing, and much of the town’s population growth came through immigration.

In Franklin, some of the increase in population came from the migration from rural areas, particularly Vermont. The *Merrimack Journal* reported on the influx of Vermonters in almost the same way as it reported people from French Canada and Ireland. The paper noted in 1880, for example, “The natives of Vermont in town exceed all other localities, combined, if we except Ireland.”64 Over the next ten years the *Journal*, and later the Franklin *Transcript* reported social events of Vermonters, who formed a sort of informal club. The “Vermont Sociable” was an important social event through the 1880s, and while the Irish advertised clog and jig competitions, the Vermonters announced who would be the “prompters” or callers for their dances.65 In 1884, for example, the Franklin Transcript reported that the Vermont Sociable included readings and songs, but noted, “At the conclusion of this part of the entertainment all lovers of dancing ‘tripped the light fantastic’ to the music of Cate’s Orchestra, the duties of prompter being acceptably performed by W. P. Gardner.”66 The point of all of this was that people had gathered in Franklin from a variety of places because of the mills. Vermonters, Irish, and French Canadians all worked in the mills along with people from New Hampshire, English, English-speaking Canadians, and the occasional German, Bohemian, and Swedish immigrant. They were immigrants all, and they could all fall into the dangers of life in an industrializing village. Drunkenness, rowdyism, and noisemaking were not associated more with one group than another.

As in Bellows Falls, by the 1880s, rowdyism had become enough of a problem that Franklin’s police and newspaper publishers began a campaign to assert law and order. The problem was particularly bad at public shows, where rowdies would gather in the balconies of the public halls, make noise before the shows, and even heckle the performers. Roscoe Collins, editor of the *Merrimack Journal*, led a campaign against these rowdies in forceful language. On June 29, 1883, in response to an incident involving a performance of the Hennessey Brothers, song and dance troop, he wrote,
The pleasure of the audience was seriously marred by the hissing of some contemptible puppies, who belong to the lowest and worst class termed “mill skunks,” which is a fitting name for such bipeds. Most of the operatives in the various mills are respectable, well-behaved people, and keenly feel the shame of being obliged to work with these young hoodlums, who have no sense of decency. They are a disgrace to any village, and is high time the police were locking them out of sight of decent people. They not only insult, in the most cowardly manner, half the best portion of the population, but are a nuisance at all shows. In this case a pair of them had a personal grudge against the Hennessey Brothers, than whom a better clog and song and dance team never visited Franklin. One of the brothers very truly told these skunks they would be breaking stone when the Hennesseys were earning a good living in their profession.67

Collins followed this complaint the next week with a letter from a correspondent who signed himself or herself simply “Operative.” “There are, unfortunately,” Operative wrote, a small number of hands employed in the mills who possess neither common sense nor decency, and by their actions in public places and on the streets bring reproach on all of us who are forced to earn our living as mill operatives. You are right when you say that we ‘keenly feel the shame of being forced to work with these hoodlums,’ and hope you continue in this course until they are made to understand that a respectable community will not tolerate their shameful conduct.68

Operative underscored a point for Collins: the problem was not an ethnic one, but simply one of a few people who lacked decency and civility. Collins’s complaints continued, as did behavior of the rowdies, for in 1889, S. H. Robie, editor of the Franklin Transcript, asked, “When will hoodlumism at public entertainments be suppressed?”69

As in Bellows Falls, the issue of illegal alcohol sales was closely connected with the larger problem of rowdyism. The sale of alcohol in New Hampshire became a local option in 1903, partly through the political efforts of paper manufacturer, Warren F. Daniell.70 Franklin Town Meeting had discussed enforcing liquor laws as early as 1877, but it did not until the middle of the 1880s.71 In the 1870s, and into the 1880s, temperance advocates had an eager following. The Father Mathew’s and St. Mary’s Total Abstinence Societies, working with local Catholics, as well as organizations working with Protestants became thriving parts of Franklin’s social life.

Certainly, temperance was an important value for an industrializing town in which sobriety and productivity worked hand in hand. To a point it could also be working-class issue. The editor of the Merrimack Journal, although ardently in favor of temperance, took offense at a
lecturer who suggested that temperance could help to level social distinctions. In June 1876, Captain Miles LePoer, a lecturer from Lowell, spoke to a mass meeting on “The Physiology of Delirium Tremens.” The *Journal* reported,

> Before he took hold of this subject, however, he could not refrain from firing away awhile at what seems to be his hobby—his war on “caste.” It isn’t a bad hobby, to be sure, except that it is likely to make the hobbyist a fanatic. Capt. LePoer is not fanatical but honestly and earnestly striving to lift the working men and women up to a higher plane of social, moral and intellectual life. He perhaps claims too much for the reform movement when he asserts that it is destined to be a destroyer of social grades and distinctions. Its most complete success will never make the daughter of the millionaire marry the son of the “truckhorse” hod-carrier, or the “walking coffee-pot” book-keeper; but it will be a grander achievement to elevate and enlighten the degraded and introduce purity and simplicity amid the luxury of modern high life.

Collins found much about LePoer’s presentation troubling. According to the paper, he spoke with a “pungent style,” but Collins noted, “If his expressions and manner are sometimes too coarse, they seem to be altogether inseparable from the man, and while they may detract from the effect of his oratory, they do not by any means spoil it.”

Ultimately, the degradation of the local rowdies was more of a threat than the prospect of social leveling. Alcohol was a problem not only because it worked against the “purity and simplicity” that were important for a productive workforce, but because its consumption led to violence. In 1877 the *Merrimack Journal* reported an assault the cause of which, at least partly was due to alcohol. The paper reported that on the evening of August 25, Alley McDonnell assaulted Mary Long on the Republican Bridge. The paper reported that McDonnell “threatened to put his knife through her and throw her into the river.” Long screamed and attracted the attention of a man who lived near the bridge. The paper commented, “McDonnell is said to have been under the influence of liquor.”

Editors were concerned with public safety, but also with the reputation of the town, which seemed increasingly violent. Roscoe Collins attributed at least some of this to the rising numbers of French Canadian immigrants. He never undertook a wholehearted campaign against the French Canadians, but in the early 1880s wrote in blunt, derogatory and stereotypical terms about violence committed by them. He reported two such incidents in 1883. The first incident
was one of sexual assault. The Journal reported, “Mr. George Delu, a Kanuck, presumably, became temporarily infatuated with the charms of the voluptuous Mrs. Betsey Ash, and in his love madness grossly insulted that daughter of Eve. He was tried in Squire Barnard’s office, assessed $17.60, couldn’t liquidate, and Deputy Sheriff Blake escorted him to the industrial school for adults at Concord, where he will sojourn until the tax is paid.” In the second incident, the paper reported that one John Wallace had been attacked in a boarding house (known as “Skinville house”) by “a Frenchman fired with poor whiskey, armed with a double-barrelled pistol and dirk knife.” These were specific incidents, and neither the Journal nor the Franklin Transcript ever systematically denounced any group. Nevertheless, as problems with what the papers called “hoodlumism” and drunkenness increased in the 1880s, reporting frequently had at least an undertone of condescension, if not contempt. Of course, there were different types of hoodlums, and in some cases, the papers simply reported incidents as individual incidents.

In one week in 1885, the Transcript reported two violent incidents. The first involved a group of rowdies that had gathered along Central Street. The paper reported,

A man was passing along the street with his wife when a couple of fellows indulged in conduct that he considered ungentlemanly, and returned the compliment by administering a moderate dose of thumping. This raised a gentle breeze and the concluding scenes were witnessed by a large crowd. Several parties interfered and prevented the disfigurement of faces and the cracking of heads. It said that the job will be finished at some future time.

In the second, a group of tramps, angry that a conductor had put them off a train, barraged the train with rocks. They walked along the tracks toward the village of West Franklin, but were pursued by a group of policemen. The paper reported, “In attempting to arrest them the officers encountered considerable resistance with fists and firearms, but succeeded in arresting one apiece and the others fled. Those captured were lodged in Hotel Criminal. …” The Transcript blamed the violence in part on the reputation that Franklin had for “harboring prize fights, wrestling matches and other enterprises that call together a disorderly mob and scores of our citizens. …” In March 1886, the paper complained that the popularity of boxing encouraged violence in children and perpetuated rowdyism in the village. The editor wrote, “the average small boy’s
greatest ambition is to learn the rules and know how to knock ‘em out’ in double quick time.”

The paper warned, “scores of our citizens are beginning to look this matter squarely in the face and think it is about time to call a halt.”

In 1886, the rowdyism in Franklin turned tragic. The Transcript complained in August, “Rows, drunks and midnight disturbances are especially numerous for dog day weather.” On Sunday, October 17, 1886, however, a fight broke out at a boardinghouse and saloon, which left the owner dead. The fight started between Fred Bourdon, a mason working on A. W. Sulloway’s hosiery mill, and Eugene Taylor, whose occupation the paper did not report. The paper began its report, “Last Sunday afternoon a party of roughs congregated at John Galligan’s place on Franklin St., and were having a general racket and yielding to the action of poor whiskey, when a fight ensued between Fred Bourdon and Eugene Taylor.”

Galligan intervened to break up the fight when Bourdon kicked him several times in the lower abdomen. Mrs. Galligan testified that Bourdon attacked Taylor without provocation:

Bourdon then came toward me with his fists doubled up intending to strike me. I took up a cane and hit him across the face to keep him off. My husband then stepped in between us and said, “You shan’t slaughter all my family if I lose my life.” He then tried to put Bourdon out. In the scuffle, Bourdon kicked my husband several times in the lower part of the abdomen, just above the groin.

Galligan “took his bed,” eventually dying of peritonitis, and Bourdon was charged with manslaughter.

The Transcript attributed the causes of the fight to alcohol, noting the testimony of James Noland, a boarder in the house, who said that Bourdon “acted crazy drunk.” The paper noted that Galligan had a “reputation of a hard worker,” but that he also ran an illegal saloon. The paper reported, “About two years ago he bought what is known as the bakery building, and commenced to run a boarding house. A saloon was soon afterwards opened in the same building and it has been known as one of the worst places in the town. It was quite probable that Bourdon got the liquor there which incited him to violence.”

The following May, Bourdon was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison. According to the paper, while Galligan’s death
was tragic, he bore some responsibility for it. The paper hinted at ethnic tensions—Bourdon was a “Frenchman” in an Irishman’s saloon—and it affirmed the stereotype, hinted at but never voiced in so many words, of the French Canadians as violent, especially when they were drunk.

Galligan’s death underscored the dangers of illegal saloons, and in the aftermath of the incident, the town increasingly sought to enforce liquor laws. By the late 1880s, Franklin began to crack down on its “rum shops.” The town’s first target was Michael Dee. Dee, who was Irish or at least of Irish extraction, had moved to Franklin late in the 1870s; by 1880, he had lost two houses on Franklin Street to fire. By 1880, Dee had already had a run-in with the law, for in November that year, the Journal reported, “Thomas Riley, Michael Dee and Patrick Cushing forcibly entered the fish market for Wesley Haynes about one o’clock Wednesday morning. They settled the damages on Thursday, paying about $50.”

By 1887, Dee had a reputation as a tough character. In the aftermath of the Galligan affair Dee had become Franklin Street’s leading saloon keeper. The saloon was an informal affair, a “shebeen,” although Franklin’s papers never used the term. In July, the Transcript wrote a humorous account of his arrest:

Michael Dee’s saloon on Franklin St. was visited Wednesday afternoon by Officers Know and Noyes who searched the premises and found the ardent. Dee smashed a few bottles, hoping thereby to destroy the evidence, but Officer Noyes interfered. Dee undertook to strike him with an ax but about that time he had stopped breathing and he continued in that condition until Officer Noyes loosened an iron grip on his windpipe. …

The arrest did not stop him: as late as 1903, he was raided again. This time he fled to avoid furnishing bond. The Journal-Transcript reported that he was last spotted in Nashua, near the Massachusetts border.

By 1890, the Transcript was reporting on what it called a “War on Rum.” In March that year, the paper reported the arrest of Richard H. Renshaw, who was charged with selling “spiritous” liquor and “lager beer.” Unable to raise the money for bond he finally pleaded guilty and paid $76.38 in fines and fees. The paper noted, “he promised to quit the business at once.”

In 1891 citizens of Franklin were growing increasingly alarmed about public safety. The
“War on Rum,” was not simply a local issue, and the Transcript reported events in nearby towns that served almost as warnings of what could happen in Franklin. In January 1891, the paper reported sensationally in a front-page story, “Guns and Gore, Laconia Rum Nearly Causes a Double Murder.” Laconia, situated where Lake Winnipesaukee drains into the river of the same name, is less than twenty miles from Franklin. The nature of the incident was similar to the Galligan homicide: two men had spent the morning drinking in Laconia. When they went home, outside the village, in the afternoon, they started to fight. A bystander tried to break them apart, and one of the combatants fired a “breech loading shotgun, charged heavily with B shot” at the backs of the other two. The Transcript noted that the shooter was drunk enough that the shot scattered and no one was seriously injured. The paper commented, “Criminal liquor traffic scores another point.”

In the 1890s, Franklin’s police force focused its efforts on the tenement districts around Franklin and Bow Streets. Franklin Street was increasingly notorious for drunkenness and violence. On December 16, 1892, the Transcript ran a front-page story under the headline, “Thumped by Thugs. Officer Bassett Has a Lively Tussle in the Dark. Gang of Five Roughs pounce Upon Him. Two of the Party Arrest—Record of Many Drunks and Fights.” The paper reported that Louis Bassett met a group of “drunken roughs” on Central Street the previous Thursday night. Bassett asked the roughs to “go home and not make any more noise.” The article continued,

One fellow said he would go but a companion was thirsting for gore and he gave the office a terrific blow in the face. This was the signal for open hostilities and while the officer was defending himself he slipped on the ice and fell. Before he could regain his feet he was pounded in the face, kicked and bruised in a brutal manner. Five men against one must necessarily be almost a one-sided affair, especially as the officer was without any means of defense except his fists.

Bassett was finally able to stand, and his assailants fled. The paper listed his injuries: bleeding from the “nose and ears, a pair of black eyes, an injured hand and small bruises too numerous to mention, but he wasn’t dead nor discouraged.” After Bassett stopped the bleeding, he went to “Mr. Colley’s boarding house,” where he found “two fellows who were mixed up in the affray,
James Balentine and Christopher Golding.” The other members of the party “skipped the town early the next morning.” Balentine and Golding were charged with drunkenness and assault, and sentenced to thirty days in the state prison.

Over the next few days, police arrested more people and charged them with drunkenness. On Saturday night Officer Bassett was again called, this time to break up a fight on Franklin Street. The paper reported, “About 30 drunken men, judging by the size of the crowd, were spewed out of two or three saloons on Franklin street at 10 o’clock Saturday evening.” The reporter commented, “A more disgusting sight is not often witnessed.” Again, on Sunday fights broke out around the intersection of Franklin and Central Streets. This was perhaps the low point for Franklin: raids became common over the next decade, and police tried to assert increasing authority.

This crackdown on illegal alcohol sales came at the same time as the Franklin Board of Trade’s campaign for a city charter. The Board of Trade sought to improve business conditions for Franklin, and the temperance crusade was part of this movement. This concern for order was not confined to alcohol: in 1894, Franklin also looked into other concerns that threatened the town’s reputation. In December, just before Franklin’s city charter went into effect, police raided a brothel known as the “Spring Hill” house and arrested the madam, Elizabeth Putnam. The Transcript reported the raid on December 11:

For several months Miss Putnam has conducted a place of questionable repute and the names of her patrons would furnish sensational reading and make business for the lawyers in numerous divorce proceedings. … Madam Putnam’s ranch has not found favor with a large number of our people and many complaints and comments have been made. The town authorities took steps some time ago to obtain evidence against the place for the purpose of closing it but the circumstances were such that they did not succeed until last.96

The raid was conducted by Deputy Sheriff (and publisher of the Transcript) Omar Towne, accompanied by several police officers, including Louis Bassett. “In court,” the paper noted, “Miss Putnam plead guilty to the charge of keeping a disorderly house and was ordered to furnish bonds in the sum of $300 for appearance at the next term of court.” Putnam agreed to sell her
house and leave town. This was second raid of a brothel, and marked the recognition by the town that it had to confront the issue of prostitution. The paper concluded, “The authorities are determined to prosecute any similar violations of the law at the earliest opportunity, and the closing of the two places that have been doing business here, shows that they mean business.”

The crusades against vice were part of the growing spirit of local boosterism. They were local issues, and people in Franklin had no desire to see them become more than local issues. They emphatically were not ethnic issues, but were simply issues of local control. Even as the American Protective Association started to spread into New Hampshire in 1894, Franklin seemed to care little. Organizers for the A. P. A. made a tour through New Hampshire in December 1894, as they claimed, to exercise their rights to free speech. They hit the immigrant centers—the industrial cities of the Merrimack Valley. In Manchester, A. M. Wilson and Thomas Rush, “evangelists” for the organization, had been pelted with rotten eggs, but they were persistent in their desire to travel north to Franklin. Wilson, who had been prevented from speaking in Franklin earlier had filed a lawsuit against the town. The town tried simply to dissuade him from speaking, but to no avail.

The town selectmen, as well as the publishers of the Transcript objected to the A. P. A., fearing that their presence would lead to violence. More importantly, the Transcript objected to the A. P. A. interfering with the town’s affairs. The Transcript wrote of the followers of the A. P. A. as dupes “who had been filled to the neck with exaggerated reports” of Wilson and Rush’s supposed persecution in Manchester. The editor wrote:

While pretending to be Americans and obedient to law and condemning Catholics for alleged interference with affairs of state, these people announce their purpose to come here and take the law into their own hands, disregard our officers and give us a lesson in home protection. They seemed to think that Franklin was in the hands of a mob and that every law abiding citizen had taken to the woods, gone up a tree, sneaked into a hole in the wall or fled to Cemetery hill.

The city government (the charter had not yet gone into effect, but Mayor-Elect Frank Parsons had for all intents and purposes assumed the duties of the office) recognized it could not prevent members of the A. P. A. from speaking, but also recognized that it needed to have a heavy force
of police, armed with rifles, guarding the event. Parsons feared that members of the A. P. A.
would overreact to insults and that a riot would result.

The “exhibition” of the A. P. A. proved to be anti-climatic. Instead of violent protests,
spectators viewing the procession of the association’s members, “viewed the procession and
made no demonstration whatever.” There were speeches by a leader of a branch of the Y. M. C.
A. in Laconia, by Rush, who spoke about the “two-faced hypocrisy of Rome,” and A. M. Wilson,
who gave a sentimental recitation. The paper summed up the event:

Not a visitor had been assaulted or even given occasion to pull his revolver. Nobody was
killed, no harsh words spoken, and when the train steamed out toward the Junction the
people felt relieved and enjoyed a general laugh over an affair which may be summed up
in five words, “great cry and little wool.”

The A. P. A. incident illustrated the pragmatic and moderate views of the people of Franklin. The
town—and soon the city—had citizens from a variety of backgrounds. Just as there were
respectable Irish and French Canadian store keepers by this time, the “mill skunks” about whom
the Merrimack Journal had complained were just as likely to be Yankees as of immigrant stock.
Rather than singling out groups, police and business leaders looked at specific problems of
violence, drunkenness, and other vice in a pragmatic way.

After Franklin adopted its city charter, the crusade against vice continued. By 1898, the
Journal-Transcript reported that police had started a new campaign against saloons. As the local
reporter for the paper put it, “The appearance lately of several men on the street who have needed
more than their portion of side walk has given evidence that more liquor than is good for the fair
name of the city is being sold. …” In September, Louis Bassett, now City Marshall, conducted
a series of raids on saloons, including one called the “Dodropin.” Bassett, along with a couple
officers raided three saloons, including one run by Hiram Renshaw, whose relative had been the
proprietor of a raided saloon in 1890.

The following year, Marshall began raiding perhaps the most colorful illegal saloon, run
by Mary Howe in a boarding house near the paper mill and Franklin Mills at the eastern end of
Bow Street. Called “Morro Castle,” at least after the Spanish-American War, the boarding house
was home to the most persistent of Franklin’s illegal saloons. It was raided repeatedly between 1897 and 1904. The City Marshall first raided the Howe Block in January 1897. In May of that year, Mary Howe pleaded *nolo contendere* to a first offense and paid a fine of $50 and costs. Five months later, she pleaded *nolo* to a second offense, and paid a fine of $100 and costs. In March 1899, Omar Towne, now editor of the *Journal-Transcript*, ran a sarcastic, front-page headline: “How-e They Did It. Officers Make a Successful Liquor Raid. Touched the Secret Spring and Saw Spirits.” The paper reported,

> Last week Thursday afternoon City Marshal Bassett concluded it was about time to pay another visit to the somewhat famous resort conducted by the Howe sisters on Bow Street. The marshal, although not doing much talking, has been picking up information from time to time and the nature of it led him to renewed efforts to secure further convictions against the place. Accompanied by Deputy Sheriff Towne and Officer Goss he made the call on the day mentioned. It proved to be the most successful raid ever conducted at the place. The officers found a quantity of whiskey, gin, rum and beer, all nicely concealed in an elevator. In police court Friday morning a plea of not guilty was made, Lawyer Barron Shirley appearing for Mary Howe, who figured as respondent.

Howe was ordered to pay a bond of $500 and make another court appearance in April. By April, she changed her plea to *nolo* and received a fine of $100 and a sentence three months in jail. This conviction did not stop her. She was arrested again in 1900, and in March 1901, the paper ran a front-page headline, “A SURPRISE PARTY. Sunday Afternoon Visit to Mary Howe’s Resort.” The paper reported humorously, “Mary Howe’s ‘Home for Little Wanderers’ at the Corner of Central and Bow streets was visited Sunday afternoon—not by Carrie Nation and her little hatchet, but by City Marshal Hale and five special officers. …” After this sentence, Howe remained out of the news for five years, but in 1904, the *Journal-Transcript* carried a front-page headline: “Morro Castle Raided. City Marshal with Corps of Specials Makes Night Visit.” Once again, the City Marshal and several officers searched the Howe Block for liquor, charging her with seven counts of illegal alcohol sales.

The Howes were some of the most colorful of Franklin’s saloonkeepers, and certainly the most persistent. The *Journal-Transcript* and its predecessors reported alcohol sales and rowdyism as part of the general problem of law and order, but alcohol was the cause of most of
the arrests. The paper reported that in 1901 the police responded to 147 incidents. Eighty-two of the arrests were for drunkenness and seventeen were for selling beer, liquor, or cider: ninety-nine of arrests were directly related to alcohol. After alcohol-related crimes the next most common crime was assault, with six arrests during the year. Other crimes included four arrests for larceny, three for receiving stolen property, and a variety of single offenses, including profanity, spitting on the Opera House floor, killing a fawn, and bastardy.\textsuperscript{108}

By this measure, Franklin was not a dangerous place, but reporting in the \textit{Journal-Transcript} still showed that the threat of violence was a source of anxiety. By the 1890s, the French Canadian and Irish immigrants had settled into the town, and the town, and eventually city governments were confident that they could stay on top of whatever problems immigrants and Yankees would cause.

Franklin had fewer immigrants from eastern and southern Europe than the towns in the Connecticut Valley. Italians and Poles settled in Franklin in small numbers. Italian workers travelled to Franklin as gangs of workers employed building dams. In 1890, the \textit{Transcript} warned, “The boss of the Italian gang thinks it would be a good plan for the girls, and others, to keep away from their headquarters and not be traveling too much in that vicinity.”\textsuperscript{109} In December 1890 the \textit{Transcript} ran a story with the headline, “Stabbed on Sunday. Blood Thirsty Italian Uses a Dirk and then Escapes.” The paper reported that George Antonio and Baptiste LaBreener had had a disagreement and that when the two met on the Republican Bridge, Antonio had pulled a knife. Antonio fled when people came to help LaBreener. The paper reported, “It is evident that the Italian intended to murder LaBreener. He is a desperate character.”\textsuperscript{110}

In 1902, industrialists finally began to develop Eastman Falls on the Pemigewasset River. That the falls had never been used for industry was remarkable. The power first for an excelsior mill, but soon would be redeveloped for generating hydroelectric power.\textsuperscript{111} The work was dangerous, for the falls had layers of ledges that needed to be blasted for the dam to be built. The developers hired the firm of Greenleaf and Doring as contractors, and they contracted with James Bellino to hire a firm of Italian laborers. The dam construction became a local spectacle but was
plagued with problems. The workers complained that the river was too high for them to work safely, and by the end of July one of the gang had already been drowned. The *Journal-Transcript* identified him as “Sebastiano di Campoli, a Boston Italian, . . .” noting that he fell while “wheeling rocks and disappeared in the swift current.” The body eventually washed up on the riverbank, and a local undertaker buried it in the Franklin cemetery. The paper noted sadly, “The drowned man was about 40 years old and leaves a wife and three children in Italy. Greenleaf & Doring gave a reward of $25 for finding the body. Friends of the drowned man say that he was planning to leave America at the conclusion of the work here and return to his home and family in Italy.”

The construction showed the anxiety of the community caused by the workers. By the end of August, a new crew of workers arrived at the construction site, “but decided not to work … claiming there was too much water work in the job. They waited at the Franklin depot from early in the forenoon Sunday until the afternoon train which they boarded for Boston.” The anxieties increased at the end of November, when Greenleaf and Doring went into receivership. Work stopped while the financial matters were sorted out, with the result that there was a camp of unemployed workers near the village. Work began again in the middle of December, but trouble started quickly. The *Journal-Transcript* reported that the workers had not been paid since the failure of Greenleaf and Doring and the workers “were becoming impatient because they had not received their pay.” The workers had barricaded the paymaster Fred Greenleaf and office manager James Shaw in the construction office. The reporter for the *Journal-Transcript* seemed to think that Greenleaf and Shaw exaggerated the danger. The paper reported,

> Threats were made, it is claimed. When the city marshal arrived the men were quiet, however, and no serious trouble occurred. The Italians have been waiting for their pay that was due them as they claim when the contractors assigned. The men who returned to work last week stopped Saturday as their pay was not forthcoming and Monday things were once more idle at the dam.

By the end of December the assignees of Greenleaf and Doring still had not sorted out the firm’s financial problems, and a small crew of laborers remained in the shanty waiting for work to
A supply of clothing for 13 Italians in camp at Eastman falls was furnished Saturday by the Associated Charities. The men, who have been idle since the assignment of the contractors, are being supplied with food by James Bellino, who furnished the Italian labor for the building contractors. The shanty is kept warm, a good stove and a plentiful supply of wood being at hand, and no actual suffering has existed among the men. J.S. Russo assisted in the distribution of the clothing.

The Orphans’ Home hired some of the workers to chop wood, but the paper noted that they “only worked one day. They were not familiar with the ax.” The work on the dam was eventually completed, and by July 1903, the Journal-Transcript reported that contractors would soon begin construction of an excelsior mill on the Eastman Falls dam.

The controversy surrounding the dam construction was characteristic of the moderate, though vigilant approach to immigrants by Franklin’s leadership. The labor situation, the bankruptcy of the contractor, and the shanty of unemployed workers in the middle of winter were a powder keg. The Journal-Transcript showed sympathy for the workers, but also seemed to recognize the danger of the situation. Some of the trouble with the Italian laborers was that they did not live locally. The fact that they were Italian was not so much the issue as the point that they were not residents of the vicinity, and had no attachment to the community. In 1906, when the Franklin Light and Power Company contracted to build a dam north of the city, the contractor apologetically noted that he was unable to find workers locally and was “obliged to send to Boston for Italian laborers.” Once work started, the contractor found the workers quarrelsome.

Soon after work began on the mill, twenty of the fifty workers quit and returned to Boston. The paper reported, “They were dissatisfied with their wages, and wanted $2 per day instead of $1.75. The bi-monthly system of payments was also unsatisfactory. W. M. Ames, the contractor in charge, telephoned to Boston for another gang of workmen and the work at the new dam has not been interrupted.”

The trials of transient labor were the extent of Franklin’s troubles with “new immigrants.” The settled Italian population of the city remained small. Similarly, fewer eastern European immigrants settled in Franklin than in the Connecticut Valley. While the Bellows Falls
Times and Turners Falls Reporter reported problems with drunkenness and violence among Polish immigrants, there were no comparable problems in Franklin. The Poles arrived in Franklin later than they did in the other towns, and they seem to have received little of the resistance in Franklin that they did in the other towns. In 1908, for example, the Journal-Transcript reported,

The first Polish wedding ever taking place in Franklin was solemnized Saturday morning at St Paul’s church. The contracting parties were Wojcisch Sliz and Miss Anna Lispionka. The officiating clergyman was Rev Leo Tylko, a Polish priest from Nashua. Rev AJ Timon assisted. The bride wore white satin with veil and carried roses and pinks. She was attended by Miss Rosy Lispionka and Miss Mary Matyzel. The groomsmen were B Syostecko and M Swionwiec. Following the ceremony the wedding party was photographed at Currier’s studio and a reception was held at their home, 192 Central street. The event was of much importance to the members of Franklin’s Polish colony.123

In 1910, the paper reported without comment, “A Polish Catholic church is being built at Bellows Falls, Vt.”124

Turners Falls

Newspaper editors in Bellows Falls and Franklin were generally reluctant to condemn immigrants. Addington Welch and Cecil T. Bagnall in Turners Falls, however, had sarcastic styles. While they were not nativist—they were as sarcastic about farmers of Yankee stock as they were about immigrants—they recognized that the rapid growth of the village was attended with problems of rowdiness, drunkenness, and even domestic violence. Welch indulged in Irish stereotypes, but he also recognized that nativism was self-defeating, if not just silly. He wrote, “The prejudice against ‘Chinese cheap labor’ is very strong in California. A few days ago a party of native laborers burned over a large tract of grain to prevent its being harvested by Chinamen.” In an adjacent column, he reported jokingly on local anti-immigrant sentiment: “The prejudice in this town against ‘foreigners’ has reached such a degree that one man, last week, twisted the neck of his rooster, rather than he should ‘keep company’ with some Irish chickens that scratched for a living in the neighborhood.”125

The Turners Falls Company and early community leaders advocated the construction of brick tenement blocks to give the village a uniform, urban appearance and to protect against fire.
The 1885 census recorded that while Greenfield had only twenty-eight brick houses Montague had 150. Brick construction, however, was not always possible, especially in the early years of the village when masons worked overtime to build mills, commercial blocks, houses, and tenement buildings. One of these early tenements was a large frame building on L Street called the “Bee Hive.” Built by John La Point before the survey for the 1871 Beers Map was conducted, the building was massive by the standards of local frame buildings, with three stories and twelve bays of windows across the façade facing L Street. A passage through the first story gave access to a central court. The upper stories of the interior were a maze of staircases and balconies. The name referred to the complexity of this massive fire hazard. By the beginning of 1873 the bee-hive was already notorious, a setting for spectacles and even scandals. In January 1873, the Turners Falls Reporter published a cryptic note, probably for its value as a pun, in its “Local Matters” column: “Sweet Home—the ‘bee-hive’ on L Street.”

In 1875, the Greenfield Gazette and Courier reported on one of the scandals in the bee hive. In December the paper reported that a conductor on the Connecticut River Railroad had arrested “a woman on his train dressed in men’s clothes.” The article continued:

Sure enough, there was among the passengers an individual with long hair (parted in the middle) and smooth, fair face, that would have passed anywhere for a female, notwithstanding the fact that she wore a slouched hat, pants and circular coat. The supposed female was escorted to the jail, persisting the while, in a feminine way, that she did not know why she should be arrested. When the charge was made and she was thrust into a cell, she demanded an examination, and in a moment proved that the conductor and the others had been badly sold, and was therefore at once set at liberty. The young man was bound for Turners Falls. Pass him along.

A couple weeks later, the paper followed up on the story with a note in the “Turners Falls” column:

The wandering hermaphrodite, lately arrested on a Greenfield train, was a wonder while it stayed, finally leaving Thursday, after having spent several days in the French “bee-hive,” on L street, and making quite a sum telling fortunes. The probable solution of the case is that the creature has worked for the past three years in a Chicopee mill, dressing as a woman, and being known as such by some of the French people now at the Falls, and that it has donned the male attire to see the world. He gave her name as Mary Tissier, child of Chas. Tissier of Hinsdale, and said she was going home to Middlefield, though she left word to have his clothes sent to George Gordon at Holyoke. She said it had been married and left its husband.
The paper was insensitive in its humor, but the story underscored local stereotypes of French Canadian immigrants as exotic. Tissier added to this exoticism by working as a fortuneteller; she added to the carnivalesque atmosphere of the place.

Bagnall criticized drunkenness and violence, but he was careful not to condemn Germans, Irish, French, or Bohemians as groups. He frequently reported drunken brawls vaguely and anonymously. In August 1877, for example he reported, “There was a free fight in the alley between Third and Fourth streets, last Sunday evening. On the previous Sunday there was also a fight at the same place. No arrests.” Occasionally, neighborhoods could give an indication of ethnicity, particularly L Street and “the Patch,” or the “South End.” Early in the village’s history, the Sand Patch, or simply the Patch, acquired a reputation as a rough part of town. Like Patches in Brattleboro and Bellows Falls, the neighborhood in Turners Falls was predominantly Irish, and reports of liquor sellers, fighters, or other rowdies did not need to be identified as Irish.

Because the Patch was predominantly Irish, people like Bagnall, as well as residents of adjoining parts of town, looked at it with some trepidation. It early became notorious for lawlessness. For example, the following news item needed no comment: “Philip Shanahan, of the Patch, was fined $10 and costs by Judge Davis, for selling liquor to a child last week.” Further, in July 1878, Bagnall reported, “A precious band of youthful robbers has come to grief on the Patch.” He reported that John O’Brien, a grocer on G Street, the main street of the neighborhood, had missed money from his till, and was on the lookout for robbers. When the robbers returned to steal money again, “Constable Morrison” arrested them. Bagnall reported, “The names and ages of the young hopefuls arrested are: Thomas Carey, 10; Jeremiah Shehan, 11; Timothy Callahan, 13. Taken before Justice Barton the lads were released on bail, until August 9th, when they will be tried.” In 1886, Bagnall reported that the neighborhood was trying to clean up its image, noting, “The ‘patch’ is to be henceforth known as the ‘South End.’” In 1889, however, he reported the failure of those efforts, reporting, “Montague City complains bitterly because that pleasant little hamlet offers a great temptation to the lawless horde of the ‘patch,’ who every year raid on the gardens and fruit, and spread terror in their path.”
Alcohol-related crimes and street fights were by no means confined to the Irish, although when Bagnall reported names they were more inclined to be Irish or German than French or Bohemian. In the 1870s and 1880s, there were few Irish-owned saloons; rather, most of the saloons were either German or Yankee-owned (out of nineteen saloon keepers or employees of the same, six were from New England, eight were German, two were Irish, two were French Canadian, and one was English). Bagnall was torn in his reporting of alcohol. He was never a temperance advocate, and indeed objected to crusaders perhaps more forcefully than drunks. He recognized that German and Irish immigrants particularly enjoyed drinking and that there was nothing unhealthy about friends sharing the occasional “bumper of beer.” His early experience with Addington Welch left him suspicious of what he called “temperance fanatics.” He stressed this point in a brief comment about Ira Sankey, the associate of Dwight Moody, who ran a school near Turners Falls in Northfield: “Sankey, the saint, steps up to the bar and quaffs his lager like the sinners.” Still, he recognized the dangers of drinking, and reported incidents of drunkenness with his characteristic sarcastic humor. In June 1877, for example, he reported,

A young man, crazed with liquor, stripped off all his clothing, except his shirt, and turned into bed along with the pigs in C. A. Davis’s sty, on Monday night. Presently, the little pigs disturbed the transient lodger, and he commenced throwing them out over the hog-pen fence, when the old sow objected, turning upon the intruder with great ferocity, and placing his life in imminent danger. The racket attracted Mr. Davis, upon whose arrival the crazy man started on a swift run, bounding through the brush and over broken bottles and other rubbish in vicinity of the barn. He was finally captured and taken in a blanket to his boarding place. Having no idea idea of where he disrobed, he lost his clothes, boots, stockings, hat and all. His feet were badly lacerated in traveling over the broken glass. Hard work and too much liquor had turned the poor fellow’s head.

Bagnall objected not so much to drinking as to the violence and rowdiness that it caused. He consistently railed against fighting, and campaigned for police to crack down on the problem. When he reported names of combatants in street fights, those names were more commonly Irish than German or French. In November 1877, for example, he reported, “A man named McNamara got into a quarrel with John Butler, about a woman, it is said, and he pounded Butler severely, cutting a three-inch gash in his head. Dr. Coy dressed the wound.” Fighting and drinking were not limited to men, for in 1878, Bagnall humorously reported a fight between two women,
comparing one of the combatants to John C. Heenan, the “Benicia Boy,” a bare-knuckle heavyweight boxing champion who had died a few years before:

Kate Moran came up town the other day with a pair of eyes that looked like holes burned into an ironing blanket, as though she had run against something kind of sudden. She was mad, too; mad!—you bet she was mad! And as she flounced along with her Sunday-go-to-meeting tie back on, toward the police court, she muttered lots of things that wouldn’t rhyme with “Now I lay me down to sleep,” “Meet me at Heaven’s Gate,” or “There is a land that is fairer than this.” Arrived before the justice, Kate was prepared to get even with the generous doner [sic] of that beautiful pair of varigated [sic] peepers, who, she announced, was no other than Norah Strahan, who, all the villagers will admit, can do that business with a thoroughness and grace that would have won admiration from even the late lamented Benecia [sic] Boy. But Norah had a little to say, and a little tale to tell. She said that Kate and a married man were doing something naughty, and she thought it would be the right thing to inform the man’s wife of the existing state of affairs, but Kate objected to meddling on the part of the outsiders and attempted to chastise Norah, but the latter wouldn’t play the programme as it was arranged, hence those black eyes and the visit to the court room. So the story goes, as it is made up from the statements of all parties, and Justice Barton has sent up Norah under bonds to a higher court.  

By pointing out that Moran went “up town,” Bagnall suggested that she started in the Patch.

Bagnall’s humor perhaps did not do justice to the fact that Turners Falls was becoming a rough town, and one that people in other towns looked at with some fear. Massachusetts did not have a prohibition law, and Montague licensed saloons, but this was not enough to prevent illegal sales, either by unlicensed sellers or on Sundays. In the 1870s, the village was still forming, and by the middle of the 1880s, it had reached a level of maturity, and Bagnall recognized that the problem needed serious attention. He also recognized that drinking and fighting damaged the village’s reputation. In 1886, he waged a battle against saloonkeepers independently of any temperance organization. Saloonkeepers had become too powerful politically and had become too selfish. For Bagnall the issue was much the same as his gripe against the Irish clergy and even labor unions: a group that combines in order to “run town or city politics” subverts the democratic process. In April 1886, he reported, “many saloon keepers marvel at the change of sentiment of the public against saloons, which is everywhere noticeable.” The public, he pointed out, had “once looked kindly upon a man who would take out a license and live up to it, as a remedy for the evil of the unlicensed hell-hole.” But saloon owners had become selfish, and
“as soon as they got a foothold they entered into politics and strove to elect men to places who
would favor them, as against every other business.” Bagnall continued,

Any combination of men, whose object is mere selfishness, which is invariably so with
the saloon interests, is extremely dangerous to the welfare of the community, and creates
intense distrust among all other classes. If the saloon element would keep out of politics,
live up to the license laws, and attend to their own business the same as a dry goods
merchant attends to his, the total abstinence people would not have so many allies. The
indications are that the State is tending toward prohibition again, and the saloon people
may thank their own meddling in politics for it. 145

The reason for Bagnall’s change in attitude was unlicensed or “free” rum. Saloonkeepers were
licensed but rum was not.

Bagnall’s campaign for stricter enforcement of license laws was not moralistic but
practical. Some roughness and drunkenness was to be expected in a manufacturing village, which
he admitted was heavily ethnic and mostly poor. Rather, he sought to defend the village’s
reputation. Drunkenness and violence were bad for business, and more irksome, they gave
Greenfield reason to look down at its upstart neighbor. On July 21, 1886, the Greenfield Gazette
and Courier commented sarcastically about a building boom in Turners Falls that “somebody has
‘rolled in another barrel.’” Bagnall admitted the Gazette’s point and recognized the “fallacy of
attempting to build a town in a healthy manner so long as the admitted curse of rum rules
everything with an insolent hand.” 146 He wrote that he looked forward to a day when “Montague
will be rid of the evil of unrestricted rum, when the town will refuse to take the thousands of
dollars of blood money from the saloons and allow them to run, nights, days, and Sunday, to
make paupers of its citizens.” 147 Bagnall wrote that he had supported license laws because he felt
they were “best for the place,” but he recognized that problems with liquor were severe enough
that he was starting to favor prohibition. He argued that increasingly saloonkeepers were bullies
and operated like machine politicians. “The patrons of bar-rooms,” he wrote

are “good fellows” in the eyes of the proprietors so long as they keep setting ‘em up, and
turning money into the tills, but let a man stop drinking, whether because he finds it is
injuring his business or because it is injuring his health, and the average barkeeper will
tempt him to break over, and failing in that, will insult him in the meanest and most
brutal ways. 148
Characteristically, Bagnall brought the issue down to a personal level: “On many occasions has the writer been insulted, and threatened with assault, because these columns have advocated restricted rum, and decency on the part of those who deal out the stuff.” Bagnall admitted that the Gazette “is right in pointing its finger of scorn at the village presuming to take on a healthy growth with the mill-stone of free rum about its neck.”

Bagnall keenly felt the critical eyes of reporters from Greenfield ready to point out any flaw in Turners Falls. Saloons, never wrong in a larger moral sense, were harmful in that they hindered productivity and harmed the reputation of the village. Bagnall made this point in a more practical way on July 28, a week after the article above. He reported, “Drunkenness is fearfully on the increase this summer, and workmen are losing their places in the mills on account of it. This is no exaggerated statement by ‘temperance fanatics,’ but is apparent to everybody. The day of reckoning has got to come quickly, or the village will be beyond redemption.”

Closely connected with the drinking was the persistent problem of violence, particularly street brawls and even more organized fights. He reported some of these incidents with sarcasm, and sometimes even took sides, taking satisfaction with an assailant receiving his just desserts. In 1889, he reported,

> Several out of town chaps, with blood in their eye went on the Avenue Sunday night seeking a chance to slay some of the “farmer boys” they might find in their way. These fellows pitched on to one infant, but he happened to be the John L. of the village, and such slaughter has not been witnessed since the battle of the wilderness … gave the impression that he had been collected out of a heap of gore and put together out of the remains of several of the belligerents, so much unlike an ordinary human being did he appear.

Here the fight was a matter of civic pride: out-of-towners misjudged people of Turners Falls and were humiliated as a result. He implied that the young men of Turners Falls—and the village itself—could stand up to outside competition.

Along with these spontaneous brawls, boxing enjoyed some popularity, despite, as Bagnall put it, the “prejudice which seemed to exist in the old bay rum state against any discussion between gentlemen which did not partake of a literary flavor.” Boxing was a popular
sport, especially among the Irish residents. The heavyweight champion, John L. Sullivan, had friends in the village, visited occasionally, and even contemplated buying property in a rural part of Montague. Bagnall felt about boxing much like he did about alcohol: regulated and legal boxing was better than the sort of street brawls that were inclined to take place anyway. In September 1889, Bagnall reported on a boxing match between Billy Sweeney and Mike Burke of Turners Falls. The match started as a disagreement “in regard to the merits of a particular [baseball] player.” Bagnall continued, “Eloquence having failed, the mediation of biceps was all that was left to decide which was in the right. There is nothing that will let a ray of light into some men’s heads but well directed blows from well-regulated fists, and these two worthies were hungering for knowledge.” Sweeney and Burke gathered a purse, “to make it interesting,” and agreed to meet for a match in South Vernon, just over the Vermont line, about fifteen miles away. Hoping to keep the fight honest, the contestants did not open it to the public, but met with only about dozen friends, seconds, and a referee. Bagnall described the fight:

The principals hung their duds on the limbs of friendly trees, pull on driving gloves, and began to manufacture sensational news for the daily press and absorb information as to the truthfulness of the several statements made at the ball game. Burke was a perfect game cock for grit, and his dukes were put up in a scientific manner, but Sweeney outmatched him in strength and quickness. The first blow in the first round from Sweeney’s fist caught Burke under the jaw sending him up like a trout jumping out of a pond after a fly, only to fall like a meal bag on Vermont’s green [soil]. Sweeney seemed to think the best way to educate his opponent was to hit him as near his “think shop” as possible, while Burke believed well directed blows in the vicinity of the bread-basket would soonest convince Sweeney that he was mistaken about that ball game. For eight rounds the educational process continued, with the argument pretty much in favor of Sweeney, when Burke was cautioned by the referee to desist from getting in so much work below the belt, and finally Burke’s dukes fell once too often below the Mason and Dixon line of pugilism, and the referee called a foul, ordered the seekers after knowledge to put on their duds, wash up their bloody faces, get home, and go to church.

Bagnall concluded, “It was cruel to call the mill a prize fight, for bless your dear heart, reader, it was honest!” Bagnall’s humor was remarkable. Far from being judgmental or decrying the breakdown of social order, he eagerly reported the details and seemed to enjoy a fight that was conducted strictly by the rules. Fixing fights, uncontrolled gambling, as well as the game’s “demoralizing concomitant, the rum bottle . . .” gave boxing a seamy reputation. Bagnall was
impressed that the combatants took safeguards to insure the honesty of the fight.

The next boxing match Bagnall reported, in April 1890, was a different type of affair. The paper reported the fight under the headline, “A Disgraceful Slugging Match.” Now Bagnall complained of the “bully and swaggering” that was “demoralizing to the young who would naturally lead respectable lives, if not for the constant example of the roughs who have the devil’s own fascination in the destruction of youths.” Rather than a private affair, like the one a few months before, this fight was widely promoted, complete with “pictures … taken in ring costume. … There was no secrecy about the affair and everybody with ears could have heard of every detail.” Bagnall “warned all persons to keep away from the disgraceful affair, . . .” but still the principals—William Sweeney again and William O’Neill—seconds, and a large group of spectators gathered to cross the line into New Hampshire for the fight. The group never made it to New Hampshire, but stopped in Northfield, Massachusetts, in a meadow in full view of Dwight L. Moody’s “young ladies’ seminary.”

Sweeney and O’Neill fought “24 savage rounds … urged on from time to time by the profanity of a half hundred rum crazed witnesses.” Finally, two constables and a posse arrived to break up the game, arresting about fifteen of the witnesses, whom the paper named. The names were mostly Irish, including McGuire, Dorsey, Mullen, Sullivan, and McCabe, although a few were French, including Morreau and Bazaine. Sweeney and O’Neill fled, reaching Hinsdale before they were arrested. They quickly escaped “for parts unknown, and are undoubtedly in Canada.” Bagnall concluded, “If they keep away from this village, with their unsavory and demoralizing art, we shall have much to be thankful for, and perhaps this all we can ever hope for. They were terribly bruised and battered, and showed evidences of a terrific fight.”

These fights were conducted under different conditions. The first was a small contest, kept private, and held across the state line, and Sweeney and Burke were careful not to let it become a spectacle. The second fight was a racket, and was offensive for the heavy drinking that went along with it, as well as for being fought in view and hearing range of Dwight L. Moody’s Seminary for Young Ladies.
As disturbing as these fights were, the persistent problems with general rowdyism were more troubling. Bagnall increasingly complained that the persistence of rowdyism was due to inadequate law enforcement, and that liquor was easy to get, even for minors. In May 1892, Bagnall reported, “There is a gang of young toughs, all minors, who get drunk almost every Saturday night, and go about the streets with chips on their shoulders, a nuisance to the town. Why are the saloon keepers not pulled for selling to these minors? These things are public facts. Is there not power, backbone or whatever you may call it to stop such nonsense.”

Finally, about 1895, local authorities began to enforce liquor laws more strictly than they had before. By this time village life had become increasingly complicated because of the growing numbers of Polish and Russian immigrants. On July 3, 1895—just in time for the rowdyism that traditionally went along with Fourth of July celebrations—Bagnall reported, “It has been known for a long time that liquor and beer have been sold in a score of places about the village, on the sly, but it soon became evident that a land office business was being carried to a lot of places within a radius of a hundred yards.” The end point of this radius was John La Point’s Bee-Hive. What is remarkable in this raid is that the places there raided were owned by French, German, and Polish immigrants, although police failed to find any beer or liquor in the store owned by Frank Smith, “the Yankeeified Polander…” Bagnall reported the various people arrested:

- In the meat market on L street kept by Henry Robert, a keg of beer was found on draught. Amiel Willett attempted to run up stairs [sic] with another keg in his arms, but was pulled in as a decidedly interested party. John Roberts was also taken under the wing of the officers as being probably an interested party.

- In LaPoint’s block—the beehive—up stairs, Arthur Bessette had some kegs of lager which he was prepared to divide up into five cent portions. …

- William Rouss seemed to have something in his house on L Street that attracted a good many of the old soaks, and not a few youths who delighted in frequent incipient jags. The officers thought they would get there this morning ahead of the procession, and found a lot of lager in bottles and some and some wine intended no doubt for the more delicate patrons.

At court, Henry Robert paid a $50 fine, “like a little man,” and Willett and John Robert had their
cases continued. William Rouss fled, defaulting on his bail, leaving Gottlieb Pfefferle to pay $300.

Drinking and fighting were problems against which Bagnall could rail and that police could fight, but even more troubling were domestic violence, adultery and bigamy, and even rape. While not exactly common—there were only a handful of causes reported in the paper in fifty years—there were more of these cases in Turners Falls than in either Bellows Falls or Franklin. The *Reporter* covered these stories throughout the course of its fifty years of publication. In 1872, only a few months after he started the paper, Addington Welch published an article with the headline “Tragedy”:

> There was an awful noise in the Russell Block on Saturday evening. A man was whaling his wife in not a very manly manner, in one of the upper tenements, when the brother took compassion on the woman and interfered. This made the man more furious, throwing his wife down stairs, and, seizing an adze, made for the brother, but the latter got well out of the way, and the former, in leaning over the banister to throw the adze, lost his balance, coming down a distance of twelve or fourteen feet, and striking on his shoulder. Curtain falls.\(^{158}\)

Welch, compassionately for the family, did not give names. The Russell Block was the Cutlery Company’s tenement house, and workers in the cutlery were largely German or Bohemian.

Generally, Welch and Bagnall reported cases of domestic violence sensitively. Welch gave a frank assessment of the man in the article above: he acted in an unmanly way, and while his death was tragic, to a point the man got his just desserts. Welch was frank, but not cruel.

Bagnall, who learned many lessons in sensitivity, was not always so. In July 1877, for example, he reported that Vensel Pauli was arrested for attacking his wife with a pair of shears. He wrote, “‘Mine Gott!’ said the old man, ‘can’t a fellow lick his frau when he feels like it! Dot’s a funny law—dot is!’”\(^{159}\) The dialect and the suggestion that Pauli was simply ignorant of standards of basic decency suggests a point that Bagnall did not make explicitly, that the problem of domestic violence was largely a German one.

Where Bagnall was least sensitive was in his reporting of adultery and bigamy. He used humor and sarcasm to report what could have been devastating personal stories. He reported
several cases of men who had come from Germany, and Poland in later years, who married in the United States even though they had wives at home. For example, in March 1875, he reported,

Christiana Herte, an unmarried German woman who has been living on pretty intimate terms with a man named Buck for several years, attempted suicide, Monday, by jumping into the river, just because the wife had returned from Germany, to the bosom of her Buck. She was prevented from carrying her design, and now seems to have no desire to do some more. But Christiana has two or three children on her hands for whom she appears to have no particular use.160

In 1882, Bagnall reported a more lighthearted case of one “Anna Sauter, a single woman, [who] possessed knowledge that she would some time in the near future become a mother.” The humor in the case came from the fact that two men were held accountable: Andrew Schneider, “a green German not long over,” and Peter Weissman. Schneider was arrested and held on $400 bond unless he married her, but Weissman was also charged with fornication. In the end, “Schneider could not obtain bonds, and married the woman, when the friends of all parties drank a bumper of beer to the couple’s future happiness.”161

Stories of this type perhaps warranted a humorous treatment. When he needed to be, however, Bagnall could be serious and even sympathetic. In September 1881, he reported the rape of an eleven-year-old girl. The story was brief, and Bagnall was unable to collect many facts. He reported that the girl had showed up at the house of a Mrs. Glover, and had told the woman that she had had been raped. Her dress was torn and spotted with blood, but she refused to file a formal complaint.162 In August 1893, the Reporter reported another attempted rape, this time of “Mrs. Julia Hemmerle, a German woman aged 33 years, who lives on Fourth street, in this village. …” The suspect was never identified, but Bagnall described him as “a young fellow from Turners Falls, aged about twenty years.” Bagnall reported the details of the crime, emphasizing the “savage manner” in which Hemmerle was attacked. Bagnall suggested that the fact that she did not speak English left her vulnerable. He wrote,

The woman was near the Ricker house, and was proceeding along the path on which the water pipe is laid when the young fellow came along and addressed her in English, which she did not understand, recognizing only the word berries, and from this she supposed the fellow was also going to pick berries. He went along in her company until a secluded spot was reached when he threw her to the ground. The woman uttered piercing shrieks
from a stout pair of lungs, which the fellow tried to stifle by holding his hand over her mouth. Becoming enraged at the woman’s outcries, the villain secured a stick of wood and struck her violently over the head and body, inflicting painful blows, although a high had of stiff material broke the force on her head. The fellow became alarmed and ran off in the direction of Millers, which the poor frightened woman ran like a deer for her home. For several days she suffered from nervous shock, but has now recovered from the effects of her terrible struggle with the brute.  

The article was clear and straightforward, lacking Bagnall’s usual sarcasm. Similarly, Bagnall covered domestic violence with a serious and sympathetic tone. Some stories were brief. In 1886, Bagnall reported simply that Martin Neipp had been arrested on the charge of assaulting his wife, but he gave few details. In August 1889, he covered a more sensational story under the headline, “Attempted Murder and Suicide.” He reported that a man named Charles Sweeney, age forty-five, had been arrested in the Bee-Hive for shooting his wife, Sophia. Bagnall reported that Sweeney was jealous of his wife and shot her to prevent her from going out on a Saturday night. Bagnall reported the crime with an eye for drama that he seldom had in other stories. “Failing to persuade her to stay at home,” he wrote,

he grasped her tightly in his left arm, seized a 22 caliber revolver and putting the muzzle close to her head, fired. The ball passed through her cheek, took off an eye tooth and went out the open mouth. He fired again. The shot grazed her nose. She gained strength with fear, broke away and ran screaming from the house. Policeman O’Keefe groped up in the dark stairs to the dark room looking for the wood-be [sic] murderer. A form was moving about stealthily. “Is that you, Sweeney?” asked the officer. The shooter contemplated the operations of the law, and his arm swung up so as to be just discernable [sic] in the gloomy room. A sharp report rang from the man’s revolver, and Officer O’Keefe, believing he had been shot at, pounced on his supposed assailant, and held him with a grasp of iron to the floor. When lights were brought, it was found that the bullet was shot into the man’s own mouth, lodging in the tissues somewhere in the back of the neck.

Sweeney was arrested but allowed to remain in his room for the night. He escaped, jumping out of a window, but was soon captured and taken to the county jail. This was a sensational story, and it would have been easy to portray Sweeney simply as a brute or as deranged, but Bagnall showed remarkable sympathy. He noted that Sweeney had been a resident of the village for four years, and that he had “always bore a good reputation, and so has his wife.” He had recently been ill and in a doctor’s care, and that “probably accounts for the crime in some way immediate or remote.” Both Charles and Sophia were under doctors’ care and neither was “in danger of
Finally, the postscript of this story was humorous. Charles was indicted, but in November was released on bail while a new indictment was drawn up. The indictment was faulty, because “Sweeney was not his real name, nor Sophia that of his wife. They were merely English terms approaching the French names in sound."

Both the attempted rape of Julia Hemmerle and the attempted murder of Sophia Sweeney illustrated some of the perils of daily life in Turners Falls. Problems with language complicated matters, for Hemmerle, whose inability to understand English made her vulnerable, and for the Sweeneys, whose real names were obscure. The Sweeney case would have been frightening if Sweeney had not been a bad shot, but the story was still troubling. By the 1890s, Bagnall expressed an increasing sense of dismay at the violence in the village. Domestic violence and rape were particularly troubling. Taken individually, the stories suggest that Turners Falls was a violent and dangerous place. While the stories were sensational, Bagnall would have admonished observers that to remember that, by and large, the village was quiet and orderly. At least that was how he wanted to present the village to the outside world. By 1900, Bagnall had come to terms with the fact that Turners Falls was a small, manufacturing village and not an incipient city. Finally, at the end of 1901, the village was the scene an attempted mass murder, and successful double murder, that shook Bagnall’s vision of the community. In the aftermath of the murder, he wrote, “It is a black day for an unusually quiet and orderly manufacturing village.”

On January 1, 1902, the lead story of the paper ran with the headline, “Terrible Day for Turners Falls.” Bagnall reported the murder simply:

Louis Bitzer, doing business under the name of M. L. Bitzer, in Starbuck’s block on Avenue A, shot and instantly killed his young woman clerk, Miss Ida Columbe, aged 18 years, at about 10 o’clock, yesterday morning, then sat down at his desk and wrote this statement on a piece of wrapping paper:

While Ida and I were packing holiday goods, I accidentally discharged a pistol and hit the dear girl in the temple. This accident is more than I can bear, and rather than stand trial, I would prefer to die, and it is better that my family go with me. O God, don’t blame for doing this.

Bitzer closed the shop and “hurried through the alley bareheaded … to his home.” Bagnall
continued,

He rushed upstairs revolver in hand, and shot the sick boy, Louis, aged 5, as he lay in bed, killing him instantly; then fired at his wife, the ball passing through her nose, then his oldest daughter, Anna, 16 years old, was shot in the head, the wound not necessarily being a fatal one, and then the second daughter Carrie, aged 12, was shot through the hand and lobe of the ear. Having killed outright his clerk and young sick son and wounding apparently fatally, all the rest of his family, he started down stairs to his mother, when the Lutheran minister, Rev. A. Faust, held him and turned him back into his home.

By the time the sheriff, a selectman, and a constable arrived, “they found him embracing his wife, and both were in a flood of tears.” Bagnall noted that the authorities learned of the shooting of Columbe only after they had lodged Bitzer in jail.

Bagnall tried to make sense of the crimes. He accepted Bitzer’s motive at face value, that he had accidentally shot Columbe and then panicked. He recognized the trouble understanding the deed. He doubted that Bitzer was insane noting, “That the fellow was ‘off his nut’ would perhaps be a fact better than to call it insanity.” He cautioned his readers about putting too much stock in speculation about “what got him into a fool streak, . . .” writing that there were “a thousand different guesses . . .” and all “had a kernel of truth perhaps. . . .” The most sensible bit of logic, he noted, was “an Hibernicism [that] if the girl clerk had never been in the store she would not have been shot there.” Bagnall noted that there was much conflicting information and opinion. Bitzer did not have a reputation for being a drinking man: he consumed no more than a glass of beer in the evening. “On the other hand,” Bagnall reported, “it is stated that he has had sleepless nights and had been drinking at home rather heavily.” Similarly, some suggested that financial problems had driven him to desperation, but Bagnall attested that he had never “shown over anxiety about paying his bills, . . .” but noted, “few men would care to express their opinion that the matter of indebtedness would so turn his head as to cause him to commit wholesale murder.” Bagnall concluded that ultimately the facts would not be known until Bitzer was tried. He wrote, “there was a volcano in that quiet, almost morose, timid appearing young man, that suddenly exploded with such terrific violence.”

Two weeks after the shooting, the Reporter noted briefly that Mrs. Bitzer and her
daughter, Carrie, were recovering, and that Anna was too, although she still had a bullet lodged in her head. The following week, the paper reported that the District Court at Greenfield had held a preliminary hearing. The defense attorney moved for dismissal, claiming insufficient evidence. Bagnall reported the results of the autopsy, stating that Ida Columbe had been shot from behind while she was at the sink combing her hair. He anticipated that the case would be straightforward, not needing to decide whether or not Bitzer committed the shootings but the degree to which Bitzer was “morally at fault for the greatest tragedy the county has ever witnessed.” Bagnall warned, “It is … useless to speculate on the degrees of insanity or the possible saneness of the man. …” By now the paper showed considerable sympathy for the man. He concluded, “In any light, the public generally has sympathy for the poor fellow behind the bars, and regret that anything of the kind should have happened, no matter from what cause, and there can be no question that anguish now rests terribly heavy on the unfortunate man’s heart.”

The story concluded with little public drama. At the beginning of March, Bitzer was examined for sanity and judged fit to stand trial. On March 18, he was arraigned and entered a plea of not guilty. In December, however, he pleaded guilty to the charge of second-degree murder for the death of Ida Columbe and received a life sentence. He made the same plea for the death of his son, but the case was placed on file because Bitzer had already been sentenced. The victims had faded out of the story by the end.

The Bitzer story was the worst tragedy to strike Turners Falls, at least in the period of this study. It is remarkable in that it was not an ethnic story. Both Louis and Carolina Bitzer had been born in Germany, and they lived on Third Street in the center of Turners Falls’s German community. Ida Columbe was French Canadian, and the Reporter noted that she had been to Mass at St. Anne’s before work the day of her death. By 1902, the Germans, Irish, and French Canadians were the village’s old population. The Massachusetts census for 1905 suggested that the village was not only receiving an influx of Polish immigrants, but that there was actually a turnover in the population, with people in the older immigrant groups leaving the village.

The first references in the Turners Falls Reporter to Polish immigrants in Turners Falls
were in 1890, and Bagnall’s first impression was more negative than anything he had admitted to in regard to the other groups. He followed the popular stereotype of the Polish as stupid and barely civilized. In September 1890, he joked simultaneously about the Poles and the state of Yankee town meeting politics:

A dignified delegation of the solid farmers of Deerfield, went to Mr. Clapp, the extensive dealer in cheap foreign help, and asked to look over his stock. They looked them over with critical eyes, and picked out three of the stupidest, ill-looking crawling, ill-natured, vindictive specimens of humanity that one would ever hope to see. “These will do,” said the party; “we are looking for something that will do for a board of cheap selectmen, and these seem to fill the bill.”

Soon, Bagnall was reporting incidents that backed up the stereotypes. A month after he published this article, he reported, “Jean Pucko, a Polander, was arrested for adultery and bastardy with Victoria Diebel, and the case was continued till November 1st. Pucko was put under $200 bonds.”

The *Reporter* was highly critical of the Polish immigrants for more than the first decade they lived in Turners Falls. Stories of fights, drunkenness, disturbances of the peace, and domestic violence dominated coverage of the Poles. Turners Falls was already noted for its problems with saloons and violence, and from Bagnall’s perspective at least, the influx of Poles made the problems worse. Germans and Bohemians had been important residents of Turners Falls’s from the start, and Bagnall did not have a problem with them. But Poles seemed more foreign and less civilized. In August 1891, for example, he reported, “A lot of Polanders had a kitchen dance, Saturday night, which continued in Sunday, and complaint was made that they raised hell generally. The officers are struggling to make the names fit the men wanted.” In September 1894, Bagnall again took a swipe at Polish names while demeaning the immigrants more generally:

Frank Smith, a Polander who does not believe in ski’s and ky’s, got drunk, as is his custom, Saturday night, and fell asleep in company with Joe Dessotell. In the morning he missed $7, and made complaint against his chum Joe, whom he suspected of nimble fingers. At the hearing, this morning, Joseph was fined $5, the amount net that plain Frank Smith without the ski, concluded he had been deprived of after crediting Joe with $2 returned before the issue of the complaint.
In a village where fights and domestic violence were common the Poles seemed particularly brutal. On February 6, 1895, for example, Bagnall reported the story of a “Polander” who had left a sick companion in the cold to die. Bagnall reported,

A Polander named John Rymkerei, aged 40, who was sick at the house of another Polander named Andrew Skvoron, was thrown out on the street Sunday night and left there to die. The unfortunate man was found by Mrs. Fessler and taken in for shelter, until the police could be notified. The overseers of the poor ordered the man taken to the lockup where he died, evidently on account of exposure.\textsuperscript{175}

Bagnall reported the Skvoron’s court appearance in March, showing his inability to grasp Polish names: “Andrew Skororn was before Justice Dana, Thursday, charged with turning John Renkinwize, who was sick, out in the street one night last February, where he was found nearly frozen.”\textsuperscript{176} Bagnall continued, reporting that a detective had been unable to gather evidence, and the trial would be postponed accordingly.

Polish celebrations, whether with formal events such as weddings or simply informal occasions of blowing off steam frightened and disgusted Bagnall. When German, French Canadian, or Irish residents drank or caroused, Bagnall did not identify them specifically by their ethnic background, but he usually identified “Polanders” specifically, and sometimes omitted the offender’s name. In March 1895, for example, he reported, “On Wednesday night, three Polanders hired a team, got drunk and drove about the streets enjoying themselves in a most noisy manner and creating quite a disturbance. They were arrested and taken before Justice Dana who fined them each $10, which they paid.”\textsuperscript{177} In January 1897, Bagnall reported dryly that Russian Poles were celebrating New Years, a “holy time,” and that there had been “many arrests.”\textsuperscript{178} In August 1900, Bagnall reported, “A Polish wedding celebration, which was held in the Hibernian block, Saturday night, terminated in the usual manner, for all hands got more or less drunk.”\textsuperscript{179}

Bagnall dwelled on this sense of incorrigibility, portraying the Poles as fundamentally predisposed to drinking and fighting. Bagnall made this point clear in another article in the same issue of the \textit{Reporter} as the article above. Under the headline, “Poland in Arms,” he reported, “’There was a hot time’ in the Polander colony on L street, ‘in the witch hours’ of Thursday
night, but this time tongues and fists were not the only weapons used, and a sharp knife was called into requisition by one of the parties in the affray.” Bagnall reported that “Frank Gesing and his better half” were attacked by John Kaulpi. The cause was not apparent. Bagnall put it,

The trio got into troubled [sic], Thursday night, for nobody knows what, for a fuss or fight is more essential to a Polander’s happiness any time than square meal, and fights are of such frequent occurrence in that part of L street where the sons of Poland most do congregate, that they cause little excitement even in a place where a howling dog is amply sufficient to draw a crowd. Mrs. Gesig [sic] is supposed to have whacked Kaulpi on the head with a stick, and he retaliated by stabbing not only the lady, but her husband.180

Frank Gesing, or Gesig’s, wounds were severe, for he suffered a punctured artery. The incident was frightening by any standard, but Bagnall’s callous assessment of Polish character was remarkable.

Finally, in May 1903, Bagnall attempted a more substantive critique of the Polish, accusing Polish farmers of undercutting Yankees and essentially destroying the local agricultural economy. In a front-page editorial, Bagnall wrote,

Thrifty farmers that once employed from half dozen hands up, now have to put up with such job lots of humanity as they can get, the halt, the blind, the cranks and the good-for-nothings that have been shoved from post to pillar all the days of their lives. Some help is offering, but it is the yellow dog variety that no one wants and is taken only because of necessity. It is all very nice to say that the farmers should pay better wages. They cannot and live. No one will pay a cent more for their produce on account of increased labor cost, in fact the farmer is obliged to take less for his goods than ever before, because the Polish farmers, everywhere now in evidence, are underselling them at every point.181

He offered examples of local vegetable farms that had been “seeded down because no one will pay the extra cost of production.” He argued that Polish farmers were able to work more cheaply than native ones: “It will be found that the Poles, who have bought farms, work well and dilligently [sic] for themselves, live cheaply and can and do undersell any and every farmer who has been raised to live well, and employ help at good wages.”182 Farms in New England, Bagnall asserted, were at a point of crisis, as old Yankees were being driven out of the business. He wrote, “How will it be when the food supply runs short? We shall then have to import lots of Poles, sell them the farms, and insist that they shall not employ help as that would raise prices of food, and of course we must all have food.” Bagnall’s assessment seems alarmist, but at
least he presented it as a reasoned argument.\textsuperscript{183}

For the first fifteen years that the Polish lived in the area around Turners Falls, they were singled out for condemnation, for what seemed to be their inferior personal characters, but also because they seemed to be contributing to the decline of local agriculture. By 1904, however, opinions of the Polish began to soften. The Polish were becoming active in St. Mary’s parish and were moving in large numbers to the South End, or the “Patch.” The \textit{Reporter} noted in July 1904 that the South End was enjoying a renaissance. Bagnall explained,

\begin{quote}
When the village was first started the land below Tenth street was bought up largely by a number of good, old fashioned Irishmen with large families, thrifty and intelligent men who were the best of our citizens, comfortable people to have in a community. Owing to death and changing fortunes of the village, the removal of many good families, the South End for a time lost its prosperous air. But of late years the tide has been turning, empty houses are being occupied, places slicked up, and in a short time the place will again have the thrifty look of days gone by.\textsuperscript{184}
\end{quote}

There were no vacant tenements in the neighborhood. Bagnall noted that Philip Shanahan, the leading developer of the neighborhood since the 1870s, had rented a tenement for five dollars per month for years but had recently started to rent it for ten. Bagnall noted that the family that rented it was “glad to get it at that.” There were two major reasons for the resurgence of the South End. First, the Turners Falls Company was working on enlarging the canal in order to increase the power available for industry. Second, Polish immigrants had started to move in to the neighborhood. Bagnall reported, “Polish people are most delighted with the locality on account of its convenience. …”\textsuperscript{185}

Bagnall finally recognized that the Polish immigrants were in Turners Falls to stay and that they were vital to the success of the village. To be sure, reports of violence and drunkenness continued, but stories became increasingly sympathetic. In 1904, the paper gave a sympathetic account of a fatal accident in the Montague paper mill under the headline, “A Pole’s Shocking Death.”\textsuperscript{186} In November 1907, the paper reported on a Polish celebration without any of the dismissive or contemptuous tone of earlier articles. No longer exotic foreigners, the Poles were now “brethren” of other townspeople. The paper noted, “Our Polish brethren are to hold a
rousing celebration in Hibernian hall, Saturday evening. They will celebrate the anniversary of the uprising of 1830 and intend making it a memorable one. …”

Finally, in 1907, the paper noted glowingly, “The children of Polish parents are all so bright, quick to learn, and ambitious in the public schools, that far seeing people look for a wonderful change in the social and business make-up of many of the towns of this county.”

A couple of things can account for this shift. The Poles had become numerous enough that the paper could not afford simply to dismiss them. They were helping the village grow. Another reason, however, is that Bagnall was no longer editing the paper, but had turned over the editorial reigns to Antonia Stemple. Stemple, the daughter of a German cutlery worker, showed more sympathy generally, but also less zeal in picking fights.

The Polish residents had become a large and vital part of the social fabric of Turners Falls. Like the other major ethnic groups, local Poles gathered in a social club, the St. Kazimir’s Society. Like the French Canadians twenty years before, Poles were eager to have a Polish church, and the St. Kazimir’s society was as active in agitating for a Polish Church as the St. Jean Baptiste society had been in agitating for the founding of St. Anne’s. The society got its chance in 1908, when the Unitarian Society—hardly a growing congregation in a predominantly ethnic and Catholic village—announced that it would close its church, on the hill overlooking Avenue A between Seventh and Ninth Streets. The St. Kazimir’s society bought the Unitarian Church in December 1908 and announced that it would fit it up for a church and turn it over to the Bishop. By the fall of 1909, the Thomas Brothers were at work making the necessary alterations, and in the summer the church was finally dedicated as Our Lady of Czestochowa. The paper noted, “The new parish is very sizeable and as the Polish population here continues to steadily increase, the parish is likely to be the largest in town before very long.” No longer considered an annoyance, or a community of brutes, the Polish were now vital to the success of the village. Whatever success the village would have would be with the participation of the Polish immigrants: they were now as important as the Old Immigrants.

Through the end of the nineteenth century, the paper towns were able to control the
problems of drunkenness and violence. The Poles started to arrive in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls at the same time that the villages began to lose their autonomy. This doubtless added to anxieties over the new immigrants, for community leaders worried about anything that might make their towns unattractive for development. These anxieties grew in the twentieth century, as the mills became part of the International Paper Company, and workers organized into labor unions.
NOTES


6 Hayes, History of Rockingham, p. 617.

7 “Local Matters,” BFT, Sept. 8, 1871, p. 3.

8 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 12, 1872, p. 3.

9 “Local Matters,” BFT, March 6, 1874, p. 3.

10 “Local Matters,” BFT, March 10, 1876, p. 3.

11 “Local Matters,” BFT, December 26, 1873, p. 3.

12 “Local Matters,” BFT, January 18, 1872, p. 3.

13 “Local Matters,” BFT, August 26, 1880, p. 3.

14 “Local Matters,” BFT, June 11, 1885, p. 3.

15 Letter to the Editor, BFT, October 11, 1888, p. 3.

16 “Local Matters,” September 23, 1880, p. 3.


18 “Local Matters,” BFT, Jan. 3, 1882, p. 2;


20 Census returns show a William Crowley in this period in Keene, New Hampshire, twenty miles south of Bellows Falls. The son of an Irish railroad laborer, he is listed in 1880 living in Keene and working as a brakeman. By 1900, he is listed in Hartford, Connecticut, working as a salesman. Census records from 1860, when he was four years old, show that he had an older brother, Dennis. In 1891, a Dennis Crowley was arrested in North Walpole on the
charge of selling beer.


24 “TALES OF THE TOWN. Manufactured by the yard and chopped off to fill space,” August 10, 1893, p. 7.


27 Ibid.


29 “Talk About Town,” August 9, 1894, p. 6.


31 Ibid.

32 “Italian Feud Ends,” BFT, April 5, 1901, p. 8.


40 “POLANDER BADLY BURNED. Narrow Escape from Serious Fire Over the Surprise--Quick Telephoning and a Little Water Removed Danger--Intoxicated Polander Burned about Legs,” BFT, March 14, 1907, p. 1.


42 Ibid.

“THE MILL WORKERS. Franklin would be a Dull Place without them. Timely thoughts on Influence of the Factory,” FJT, April 5, 1901, p. 1.


“Strike is now in Full Force. IP Mills Down for an Indefinite Period,” BFT, Aug. 6, 1908, p. 1.


“A Young Scapegrace,” MJ, March 5, 1875, p. 2.


66 FT, Jan. 18, 1884, p. 2.

67 Letter to the Editor, Merrimack Journal, July 6, 1883, p. 2.

68 Ibid.

69 Editorial, Franklin Transcript, Feb. 1, 1889, p. 2.


71 “About Home,” Merrimack Journal, March 1, 1877, p. 3;

72 “About Home,” Merrimack Journal, June 30, 1876, p. 3.


74 “Franklin and Vicinity,” MJ, June 1, 1883, p. 3.

75 Ibid.


77 Ibid.

78 “About Home,” March 26, 1886, p. 2.

79 Ibid.

80 “About Home,” FT, Aug. 6, 1886, p. 2.


82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

“City News and Notes,” FJT, April 21, 1899, p. 4.


Ibid.


“About Home,” FT, May 2, 1890, p. 2.


Ibid.


Ibid., p. 7.

“New Mill at Eastman Falls. Contract has been Let and Work to be Commenced at Once," FJT, July 30, p. 1.


[No title], FJT, Jan. 30, 1908, p. 4.


“Local Matters," TFR, Aug. 28, 1872, p. 3.


The Bee-Hive stood until 2003, when petitions by the Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity led to the building being condemned and finally torn down. It was, as Habitat pointed out, an “eyesore.” It was a significant building for its historical associations, but also as a unique example of local vernacular architecture. See the newsletter of the Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, Nov., 2004, p. 4.


“Turners Falls," GG&C, Dec. 6, 1875, p. 3.
133 “Turners Falls and Vicinity," TFR, Jan. 20, 1875, p. 3.
135 Ibid.
137 “Turners Falls and Vicinity," TFR, Sept. 9, 1889, p. 4.
140 “Personal," TFR, Nov. 10, 1875, p. 2.
143 “Turners Falls and Vicinity," TFR, July 31, 1878, p. 2.
144 “Turners Falls and Vicinity," TFR, April 7, 1886, p. 4.
145 Ibid.
146 “A Sharp Dig at our Many Saloons," TFR, July 21, 1886, p. 4.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid.
151 “Turners Falls and Vicinity," TFR, Aug. 21, 1889, p. 4.
154 Ibid.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” May 18, 1892, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, July 3, 1895, p. 4.
“Tragedy,” TFR, Aug. 21, 1872, p. 2.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, July 30, 1877, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, March 31, 1875, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, July 7, 1886, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Nov. 20, 1889, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Jan. 15, 1902, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Oct. 8, 1890, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Aug. 5, 1891, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Sept. 5, 1894, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Feb. 6, 1895, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, March 20, 1895, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, March 13, 1895, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Jan. 27, 1897, p. 4.
“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, Aug. 29, 1890, p. 4.
“Poland in Arms,” TFR, Aug. 29, 1900, p. 1.
“Farm Labor Getting so Scarce that Farmers Cannot Sell Low enough for the Laboring Man to Buy--So Have to Sell,” TFR, May 6, 1903, p. 1.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


“Local Matters,” TFR, Aug. 10, 1907, p. 4.


Sports, lectures, and shows were important to community life as healthy alternatives to drinking and rowdyism, and as shared pastimes that helped foster a sense of community. When the towns were at their peak, they were vibrant, with voluntary associations including Masonic orders and ethnic associations, lectures and shows, and sports. That people could find time to attend and participate in such things is remarkable, considering the long hours of work in the mills, but the social life of the paper towns was busy. Newspaper reports suggest people in the paper towns were eager spectators of village life. They participated in and watched sports. Baseball was the greatest sporting passion of the towns, but newspapers also reported on horse racing, boxing, bicycle riding, and even lacrosse (in Franklin at least). In the 1870s and 1880s, when the northeastern states were in the grip of the fad sport of pedestrianism or competitive walking, many in the paper towns were eager spectators and competitors. In 1883, people in Franklin played cricket for Memorial Day; in 1916 rival teams of paper makers and pulp workers played Gaelic football for Labor Day. Especially in Turners Falls and Bellows Falls competing hose companies in the villages’ volunteer fire departments eagerly competed in hose running races. In 1906, even the construction of the Arch Bridge linking Bellows Falls and North Walpole became a competition, as rival crews working from either side of the river competed to reach the center first. This sort of competition was important to the late nineteenth century standards of manliness, which included physical prowess and character. Competition was also important because it helped unite people. If drinking and fighting were linked to ethnicity and social class, sports and public shows had a much broader appeal. Finally, team sports, particularly baseball, fostered local pride, as teams representing the towns competed against rival towns.
Baseball became popular in the paper towns in the early 1870s. By 1872, both the
*Turners Falls Reporter* and *Merrimack Journal* covered baseball games. Franklin had two
nines, representing the town’s east and west villages (soon to be called Franklin Falls and West
Franklin). By 1875, the game was receiving regular coverage. Once the game caught on in
Franklin, it attracted greater enthusiasm than it did in either of the other two towns. In 1875, the
town supported the Red Stockings, under the leadership of the English paper machine tender and
later mill superintendent, “Jimmie” Ayles.

The first games reported in any of the towns were in Turners Falls and its suburb
Riverside. In May, 1872 the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* announced the Riverside Base Ball
Club had “been organized with J. B. Weston, President, and John McVey, Sec’y. Regular practice
on the afternoons of Wednesday and Friday.” In August the same paper reported, “The Stars and
Lazy Base Ball clubs played a game on the 10th, the Stars winning 34 to 1.” The following week
the *Turners Falls Reporter* reported a game between the Turners Falls Stars and the Shelburne
Falls Federals. The paper reported,

Saturday was a lively day in Turners Falls. The Shelburne Falls Club came to play the
return match with the Stars, and on their arrival every person predicted for them a
handsome victory, for a finer looking lot of athletes it is difficult to find. Their uniform
is very handsome, being a white tunic with a shield on the breast, blue knee-britches, with
scarlet cord at the sides, blue and white stockings, and a red cap with a star on the crown.

About two hundred people gathered to witness the match, and at two o’clock bases were
pitched, and the game started. The Stars skunked the Federals the first three innings,
when the Stars seemed to have confused, and made some awful blunders. One of the
players in the Stars we noticed several times to be rather timid of the ball, and in
consequence gave some some unnecessary scores to their opponents. George McVey’s
pitching was excellent for the first two or three innings, they could not make a score on
his balls. The “Federals” were invited to Mr. John S. McVey’s to dinner, and altogether
got well treated by the members of the Turners Falls Club.

The story, while uncharacteristically long for the *Reporter* (at least in regards to sports),
shows the basic attitudes toward the game. Baseball clubs were attractive in the rough and
tumble of the growing villages because they offered wholesome recreation. In villages where
fighting and rowdyism were common, baseball clubs were respectable. As the *Bellows Falls*
*Times* put it in 1888, “The base ball player has no excuse for being wicked. His occupation should teach him to lead the better life.” The *Reporter* stressed appearance and deportment, the humility of the Turners Falls team, as well as its graciousness. The custom of treating opposing teams was falling out of usage in base ball in general as the game became increasingly professional, but was still important to the small town clubs. The frank criticism of the Stars’ performance was characteristic of reports generally. But ultimately what mattered most to the reporter was the totality of the experience, and especially the civility of the two teams. The fact that the Federals won a “handsome beat” was almost lost in the other details.

Baseball fever was in full force Bellows Falls in 1874 when the *Times* reported that a game between the Actives of that village and the Stars of Walpole, New Hampshire had been a highlight of Fourth of July celebrations. On August 14, the *Times* announced a game that “promises to eclipse Barnum’s Hippodrome,” noting that the players ranged in age from twelve to sixty. The following week, the paper announced another game between a Bellows Falls nine and the Independents of Keene. By the end of the season, readers of the *Times* were sufficiently interested in the game that the paper reported games played some distance from the village. In November, the paper reported that the Jim Fisks of Brattleboro had lost to the Pawlet Stars in Rutland. The following Spring, excitement was such that villagers played pickup games around the village, even in the village square. The *Times* complained at the beginning of May, “The other day a base ball went through a large glass light in O.D. Gray’s store and though an instant before catchers were plenty in the Square no one could be found who knew anything about it. See action of the Bailiffs. The one who threw the ball is respectfully invited to call and settle for the same.” The season began enthusiastically, with a victory by the Bellows Falls Red Stars over the Cambridgeport Unions.

There were two major types of teams: nines associated with clubs and broadly representing the towns, and nines associated with other organizations, most commonly work but also social clubs such as the Father Mathew Temperance Society. Workplace teams could represent entire mills or factories—the Keith Paper Company had a nine in the 1870s—or
positions in the mills. For example, paper makers sometimes played pulp workers or office clerks. Where a plant had multiple mills, as in Bellows Falls and Franklin, those different mills sometimes raised nines. In 1890, for example, the Bellows Falls Times reported, “Two nines from the paper mills played a close game of base ball on Monday, the score standing 18 to 19.”

In 1903, the Franklin Journal-Transcript reported, “In order to promote the rivalry between the paper mills in baseball Supt. W. E. Everett has offered to donate a box of cigars to be competed for. No. 1 team, the team that defeated No. 2 mill July 4, will challenge a team from any of the other mills it is expected.” In Turners Falls, where there were company-owned tenements, the Pulp Block supported a nine in 1877, and the Cutlery Block supported one in 1881. Finally, in at least one instance in Turners Falls, a neighborhood sponsored a nine. In 1889, the “Patch,” the village’s Irish neighborhood, sponsored the “J. O’Neill nine.” In 1890 the nine was reorganized under the name the “South End Juniors.” Boasting of a perfect season the team “offer[ed] to lick” any team that would accept a challenge.

Baseball nines seldom lasted more than a season or two. While baseball was a passion of many in the towns the organization of clubs and nines depended on the initiative of a few enterprising people. While boosters and even mill managers recognized the value of the sport for civic pride and morale, they never tried formally to organize teams. When mills and factories supported teams, managers sometimes supported the competition by giving token gifts such as boxes of cigars, but they did little else to support the games. In Franklin, where much of the vacant land was owned either by the Franklin Falls Company or the Winnipiseogee Paper Company, paper company president W. F. Daniell granted baseball teams the right to use land belonging to his company, but only as a way of keeping people from playing on other pieces of his property. In 1885, the Franklin Transcript published a notice regarding this: “Hon. Warren F. Daniell,” the paper reported, “has given notice that base ball playing on land owned by the Winnipiseogee Paper Co., Franklin Falls Company and himself, will be strictly forbidden except on ‘Ox Bow Point’ otherwise known as the Island. This location is at their service for week days only.” This was not generous as it was simply recognizing an accomplished fact: teams played
there anyway and Daniell hoped to control where the games would be played. Eventually, the city of Franklin would buy the land at Ox Bow Point—which was called colloquially the “Island”—and convert it into a park, complete with baseball diamonds.

Baseball clubs in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls never had to negotiate for the use of land, for there was adequate open land in both towns. Turners Falls nines generally played on open land east of the settled part of the village, on a terrace called “Pleasant Plain.” The Plain was behind the finest houses in the village on Prospect Street. As the Plain developed and land became scarce the games moved to Goddard Park, slightly east of the center of Pleasant Plain. In Bellows Falls, baseball early settled into Old Terrace at the south end of the village. The village’s early teams played in the Basin, on the southwestern edge of the village, but by the 1880s the games had moved to the northwest edge of the Terrace to land owned by James H. Williams, bank treasurer, on what was called simply the Williams Lot, or later Williams Terrace. As in Franklin, partly because people used the field for games and the neighboring pine grove for picnics, the village eventually acquired the land for a playground.

Organizers of baseball teams seemed to choose their names carefully. The more conservative teams, playing for clubs that represented the reputations of the villages, frequently bore simply the names of the villages. The papers reported games between Bellows Falls and Walpole, or the Franklins and the Fishervilles (a village between Franklin and Concord). Still safe and respectable, sometimes teams took names to indicate a superlative quality. Some form of the name “Stars” was popular—the Stars in Turners Falls and the Red Stars in Bellows Falls. Other names represented strength or power—the “Resolutes” and the “Live Oaks” in Turners Falls or the “Rockets” in Bellows Falls. Occasionally, teams took their names from local color. The Bellows Falls Red Stars in 1875 played the Brattleboro “Jim Fisk, Jrs.,” named in honor of the Robber Baron who had lived in Brattleboro, who was buried there in 1872, and whose father was still well-known in the region as a lightning rod pedlar. Sometimes teams tried to sound menacing. The Bellows Falls Loud Boys played for the three seasons, replacing the safer-sounding Red Stars. In 1879 they beat the equally menacing-sounding Keene “Hot Waters.”
The Franklin “Wahoos” made their first appearance in 1878 with a flourish. The *Merrimack Journal* reported, humorously, “On Thursday, the 10th, the general tranquility of this village was disturbed by the debut of the ‘Wahoos’ of Franklin, who invaded our streets, arrayed in uniform, smeared with war paint, and audaciously flourishing the hatchet.” The Wahoos’ bluster soon turned to embarrassment as they lost their first game to the poorly organized “Potato Bugs,” a team whose name reflected their humility and even silliness. Finally, in 1909, in Turners Falls the “American Boys” played the “Maple Street Terrors.” Maple Street was the location of the village baseball park. The “Terrors” suggested a fierce neighborhood loyalty.

The variety of names, even in the same towns indicated a tension within local baseball. On one hand teams represented the reputations of the villages, but on the other, the Loud Boys suggested a gang, or at least spirited play verging on the sort rowdyism about which the local papers consistently complained. The Franklin Wahoos, or for that matter the Modocs of Millers Falls, Massachusetts, looked to the towns’ legendary past, while suggesting wildness that made the teams sound hopefully fearsome. The Wahoos’ use of war paint and tomahawks only reinforced this. Ultimately, however, rowdyism and wildness was not what the newspaper editors wanted to promote. Rather, the papers emphasized sportsmanlike conduct. The ideal teams were disciplined, well-practiced, and gracious in victory and defeat. They served as goodwill ambassadors for the towns, and the editors tried to downplay the sort of rowdyism that already threatened the towns’ reputations.

Not only did the teams promote the good names of the villages, they were also good examples for people within the towns. Good “base ballists” did not frequent saloons and participate in rum riots, or so the papers wanted readers to believe. Skillful play required practice; indeed, the papers reported on baseball practice. In July 1875, the *Bellows Falls Times* announced, “The Red Star Base Ball Club will meet on the Terrace every Wednesday and Friday afternoon, at 6 ½ o’clock for practice.” In 1876, Franklin’s *Merrimack Journal* reported on a particularly poorly played game noting,

The play on both sides was very loose throughout; that of the Franklins being far below
the usual standard. Their friends however will overlook it this time considering that they played with a home club and on an intensely hot day. They must follow the advice of the surest player in their nine, and practice at other times than on the fields of match games. \(^{28}\)

Baseball, as Warren Goldstein shows, occupied a social space between work and play. \(^{29}\) While officially an amateur pursuit, newspapers showed that people in the towns took it very seriously. Frequently reports were concerned with the skill of the players, their degree of practice, deportment, and even uniforms. Addington Welch had shown this level of detail in 1872, when he described the game between the Turners Falls Stars and Shelburne Falls Federals. Welch was concerned with uniforms and the good manners of the teams at least as much as he was with the game itself. Reporters carefully noted the plays of the game, the teams’ strengths and shortcomings, errors, and whether or not the players and spectators. In 1873, the *Reporter* reported on a game between the “Live Oaks” of Turners Falls (the Keith Paper Company nine) and the “Resolutes” of Shattuckville (near Shelburne Falls). The reporter wrote, “The visiting club are a fine lot of young fellows, very gentlemanly, and the usual good playing of the Live Oaks, although defeating them badly, did not ruffle their temper in the least.” \(^{30}\)

Similarly, the baseball reporter for the *Merrimack Journal* covered the deportment of the players and spectators in detail. Franklin took baseball very seriously. The best player in the 1870s and the captain of the team was “Jimmie” Ayles, who was quickly rising through the ranks in the mill until he became a superintendent by the end of the 1880s. His brother, Elias, who also became a superintendent was another player, as were two sons of Walter Aiken, James and Frank. The game was not ostensibly a working class pastime, but represented the population of the town broadly, and even mirrored the power structures of the workplace. Consequently, the game was respectable, and aside from comic interludes like the appearance of the Wahoos, never threatened the standing social order. Newspaper reporters were careful to point out the orderly conduct of the games. In September of 1875, for example, the *Merrimack Journal* reported,

One of the best, because the closest contested, games of base ball ever played in Franklin, came off last Monday in this village, between the first nines of Fisherville and Franklin. The Umpire, Mr. L. S. Atkinson, of Tilton, was a model of fairness and quick decision, and both clubs showed a gentlemanly disposition to avoid discussions and disputes. The game resulted in a victory for the Fisherville boys, by only one extra tally, the score standing at the close 9 to 10. All the innings were played, and the game concluded in
little more than two hours.\textsuperscript{31}

By 1876, as Franklin’s celebration of the national centennial approached, baseball appears to have come under the guidance of the local Reform Club, the organization that organized local celebrations. The national game would figure into the larger celebration, so it was important to see that the game was played in an orderly way. The first “match game” of the season, the \textit{Journal} reported, was between the clubs of Franklin and neighboring Tilton; the umpire was a representative of the Reform Club, the Rev. J. F. Fielden.\textsuperscript{32} The paper reported the game in dramatic detail. Because the game was the first one of the season, and because it started late because one of Tilton’s players was delayed in arriving, the \textit{Journal} reported that the Franklin team had “to vent their pent up enthusiasm, which had already reached a high pressure.”

In the first inning, Franklin scored four runs, but “in the second inning . . . the scales were reversed. The Franklin boys,” the \textit{Journal} reported,

got pretty thoroughly demoralized, and allowed the Tiltons to secure four scores. This gave the Tilton backers a chance to clear their throats, which they were not slow to improve. At the end of the fifth inning the score stood 7 to 4 in favor of the Franklin Club, and both nines settled down to sure and steady work. By superior batting the Franklin Club secured four runs and disposed of their adversaries with one, thus giving them another long lead on the score book. The boys now went into what proved the “bloody eighth.” By loose fielding both sides piled up in the scores pretty thickly and the hopes of a small score were entirely dissipated. In the last inning the Franklins were disposed of in one, two, three order and the Tiltons went in to “do or die.”\textsuperscript{33}

At this point, the \textit{Journal}’s account of the game became increasingly dramatic:

The prospect was certainly not encouraging. Seven runs were necessary to tie and eight to win, and our boys looked resolute. The Tiltons commenced handsomely. One, two, three, four runs were secured, and the Franklins looked a little pale. The prospect seemed dubious and their jollifications might be a little premature. In an evil moment for the Tiltons, however, Pierce endeavored to run home from third, where the ready catcher easily disposed of him and closed the game, leaving the Franklin Club victors.\textsuperscript{34}

The article captured the excitement of the game. In his analysis, the reporter noted that the Franklin Club had “won by a superiority in the field.” The reporter particularly praised the pitcher, Gilbert Fellows, noting that Tilton was “unable to bat” his pitching. The reporter, however, was careful to praise both teams, writing, “The playing on both sides was good, and brilliant catches were made by Jimmie Ayles and Aiken of the Franklins, and Nelson and Tilton of the Tiltons.” As with the account of the game the previous season, the reporter noted, “One
praiseworthy feature of the game was the entire absence of a quarrelsome or bullying spirit. In the most exciting moments of the game, not a word of recrimination was indulged in. The umpire, Rev. J. F. Fielden, gave unexceptional satisfaction.™ At a time when disorder seemed to threaten the town, baseball seemed to be a model for people’s behavior. It showed that people could exercise both enthusiasm and restraint, and channel their energies into a productive pastime.

In October 1876 the Journal reported a more troubling game. Franklin played a match game with Fisherville, one of its chief rivals a few miles south of town, on the way to Concord. Rev. Fielden was again umpire and “Gil” Fellows was pitcher. The game began contentiously when Fellows did not recognize the pitcher for the Fisherville nine. The Journal reported, “It was whispered that he was ‘imported,’ and one report had him from Boston and another from Manchester.” The game stopped while the umpire and nines discussed the problem. It turned out that Fisherville’s pitcher was from Concord, and not a professional player. He was not much of a player at all, for the Franklins made “no less than eight first-base hits . . . off his pitching the first inning.” The rest of the team played no better than the pitcher. The paper noted, “It was a noticeable sight to see ‘Flun,’ the colored first-base-man sail majestically into the air after a ten-footer, only to come down without it, and to be tripped up and ignominiously [sic] spread out by the bold runner.” The final score was a victory for Franklin of twenty-three to seven. The article concluded by praising the deportment of the Franklins, noting, “The deportment of the Franklin club as usual, was excellent—something that cannot be said of all the Fisherville nine, the choleric disposition of the pitcher noticeably exciting the temper of what would generally have been a good-natured crowd.”

The tension in Franklin over the “imported” pitcher was a common concern in early amateur baseball circles. Amateur players lived active lives and were fit, but long hours of work in the mills did not allow the players to practice as much as they may have liked. Hiring professional players was unsportsmanlike, if not, in the terminology of the time, “unmanly.” Of course, hiring professional players reflected badly on teams. Amateur nines ridiculed their
opponents for being unable to win without professional help. In August of 1877, for example, the *Turners Falls Reporter* quipped, “The Greenfield base ballists had better stop ‘chinning’ till they are able to win at least on game with or without their hired players.” Greenfield was Turners Falls’s chief rival in all things, and as the *Reporter* pointed out, the Greenfield club had accused the first nine of the local club of issuing a challenge and then refusing to play. The *Reporter* reprinted a note from the *Gazette and Courier* and commented,

The Turners Falls base ballists are not so anxious as they were to play the Greenfield club. After holding a challenge for a week, they decline the match.—*Gazette*

Please don’t prevaricate so. The Turners Falls boys are anxious to play, but they could not play on the day selected, because several of the club could not obtain a holiday at that time without losing their positions. By the way, Greenfield does not possess a ball club that could stand the least show with the Turners Falls club and there is a good deal of money here to back up the assertion, two to one. The only hope the Greenfield boys have is to hire a catcher from a professional nine in Fitchburg and a pitcher from Northampton. Whenever the Greenfield club desire to play, any other county club, they telegraph to those places for players. This is a fact, and it is impossible for them to raise a home nine that could beat any ordinary club.38

This interchange over basic civility and sportsmanship summed up the entire rivalry between the towns: the reporter contrasted the hard-working players from Turners Falls with the people of Greenfield, who by implication did not work the long hours of the Cutlery and paper mill workers in Turners Falls. Where the Turners Falls club had honest skills, Greenfield could afford to buy whatever it needed. Turners Falls had civic spirit, while Greenfield could not even raise a “home nine.” The next time a nine from Turners Falls played one from Greenfield, the Turners Falls “White Stockings” won by a score of thirty-nine to six. As if to rub salt in Greenfield’s wounds, the *Reporter* noted that Greenfield had lost to Orange by a score of four to one, and, the paper commented, “had it not been for an error on the part of the Orange club, the Greenfield boys would have been whitewashed.” When Greenfield played Athol, the paper reported, “The Greenfield club got warmed at Athol yesterday, 19 to 9. The Mystics did the business. Carry the news to the *Gazette*.39

In the same article, the reporter emphasized his point in an account of a game between the Turners Falls Independents and the Orange Mystics. Orange was a common opponent of
Turners Falls, yet the rivalry between the towns was nothing compared to that between Turners Falls and Greenfield. The paper reported, “There was a splendid game of base ball on Pleasant plain on Saturday last, witnessed by some three hundred people of both sexes and all ages.” The Orange Mystics hired a catcher for the game, Dan Merrill, “a professional ball player of some notoreity.” Merrill won one run, but apparently did little else to help the team, which lost by a score of fourteen to three. The Reporter noted, “the result was highly creditable to the local boys.”

This attention to the “local boys” and the “home nine” made baseball particularly appealing in the 1870s. At a time when boosterism was at a peak, baseball was a unifying force, cutting across class and ethnic lines. The Franklin Base Ball Club included players from all levels of society, from millowner to unskilled worker. While there were specifically ethnic teams, especially in Turners Falls where the Father Mathew Temperance Society raised nines, other teams had people of Yankee, French Canadian, Irish, and German backgrounds. Similarly, the Franklin club was organized by English players, but included at various times players of Yankee, Irish, and French Canadian backgrounds. In towns where there was much to divide people, baseball helped to promote a local spirit.

Newspaper reports of baseball in the 1870s suggested the excitement that went along with the novelty of the game as well as the novelty of the communities. Interest in the game hardly waned over the next fifty years, though some of the excitement of the reporting did.

Players in Bellows Falls approached the game less formally than they did in other towns. Most years the village had organized nines, but there were also many games between “picked nines” and even informal “scrub teams.” In 1891, for example, the Bellows Falls Times reported, “Division office boys are out, for base ball practice between trains, and show up to the queen’s taste. Get up a game, boys.” On April 21, 1892, the paper noted, “Two scrub teams played a game of ball on Morgan’s field, Fast day, which resulted in a victory for both. Score: 24 to 24.” A week later the paper poked fun a scrub team from Bellows Falls for losing to the academy team from Saxtons River: “A scrub base ball nine, under the management of Frank Diggins, went to
Saxton’s River Tuesday and let the Academy boys beat them 33 to 2. How about this, boys?

These terse reports were typical of reporting in the *Times*. Through the 1880s and 1890s the game was informal, and while popular was never as serious as the deep-seated rivalries in other towns. In 1892 the *Times* seemed exasperated that the village did not produce more serious ballplayers. It commented at the beginning of June, “A ball game Saturday, between the men from Flint’s and Moore, Arms & Thompson’s paper mills resulted in a victory for the former by a score of 10 to 2. There is still some life in base ball circles and some players who can find the ball without fanning the air with a scoop-net.”

Such was not the case in Franklin, where the game seldom failed to create passionate interest. Both the *Merrimack Journal* and later the *Franklin Transcript* covered baseball regularly and worked to keep interest in the game high. In 1884, for example, the paper reported with some concern,

> The weather was very unfavorable for the base ball game between the club here and at Concord, Saturday, but it was played however before a good number of visitors. The result showed twenty-two innings for the Conords and three for the Franklins. Considering that the club here has done but little practicing this season it cannot be called in “fighting trim.” We expect to see it in better condition before the season closes.

Two weeks later, the paper ran column with the headline, “The Transcript Would Intimate.” The column consisted of phrases that completed the sentence begun in the headline. One of the items that the paper intimated was, “That base ball playing on Sunday is getting to be a favorite amusement here.”

By the middle of the 1880s, Franklin had two base ball clubs, the Granites and the Merrimacks. Between 1876 and 1878 the Franklin club was undefeated, but in the 1880s the clubs did not have particularly strong records. W. F. Daniell’s permission of baseball teams to use the Island gave the clubs a convenient place to practice, and by 1888, the *Franklin Transcript* was again boasting of the skill of the re-energized Franklins.

Baseball in Franklin was a varied and complicated enterprise. As in the 1870s the town hosted different types of nines, from the formal clubs, to nines drawn from the mills and other workplaces (in the falls of 1887 and 1888, teams drawn from town merchants and professionals played), and youth teams. The club teams had become increasingly formal, with a management
to organize and promote the games. Moreover, Franklin hired at least one professional player, outfielder Jerry Driscoll, who had played for the Skowhegans in Maine. The Transcript described him noting, “His playing is full of life and ginger; he hits the ball hard and runs well; he pulled down a high fly in the first inning with great ease, and he promises to be as useful a man as any on the team.” Driscoll made his first appearance at a game between the Franklins and a nine from Grafton, New Hampshire.

Problems of the 1870s persisted. Even while the games were becoming increasingly well managed, they still had moments of disorganization that were simply comic. The Transcript noted, for example, “Driscoll managed somehow to get out of the way of a crowd of little girls who were watching the game from his position. . . .” Similarly, baseball managers and newspaper reporters still complained of incivility at games. The Transcript complained,

Right here is a good place to say the under whatever conditions a game is played, the visiting club is entitled to the courtesy of the spectators. A noisy mob which greets every poor play of the visitors, every attempt on their part to address the umpire, and every close decision by the latter against the home team, with howls of derision, is no help to the home nine and is a decided discredit to the civilization of the town. We know that the exhibitions given by some spectators, whose noisiness is only equalled by their ignorance of the game, are not approved by the management, for they keep away great numbers of the best patrons from the games, and we can say for the players that they are quite able to attend to beating any ordinary club that comes here without the assistance of any disreputable methods of disconcerting the opposing fielders or the umpire.

Baseball in Franklin was becoming increasingly serious and professionalized at least by the fact that Jerry Driscoll had moved to town specifically to play for the Franklins. Franklin had good teams and took considerable pride in their skills. On July 4, 1888, for example, the Franklins played a nine from the Boston office of the Adams Express Company. The Transcript reported that the Franklins expected a “close contest,” but that the “truck drivers” played surprisingly badly. “At the bat,” the paper reported, “they were simply helpless before Whalon’s curves. With the regularity of clock work they walked up to the plate, struck at three balls, and sat down. . . .” The Franklins’ “fielding was clean and steady,” but the reporter admitted, they “had little to do. . . .” With a final score of eighteen to nothing, the paper commented, “The expressmen came in to do or die, and it took just nine pitched balls to make them die.”
Ten days after the Franklins’ victory against the “expressmen” the nine took on the “Burkes,” a team from Lowell. The Burkes had a professional battery, and the Transcript noted “At last the Franklins have met a club that is somewhere near their equal in strength. . . .” But the Franklins, the Transcript warned, were sloppy, nearly losing the game through errors in fielding, before rallying in the eighth inning when “they went in and batted out a victory. . . .” The Transcript published a detailed, play-by-play account of the game, relishing the jargon of the game, and describing the plays with considerable humor. Writing of Jack Welch, the Franklins’ third baseman, the paper reported, “There was a hole in Welch’s bat and three balls slipped through it and Jack sat down.” The Transcript described the climax of the game in the eighth inning:

In the eighth the visitors went to work and brought in three runs, one earned. Butler started out by dropping the ball in to the bushes in left field, and before it was fished out he had been clear around the diamond. Miskella hit to Welch [third base], who fumbled, went to second on a wild pitch and home on Booth’s base hit past Galligan [shortstop]. Booth stole second, went to third on a wild pitch, and after McGuane had gone out from Whalon [pitcher] to Yeaton [first base] Cull brought him in with a hit to centre. Quill struck out and Jack Cating [second base] took care of O’Hare’s grounder. With the score tied the Franklins came in to see what they could do. Griffin began by hitting a grounder which Butler [the Burkes’ second baseman] fumbled, and stealing second [sic]. He need not have wasted his breath, however, for Jack Cating got his base on balls. Mike Cating put up a fly for McGuane [third base], Welch made a dandy clip to centre and Griffin scored, Jack Cating going to third. He was caught off that base and Manning [catcher] and McGuane attempted to run him down, but Manning muffed a throw and Jack came in, Welch going to second. Welch stole third; Driscoll fouled out. With Yeaton at the bat Manning muffled a ball which rolled off about ten feet down the right foul line; Welch started in; Cull [first base] got the ball, but threw wild and Welch scored. Yeaton made a hit, but Sullivan went out from Cull to Quill [right field]. Franklins, 10; Burkes, 7.

Finally, in the ninth inning, after a series of errors the Burkes failed to score and “the most exciting game of the season was over.”50 The welter of details and colloquialisms in the description of the eighth inning reflects the passion with which people followed the game. Baseball was no longer a novelty, and the details show how much it had become a part of everyday life. Franklin was fortunate to have a strong club that could beat even semi-professional clubs from urban Massachusetts. Franklin’s success at baseball reflected on the reputation of the community.

The town was not always as fortunate. At the end of August, the Franklins played an
away game in Pittsfield, New Hampshire, about thirty-five miles from Franklin. The train ride took more than six hours and the players arrived tired and frustrated. “Two of the players in two of the most important positions in the nine,” the Transcript reported, “came on the field in a disgraceful condition.” The paper complained that the umpire addressed the Franklins “in his usual bite-your-head-off style.” The Franklins’ fielding was slopping and they seemed unable to hit the ball. “Old Reliable Driscoll” had three hits, helping a teammate score, but was unable to make up for the problems of the rest of the team. The game turned comic as the Franklins had to endure the teasing of the Pittsfields. The Pittsfields’ shortstop, a man named Muzzey, relentlessly teased his opponents, shouting to the Franklins at one point, “Won’t some one please hit that ball?” and “Why, you’re hideous, ain’t you . . . when another player struck out. Even the reporter found humor in how badly the Franklins played, describing Franklin’s pitcher Morris Whalon’s attempts to steal bases. The reporter noted that Whalon, “hoisted sail, got the wind on his starboard quarter, put his helm hard down and bowled down to second and cast anchor.”

The reporter tried to find lessons in the Franklins’ defeat. He wrote, “We can at least prove ourselves good losers, and I will say that if ever a club was fairly beaten, with a good umpire and a well-behaved crowd, the Franklins were so beaten last Saturday.” He searched for excuses. “The Pittsfields have five paid players,” he noted. First baseman Yeaton played with an injured hand, “Driscoll was sick and unfit to play,” and the team simply had bad luck. But, the reporter noted, “The audience was a model one, applauding good plays impartially and not disturbing the game by senseless yelling. There were there to see the game, not to make an exhibition of themselves. . . .” The reporter concluded with encouragement:

After all, what if we have lost a couple of games? It is nothing to be discouraged about. The result of the last two games only shows that if we are to win from strong clubs every man on the nine must keep himself in good condition and play ball from the time the first ball is pitched till the last man gets out. The public and press of Franklin are with you, boys, and giving you good support. What you have done heretofore will not help nor hurt you. Let us see now what we can do for the rest of this year.

The Franklins recovered and continued to play well for a passionate crowd. Franklin looked to its baseball club for recreation but also for civic pride. While baseball was a favorite game in all the
towns, neither Turners Falls nor Bellows Falls played with quite the intensity of Franklin. In the other towns baseball was an important part of Fourth of July celebrations, and eventually Labor Day celebrations as well. But only Franklin boasted of a record of beating semi-professional teams. Franklin was the only town to send a player to the minor leagues, for in 1902, Jack Fifield, a native of Andover, N. H. and a veteran pitcher for the Franklins, went to Syracuse, N. Y., where he played for several seasons, and even played on the city’s indoor base ball team.54

Baseball was a community game. Promoters saw it as healthy recreation, and a way of keeping people off of streets and out of saloons. The sportsmanship that the game supported was a model for public behavior. Employers saw games between workers as healthy competition, promoting morale as well as keeping workers out of trouble. Virtue was a result of the competition, and something of which newspaper reporters seemed aware, but simple enthusiasm for the game was more important than any aspect of social control. Employers encouraged games, but newspapers do not indicate that they actively promoted the games, beyond giving cigars to victors. They did not did not actively sponsor the teams, and did not set up and maintain ballparks. Indeed, W. F. Daniell did not give land to the baseball clubs so much as grant permission to use land in order to restrict clubs from playing where he did not want them.

Baseball was by far the most popular team sport, but other team sports enjoyed some popularity. By 1894, firemen’s parades in Bellows Falls included football.55 In 1907, the Turners Falls Reporter reported that a football game between a team from the Ancient Order of Hibernians and another from St. Mary’s Catholic church was cut short by “a lively dispute which arose.”56 Basketball became popular in Bellows Falls by 1906, when the village’s athletic club came close to winning the state title, although eventually losing to Brattleboro.57 Basketball teams in Bellows Falls were much like baseball teams, with a formal club as part of the Bellows Falls Athletic Association, but other teams representing neighborhoods (in 1906 Old Terrace had a team, as did North Walpole, N. H.) as well as other interests.58 The Shamrock hose company of the village fire department had a team, and in 1907 there were teams representing married and single men.59 Company E of the National Guard had a team that competed widely and in 1915
won the state title. When paper mill workers took an interest in Gaelic Football in 1916, the paper quoted a player comparing the game to basketball: ‘‘The rules are something like basketball.’ They may be ‘something like’ those of the great indoor game, but there are things allowed in Gaelic football which would never go in basketball.’

Basketball caught on in Bellows Falls, but Franklin took to lacrosse. In 1902, the Journal-Transcript announced, “The Franklin lacrosse team will play the Haverhills at Haverhill July 4.” Announcing a match game with the Haverhills for Labor Day, the paper noted, “This is the National Game of Canada, originated by the Indians.” Over several years, the paper reported the founding of lacrosse teams in neighboring towns, including Laconia and Contoocook. In 1904, the paper reported, “Lacrosse is expected to receive a boom in this city the coming season and local players are already looking forward to matches with Laconia and Contoocook. . . .” Lacrosse never caught on as much as promoters hoped, and Franklin remained devoted to baseball.

Team sports were popular because they had broad community support. The competitive spirit ran deep enough that it had an impact on many aspects of town life. In the ideals of the time, competition was essential to manly bearing. Whether in business, on the shop floor, or for recreation, men in the villages were intensely competitive. Certainly, at least in Bellows women occasionally played baseball. In 1891, a women’s baseball team, calling themselves the “queens of the emerald diamond,” visited Bellows Falls and challenged a men’s picked nine. The women won by a score of 33 to 31, but the Times noted, “As an institution for fun it was a howling success, but for scientific base ball it was a canard.” In 1906, the Times reported that the “Bellows Falls Girls” team had played in Charlestown, New Hampshire. These were exceptions, which the Times did not take seriously.

Horse Racing

Team sports were only part of the athletic interests of the towns. Individual sports,
notably various types of racing, were also important. Horseracing was a sport that was second only to baseball in Franklin, though the sport enjoyed popularity in all the towns. Before the 1890s, horse racing was informal, and was looked upon as much as a nuisance as a popular pastime. In July, 1871, the *Bellows Falls Times* noted that village bailiffs had received complaints about “horse racing in the streets,” but noted that the issues was not in the bailiff’s jurisdiction. In Bellows Falls informal horse races generally took place on Atkinson Street, the long residential street running along the western side of the village (at least before the terraces were developed). In July of 1877, the *Times* reported,

> There was quite a crowd on Atkinson street, Saturday afternoon to witness the trot between a horse owned by F. M. Whitcomb and one belonging to H. H. Wolfe, for a purse of $10. It was best three in five and won by Wolfe’s horse in the first three straight heats. We have not at hand the names of these horses which now have a distinguished “official record,” but they will doubtless be heard from “on the turf” hereafter.

Residents of Atkinson Street, however, considered horse racing an annoyance. The *Times* reported in June of 1880, “Many citizens on Atkinson street object to horse racing on their street and have petitioned the Bailiffs to abate it as a nuisance.” But it would take the village more than a decade to outlaw the practice of street racing. Racing may have been annoying for the people who lived on the street, but the village was disinclined to be heavy handed. In 1882, the *Times* reported, “Atkinson street is turned into a race course apparently, and on pleasant days the trial of speed of fast horses, of which there seem to be many here, are both numerous and sometimes amusing.” Finally, in April of 1891, the *Times* reported under the headline, “Street racing,” “Article 15 of by-laws forbids racing horses on public streets.” Horseracing remained popular as part of Fourth of July celebrations. In 1905, the Bellows Falls Driving Club began sponsoring races at a stock farm north of the village that was owned by the Lovell family.

In Turners Falls, boosters saw horse racing as a way of promoting the village. As in Bellows Falls, horse racing was popular anyway, and horsemen raced on Avenue A, the main street of the village. Promoters, however, pointed out that a good driving and trotting park would get strangers into the village “semi-occasionally.” Cecil Bagnall commented about the proposed park, “We think it would be a good thing for Turners Falls as it would get a new crowd
in the habit of coming here, and possibly some of them might drop a dollar by accident, and then we’d all scramble for it.”\textsuperscript{73} The park was built and opened in September 1887, but went out of business four years later. Bagnall blamed the closure of the Farren House hotel, noting the park had faltered “because the horsemen refuse to come to a town that has not ambition enough to keep a hotel.”\textsuperscript{74} The hotel eventually sold, but the interest in horse racing does not seem to have revived.

As interest in horse racing dwindled in Turners Falls it grew in Franklin. The \textit{Franklin Transcript} reported racing as part of Fourth of July celebrations as early as 1884, but racing did not catch on until about 1892. There were several people in Franklin with a keen interest in horses. C. C. Kenrick, a stock farmer at the southern end of West Franklin, raised horses. Hotel proprietor Patrick Kennedy kept a stable of fine horses. D. Ned Davis, agent for the Winnipiseogee Paper Company and later real estate developer, took pride in his fine horses. The leading racer, however, was Warren F. Daniell, the principal owner of the Paper Company.

Writing of the various horsemen in town in 1894, the \textit{Transcript} noted,

But the happiest man of all these is Uncle Warren Daniell, and as you see him come down the bow people would naturally think that it was an old driver and not the ex-congressman of New Hampshire. Uncle Warren says he never likes to beat other men’s horses, but we all notice when his principal is ahead he never holds up and let them go by, as he think then it looks better to be ahead.\textsuperscript{75}

By 1894, Daniell was sixty-seven years old, a lifelong paper manufacturer, and, for one term, a representative from the Second District of New Hampshire. Although still the principal owner of the company, he was able to leave day-to-day operations to his sons and to the mill superintendents, and devote much of his time to racing.

Daniell was one of the chief organizers of the races, but he was not elitist in his interests. He was able to buy fine horses—in 1902 the \textit{Journal-Transcript} reported that he spent $375 on a horse—but he was noted for his humility.\textsuperscript{76} Local papers portrayed his interest in racing as a passion, not as an aspect of class-consciousness. In 1890, the \textit{Transcript} noted about him, “He is one of those genial, unassuming men whom everybody is pleased to meet. There is no line of class distinction that keeps him aloof from people in the common walks of life,” and he
approached racing from this perspective.\textsuperscript{77} Horse racing, naturally, was a sport of the wealthy but the horse owners were not uniformly wealthy. Harry W. Daniell, W. F. Daniell’s son, was also an eager racer as was William B. Cook, who according to the \textit{Souvenir Directory} of 1895 was a professional horse racer, who worked as such for Daniell. But D. Ned Davis was an agent for the paper company, and J. H. Bowen was a porter in the Webster House hotel. By 1902, the racers included C. W. Cogswell, a salesman in John H. Shepard’s wholesale grocery, and Emil Charland, a worker in one of the paper mills.

After Daniell, Patrick Kennedy was the keenest lover of “horseflesh,” as the \textit{Transcript} put it. Kennedy, an Irish immigrant who bought a local hotel in the 1870s, was prosperous though well below Daniell’s status. Kennedy ran a fine livery stable as a subsidiary of his hotel. The \textit{Transcript} described his new stable, completed in the beginning of 1893:

P. L. Kennedy’s new stable has been completed and a visit to it shows that care has been exercised in providing commodious quarters for the animals which Mr Kennedy owns. The building is 65x34 feet, containing five box and four single stalls, a cosy office, ample room for hay and grain on the second floor, all well lighted and ventilated. A look into the stalls discloses the presence of several pieces of promising horseflesh. There is pretty Sadie Splan, foaled in 1889, P. L. K. same age, by Volunteer Boy, which won so many friends on the Tilton track last summer and then there is the standard bred stud colt, Sam Viking, owned by Sam Follansbee of Bristol. Mr Kennedy has a Wilkes colt, three years old in the spring that bids fair to make a creditable mark in the near future. Maud B., Mr Bowen’s mare with a record of 3.05, occupies one stall. Opening from the office is a comfortable harness room and the office walls are adorned with pictures of well known flyers. J. W. Kennedy is the right hand man in charge of the stable. He takes an interest in his work and can swap horse gossip with all who call for a little chat in the new stable office.\textsuperscript{78}

Under Daniell’s guidance, and with the support of Kennedy, horse racing became a well-established sport in Franklin.

Racing was a year-round sport, but was particularly popular in the winter. Racers gathered on Bow Street, one of the main streets of tenements, on South Main Street in West Franklin, and in particularly cold weather on the Pemigewasset River. In February of 1894, the \textit{Transcript} reported,

Local lovers of the steed and trot have transformed Bow street into a trotting course. It has been scraped and made very smooth, giving a track three-quarters of a mile in length, with 40 rods for the start and 40 rods for the finish. the quarters are designated and printed signs request drivers of ordinary teams to keep to the right. By giving attention to
this little matter by a daily scraping our horsemen hope to keep the road in good condition for winter sport. South Main Street, in West Franklin, was perhaps a better spot for racing than Bow Street, which was always busy with people coming and going from tenements as well as teams serving the pulp and paper mills at either end of the street and the Aiken hosiery mill on the eastern end. South Main was the main road to Concord, but it was also on the edge of farmland. C. C. Kenrick’s handsome stable was along the South Main Street “Speedway.” Between 1905 and 1908, racers cleared the ice on the Pemigewasset above the Eastman Falls dam, creating what the *Journal-Transcript* called the “River Speedway.” In February of 1908, the paper reported a crowd of about 1,000 watching the races on the river. By 1908, however, W. F. Daniell was eighty-two years old, and as he aged, he was unable to continue racing with the enthusiasm he had formerly had. Moreover, as automobiles became increasingly popular, motoring gradually superseded older sports like horse racing.

**Pedestrianism**

Horseracing drew a mixed group of followers, from paper manufacturers to mill workers, but it was predominantly a sport for the middle-class and wealthy. Foot races were more of a working-class sport, as was, in the 1880s and 1890s, bicycle racing. Nationally, pedestrianism or competitive walking became popular in the late 1860s. Popularized by the long-distance walker, Edward Payson Weston, who walked from Portland, Maine to Chicago, Illinois in 1867, pedestrianism grew as a sport in the 1870s. In 1879, the popularity of competitive walking reached faddish proportions, and even Weston complained that the sported had “descended to a ‘hippodroming affair.'” By 1884 the fad had almost passed. Weston, who was a showman and promoter in spite of his protests, continued to promote walking, but the *New York Times* noted that the sport had faltered because there was little money in it. Weston continued to walk, completing a cross-country walk in 1909 at age seventy, by which time the sport had largely been forgotten.
The “walking mania,” as the Merrimack Journal called it, hit Franklin in the Spring of 1878. On Decoration Day, the paper reported, “after the ceremonies, a largely attended exhibition of pedestrianism occurred at Burleigh Hall.” Three contestants participated in a test of speed, walking laps around the hall for a total distance of one mile. The fastest walker completed his mile in nine minutes, six seconds. This was a fast walk, though not a run. Contestants had to maintain a “square” gate, meaning had to walk by landing on their heel and rolling to the toe; one foot had to be on the ground the at all times. The paper noted, “The Hill [New Hampshire] Cornet Band furnished the music for the occasion.” Farther down in the same column, the paper announced a “there is soon to be a grand champion walking match for the championship of Franklin, and a prize belt, which is open to all contestants.” The notice continued, “It will be the culmination of the walking mania, and all our crack pedestrians will undoubtedly enter. . . . The Franklin Cornet Band have been engaged for the occasion, and it will present all the attractive features of the previous exhibitions—only more so.”

The championship became a spectacle. The match was organized by Aaron S. Morrison, “who has won the characteristic sobriquet of ‘Second P. T. B.’ by his dazzling and pertinacious career as a showman. . . .” The paper continued, “Mr. Morrison is as judicious an advertiser as Mr. Barnum, and as on previous occasions secured Mr. Kenrick’s four-horse omnibus in which the Franklin Cornet Band were driven through the principal streets, giving a fine concert en route. The band was preceded by a carriage containing Mr. Morrison and Mr. C. M. Mitchell, the champion pedestrian of the State.” The contestants walked consecutively, and the paper described each contestant’s heat. Mitchell served as referee, judging the competitors on their speed but also on their gate, and gave a demonstration heat to illustrate the proper gate. The paper noted, “Mr. Mitchell . . . gave an exhibition walk in true professional style, and although he made the slowest time of the evening, his last few circuits of the hall showed what he could do.” One contestant stood out in contrast to Mitchell’s “professional style.” The paper reported,

There then stepped coyly but confidently into the ring, Mr. Painter Haines, who may justly be called the unknown factor in the contest. It was rumored that Mr. Haines had been in scientific training for some time and had acquired a speedy but peculiar gait. So
his many backers exchanged knowing glances as the “Painter” with modest mien awaited his “send-off.” At the word “go!” he quickly struck into the most ludicrous “dog-trot” which was received with vociferous and convulsive applause. He maintained it, however, to the close of the heat, making two or three very effective “spurts” in the “home-stretch” and “crossing the wire” in the best time of the evening--7.40.

Haines did not win the contest because his peculiar gate. The winner was Warren H. Danforth, who had also won on Decoration Day. The Journal noted, “His gait was squarest and swift, much resembling Mitchell’s.” The article concluded, “The walk was supplemented by a grand promenade concert, for which the band furnished music. Then followed ice cream, etc., and after that adjournment. The pedestrian exhibition was very exciting and everybody seemed to be well pleased with the ‘show.’”

Although perhaps inspired by Edward Payson Weston, the pedestrianism of 1878 had more to do with speed than endurance. This first round of pedestrianism was a seasonal sport, and concluded at the end of the summer season. By the following year, the endurance walking that Weston championed had become the standard. Still held in Burleigh hall, the contest was now a twenty-six hour walk, with a minimum of sixty miles total in order to be eligible to win the purse. The course around the hall, the paper reported, was ten rods long (165 feet), or thirty-two laps per mile. In order to make sixty miles, the contestants had to walk a minimum of 1,920 laps. The contest was open to all residents of Franklin, though no women or children entered. The field of contestants soon thinned as the walkers discovered that if they paced themselves poorly or were dressed to heavily they would exhaust themselves quickly. In the end, only three contestants walked sixty miles. Dennis Healey walked a total of sixty-six miles and eighty laps (a total of 2,192 laps), winning the race.

Pedestrians soon discovered the limitations to the sport. At the end of July, Healey and Weston A. Webster walked in a “grand walking match.” The match was “twelve hours, go-as-you-please” with the contestants taking home fifty dollars each and the winner taking two-thirds of the gate money. Healey and Webster began at a run, covering more than seven miles in the first hour. After thirty miles, however, Healey left the course with a sore knee. He returned after a short rest but had lost his advantage. He finally quit after a little more than ten hours, having
covered just over forty-five miles. Webster won by default, but quit shortly after Healey. Healey immediately challenged Webster to a rematch.

In the column below its coverage of the Webster-Healey walk, the Journal ran a column under the headline “Footnotes,” noting several challenges for walking matches, as well as an announcement of a fifty-two hour championship. Although open to all residents of Franklin, only four contestants showed up. The contestants gradually fell away. Fred Blackburn left the race after thirty-four miles. Michael Gleason quit after 154 miles, “claiming that he had been defrauded in the score.” A contestant identified only as the “Unknown” continued though, the paper commented that he was “pretty well used up.” He quit finally after 167 miles. Only one contestant, Jerry Smith completed the fifty-two hours, walking a total of 180 miles. The Journal noted, “he looked as fresh and agile as at the start.” The results of the championship were disappointing, for there was no real competition at the end. Immediately after the championship there was another race, a ten-mile match between Healey and a man named Taylor of Laconia. The race was not completed, for Taylor quit early, complaining that the track in Burleigh Hall was too small; a fire alarm finally stopped Healey. The paper noted, “Brodeur’s band furnished excellent music each evening,” but recognized that “the walk was not a financial success, as the pedestrians received very small dividends after all expenses were paid.”

Pedestrianism enjoyed one more season, with promoters now selling season tickets. Promoters tried to address the issue of financial incentives by promoting a minimum fifty-six mile walk with a purse of $175. For another competition, promoters offered a billiard table for first prize and fifty dollars for second. The winner of this match was Pat Haley, Denis Healey (identified in the paper as “Haley”) came in second, although he failed to cover sixty miles in twelve hours. With this match in the middle of May the walking mania petered out. Perhaps baseball was enough of a passion for the town; perhaps the incentives were not adequate, but residents of Franklin had had their fill of the sport.

“Walking fever” in Bellows Falls was similar to that in Franklin, though in Bellows Falls it remained popular longer, until 1885. The Bellows Falls Times announced the first match in
April of 1879: “The walking fever which has been raging through the country for the past few months and creating so much excitement, has at last reached this place, and two well known young gentlemen ‘Professors’ Higgins and Raabe, desiring to test their abilities as pedestrians, have arranged a 50-mile match, for $25.00 a side, to take place at Union Hall, Saturday, April 5th, 1879.” The following week the paper announced a twenty-four-hour “go-as-you-please” match, in Union hall (the village’s only public auditorium at the time), followed by dance with music provided by Huntoon’s Quadrille Band. The winning contestant, the Times reported, covered eighty-seven miles.

As in Franklin, managers of pedestrian competitions continually tried to make each competition more of a spectacle than the last. At the end of October, the Times announced the Windham County walking championship. The event was a twenty-six hour, go-as-you-please walk in Union Hall, with music by a cornet band for entertainment. Promoters were hopeful that the walk would be at least 100 miles, though only one contestant reached that distance. The competition became a contest between Bellows Falls and Brattleboro, with three contestants from the former and two from latter. As with walking matches in Franklin, this competition became one of attrition. From the start Michael Dundin, one of the contestants from Brattleboro and a laborer by occupation, had troubles on the track.

The start was made promptly at 8 o’clock, and all began their rounds with apparent vigor except Dundon [sic]. Something seemed to ail him. He acted strangely, made very doubtful expressions, and at times the saw dust would fly out from under his feet like a snow storm, and at other times he would bound like a buck and kick like a mule. This passed away however and next day he was among the most circumspect in the ball and when tired out and his good wife met him on the track with refreshments, it was impossible not to feel a sympathy [sic] for him or her kind act and, for the time at least, overlook the folly of the previous evening.

Similarly, the other contestant from Brattleboro was overwhelmed by the competition. The Times noted, “Tucker did handsome walking but the Bellows Falls boys meant business from the start and he withdrew after walking twelve hours.” The competition came down to the three walkers from Bellows Falls: tobacconist and Prussian immigrant, Adolph Raabe, paper mill worker and son of Irish immigrants, Daniel P. Higgins (his father, also Daniel Higgins, was one of the
referees), and eighteen-year-old Michael Donovan. The *Times* reported,

Raabe found his powers of endurance less than expected and withdrew after 19 hours. The contest was really between Donovan and Higgins who made between 7 and 8 miles in the first hour and were even, Higgins holding the lead a few feet. The next day Donovan took the lead and held it through. Higgins retiring after being on the track 23 hours, and making 82 miles and 23 laps. . . . After Higgins withdrew it was a match against time. In the afternoon Saturday it was evident that Donovan was tired, but he rallied in the evening. As he reached the nineties the interest increased, and still more when he reached the 98th and 99th mile, and it was painfully evident that it was full even whether his would make the 100. At last, he strikes the 100th and a crisis prevails. He has various encouragements in the cheers of his friends and the band, who had been present both evenings, are constantly urged and they give quick and spirited music among which was “Yankee Doodle” and “The Girl I left behind me,” but the girl in the gallery probably cheered him the most; he wavers, his exhaustion is very apparent, friends urge him, he leans for the door into the hotel, rallies, and amid the plaudits of friends he is the hero of the hour. Young Donovan is but 18 years of age and however much the folly of such over-exertion, he has certainly shown good endurance and courage, which are always admired. He has been lame and stiff since, but will soon recover. He is said to be a lad of good habits which perhaps accounts for his endurance. 97

As in Franklin, Bellows Falls interest in pedestrianism started to wane in 1880, but it revived a few years later. In January 1880 the *Times* announced a challenge from George Stephenson, “for a walk of 500 miles, go as you please, or a six days match, . . .” though the paper did not report results of the challenge, if it took place. 98 Pedestrianism enjoyed a revival in 1883. This time, however, competitions took place outside on village streets. Atkinson, Westminster, and Rockingham streets—the principal streets running north and south in the village—form an elongated diamond: Atkinson merges with Rockingham in the north and Westminster in the south. This layout made the village an ideal walking course. The *Times* put it in 1883, “The 1 5/8 miles of Rockingham, Atkinson and Westminster streets bids fair to become the arena of many exciting pedestrian contests. At ten o’clock on a recent evening, two young men walked it, square heel and toe, one coming up to the scratch in seventeen minutes and the other in nineteen.” 99 In the week, two pedestrians again raced on the streets. They were “James E. Bessom, the champion backward pedestrian, and Herbert Ingram, who has won some reputation as a walker. . . .” 100 Bessom, while adding to the “hippodroming” of the event, proved to be the weaker walker, for Ingram completed the walk in nineteen minutes and twenty-six seconds, while Bessom took six minutes longer. The *Times* pointed out that the spectacle perhaps
did not live up to its billing, for two weeks later the paper reported,

A lady in this place walked the circuit, which is the course used for champion walkists, one mile and five-eighths, one day this week in 24 minutes, crossed the streets three times and walked on the sidewalk in her usual manner and not on a wager at all. Many of the walks being newly graveled it was not a fair test of speed; yet she thinks the professionals of the stronger sex are not performing such wonderful feats after all.¹⁰¹

Through 1883, there were several more pedestrian matches. Finally, the Times noticed the last pedestrian matches in 1885, when John Fitzgerald and John Cadigan competed an eighty-five mile, twenty-six hour match in Union Hall. Cadigan “retired” after eighty-eight miles, but “Fitzgerald continued to spin around the track until 10 o’clock with a score of 96 miles and 24 laps.” The last comment of the Times was, “A noticeable feature after the races was the shaking of hands and the smoking of fragrant Havanas by the sporting fraternity of No. Walpole.”¹⁰²

This sportsmanlike civility was important in the towns, where rowdyism and heavy drinking always seemed to threaten public safety. Sport was attractive as a distraction that kept people off the streets and out of saloons, but it was more than social control. Competition was important for the competitors because it was a reinforcement of community standards of “manly behavior,” which included not only competition and displays of power but also moral standards of respectability. Competition within the confines of rigorous rules as well as graciousness in victory and defeat reinforced the moral standards by which people wanted to live. In walking matches, a merchant like Raabe was on the same level as a millworker like Higgins. In horse racing W. F. Daniell, a mill owner, P. L. Kennedy, a hotel keeper, and Emil Charland, a millworker all competed on equal terms. The Transcript’s name, “Uncle Warren,” indicated a sort of deferential familiarity, but there is no indication that this was an issue in the heat of the races themselves. Daniell had the advantage on the speedway in that he could afford fine horses and the services of a professional jockey, but he was gracious no matter the results, as was Kennedy or Charland. Even baseball modeled this standard of “manly bearing.” The teams represented a cross section of local society, and mutual was essential to the success of a team. Team members had to show respect to each other just as teams and spectators had to show respect to other teams. Sportsmanship was a corrective for unrestrained individualism. Moreover ideals
that were important in circumstances beyond the track or baseball diamond. Honor, mutual respect, and competition with closely defined limits were standards that workers expected in the workplace as well as in the town at large. These standards of manliness were important to the civility of the workplace, and as conditions changed, to the development of labor unions.

Lectures and Shows

Residents of the paper towns had available to them a full social life, with lectures, plays and other shows, fraternal organizations, and events sponsored by churches. Bellows Falls particularly received many visitors, especially in the 1870s and 1880s. Presidents Grant, Hayes, Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, and Coolidge all visited Bellows Falls, as did Generals Sherman and Lee, the adventurer, Kit Carson, Jr., writer, Horatio Alger, and suffragist, Frances Willard.103 Franklin was perhaps more off the beaten track than Bellows Falls, but the village notably hosted Oscar Wilde in 1882.104 Newspapers encouraged their readers to attend lectures because they were the most edifying of the entertainments to visit the towns. In 1881, the Bellows Falls Times announced a lecture about “Womanhood in Shakespeare,” and commented, “It is a very common as well as true remark that a ‘nigger show’ always draws a full house. Now if those who make the remark, or think it, would like to see something of a more elevating character successfully compete with the entertainments spelt with two g’s, let them come out to the lecture next Monday evening.”105

All of the towns enjoyed regular visits of traveling theatrical and musical companies. In the 1870s and 1880s, Whitmore and Clark’s minstrel show company visited each of the towns annually, playing to enthusiastic audiences. In 1878, announcing a show in Bellows Falls, the Times noted that the company had performed in the village since the 1850s. “Those famous minstrels, Whitmore & Clark,” the paper reported,

are to be at Union Hall next Monday evening, where they will no doubt be greeted with a host of old friends who have listened to them with so much pleasure for a score of years. Clark always goes on the ground that good sense is relished as well as nonsense, and accordingly they always serve their friends with both sentiment and comic. And—
“Hank” will be there!\textsuperscript{106}

Hank White, one of the leading singers and comedians of the troupe, was beloved in the towns. After the show in 1878, the *Times* noted, “’Hank’ was declared to be ‘better than ever. . . .’” In 1879 the paper commented, “They give a new bill of fare every time, and do so well that their satisfied audiences do not complain of the loss of a few buttons.”\textsuperscript{107} Whitmore and Clark visited Franklin regularly at least from 1873.\textsuperscript{108} In 1877, the *Merrimack Journal* declared the troupe, “the largest and most brilliant minstrel organization traveling.”\textsuperscript{109} In 1882, the Turners Falls Reporter noted White’s talents amusing “a rural audience.”\textsuperscript{110} In 1900, the *Reporter* carried White’s obituary, commenting, “His face—or at least his mouth—was his fortune.”\textsuperscript{111}

Circuses, notably Adam Forepaugh’s, began visiting the towns annually in the 1870s, an event that, like the river drives, was anticipated with both excitement and dread. The papers usually reviewed the circus well, but recognized that followers of the company frequently resorted to theft. In 1875, the *Bellows Falls Times* gave the circus a positive notice, but reported that one of the members of the company was arrested for stealing a buffalo robe.\textsuperscript{112} Almost twenty years later, the *Times* warned its readers,

Lock your doors and windows, tie your dog loose and leave your pocketbook in some safe place next Thursday, for Forepaugh’s circus is coming and there is generally a big following of housebreakers and pickpockets with the tent shows. And beware of the games of chance about the grounds. Those fellows are not running business for fun, and you can’t beat them at their own game. It’s been tried millions of times, and has failed just as often. Buy all the red lemonade and molasses candy with a stick in it that your children and best girls can eat, but beware of the three card monte sharp and thimble rigging man. You would do better buying “corn salve” and “grease eradicator” than by purchasing the nothingness they give for prizes. And don’t try to pick the gold nugget out of the mule’s left hind foot.\textsuperscript{113}

By 1877, companies performing circus-like adaptations of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” also began visiting the towns at least annually.\textsuperscript{114} The shows were part drama, part minstrel show, and part circus, and were usually well-received. In 1880, for example, the *Bellows Falls Times* reported, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin by Anthony & Ellis, at Union Hall, last evening, was a splendid ad satisfying event.”\textsuperscript{115} But the next year, the *Merrimack Journal* in Franklin reported with exasperation a performance of “Uncle Thomas’s dwelling house, sometimes called Uncle Tom’s Cabin . . .” but noted that the house was “crowded with empty seats.” The paper commented,
“This town has been Uncle Tom’d to death. . . .” In 1882, the Turners Falls Reporter commented on the sense of boredom that attended the shows, reporting a performance by the Boston Ideal Company and noting that the audience knew “almost every line.”

But “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was tenacious, and continued well into the twentieth century. The Bellows Falls Times and the Franklin Journal-Transcript both announced improved versions of the show. The Times noted in 1907, “The work of competent players is further enhanced by beautiful stage settings and new electrical devices. Colonel Sawyer’s celebrated pack of Siberian blood hounds is one of the features with this company as well as the prize of Shetland ponies. New and novel specialties are introduced. The street parade of this big company will be worth going to see.” The Journal-Transcript advertised Uncle Tom’s Cabin throughout the period of this study.

These were the major shows that played in the paper towns, but also in many other communities in the northeast. There were many smaller companies as well, which often appealed to Irish or French Canadian audiences. In 1882, for example, the Merrimack Journal announced, “‘They say there is more button-bursting, corset-dislocating, clean and roaring fun furnished by White & Parsons’ Comedy Company than was ever given by any ‘nigger show’ or comedy company which has been here.” White and Parsons’s show was called “Tableaux of Erin” and was a panorama, with comic song and dance performed as the scenery was unrolled. The Journal reported, “Solos choruses, rattling Irish jigs and lots of Irish wit and cute sayings are interspersed plentifully as the panorama is unrolled.” In 1883, a clog dance and song team, the Hennessey Brothers, visited Franklin. In 1885, the Bellows Falls Times announced a team of acrobatic skaters at the village’s skating rink. The paper reported,

The exhibition given by the Powers Bros. at Bijou hall last Saturday was well attended and their performance gave good satisfaction. They give the public something entirely different from any other skatorial artists who have ever been here, including a musical prelude entitled “The Four Dudes.” Following this they gave an exhibition of juggling with knives, balls, burning torches, a fifty foot banner. Chinese umbrellas, etc., also double fancy skating, clog dancing, and their pedestal act.

The Hennesseys and Powers Brothers were of Irish backgrounds, and the shows thus found a
ready market in the villages. Similarly, in 1897, the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* announced a performance by a traveling company of the comedy, “Hogan’s Alley.” The paper reported,

The talk of New York is Gilmore & Leonard’s “Hogan’s Alley” company, which R. F. Outcalt of the New York World has made famous with his colored supplement in the Sunday edition. Manager Fred Colle of Turners Falls has secured this laughing craze for the Colle Opera House for one night, Tuesday, Feb 2, and will present to his patrons Edwards & Coneley, known the world over as Ireland’s Thunderbolts, and their funny company of comedians, in the latest and best of all farce comedies, “Hogan’s Alley.”

Variety entertainment was always popular, but occasionally traveling companies and local dramatic clubs tried more serious fare, including shows such as “Handy Andy,” a comedy written by Samuel Lover. More serious were plays by Dion Boucicault including “Pyke O’Callaghan, or the Irish Patriot” and “Bouchal Bawn.” A traveling company performing “Bouchal Bawn” passed through Bellows Falls in 1891. The *Bellows Falls Times* reported, “J. S. Murphy appears in the title role of the new Irish comedy, ‘Bouchal-Bawn’ at Opera House Saturday night, December 12. The play is written especially for Mr. Murphy and is a story of Irish life, with all the pathos, humor and sentiment common to such plays. The characters are all clear cut and well sustained. Large audiences greet him everywhere. ‘Caed Mile Faltha!’ [sic] to all!”

Similarly, traveling companies and local clubs performed plays appealing to French Canadian residents. In 1883, the *Turners Falls Reporter* announced a performance of “The Malediction” by the local French Dramatic Club. The paper reported that the company performed to a full house. In 1888, the Colle Opera House in Turners Falls advertised “Louis-Riel, or the North-West Rebellion,” about an event that took place in Manitoba in 1885. Riel, the leader of the mixed French and Indian Métis, was killed in the rebellion. The advertisement noted that the play was a “thrilling 4 act drama,” written by Clay M. Green and performed by Frank Martin’s Dramatic Company; the performance included “North-west costumes, Special Scenery, Indian half-breeds, scouts, soldiers, etc., etc.” By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Franklin *Journal-Transcript* reported performances by the Canado-Americain Society, a French Canadian social club and mutual aid society. In 1903, the *Journal-Transcript* reported, “The Canado dramatic club of Laconia presented the five act drama ‘Portefeuille
Rouge,’ in French at the Franklin Opera house Wednesday evening.” In 1906, the paper noted, “The seven act drama Les Pauvres de Paris was given at the Franklin opera house Monday evening by local talent. The play was which was given in French was presented under the auspices of the St Thomas d’Aquain court, No 905, Catholic Order of Foresters. An audience of some 500 were in attendance and the drama was presented in an excellent manner.” In 1909, the Foresters presented the drama, “La Voleuse d’Enfants.”

Gradually, after 1900 movies started to compete with live shows. In November 1897, the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* reported that the ladies of the Congregational Church in Turners Falls had booked Lyman Howe’s motion pictures for Colle’s Opera house. The *Gazette* noted, “This comes mostly highly recommended and is Edison’s very latest invention. Pictures so lifelike that one hardly believes them pictures. . . .” A year and a half later, the *Turners Falls Reporter* announced the exhibition of Howe’s “War-Graph” of the Spanish American War, noting, “The pictures are very realistic and distinct, the war scenes being especially good and life-like.” Howe’s motion pictures were shown in Franklin as early as 1900, when the *Journal-Transcript* advertised a show of European street scenes.” The next year, Howe’s pictures competed with Uncle Tom’s Cabin. In 1904, the Harry K. Daniell Company of the Knights of Pythias presented Howe’s motion pictures. By 1906, the Hadley Company competed with Howe for spectators in Franklin. The *Journal-Transcript* advertised one of Hadley’s shows:

While the program of the Hadley exhibition of moving pictures abounds with new and startling features, one in particular is worthy of especial mention. Mr. Hadley has at a great expense secured a thrilling and exclusive serious of a great Chicago fire, and these pictures will be presented for the first and only time in this city. . . . This series will be given in its entirety and with such startling realism as is only given with the Hadley exhibition.

When Hadley returned the following summer, the paper advertised the show, reassuring the readers of its wholesome qualities, and claiming they were better than Howe’s: “Hadley’s pictures are the cleanest and most satisfactory in every way, and he keeps them moving so rapidly that he shows nearly twice as many as any other company. Don’t miss them this time.” Lyman Howe visited Bellows Falls, at least by 1906, when a storm stranded spectators who had ridden
the streetcars from Saxtons River. In 1915, the *Times* advertised that Howe would show
motion pictures of the Panama Canal and the San Diego and San Francisco Exposition of that
year at the village’s annual street fair. The paper noted,

> Long after the building of each have dissolved like a dream, and the statues and symbols
> have disappeared, and the supremely harmonious buildings have fallen apart, the scenes
> perpetuated by Howe’s films will linger in memory. So compelling and so haunting in
> their beauty are these scenes that frequently spectators sigh with regret that so much
> enchanting loveliness should be so transient. And when the last foot of film has passed it
> is as though there was laid aside a wonderful fairy book full of exquisite pictures, and one
> wishes almost unwittingly that the scenes just witnessed might come back in a dream. For
> they are dreamland Expositions.

By 1915, Howe’s pictures were old-fashioned. No longer were movies traveling shows
on the same circuits as vaudeville attractions, but now each of the towns had movie theaters. The
*Turners Falls Reporter* noted in 1909 that movie theaters had “sprung up mushroom like,
throughout the length and breadth of the land in the past few years.” Turners Falls had the
Lyric Theater, on Third Street. The Pastime Theater opened in Franklin in 1908.

In Bellows Falls, the Edisonian Theater opened in time for the Fourth of July, 1907. The
paper ran an advertisement for the theater on July 4: “High Grade Moving Pictures and Up-
to-date Illustrated Songs. A refined entertainment for ladies and children. Performances every
half-hour.” The theater was in a hotel building beside a flight of stairs that connected the
village square to the residential area of School and Church Streets. In 1909, former paper maker
T. F. Kiniry opened the Grand Theater on Rockingham Street, north of the Square. In 1914, the
town leased the Opera House in the town hall to a company showing movies.

Despite advertisements of “refined entertainment,” movies were a working class
entertainment, and as such caused some anxiety. In Franklin, the proprietor of the Pastime was
Charles H. Bean, a paper mill worker who remained active in the Pulp and Sulphite Workers
Union through the great strike of the 1920s. Kiniry in Bellows Falls had also been an early
member of the Paper Makers. He not only ran the theater at the north end of the Square, but also
at Barber Park, the town’s streetcar park between the villages of Bellows Falls and Saxtons River.
In Turners Falls, the Lyric was in the heart of the village’s tenement district. In 1909, the
Reporter noted village anxieties over the movies. The paper reported, “Of late there has been a
great hue and cry raised over the moral effect on children and others of some of the moving
pictures shown. . . .” The reporter defended the movies, reporting that the anxieties were
misplaced. She (for the local reporter by this time was Antonia Stemple) attended a movie in
order to give her impressions. She wrote,

It was simply amazing to note that these children, young as they were, instantaneously
grasped the point of every film, and saw the milk in the cocoanut before the tree was in
sight. The youngsters understood, too, the most obtuse situations and the fine points of
ethics of all the episodes. They vociferously applauded the hero and heroine and showed
in no uncertain manner their disapproval of the actions of the villain, precisely as though
flesh and blood creatures enacted the scenes before their eyes. It was refreshing to
observe that the triumph of the right over the wrong invariably struck a strong responsive
chord.

Stemple admitted that sexuality was part of the movies, but argued that children were able to
understand the issues. She continued,

It seemed strange, however, that such young people should be able to discern unerringly
the crux in films which dealt with some phase of the seventh commandment or had to do
with the sex or social problem. That they did understand such complexities no one could
doubt, for the laugh and the sneer, the applause and the silence were invariably
forthcoming at the correct time. The small fry entered into the entertainment heart and
soul, and the educational films were of as much interest to them as the more humorous.

Movies may have been edifying, but they were more private entertainments than stage shows.
While even vaudeville tended to receive notice in local news, movies generally had only
advertisements as announcements. But if movies did not receive notice in the news columns,
they also did not receive complaints of rowdyism. The “young fry” in Turners Falls were
enjoying movies at the same time that Fred Colle had to resort to using police to ensure order at
variety shows. Indeed, none of the local papers complained of rowdyism at movies.

By 1915, movies had become an important part of life in the towns. Papers in Turners
Falls and Franklin tended to advertise the movies simply, with the name of the theater and
occasionally the name of whatever film was being shown at the time. Advertising in the Bellows
Falls Times was more elaborate. For the Grand Theater, Kiniry bought advertising space that
sometimes spread over several columns. In June, 1915, for example, the Times ran a front page
advertisement for the Grand listing the theater’s weekly calendar. The week’s movies included,
the “Broadway Star Feature Vitagraph,” “Two Women,” “Wildfire,” starring Lillian Russell, two movies starring Broncho Billy, a vaudeville show starring the Carr Family, and the “Two-Reel Chaplin Comedy, ‘The Jitney Elopement.’” In July 1916, the Grand advertised an elaborate propaganda film, entitled, “The Battle Cry of Peace, or the Invasion of America.” An illustration showed an airplane bombing a skyscraper. The advertisement called the film, the “Triumph of Preparedness,” and “The Greatest War Drama Ever Filmed.” Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the film, “The most awe inspiring spectacular I have ever seen.” By this time, movies were no longer novelties, or simply cheap children’s entertainment; they were now important political tools. They still occasioned some anxiety, for as late as 1924 the local Rotary Club heard a lecture by a Dr. A. L. Miner arguing that young people should be chaperoned at movies and that movies containing sexual or violent content should be banned.

In 1925 and 1926, as the town of Rockingham discussed plans for a new town hall, W. C. Belknap led a campaign against using the hall’s auditorium for movies.

By World War I, people’s taste for spectacles was still strong. Spectators still turned out to watch floods and the ice going out of the rivers, and they still watched sports enthusiastically. Movies had not yet replaced vaudeville; indeed, the Grand showed movies and hired vaudeville acts. Viewers seemed to watch movies more passively than shows: at least the newspapers did not comment on viewers’ deportment at movies. Movies, however, were different from stage shows in that they were more passive, but also more standardized. The “Battle Cry of Peace” appeared in Bellows Falls just as it had in New York and elsewhere. Modern trends in popular culture and consumerism were having an impact on the paper towns, just as they had on other communities around the country. While people still turned out to watch natural spectacles, or to participate in local celebrations and sports, their entertainment was at the same time becoming more national and commercial.
NOTES

1 “Franklin Facts and Fancies,” MJ, June 1, 1883.

2 Lewis D. Rights, “Erection of the Bellows Falls Arch Bridge.” Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers 61 (1908): 259


5 “Base Ball,” TFR, August 21, 1872, p. 2.


7 “Base Ball,” TFR, August 21, 1872, p. 2.


11 “Local Matters,” BFT, Nov. 6, 1874, p. 2.

12 Cambridgeport, after Bellows Falls and Saxtons River, was the third largest village in the town of Rockingham. Until 1878, the village was centered around a woolen mill. When the mill burned in 1878, the village gradually dwindled, supporting for a time a soapstone factory and saw mill. Hayes, History of the Town of Rockingham, Vermont, 371.

13 The Father Mathew Society raised a nine in Turners Falls in 1890, see “Base Ball,” TFR, August 6, 1890, p. 1.

14 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, August 11, 1875, p. 2. The Keith Nine adopted the named the “Live Oaks.”

15 “Local Matters,” BFT, August 7, 1884, p. 2;

16 “Local Matters,” BFT, June 2, 1887, p. 2


18 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, August 8, 1877, p. 2; “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, September 28, 1881, p. 4.


21 See for example, “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, August 11, 1875, 2; “Base Ball,” TFR, July 2, 1890, p. 2.

30 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, August 11, 1875.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 “About Home,” MJ, October 27, 1876, p. 2.
37 Goldstein, 43-48.
38 “Base Ball,” TFR, August 1, 1877, p. 2.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 July 30, 1891
42 April 21, 1892
43 April 29, 1892.
44 June 2, 1892.
48 Ibid.
49 “Base Ball,” FT, July 6, 1884, p. 2.

“Once Again,” FT, August 31, 1888, p. 3.

Ibid.

Ibid.


“City News and Notes,” FJT, March 10, 1904, p. 9.

BFT, August 13, 1891, p. 10.


“Street Racing,” BFT, April 23, 1891, p. 6.

Lovell, 195.


Ibid

“Ibid

“Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, September 2, 1891, p. 2.

“Sport on the Oxbow,” FT, February 2, 1894, p. 4.


Ibid.


93 “Local Matters,” BFT, April 17, 1879, p. 2.
95 “Local Matters,” BFT, Nov. 27, 1879, p. 2.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
110 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, March 22, 1882, p. 4.
111 “Death of Hank White of Whitmore and Clarke, in Windsor Vt,” TFR, Feb. 28, 1900, p. 2.
114 “Local Matters,” BFT, June 8, 1877, p. 2; Sept. 28, 1877, p. 2.
118 “Uncle Tom's Cabin' Company Coming,” BFT, March 7, 1907, p. 5.
120 Ibid.
122 “Local Matters,” BFT, October 1, 1885, p. 2
124 “Franklin and Vicinity,” MJ, Nov. 22, 1878, p. 3.
128 Advertisement, TFR, May 22, 1888 p. 3.
129 “City News and Notes,” FJT, Feb. 12, 1903, p. 4.
133 “Lyman Howe's 'War-Graph,'” TFR, May 24, 1899, p. 1.
134 “Speaking of Street Scenes,” FJT, September 21, 1900, p. 1.
142 Advertisement, BFT, July 4, 1907, p. 5.
143 Lovell, 210-211.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Advertisement, BFT, June 17, 1915, p. 1.


The last three decades of the nineteenth century were the golden age of the Paper Towns. The towns were industry leaders in this period, not only in papermaking but in their secondary industries. Into the 1890s, the paper industry seemed to be immune to economic boom and bust cycles. In 1873, as the country fell into depression, the paper industry thrived. J. H. Walbridge wrote in the *Souvenir Edition of the Bellsows Falls Times* in 1899, “In 1873 the first great industrial depression after the war struck the country fore and aft; but paper was needed, and this great industry steadily expanded to meet the growing demand.” Walbridge continued, writing that by 1899 the mills had operated continuously for more than twenty-five years. By the 1890s, however, the towns all had reasons to worry. As patents on wood grinding technology expired, competition increased. Industrialists built new mills closer to wood supplies, and the original wood pulp mills were no longer at the forefront of the industry. In the 1890s the paper towns had not achieved the success to which they had seemed destined a quarter century before. They never became great industrial cities but remained small, with fewer than 10,000 residents. In an era of consolidations, when bigness was essential for survival, the paper towns were at a disadvantage. The turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the period of consolidation and centralization. Community leaders in the paper towns found this troubling: they were not eager to lose their autonomy, but rather sought ways to fight the centralization and remain competitive.

The towns began to decline after 1898, when the towns’ largest paper mills became part of the International Paper Company. No longer leading producers of groundwood pulp and newsprint, the mills were relatively small. Other mills, including ones in Rumford and Livermore Falls, Maine, and even the company’s flagship mill in Corinth, New York, which was enlarged
and modernized, were now the leading producers. These larger and more successful mills were closer to the forests that provided the raw material. They were profitable enough to warrant investment in buildings and updated machinery. The smaller, older mills stagnated. For about a decade after the consolidation of International Paper, the mills continued to operate as they had before the merger, but by 1908, because of shrinking profits and increased labor costs in the face of the success of the movement for an eight-hour day, the company began a slow process of shutting down the mills.

The loss of autonomy and stagnation of the mills meant the loss of autonomy and stagnation of the towns. Local leaders began to recognize this threat by 1890. In Turners Falls, the greatest threat seemed to come not from corporate board rooms in New York City, but from the village’s larger neighbor, Greenfield, which threatened to turn it into nothing more than an industrial suburb. This threat played itself out in a dispute over the construction of a streetcar line linking the villages. In Franklin, business and community leaders responded to the threat of consolidation in a more positive way, by forming a board of trade to take control of the town’s waterpower and thus attract industry, and ultimately by fighting for a city charter. Bellows Falls’s response to these threats was more haphazard. Community leaders did not begin to fight for local control of industry until 1906, by which time the village was feeling the effects of the merger of International Paper. It was the first major strike by workers in the paper mills in 1907 that underscored the importance of local control and the fears of decline of prosperity.

Electric Railway to Turners Falls

Community leaders in Turners Falls were particularly anxious about their autonomy. For Cecil Bagnall the threat was not distant cities but Turners Falls’s neighbor Greenfield. Greenfield was more prosperous and better established than Turners Falls. The rivalry between Turners Falls and Greenfield ran deep. Greenfield was an old village, founded early in the eighteenth century. It had been an important industrial center for most of the nineteenth century. It was politically important as the shire town of Franklin County; Cecil Bagnall frequently referred to it
simply as “the shiretown.” Turners Falls was an upstart that threatened Greenfield, but it was also still something of an industrial suburb to the dominant village. Through the 1870s and 1880s, it was the fastest growing village in the county; by 1885 it was larger than the shire town. Greenfield’s business leaders were bitter about competition from the new village, but they also refused to look at it as a serious, independent village.

Before it was well established, Turners Falls was an industrial suburb of Greenfield. In the 1870s, many of the German employees of the Russell Cutlery who had worked for John Russell in Greenfield continued to live in their old homes. Some workers walked several miles back and forth to work, and the Turners Falls branch of the Vermont and Greenfield Railroad (later the Fitchburg Railroad), ran daily trains for commuting workers. In the 1870s this was necessary, but Bagnall felt that it was not ideal. As long as workers worked in Turners Falls and lived in Greenfield the new village would not be independent.

The Turners Falls Reporter attacked Greenfield’s business and community leaders almost from the start. Even in 1873, before Cecil Bagnall was the editor of the Reporter, the paper accused Greenfield of attempting to stifle the village’s development, and denounced Greenfield’s leading citizens using colorful language. The issue was the founding of the Crocker Savings Institution in the new village. The Gazette and Courier responded calmly and humorously, “We would inquire of the Reporter if its editor and artist is not in danger of being arrested by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in comparing certain of our citizens to that useful animal the Ass.”

By the end of 1877, this rivalry was already reaching a fever pitch. The Gazette and Courier wrote disparagingly of Turners Falls: “Here it is, though only a ten-year-old, sneering at the shiretown, proposing that none of its workers shall live there, and putting on airs generally.” The Gazette asserted, “The village is emphatically Greenfield’s child and pet.” This enraged Bagnall, who admitted that if it was intended to be “sarkastick” it was a good joke, but if it was serious was insulting. Bagnall asked, “What has Greenfield ever done to claim the paternity of our village?” Wendell T. Davis, the Greenfield banker who worked with Alvah Crocker, had
invested modestly in the enterprises in the village, but since his death in 1876 Bagnall claimed, Greenfield capitalists were notably absent among the stockholders of Turners Falls’s various corporations. Bagnall excepted Matthew Chapman, of the Russell Cutlery and the Crocker Savings Institution, but he stressed that rather than act paternally toward the new village, Greenfield had discouraged its growth. Bagnall gave as an example the process to charter the Crocker Savings Institution.

When application was made to the Legislature for authority to establish a savings bank at Turners Falls [wrote Bagnall], the monied men of Greenfield took the labor and pains to go before the legislative committee and say it was neither desirable nor practicable to establish successfully a savings bank in the “howling wilderness.” Was it paternal or maternal or infernal thus to seek to crush the breath of life out of the struggling infant? Bagnall claimed that Greenfield tried to stifle every “enterprise that was thought might possibly come in competition with the business of Greenfield.” Asking again if this was the behavior of a parent toward a child, Bagnall responded,

No, a thousand times no. This village is the legitimate child, the product of the brain, the mind and the money of the late Hon. Alvah Crocker, and while the present generation exists, and we trust for many generations to come, it will be impossible to rob his memory of the honor and glory of his great enterprise. The child of Greenfield, forsooth! There is not enterprise enough in Greenfield to beget and bring forth a legitimate business child with the breath of life upon it.

Rather, Bagnall pointed out, Turners Falls actually improved Greenfield, raising its valuations forty percent. This bitter rivalry colored many of the aspects of the village’s development. Turners Falls was a child that had to prove itself. Many in Greenfield were bitter that Turners Falls threatened to become the leading industrial village in Franklin County. The Russell Cutlery’s move from Greenfield to Turners Falls was evidence of this.

The issue flared up again with the proposal to connect the two villages with an electric railway. Promoters of Turners Falls were generally in favor of building transportation infrastructure. The village depended on rail connections, and boosters zealously campaigned to have bridges connecting the village with Greenfield and Gill, but there was such a thing as too much transportation. Roads, bridges, and railroads all helped with the transportation of people and goods. Local public transportation, however, threatened the business interests of Turners
Falls. Cheap and efficient transportation of people had been an interest of people in Western Massachusetts for many years. The Turners Falls Reporter noted in 1890 that developers had first proposed a horse railroad from Boston to Brattleboro, Vermont in 1828. By 1889, businessmen in Greenfield became interested in the new field of electric traction.

Bagnall announced the proposal to build an electric railway between Greenfield and Turners Falls on October 30, 1889 with a front-page editorial. Under the headline, “What Isn’t Wanted,” Bagnall began, “The Greenfield shopkeepers and speculators have a nice little scheme cooking to bleed the life of Turners Falls, which we hope to see knocked in the head.” He explained that representatives from Thomson-Houston Electric had visited Greenfield and Turners Falls to gather signatures on a petition to charter a street railway company. He noted that in Turners Falls only four people signed the petition, “and those four were put on without thought.” He named the people who signed: W. D. Russell of the Montague Paper Company, W. P. Dustin of the Cutlery, D. P. Abercrombie of the Crocker National Bank, and merchant, F. I. Webster.

Bagnall explained his opposition to the road. He felt it was not necessary. Trains ran regularly and the stagecoach that ran between the villages was usually empty. He continued:

We don’t want out streets cut up with a railroad that would be nothing but a bloodsucker to our village. … Greenfield wants to open up a lot of real estate, and hopes with cheap fares to tempt the operatives to build houses over there, and take the best of our thrifty people away by promises of better land at cheaper prices, and “better society,” and all that. On principle, not a dollar of Greenfield trade would come here, nor does come here now, but there is a constant endeavor to rob this village of such trade as belongs to it, by canvassing, dickering, breaking prices, trusting, &c., and with a blood-sucker road running in here we should expect to hear “stand and deliver” bellowed in our ears. …

Bagnall continued by going to the heart of the rivalry between the communities. By this time, he had lived in the village for seventeen years and had seen the village grow and struggle. He still nursed the bitterness over the early slights of Greenfield’s business community to the new village:

If the business interests of the two towns were at all mutual there might be some sense in joining them with a railroad, but from the first the shiretown has exhibited the most intense jealousy at this rising town, and while at first it was disposed to treat us in a patronizing manner … with our strength and independence, the shiretown has simply soured on us, and now we are looked at with a supercilious sneer after what few offerings
as can be secured from us are tucked into their coffers.\textsuperscript{11}

On another page, tucked into the local news column, Bagnall gave an example of the effect of street railway lines on communities that were close to larger neighbors:

Since the street railway was started between Adams and North Adams, the mercantile business of the former town has been killed, and everybody goes to North Adams to trade. One of the largest merchants in Adams has had his trade cut in two. This is what Greenfield hopes to do to Turners Falls with an electric road.\textsuperscript{12}

Bagnall kept up his assault on the proposed electric railway through the fall and winter of 1889 and 1890. On November 20, he published an editorial titled “Chickens Coming Home to Roost,” giving examples of local people who went to Greenfield to trade at the expense of local merchants. This was a personal issue for Bagnall, who had struggled in his own business of publishing and job printing:

We have for a great many years been freely asked to contribute our columns, our means of bread and butter, to help the success of societies of all kinds, and still it is a very common thing for all classes and conditions to go to out of town printing shops when it becomes necessary to pay out a dollar for printing which the local columns won’t quite meet.\textsuperscript{13}

On December 11, in another front-page editorial, Bagnall again attacked Greenfield and the “bloodsucker railroad,” accusing the shiretown of wanting to cripple Turners Falls to “satisfy their greed.” He pointed out that Turners Falls was generally united against the electric road and that local supporters “would have been drawn [and] quartered.” Bagnall also noted victory, because the capitalists funding the road had backed out, and the scheme had stalled. But then he offered a possible compromise: put the road through Montague City, between Cheapside (on the townline between Greenfield and Deerfield) and Turners Falls, “that our real estate might be developed.” This seemed to be impossible, for the electric railway could not use the Fitchburg Railroad Bridge there, nor could it cross the old covered highway bridge.\textsuperscript{14} Bagnall’s gloating was short-lived. In his paper of December 25, announced that the Greenfield promoters of the electric railroad had “other fish nibbling at the bait.” By this point, Bagnall had made his point and summed it up succinctly: “We must resist all efforts to stick such a blood-sucker between our fourth and fifth ribs. We shall resist the impertinent invasion!”\textsuperscript{15}
Bagnall was aware that his tactics seemed extreme. He noted that the *Boston Globe* found humor in the “method we adopt to defeat the wicked blood-sucker road which the cow-pasture owners in Greenfield are trying to force into our vitals.” He was aware, he wrote, that people in Greenfield regarded him as a “cheap country editor, who was liable to go off at half cock at any time,” and that they blamed him for forcing Thomson-Houston to abandon its plans. But, he pointed out, “it is better to go off half cock with a good aim, than let a burglar get in his work.”

The question of the electric road stirred up old issues, going all the way back to the construction of the suspension bridge connecting Greenfield and Turners Falls in 1872. Bagnall wrote that people in Greenfield liked to blame R. N. Oakman, chairman of the Montague Board of Selectmen when the lower bridge was built, for the bridge’s problems, namely a dangerous grade crossing with the railroad as passengers entered Turners Falls. Oakman did object to the bridge, doubting its necessity and questioning its cost, but, Bagnall noted, he also proposed raising the level of the bridge over the railroad before the bridge was built, but that Greenfield had refused to pay its share of the increased costs. This was an old story, but Bagnall thought his point important enough that he repeated it three weeks later.

Bagnall’s complaints did not stop the scheme from going forward. On January 21, the Greenfield Board of Selectmen held a hearing to consider the electric railway. Judge C. C. Conant presented the plan to the Selectmen, giving them a petition in support of the plan with 100 names. He presented a route: over the Turners Falls Road from Greenfield, and across the lower suspension bridge. He claimed that if Turners Falls refused to grant rights to the company to cross the bridge that the line would end across the Greenfield line and omnibuses would carry passengers into Turners Falls. Addressing safety concerns, Conant assured the selectmen that the rails would be laid flush with the road, and automatic gongs would warn of cars approaching crossings.

The meeting with the Greenfield selectmen got the issue of the electric railroad on the agenda for town meeting. The *Gazette and Courier* reported on the town meeting, noting that
even within Greenfield there was considerable opposition to the scheme. Even the selectmen admitted that they were opposed to it as it was presented. People in rural Greenfield worried that the tracks would interfere with transporting produce to market in Turners Falls; some people objected to the proposed route; some worried that there were not enough safety provisions. Town meeting decided that it was not opposed to the project within the limits of Greenfield all that was in its jurisdiction. Ultimately Bagnall lost his campaign, for with support of the town of Greenfield, the street railway received a franchise.18

The project took a few years to plan, and through this time, Bagnall kept up his opposition. Complicating the issue was a report that employers in Greenfield refused to hire workers who lived in Turners Falls. This was an assurance that the Bagnall’s fears of the effects of the line on the local would be devastating. Bagnall commented that if the federal government had a policy of refusing to deal with countries that would not enter into reciprocity agreements, that Turners Falls should do the same thing. He wrote, “A little more independence, coupled with aggressiveness, would be a good thing for this town. …”19

In 1893, the route of the line still had not been finalized, and Bagnall once again called for the line to go through Cheapside. Bagnall still bitterly opposed the line, but he argued that if it was going to be built, at least it should travel through as much of Montague as possible, and should pass from Cheapside to Montague City. In March 1893, he wrote in reference to the line,

Talk about Walls! We all came here from the four corners of the earth to lasso an untamed water power with the express view of making a dollar and a good many of us have seen a big town rise from a wilderness of scrub oaks. … Take away or cripple the hand that reaches out after the dollar, and gets it, and Turners Falls would shrivel up like last year’s bean pod and be just as interesting to Greenfield.20

Bagnall was still concerned with reciprocity. He wrote,

It is an unwritten law in the shire town that a dollar must not be spent in Turners Falls if there is an excuse to spend it at home. They have not the slightest idea of reciprocity, and brazenly say that even a workman cannot remain in the employ of their shops and live with his parents in Turners Falls. … While the shire town makes no bones of saying it has no money or favors for us, we are not chumps enough to allow them to reach after our dollars with all the nonchalance of a highway.21

Still, the issue was personal for Bagnall. He wrote that he took printing orders from various
places but never received any from Greenfield because of the “unwritten law” that Greenfield would not spend money in Turners Falls.

The electric road seemed to be a foregone conclusion, but the town of Montague still put up a fight. The town refused to allow trolleys to cross the suspension bridges or to enter Montague by the Turners Falls road. This forced the line to take a southern route, through Cheapside, as Bagnall had wanted early on. As late as March 1893, Montague was still steadfastly against the electric road. Montague would not agree to the electric road until 1895, when the line’s builders agreed to have the line pass through Montague City and also to build the company’s repair shops there.

By January 1895, even Bagnall had reluctantly thrown his support behind the street railway. “All rainbow-chasing aside,” he wrote, “the majority of our people are extremely well pleased at the prospect of an outlet and inlet at all reasonable houses of the day. We are fenced away from the world at times when the barriers seem unbearable. …” He still reminded people of the concerns he had for the line.

One thing must be understood. This scheme is something not at all of our own choosing; it is promoted entirely by outsiders who have no more care for our welfare than we have for theirs. The promoters make their headquarters in Greenfield, are driven about by a man who positively refuses to give employment to a man if he continues to live in Turners Falls, and all of the local directors are men who are antagonistic to Turners Falls when it comes to the rivalry of business. While we should welcome railways that would not be a positive menace to our well-being, it behooves us to keep our eyes peeled all the time when we take any chances in the other fellow’s game.

Bagnall refused to believe that the electric railroad would not be a threat. Greenfield remained the dominant community in the northern part of the Pioneer Valley, and Turners Falls remained a small manufacturing community. The electric railway controversy underscored this point.

The coming of the electric railway made Bagnall reflect on the type of community that Turners Falls had become over a quarter century. The child of Alvah Crocker, whom Bagnall and others in the community revered for his vision, Turners Falls never achieved the size or success that Crocker had envisioned. Rather than becoming a great manufacturing city, it had matured into a manufacturing village of about 5,000 people. While factories and mills gave employment
and operated at respectable capacities, they were not the nucleus of the next Springfield or Holyoke. Commenting on promises by the electric railroad’s promoters that the line would turn Montague City into a real city, Bagnall scoffed, writing, “People do not build houses with no one to live in them. We have now more houses than tenants can be found to occupy, and there is land without end in this village not yet built on.”24 Turners Falls had reached maturity, and Bagnall recognized that it was not going to grow into a city, no matter what boosters and schemers promised. Over twenty-five years, Bagnall had heard of many schemes and promises, but few of them had come to pass. The paper mills and the cutlery were running well, but the cotton mill had never achieved the success that Joseph Griswold had promised. In the middle of the 1890s, with bad business conditions across the nation, the village was not inclined to spring up into a city. Bagnall recognized the economic realities of the community. He wrote,

The only reason why Turners Falls has a single inhabitant is because manufacturing is done here, and labor has a market. Wipe the factories out of existence, and inside of one year brick blocks on our main streets wouldn’t be worth ten cents apiece. If the present factories are employing to their full capacity, and no other factories are built, there is no more reason to expect a demand for additional houses than that a laboring man should live in two houses at the same time!25

Bagnall concluded with a reference to Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner’s character from The Gilded Age, Col. Sellers, a promoter and schemer. Bagnall, noting that new industrial development was not at hand, commented, “We might as well cease trying to out-do Col. Sellers, and spend the rest of our days in thanking our lucky stars that our many incipient booms did not turn our heads completely.”26

By April, 1895, the rails for the electric road had been laid to the south end of Turners Falls, and by May 1, the line had reached Avenue A.27 Michael Sullivan, one of Turners Falls’s leading builders had the contract to build the repair shops, station, with waiting room, conductor’s room, and superintendent’s office, as well as the power house.28 In the end, in order to make the line agreeable to Turners Falls, the developers had to give in and provide incentives to the town. By June, when the line had its inaugural run, Bagnall was downright enthusiastic. The line was not completely finished—a bridge across the Connecticut from East Greenfield to Montague City
still needed to be put in place—but it was finished enough for a demonstration and celebration.

Bagnall found humor in the intermingling of wealthy people from Greenfield and poor children from Turners Falls, as well as the sobriety of the celebration. Turners Falls’s hotel, the Farren House, was renowned for not serving alcohol. Bagnall wrote,

The cars waited some little time in front of the very dry Farren House, until the Turners Falls guests came, and in the meantime the Greenfield patricians looked upon the uncounted numbers of our diversified and somewhat picturesque juvenile populace of plebeian mould, with curiosity and unconcealed amusement.

The cars started down the avenue at a good jog, passing through facing lines of homogenous [sic] humanity, the staid and substantial merchant, the manufacturer, the idle operative, the aproned woman of generous proportions, devoid of headdress or trifling ornament, the curious, the enthusiastic, the wonder-awed, yet all evidently happy in viewing the first fruits of hazy dreams of a vanishing past—the fulfilled promise of that glorious enthusiast—the lamented Colonel Alvah Crocker.²⁹

Bagnall’s irony is interesting. With a streetcar line, Turners Falls had one of the trappings of a modern city. It had another aspect of modern cities as well: the poor and working class, the people of “plebeian mould.” The streetcar was a spectacle but it still underscored Turners Falls’s identity as a working class industrial village, and Greenfield’s poor relation. He emphasized this point in a description of a stop the trolley made to allow Greenfield residents a chance to look at a vista of their own village:

The first car halted beyond the residence of C. M. Burnett [treasurer of the Keith Paper Company] on High Street, and as the carriage contained travellers [sic] from the far-away town on the other side of the mountain that throws its trap-rock buck up against the western horizon, the view was enjoyed as a panoramic wonder entirely unlooked for and incomprehensible in its latitude. …³⁰

Bagnall’s humor emphasized the divisions between Greenfield and Turners Falls, and that people from Greenfield had never bothered to notice things in Turners Falls. Ultimately, Bagnall grudgingly accepted the electric railroad and wrote with surprise of its popularity. Within a couple weeks of its opening he noted that the cars were filled with working people on Sundays. “They are the most generous patrons of the road,” he noted, “but no one supposed that travelling on the electrics was what they most needed.”³¹ By the summer of 1895, the street railway was no longer front page news. News of the company asking the county commissioners to extend the
hydrant system to Montague City, as well as news of the opening of the Montague City bridge were consigned to the local news column on page four.  

The controversy over the street railway seemed alarmist after the fact, but it was important for what it showed of the identity of Turners Falls and its relation to surrounding towns. While it had been born as a planned community out of Alvah Crocker’s combined railroad and paper making interests, and had been wildly promoted, it became simply an industrial village. Bagnall, for all of his bitterness and bluster, was justified in his resentment of Greenfield, which did cast a long shadow over Turners Falls. At the same time, Bagnall and the community at large, grappled with Turners Falls’s limitations, accepting that what had been established as the “new city” would remain a village. At the same time, he also signalled a growing localistic spirit and defensive stance against the centralizing tendencies of the period.

Franklin: The Board of Trade and City Government

Of the three towns in this study, Franklin was the most localistic. It was the only one of the three in which the major industrialists lived locally. The Daniell, Solloway, and Aiken families ran three of the four major industries. Moses T. Stevens of North Andover, Massachusetts and W. A. Russell of Lawrence, were the exceptions. Stevens was the principal owner of the town’s woolen mill, and Russell kept a controlling interest in the waterpower company as well as the Winnipiseogee Paper Company, at least until 1890. Business leaders in Franklin believed that local control of industries was essential to the prosperity of the town, and therefore rejoiced in 1890 when Russell announced his retirement from the Winnipiseogee Paper Company in order to focus his attention on his mills in Bellows Falls and Lawrence, Massachusetts.  

The Transcript cheered this change with an enthusiastic headline on its first page: “Important Change. Hon. W. A. Russell Retires from the W. P. Company. Controlling Interest Now Owned by Hon Warren F Daniell—Additions and Improvements Contemplated—Citizens Believe the Town will be Benefited.” Russell had sold his his shares of the company, mostly to Daniell. Daniell was now president of the company; W. F. Daniell’s son, H. W.
Daniell, was the clerk. The Treasurer was Franklin native, A. N. Burbank, Russell’s close assistant and a resident of Boston.

Russell’s retirement came with important announcements: a new pulp mill at the Cross Dam, the easternmost mill site in Franklin and a new finishing room, and later a new paper machine, for Paper Mill No. 1 (the “Upper Paper Mill”). The Transcript commented, “The change in the management of the concern by which Mr. Daniell becomes the leading owner and director is very gratifying to our citizens and many favorable comments have been heard.”

On June 13, the paper reprinted news of Russell’s retirement from the Manchester Mirror. The Mirror noted inaccurately that Russell had developed the wood pulp industry in Franklin, and that he had “never been a citizen of New Hampshire but he has done a great deal for the State, and in making his own fortune has contributed very largely to the prosperity of hundreds and thousands of others.” The paper concluded, “this company is now in the hands of New Hampshire men and while we are not aware that anybody has heretofore suffered because it was controlled by Massachusetts millowners, it is a good thing in view of future contingencies to have it brought home and kept here.”

This concern that capital should stay local was the motivating idea of the Board of Trade movement in New Hampshire. Local capitalists had local loyalties, so no matter how benevolent Russell and even Burbank were their money and loyalties were in Massachusetts. Daniell’s purchase of a controlling interest in the company was a step in the right direction. Russell sold not only his interests in the Winnipiseogee Paper Company, but also his shares in the Lake Company, which owned the dam on Lake Winnipesaukee, which partly controlled the water level on the entire Merrimack River. For the time being, he retained his controlling interest in the Franklin Falls Company, so sale of the paper company was only a first step to taking financial control of Franklin’s industry home. Agitation to control Franklin’s economy locally was growing as part of the Board of Trade movement on a state, and even regional level.

The Board of Trade movement hit Franklin just after Russell announced his retirement. On July 18, 1890, the Transcript printed a coupon and asked readers to fill it out and return it.
The paper asked, “Have you voted? Let Citizens Put themselves on Record in Favor of a Board of Trade. … Let us see how many feel like getting out of the old rut, to unite on a new plan of action. Here is the coupon.” The paper repeated the call for the Board of Trade the next and printed the coupon again.

The Board of Trade seemed to go by the wayside for more than a year. In May 1891, Jonathan B. Harrison, a Unitarian minister and reformer with a wide variety of interests, from civil rights to scientific forestry, revived it with an opinion piece in the Transcript titled “Organization.” He argued that local businessmen would be helped by greater organization, and that business and civic leaders had to work together to foster a local spirit. This was an indication that there was still life in the issue, and he became the leader of the movement. Finally, in December 1891, Harrison organized a citizens’ meeting. The Transcript announced the meeting and noted, “It is very important that there should be a large attendance, a full, free and candid consideration of the subject, and such action taken as may be helpful to the town and every person residing within its borders. …” The following week, the paper ran a banner headline: “IT WAS UNANIMOUS! Citizens agree to unite in live board of trade.” The paper proudly noted, “Perfect harmony prevailed.” According to the Transcript, the chairman of the meeting, lawyer Edward G. Leach, argued, the Transcript reported, “If the town could be benefited by a board he saw no reason for delay in forming one.” The Board of Trade was an attempt by the local business leaders to control their economy: it was a movement that could potentially put the merchants and local professionals at odds with the industrialists. But Eugene S. Daniell, son of W. F. Daniell (at this point Representative from New Hampshire’s second district) and general superintendent of the Winnipiseogee mill, threw his support behind the board, saying that “he had the welfare of the town at heart and would be glad to see the movement successful.” Leach noted that he believed the board could buy waterpower at a reasonable cost, and he hinted of “two citizens who are about to engage in manufacturing and favored an effort to keep them here. …”

The first task of the board was to get waterpower. W. A. Russell still owned the controlling interest in the Franklin Falls Company, and W. F. Daniell owned a substantial amount
as well; they would have to agree on how they wanted to use the power before they would sell to
the Board of Trade. Daniell stopped to visit Russell in Lawrence on his way home to Franklin
from Washington. He returned home to hear of the new Board of Trade and immediately offered
his support. He said to S. H. Robie of the Transcript, “Personally I am in hearty sympathy with
the objects of a board of trade and am glad that the movement has been started. This is my home;
my interests are here and I have every reason to rejoice and co-operate in anything that will help
the town.” On the issue of waterpower he was more circumspect, telling the paper, “We are
ready to sell the water power at the island and the land in that vicinity, also what we own on the
Pemigewasset River, and all we ask is a reasonable price. I would be glad to have more
manufacturing come here and would gladly try to offer some inducements.” He assured the paper
of his commitment to local industry, and pledged his support for new industry.44

The Board of Trade acted quickly. On January 8, 1892, Edward G. Leach, now president
of the Board, published the organization’s by-laws and constitution.45 The chief issue of the
Board was control of the Franklin Falls Company. Russell was reluctant to sell, but finally
agreed on the condition that he sell all of the stock, save $5000 worth, as a lump.46 Finally, in
March of 1892, both Russell and A. N. Burbank agreed to sell their shares. This brought
the Franklin Falls Company into the “hands of home capitalists.”47

Immediately, the company met to reorganize and to elect new officers and board of
directors. The officers and directors included Warren F. Daniell, E. S. Daniell, and Walter Aiken
from among the industrialists, lawyer E. G. Leach, and bank cashier Frank Proctor. Tradesmen
were also represented, including mechanic John W. Dresser, carpenter John B. Howard, and
contractor Charles M. Babbitt. Immediately the company voted to retire three-quarters of the
outstanding stock, decreasing the capital, but voting to increase the stock to $70,000, “at such
time as the directors may determine.”48 The first task of the Board of Trade was successful:
Franklin was able to strengthen its local economy, and bring most of its outstanding capital home.
The Transcript noted, “The gentlemen now interested in this company are among our most
substantial and enterprising citizens, and no effort on their part will be lacking to utilize the
property to the best advantage. We believe that this transaction is one of great importance and that it marks a new era in the growth and prosperity of Franklin.” With this important victory, the Board of Trade became an important local institution, eagerly supported by the local press.

As part of Franklin’s attempts to enhance its image for potential residents and capitalists, community leaders and boosters began to promote the idea of a town hall. Although opposed by many residents in the rural sections of the town, town meeting voted to embrace the project. The hall would serve three purposes: town offices, an Opera House, and a memorial and meeting hall for the Grand Army of the Republic. The vote passed easily; the Transcript commented, “local politics were remarkably dull this year.” Architect William M. Butterfield of Manchester, N. H. submitted his plans in May, and construction began. By October the roof was on the building; the next February, the Merrimack Journal reported ambitiously that the hall was nearing completion. The Richardsonian Romanesque hall was completed in September, 1893 and dedicated with elaborate exercises. The Transcript reported that it was “an imposing structure, beautiful within, and creditable to the town.”

Having built a town hall and simultaneously attracted a new industry, the Board of Trade started on a more ambitious project, to obtain a city charter for the town of Franklin. This was controversial. On one hand, the Board of Trade and the Transcript argued that a city charter would allow for more efficient governing of a growing population, and that a healthy be beneficial for everyone. For critics, a city charter would open a threat of corruption, unwieldy political machinery, and the destruction of a traditional way of life.

The Transcript opened the question of a city charter in December 1892. On December 23, the paper ran an article, reprinted from the Manchester Mirror, with the headline, “A City Charter. Would it be Advisable to have one for Franklin? Advantages of Municipal Government. Affairs of a Large Town Managed More Systematically and Successfully.” The article recognized the benefits of the New England Town Meeting—that it was a “pure democracy,” and a
gathering of intelligent, patriotic, level-headed men who met to consider town affairs as they would their private business, to decide, after full and fair discussion, how much money was needed for schools, highways, the support of the poor, and other town charges, and to select as their agents for the collection of the necessary taxes and the disbursement of the proceeds the very best citizens, in whose hands the money would be safe until it was needed and then expended with as much care and economy as it would have been if it had been their own.\textsuperscript{55}

Town meetings worked best, the paper argued, with a small, homogeneous population. Franklin Falls had become a large, ethnically heterogeneous community and had lost much of the character of an ideal New England town and village. In size alone, the paper argued, Franklin Falls, with a population of about 5,100, was growing large enough that it was becoming unwieldy.\textsuperscript{56} “The town meeting,” the article argued, “is no longer a deliberative assembly, town affairs are no longer considered with reference to the greatest good of the greatest number, and town officers are no selected solely with regard to their honesty and capacity.”\textsuperscript{57} With a growing, and enterprising, diverse community in Franklin, a representative system of government would be the most efficient system.

The idea gestated for the next year. The Board of Trade discussed the idea at its annual meeting, in January 1893, and at the end of the month, E. G. Leach, now Franklin’s representative in the state legislature, introduced a bill to grant the town of Franklin a city charter.\textsuperscript{58} The \textit{Transcript} described the bill thoroughly on January 27.\textsuperscript{59} The town would be divided into three wards: Ward One was the land west of the Pemigewasset and Merrimack Rivers, including the village of West Franklin; Ward Two was the southeastern part of town, including part of Franklin Falls; Ward Three included most of the village of Franklin Falls, including the densely-populated neighborhoods on Bow Street and on Elkins and Franklin Streets. The government would consist of a mayor and council of nine members. The mayor would be elected annually, and the councilmen would serve for three years (except for the first election when three councilmen would serve three years, three two years, and three one year). The charter called for one school district. Each ward would have a moderator and three supervisors—the \textit{Transcript} noted that the supervisors would have the same duties as selectmen, except on the ward level. The officers of the city would include members of the Board of Health, a Treasurer, serving both the city and the
school district, a tax collector, a City Solicitor, a City Marshal and police officers, a Chief Engineer, a Highway Commissioner, and “such other officers or agents as are necessary for the good government of the city not otherwise provided for.” Finally, the city government would become effective on the fourth Tuesday of November, providing the town voted to approve the charter.

The city charter pitted the leading industrialists, including W. F. Daniell, Alvah Sulloway, and Walter Aiken, who were Democrats, against the local business leaders, the people who had championed the Board of Trade, who were Republicans. It split the newspapers as well: the Transcript championed the city charter while the Merrimack Journal opposed it. Finally, it raised important issues about Franklin’s identity as a New England town and as an industrial center.

At the heart of the city charter discussion was the tension between industrial and commercial growth and tradition. New Englanders were proud of their traditions of local government, and even the supporters of the city charter were careful to recognize that point. But, the Transcript stressed, the system did not work for a town with the diversity of interests that Franklin had. The paper admitted that the proposed charter was a radical change, but argued that it was a logical extension of the recent improvements in the town. Recently, the town’s industrialists had championed the construction of a short branch railroad, called the Franklin and Tilton Railroad, to connect the town to lines to the east. The town had also set up municipal water and electrical systems. The Transcript noted that all of the recent developments had met opposition, but that none had done any damage. Editor Robie wrote,

Who would vote to remove our water and electric light systems? The water system, instead of being a burden to the town, proves to be a good investment with flattering prospects for the future. Our electric lights are as good as any in the country. No disadvantages of any account result from the F. & T. Road and we have one of the best and prettiest railroad depots in New England.

Robie stressed, “Every step shows the wisdom of the majority who made such progress possible.”
Robie recognized the worries of cost and the dangers of political machines, and answered those fears. He argued that a city government would be less expensive than a town government. He broke down the costs, showing that the costs for selectmen, town clerk, treasurer, Board of Health, and Supervisors came to a total $882 annually, while under the city charter only the mayor, city clerk, city treasurer, and assessors would be paid. The councilmen, ward supervisors and clerks, and the Board of Health would all be volunteer positions. The total cost would come to $500 annually. The voluntary nature of the city council, which was required by New Hampshire law, protected against corruption, as did the rotation of the councilmen. The resulting government, the Transcript argued, “brings to public service a larger number of citizens, increases information of affairs relating to the city, stimulates local pride and divides the official labor and responsibility.”

Answering the worry that a town of 5,000 was too small to be a city, Robie argued that Franklin’s size was ideal, because a city government would bring to it the benefits of efficiency, while the size would make it that much more efficient. Running the city government in Franklin would be easier and less expensive than trying to “move the official machinery in a Manchester, a Concord, or a great New York.”

The proposed charter passed through the New Hampshire legislature, and only required a town vote to be passed. The vote came up in November 1893. On November 3, the Transcript again published the proposed charter and summarized its support for the plan. Editor Robie focused particularly on the efficiency of voting under a city charter. The trouble with town meeting for him was what many considered the virtue of the institution, its democratic nature. Robie wrote, “The division of the town into wards would do away with the crowded, boisterous, laborious and almost entirely unsatisfactory manner in which the town business is at present transacted.” Town meeting discouraged people from active involvement because it was too crowded and loud for productive discussion. Particularly, he noted, “scores of business men are absent when the matter of appropriations is acted upon simply because they will allow themselves to be crowded, pushed or thrown above the heads of the crowd.”

Coming out of the Board of Trade, the city charter was an effort by these businessmen to control the affairs of the town.
For this reason, the *Merrimack Journal*, now edited by Octavia Collins, opposed the charter. She argued that the charter was not needed and would cause more problems than it solved. She subtitled her critique of the charter “Out of the Frying Pan Into the Fire … Don’t Worry About the Heavy Tax Payers, Guard the Interests of the Laborer.” Collins argued that the leading industrialists in Franklin—Daniell, Sulloway, and Walter Aiken—opposed the charter because they felt that it would become more expensive than a town government, and that it would increase the opportunity for “jobbery in various ways.” Collins rejected the claim that the size of Franklin had become unwieldy. She pointed out that in the 1890 census, Franklin had a population of 4,078, not over 5,000 as the *Transcript* claimed. Moreover, about 1,200 of that population were French Canadian and, “many of them are migratory. There are fewer people in Franklin than there were six months ago.”

City charters, Collins argued, should be “put off … as long as possible.” Massachusetts, she pointed, required towns to reach populations of at least 12,000 before they could apply for a charter. The process of city building should be conservative. She contrasted the staid East with the boomtowns of the West, noting that places in the West tended to stake out building lots, and “after securing a post office and setting up a barroom, of dubbing the place a city and then coming east to Franklin and other places and borrowing the money to ‘boom’ their ‘cities.’” Collins argued that Franklin should try to “engraft” the western methods on the “community of Franklin.” She noted that house lots were rare and expensive enough that they did not need booming. She warned that having members serve on the city council without pay was not practical and that people would look would want to put their time into their livelihoods more than service. Further, people serving on the school board and other city boards would be inclined to take try to profit from their positions: “All these officials who start without pay—school committee, and others—are soon promoted to a salary and perquisites. The salary is all right but the perquisites are what constitute the ‘pull.’ So it is with a common council in the history of all cities.” Collins thought corruption inevitable in cities. She noted that people might prefer to not to have raucous town meetings, but that soon the disadvantages of a city government—
corruption, difficulty in finding disinterest people to serve, extravagant spending—would make the citizens of Franklin regret their decision.

Collins supported her stand on the charter with letters from people who signed themselves simply “Tax Payer.” One correspondent wrote that when the proposition was first suggested most people in town thought it was a joke, or perhaps part of the struggles of communities like Laconia and Somersworth to receive city charters. The correspondent suggested trying to reform town meeting, pointing out that the new town hall had an auditorium designed to seat 1,000 people comfortably. Town government, even if it was dominated by “boys and loafers,” was preferable to a government by “‘common council’ aristocracy, which governs in the upper air, above the heads of the people.” The correspondent concluded, “when it comes to rings and jobs, nothing has ever yet matched the city council for rottenness and dishonesty of every kind whereby tax-payers were plundered and cheap rascals kept in power.” Once in place, the correspondent warned, a city government could not be changed back to a town government.

A second “Tax Payer” continued the argument against the charter. This correspondent pointed out Franklin’s growth—the new houses that had been built, the water and electrical systems, the school system that was among the best in the state, even the town hall—and argued that this had only happened because “the people manage their own affairs.” City government would take authority away from the people and put it into a ring of ten people, namely the mayor and city council. The city government could function without accountability, and could make appropriations without asking the citizens. The correspondent asked, “Isn’t there more honor in being a citizen of the biggest and smartest town in the county than to be a citizen of a little puny city that came into existence before her time?” The correspondent argued,

The New England town system is the foundation of our liberty and let us retain it until some better motive than politics is shown for a change. … What besides politics can it be that half a dozen men are so earnest for the change all at once? Are we worse governed this year than usual? We have had no boom that has increased our population so rapidly as to make a city a thing of necessity all at once. … We now have a town we are all proud of, the banner town of the state, and isn’t it best to let well enough alone and let Franklin lead in the list of towns rather than force her down to the rear end of the cities and double our taxes thereby?
Of course, by the end of 1893, a change had happened in Franklin as it had across the country. The city charter was proposed before the financial panic of 1893, and by the fall many people were worried about Franklin’s economic health. A city government, working closely with the Board Trade, was the best promoters of the charter could see to protect the local economy.

The *Merrimack Journal* was published on Friday, and the next day, voters went to a town meeting to vote on the city charter. Promoters of the city charter opened the meeting by proposing to proceed to a vote without discussion. Only one person, Jonathan B. Harrison, spoke before the meeting. Harrison objected to the way the meeting was conducted. “The people come here to this town meeting,” he said, “and they are on their own ground. The place of meeting belongs to them. It is the people’s day, and the people’s opportunity. They are sovereign here, because it is a New England town meeting.” This example, he argued, was an indication of what people could expect under a town government. Harrison pointed out that voting in favor of a city charter would take away from the people the power to determine their destinies, and it would destroy locally the distinctive institution of town meeting. Harrison concluded,

> Under the new scheme there would be no direct responsibility and no means for redress. This charter is a measure for the *abolition* of a government of the people, by the people and for the people in the town of Franklin. If our citizens are tired of freedom and sovereignty and wish to renounce the functions of self-government they should vote yes today. If they prefer to retain the control of public affairs in their own hands, they should vote no.

The city charter failed. The meeting was poorly conducted: the *Journal* complained that arrangements for voting were “entirely inadequate, indeed there was no arrangement and there was, therefore, much confusion and annoyance, but the hall at no time was filled by the people.” Finally the charter was voted down by a vote of 317 to 300.

The vote was not the end of the matter. The town meeting warrant for 1894 would include another chance to adopt the charter. In January, the *Merrimack Journal* published a front-page defense of the charter with Collins’s rebuttal. The Franklin *Transcript* undertook a longer campaign to, as S. H. Robie would have put it, mould “public thought and action.” On January 19, both papers ran articles on both sides of the issue. J. B. Harrison in the *Transcript*
pointed out that such matters were occasions when partisanship was useful, because they gave
townspeople a chance to discuss the issues thoroughly. Advocates of the charter pointed out that self-government was something of a “delusion and a snare,” that the selectmen were not as accountable as they might have seemed. The city advocates argued, ward bosses and councilmen would have more direct contact with the voters, because they answered to smaller constituencies. The city council was more accountable than the selectmen because at council meetings the city clerk kept a record of every vote. Further, the city government would attract the “solid businessmen,” who would serve without pay and without financial interest. Other cities, the advocates of the charter pointed out, had no problem attracting businessmen to serve. The advocates again argued the city charter would cost less, and that appropriations would be no more extravagant under the charter than under town meeting. Ultimately the voters would control who served and thus what was spent. Opponents questioned finances, honesty, accountability, and the wisdom of abdicating the “blood bought rights’ of the town system.” The debate went back and forth in the papers until March 9. As town meeting approached, the Transcript asked in a front page headline, “Who Controls Town Finances? Not the People, as you can Plainly See by the Figures.” The Transcript showed that what town meeting appropriated and what the town spent were different things, and that the people’s vote did not actually limit expenditures. Thus, on democratic grounds the objections to the charter did not make sense.

The campaign for the charter finally was successful. Town meeting voted to adopt the charter, 496 to 438; Franklin would become New Hampshire’s tenth city the following January. The Journal printed notices from other cities of the vote in Franklin. Papers in both Manchester and Concord portrayed the vote as partisan issue, the Protectionist Republicans versus the industrialist Democratic bosses. The Manchester Mirror jokingly portrayed Franklin as the “Baby City,” and gave it praise and advice accordingly. The paper started, “Well, number ten, the Mirror has been expecting you and it welcomes you….” The article continued, “Greatness will make you as fat and slow as Concord.” The article teased the opposition to the charter:
Be careful who you take sweetmeats and condensed milk from. For a time beware of Sulloway, Daniell, and Sanborn, for they hoped you would be stillborn. … By and by, when you come to be strong and spry and stylish, they will like you and be very proud of you, but for the present keep them out of the nursery. And above all see to it that Sister Collins isn’t allowed to rock the cradle or she will have your obituary in the Journal next week.  

The *Concord Monitor* was more serious, casting the vote in a partisan light. The victory of the city charter, the paper argued was a Republican victory. It reminded its readers that the leading industrialists were Democrats, and that the policies of President Cleveland’s administration had “successfully closed our mills and brought suffering to our workingmen.” The city charter was an attempt to address the national financial problems on a local level. The *Monitor* argued that the vote in favor of the charter was a reaction to the financial problems the country was mired in. 

“In ordinary times,” the *Monitor* wrote, “the mills and factories of the democratic bosses of Franklin would be open, running on full time and at good pay.” The *Monitor* continued,

Therefore, in ordinary times, they had only to indicate to the voter that a continuance of these conditions depended mainly upon his voting the democratic ticket, and he was glad enough to vote it. … Many of these compliant and complaisant voters of Franklin have voted the democratic ticket for the last time at anybody’s suggestion. They see that by voting that ticket they have voted to reduce their hours of labor, to cut down their pay, and to discharge themselves from good jobs; and they have got what they voted for.

This was uncharitable at best. The Franklin papers do not indicate that Daniell and Sulloway tried to manipulate the voters. The *Monitor* concluded by patronizing Franklin’s voters, writing, “We congratulate Franklin upon its step in advance, and not less do we congratulate her citizens upon their novel independence.”

The city charter was a Republican victory, and as the *Monitor* pointed out, a protectionist victory. It showed the strength of the local businessmen and the Board of Trade. It was an expression of a similar trend in the other towns. If the *Monitor* was correct and the city charter was a reaction against the control of the Democratic industrialists, no such movement was necessary in other places. Bellows Falls had a strong Republican leadership and the chief industrialist was also Republican and Protectionist. In all of the villages, the period that resulted in Franklin’s city charter was important in that it affirmed the communities’ growing sense of who they were. Turners Falls did so by opposing Greenfield’s attempts to suck its blood with the
electric railroad and Bellows Falls did so by supporting the same, and by helping to strengthen other industries such as the Vermont Farm Machine Company. Franklin was the most forceful of the three, and the most successful, at least until the paper companies became part of the consolidated International Paper Company.

In the growing concern for fostering a local spirit in the 1890s, Bellows Falls was notably different from either Franklin or Turners Falls. It lacked Turners Falls’s defensiveness. Its closest industrial competitors—Claremont and Keene, New Hampshire and Brattleboro, Vermont—were more than twenty miles away, and the nature of the industrial development in those places was much different from the development in Bellows Falls. Bellows Falls was smaller and specialized in different products. There was no danger of Brattleboro, Keene, or Claremont sucking the blood from Bellows Falls. But the village also lacked Franklin’s enterprising localism, as well as its community of industrialists. The town had been built on foreign capital and had never had control of its waterpower or industries. For the first eighty years of its existence, the village had depended on British capital. The investors seemed to lack commitment, and the village had not achieved the prosperity for which many had hope. This left a lingering suspicion of outsiders and their moneymaking schemes, but the experience in the 1870s and 1880s had softened much of this. While Franklin treated W. A. Russell with coolness, Bellows Falls welcomed him wholeheartedly, and he responded by pouring money into the community and by becoming actively involved in its affairs. Russell’s father, cousins, and sister lived in Bellows Falls. Community leaders recognized that no local developers or capitalists could do for Bellows Falls what the Russells had done. A localistic spirit did not make sense in Bellows Falls.

The village took a pragmatic, if haphazard, approach to local development. In 1885, when the village was recognized as the second largest paper producer (after Holyoke) in the country, the village decided it should present a public face to the world, and voted to build a town hall. The issue was never controversial. The hall was built between the spring of 1886 and the end of 1887. In June 1887, the *Times* reported that a visitor had come to town to visit the new
hall. The paper reported, “He has seen all of the best halls in the state, and thinks none of them are equal to it.” By Thanksgiving, the paper reported that a mason, Jeremiah Leach, was finishing the curbing in front and was putting the final touches on the building. The paper noted that the town hall caused considerable public interest. The hall was a massive three-and-a-half story Richardsonian Romanesque building, with a square tower rising another story above the main block. The Bellows Falls town hall—soon popularly called just the “Opera House”—was impressive, monumental, and projected an air of solemnity and authority in the eclectic collection of architectural styles on the Square. The building reflected the point that Bellows Falls was serious about business. It was not, however, part of a program of fostering local control of industry and waterpower, as the town hall in Franklin was.

Similarly, the village Building Association, and later the Board of Trade, responded to practical needs without larger plans for local economic control. Bellows Falls had had a building association as early as 1874, but it association languished with little more than meeting to maintain its existence, and finally dissolved after 1880. In August 1888, there was impetus for a new building association, when N. G. Williams, president of the Vermont Farm Machine Company, complained that the company had outgrown the building at the south end of the paper mills that W. A. Russell had built for the company in several years before. N. G. Williams later wrote that a group in Brattleboro and another in Wallingford, Connecticut, convenient to the Williams family home in Hartford, offered to build the company a new plant. By this time, the company had expanded from producing maple sap evaporators, to mechanized cream separators (the “Cooley Creamer”) and a butter churn (the “Davis Swing Churn”). Russell, together with insurance agent and local historian Lyman S. Hayes, organized a building association to induce the company to stay in Bellows Falls. Russell set up the association with $35,000 capital, and invested $9,500 of the Canal Company’s money to get the association off the ground. With local subscriptions and a mortgage from the Bellows Falls National Bank, the building association was able to raise the $85,000 necessary to build the four hundred by 60 foot building. The Building Association was a response to a specific need and did little beyond raising money for the
Vermont Farm Machine Company. In 1892, it was replaced by a Board of Trade. The Board was charged with attracting new industry to town, but it lacked the organization and vision to act in more than a piecemeal fashion. It had two purposes when it was founded: to put pressure on the railroads passing through Bellows Falls to build a new depot, and to undertake various projects to beautify the village. These included laying concrete sidewalks, building a stone wall on the muddy bank between Westminster and School Streets, and cleaning up the canal. 

Development in Bellows Falls seemed to come in fits and starts. By 1890, it was apparent to many in Bellows Falls that the village had reached a geographical size beyond which it was unlikely to grow. In May 1891, the *Times* noted that future development would have to be north of the village, “since it is crowded to the bank on the west and into Westminster on the south.” Development in North Walpole was happening but it still had the disadvantage of not having a direct road bridge. People had to cross either the Tucker Toll Bridge or take a risk crossing the Sullivan Railroad Bridge. It was possible for Bellows Falls to grow west, along the road to Saxtons River. This was five miles of mostly open land, but transportation into Bellows Falls was a problem. Thus, in December 1892, when investors arrived in Bellows Falls to lay out an electric railroad, the village welcomed them warmly. The *Times* reported,

At the present time there are so few available building sites in the village that the price is naturally beyond the reach of the laboring classes, but with an electric road one may live two or three miles out and ride back and forth to his work and at a small expense. First comes the electric road, then commutation tickets; then following closely comes the building up of the surrounding country and natural rapid growth of the business center, which in this case is Bellows Falls. We may have a city here yet, you bet.

The incorporators of the Bellows Falls and Saxtons River Street Railway included several of the business leaders of the village including paper manufacturers Wyman Flint and John T. Moore, retired newspaper editor, A. N. Swain, bank president James H. Williams, furniture dealer Clark Chase, and attorney, Zina Allbee. The *Times* reported the details of the plan in February 1893, reporting that the Pettingill-Andrews Company of Boston would build a line from Bellows Falls to Saxtons River, the second largest village in Rockingham. The paper reflected the continuing skepticism of the community regarding schemes:
The two most important districts of the town are to be more closely drawn together; there
is to be opened up along the line of such connection land, that very common but
exceedingly limited commodity in this immediate section; homes are to be made possible
and public convenience furthered where now is impossibility and disadvantage; the
development and growth of the town is fairly promised. This much if the good faith of
the transaction of last week may be assumed, and we may think that it may. Parties do not
ordinarily drop $11,000 into projects wholly ethereal, and there seems substantial reason
to believe that these gentlemen mean business.80

Their skepticism was well placed. The following October the paper noted, “J. E. Willson of
Boston, who was in charge of the construction of the Bellows Falls and Saxtons River electric
railroad, was in town last week. He says the road is sure to be built—sometime.”81 Delayed by
the economic depression beginning in 1893, construction on the electric road was not begun until
1899.82 By 1900, when the line opened, the village was nearing its peak population and growth
between the villages never amounted to much. The community that benefited most from the line
was a hamlet a mile-and-a-half from Bellows Falls, called both North Westminster and Gageville.
Gageville was already a suburb of Bellows Falls. Besides having a saw mill for the Fall
Mountain Mill, the hamlet was home to a basket factory, owned Sidney Gage, which in 1884
produced 600 baskets a day as well as 250,000 feet of lumber per year.83 Gageville was already
enough of a suburb by the time the street railway was built that there was talk of annexing the
hamlet to Bellows Falls, and while the street railway may have made it more convenient to
Bellows Falls, it did not cause the hamlet to grow.84

The street railway never caused the anxiety in Bellows Falls that it did in Turners Falls.
The Times and the business leaders of the community thought that the line was a good idea, if it
would ever be built. But, as in Turners Falls, it underscored the limits of growth in the village.
The village was reaching its upper limits in terms of space, and while the electric road promised
to open up land for growth, that growth never happened. Partly because of the depression
beginning in 1893, Bellows Falls was reaching its maximum physical size, and by 1910 would
reach its maximum population. Ultimately what the electric road did was open opportunities for
recreation, for C. L. Barber, a music teacher in Bellows Falls and farmer near Saxtons River,
donated his farm to the town for use as an amusement park. The street railway ultimately derived
much of its business from passengers to Barber Park.\textsuperscript{85}

\textbf{Impact of the Consolidation of the International Paper Company}

The 1890s was a time of anxiety in the paper towns, and village leaders responded in various ways. Turners Falls tried to defend itself from its more powerful and prosperous neighbor. Franklin was the most enterprising of the group, reorganizing itself into a city and actively taking control of the waterpower and industrial development. Bellows Falls was much less organized, depending on the enterprising spirit of W. A. Russell, its chief benefactor, but not a resident of the village. In all cases there was at least an implicit recognition that the towns were at a competitive disadvantage, that in an age of centralization, when size helped determine success, small industrial centers were in danger of being subsumed by larger industrial and financial centers.

These fears were realized in 1898, when Russell and his assistant, A. N. Burbank, along with Hugh Chisolm, who owned mills in Rumford, Maine, and Albrecht Pagenstecher, whose interests included the Montague Paper Company in Turners Falls and the large Hudson River Paper Company in Palmers Falls and Corinth, New York, agreed to combine their interests. The mills in Bellows Falls, Franklin, and Turners Falls were among the original sixteen companies in what the \textit{Franklin Journal-Transcript} called simply the “Paper Mill Trust.”\textsuperscript{86}

Turners Falls greeted the consolidation of International Paper with guarded optimism.

Cecil Bagnall announced the formation of the company on February 9, 1898 and wrote,

\begin{quote}
What the effect will be time alone can tell, but Turners Falls will not be the loser, except by the transference, possibly, of some of our strongest men to other and more extensive fields of usefulness. Certainly, however, the indications point to more steady employment of the mill machinery in the future, and a greater output rather than less.\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}

He continued, explaining that economic conditions had made the consolidation necessary:

\begin{quote}
Business got to such a pitch of poverty that every mill owner was glad to quit if some other corporation could be formed to stem the tide of destruction. With all the big mills under one management an immense saving will be made in manufacturing, each mill only doing that which best suits it, instead of going into the market cut-throat fashion for such business as could be got by hook or crook, or forced on it by the duplicity of some big consumer who delighted in playing mill against mill in search for “concessions.” The old
business became rocky by degrees until no one knew where it would be at a twelve month ahead.88

The immediate change that Turners Falls felt from the consolidation was that it lost a local manager of the Montague Mill. On February 16, the Reporter announced that W. D. Russell (no relation to W. A. Russell) had been appointed auditor of the new company, and would leave Turners Falls for New York. Bagnall wrote, “While Turners Falls will lose one of its finest citizens by the selection of Mr. Russell to such an important position there is behind the sorrow of all our people to his loss from among us, genuine gladness at the choice of a most worthy gentleman to a post of honor and considerable emolument.”89 The appointment of Russell as auditor perhaps softened the blow of the loss of local control and underscored the importance of the Montague and Turners Falls Paper Company mills to the larger enterprise.

Like Turners Falls, Bellows Falls welcomed the consolidation of International Paper. Copies of the Bellows Falls Times do not exist for the beginning of 1898. The fact that W. A. Russell and A. N. Burbank were closely identified with Bellows Falls, however, made people in Bellows Falls proud of the new company. In 1899, the Times continued to stress Russell’s importance to the village, as a “Napoleon of industry” and “father of the industry of paper-making in Bellows Falls.”90 A. N. Burbank, Vice President of the consolidated company, lived in Bellows Falls for most of the 1890s, only leaving the village in order to assume his duties in New York. Two of his children had married into the family of Charles E. Capron, a local merchant.91 With these deep local connections, people in Bellows Falls were not inclined to be anxious about the consolidation. The fact that the Fall Mountain Mill was “only one member of a great family, or group of paper manufacturers, whose business and out-put is managed by a great central office,” did not lessen its importance. Accounts of the Fall Mountain Mill in this period continued to stress the size and productivity of the mills.

In Franklin, the well-organized localism of the Board of Trade and city government trumped the Russell and Burbank’s local connections. News of the combination seemed ominous. W. A. Russell had grown up in Franklin and Burbank was born there, but the important
point was that they had left. The human face of the Winnipiseogee mill was the Daniell family, and with the consolidation, W. F. Daniell, as well as his sons, Eugene and Harry, ceased to be involved in the operation of the mills. Of newspapers in the three towns, only the Franklin Transcript referred to International Paper as a trust. On January 14, 1898, the paper announced the consolidation stressing the uncertainty of the future of the mill:

It is now practically settled that the printing paper manufacturers have completed arrangements for a combination which will assume the management of the mills. The Winnipiseogee Paper Company Paper Co of this city is to be a member of the proposed trust and its property will be absorbed by the combination. It is not expected that any important changes will be made here at present, but just how the new order of things will effect the business of the mills is not known. For the first year each plant will be operated under the present exiting owners, but when the general manager is elected he will have power to appoint his assistants for each plant.92

A month later, news that Russell had been elected president and Burbank Second Vice President seemed hopeful. The paper noted, “It is worthy of note that in the organization of this great combination, having a capital of $45,000,000, the president and second vice president are both former residents of Franklin and have long been connected with the paper manufacturing business here.”93 In September, the Transcript announced that the company had “ceased the local practice of insuring employes [sic] against accidents.”94 Over the next year, the village started to feel the impact of the consolidation. Eugene Daniell resigned as the superintendent of the mills at the end of 1898, severing the family’s seventy-year connection with paper making in Franklin. Taking his place was Willard E. Everett, superintendent of the Montague mills in Turners Falls. In May 1899, International Paper Company bought the waterpower and mill privileges from Lake Winnipesaukee to the end of the Winnipesaukee River in Franklin, undoing the gains made by the Franklin Board of Trade a few years before.

The impact of the consolidation of International Paper was subtle at first. The employees’ loss of accident insurance, the loss of local control of the waterpower and mill privileges, and the passing of the Daniell family from the management of the mills underscored the point that the mills were ceasing to be central to Franklin’s identity. International Paper cared about profitability and efficiency, not about the general welfare of places like Franklin, Bellows
Falls or Turners Falls. The communities were important as lines on a balance sheet.

Several issues underscored this point over the next few years. In the summer of 1899, the *Journal-Transcript* announced that International Paper would enlarge its plant in Rumford, Maine, adding buildings and four new paper machines.\(^95\) Rumford had two things in its favor. First, with the death of W. A. Russell in January 1899, Hugh Chisolm, the former president of the mill in Rumford, was now President of International Paper. More important, the Rumford mill was a more modern mill than the Winnipiseogee mill and was closer to pulpwood supplies. The point for Franklin, however, was that International Paper did not choose to enlarge and modernize the Winnipiseogee mill. The mills stagnated not only in Franklin but also in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls. None of the mills in any of the three towns grew or modernized considerably between 1898 and the time of their final closure between 1928 and 1936. In 1901, the *Turners Falls Reporter* noted that International Paper had “given up the plan of building a mill above the upper suspension bridge.”\(^96\)

Another issue underscoring the loss of concern for the community welfare in Franklin was a dispute in 1901 and 1902 over storage of city fire equipment and the use of company teams to help extinguish fires in the city. From 1880 until 1902, the Winnipiseogee Paper Company provided an engine house for the municipal fire engine and other equipment as well as a team to haul the engine. This courtesy seems to have been a concern of W. A. Russell, for in Bellows Falls he also donated the services of company teams to haul fire equipment and in 1891 built an engine house for the village.\(^97\) According to the *Merrimack Journal*, the engine house was built in 1880 on “the vacant lot between the Paper Co.’s stock house and Asa Morrison’s store.”\(^98\) The agreement between the town (and eventually the city) and the paper company had been solemnized by a contract of long standing, although the company received no payment for its services.\(^99\) The annual city meeting in March 1901 noted that International Paper seemed increasingly reluctant to continue the contract. A. W. Sulloway, hosiery mill owner and brother-in-law of Warren F. Daniell, proposed buying land for a stable between City Hall and M. T. Stevens woolen mill. The paper reported,
During the course of the discussion it was brought out that the paper company probably picked out its aged horses for use on the fire apparatus and did not allow the drivers to hurry them. Those who watched the movements of the animals in their progress toward recent fires agreed that this was no dream. It was further suggested that the present management of the mills did not feel obliged to furnish horses and preferred to have the arrangement terminate and that such a course might be necessary on account of the poor service.100

The city recognized that the “Winnipiseogee Paper Co. and the International Paper Co. were two different concerns; that the land now occupied by the engine house had not been deeded to the latter company; that the W. P. Co. did not now keep horses here to be run to fires.”101 The trouble for the city was that it had to buy land, build an engine house, and keep a team. City council was unable to agree on how to undertake this. They recognized that International Paper was under no obligation to honor the old company’s contract and that doing so was simply a matter of courtesy. A. W. Sulloway believed that International Paper should show that courtesy and “continue to abide by its agreement.”102 Finally, after another year, Superintendent W. E. Everett formally asked the city to end its agreement to store equipment and provide a team to haul the fire engine.103 Finally, in December 1902, City Council passed a resolution that released International Paper from the contract to supply a team to haul the fire engine. The city, however, had won a compromise, by which the company gave the engine house and the land it stood on to the city. A. W. Sulloway continued to object to giving up the contract, arguing “that he saw no gain in giving up a contract good for all time for the sake of getting a title to the land upon which the engine house stands when the city has practically a clear title to the land under the present conditions.”104

The controversy underscored the fact that International Paper was very different from its predecessor. As a locally owned company headed by a beloved patriarch, the Winnipiseogee Paper Company was deeply enmeshed in the life of the community. W. F. Daniell (and W. A. Russell before him) recognized the company’s responsibility for the general welfare of the community. Managers of the International Paper Company cared little about such courtesy. The Winnipiseogee mill was simply a piece of a large portfolio, and managers cared about running the mill profitably, but not about little courtesies that maintained the good will between the company and the town.
By the first decade of the twentieth century, the paper towns were past their periods of vibrant growth. This was apparent as International Paper improved and enlarged other mills. Particularly in Bellows Falls, however, the newspaper noted a general stagnation by 1905. From about 1870 to 1900 housing was in continual short supply. In the 1890s, developers finally addressed these shortages with a building boom, particularly in the northern part of the village in a predominantly Irish neighborhood that included Kerry, Brosnahan, and Laurel Avenues. Development peaked, however, in 1903 when seventy-five tenements were opened. After that development dropped off as the growth of the village in general stagnated. In 1904, only thirty-five tenements opened, and by 1905, only nine were built. Conditions eased somewhat in 1906, as the Canal Company sold more land in the northwestern part of the village. Problems with housing persisted, for in April 1907 the Times reprinted an article from Bradstreet’s Vermont Trade Report noting that tenements were scarce in Bellows Falls. Bradstreet reported, “Whereas early in the year there were plenty of tenements to rent now it is difficult to find a vacant house. … It was less than two years ago when there was talk of 150 vacant tenements in Bellows Falls. What has filled these tenements? There have been no new industries, so the increase in demand must be due to the natural growth of what industries we have.” Turners Falls also gradually stagnated. From the 1870s into the 1890s, it was the fastest growing village in Franklin County. The village’s growth remained strong according to the Massachusetts state census of 1895, but by 1905, its growth was falling behind other industrial villages in the county. By 1905, its population started to level off, as did its per capita income. The village still grew, but slower than Greenfield, which grew rapidly between 1895 and 1915. No longer poised to become a second Holyoke, Turners Falls had matured into an industrial village.
NOTES


3 “Turners Falls,” GG&C, May 1, 1871, p. 2; Sept. 7, 1874, p. 2.


6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, April 23, 1890, p. 4.


10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.


16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.

19 “Reciprocity or Retaliation—That Ought to be Good Home Policy if it is a Charming National One,” TFR, April 13, 1892, p. 1.


21 Ibid.


24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.

27 “Electric Street Railway,” TFR, April 24, 1895, p. 1; May 1, 1895.
30 Ibid.

31 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, July 3, 1895, p. 4.
32 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, July 17, 1895, p. 4.

35 Ibid.
37 “Have You Voted,” FT, July 18, 1890, p. 2.
38 “Local Brevities,” FT, July 25, 1890, p. 4.

40 “This Evening. Citizens Meet to Discuss Board of Trade Organization,” FT, Dec. 11, 1891, p. 1.
41 “IT WAS UNANIMOUS! Citizens Agree to Unite in Live Board of Trade,” FT, Dec. 18, 1891, p. 1.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.

46 “Special Town Meeting. One Will Be Held on Friday, Feb. 5,” FT, Jan. 22, 1892, p. 1.
47 “IMPORTANT LOCAL DEAL. FRANKLIN FALLS CO. IN HANDS OF HOME
CAPITALISTS,” FT, March 4, 1892, p. 1.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.


56 Souvenir Directory, 54.

57 Ibid.

58 “Board of Trade Annual Meeting,” FT, Jan. 13, 1893.

59 “CITY OF FRANKLIN. Act to be Introduced in House by Representative Leach,” FT, Jan. 27, 1893, p. 1.


61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 “READ, REFLECT AND ACT! IS IT POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE ON PRESENT SYSTEM OF DOING TOWN BUSINESS? PLAIN PROPOSITION FAIRLY PRESENTED AND ENTITLED TO CONSIDERATION FROM EVERY VOTER,” FT, Nov. 3, 1893, p. 1.

64 Ibid.


Named for Henry Hobson Richardson, who designed Trinity Church in Boston, the Romanesque was popular for public buildings in this period. Both Bellows Falls and Franklin chose the style for their halls. See Cyril M Harris, American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1998), 276-277.

“Local Matters,” Jan. 9, 1874, p. 2. The last report of a meeting of this building association in the BFT was in the “Local Matters” column on Feb. 5, 1880.


“A New Depot. The Principal Topic of Discussion at the Board of Trade Meeting,” BFT, May 19, 1892, p. 7.

“Local Intelligence,” BFT, May 28, 1891, p. 5.


Hayes, 338.

Child, 304.


Lovell, 213-215.

“PAPER MILL TRUST. Many Companies in New Combination. Winnipiseogee Paper Company Paper Co is Among the Number. No Important Changes will be made at Present,” FJT,
Jan 14, 1898, p. 1.


88 Ibid.


90 Walbridge, 7.

91 Hayes, History of the Town of Rockingham, 811.

92 “PAPER MILL TRUST. Many Companies in New Combination. Winnipiseogee Paper Company Paper Co is Among the Number. No Important Changes will be made at Present,” Franklin Transcript, Jan. 14, 1898, p. 1.


94 “Local Mere Mention,” FJT, Sept. 16, 1898, p. 5.


96 “Turners Falls and Vicinity,” TFR, March 27, 1901, p. 4.

97 “Electric Fire Alarm. The Wire has Come and the Poles Will Soon be Ready,” BFT, June 18, 1891, p. 5.

98 “Franklin and Vicinity,” MJ, April 30, 1880, p. 3.

99 Town reports from 1887 to 1894 all mention the equipment stored near the “Lower Paper Mill,” but do not record any payments.


CHAPTER 11
THE BEGINNINGS OF ORGANIZED LABOR

One of the most important changes in the paper towns after the consolidation of International Paper was the growth of labor unions. The craft mentality of the paper industry and prestige of the papermakers or machine tenders hindered the growth of organized labor. The Knights of Labor never got a foothold in the paper industry. Skilled paper makers kept a fraternal lodge in Holyoke, Massachusetts beginning in 1884, but for its first decade it remained more a fraternal lodge than a union, lacking both an ideological basis and a drive to organize. Labor unions did not organize successfully until the 1890s, when paper companies began to merge into trusts such as the International Paper Company and the American Writing Paper Company. The founding of these companies, in 1898 and 1899 respectively, combined with the growing strength of the American Federation of Labor, gave paper makers the impetus to organize.

The United Brotherhood of Paper Makers grew out of the Eagle Lodge of paper makers in Holyoke. Founded in 1884, it was well enough organized by 1892 that it had a few locals, including one in Bellows Falls. In 1892, the union held its convention in Bellows Falls. The union met over the weekend of November 26 and 27, 1892, in the village’s A. O. H. hall, hosted by the Mt. Kilburn Lodge of the union. Officers elected at the convention included members from Holyoke, Lawrence, and Fitchburg. The president of the union was J. J. O’Connor, who would later move to Bellows Falls and serve as president of the local International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, the successor of the U. B. P. M. The Bellows Falls Times praised the union, noting the decorum with which the convention was conducted: “The proceedings of the convention were harmonious and enthusiastic and the reports of the officers showing the growth of the organization for the past year were received with great applause. The Brotherhood is
composed of conservative men, who are striving to benefit not only themselves but their employers.”

The U. B. P. M. was organized well enough by 1893 that it applied for a charter from the A. F. of L. The Times reported that the A. F. of L. had granted the charter in April, noting, “The United Brotherhood of Papermakers of Bellows Falls have joined the American Federation of Labor, which now has a membership of over 2,000,000 skilled workmen, from the various trades, in the United States.” The union was small, encompassing only machine tenders and beater engineers. Back tenders, the second hands on the paper machines, were not included. It remained active in Bellows Falls, for in August 1893, it sent three delegates to the national convention, this time held in Fitchburg. The Times noted the character of the union, that it contained “none but skilled workmen of the craft” and reported that the union was growing, bolstered by “the fact that the Holyoke workmen have got the Sunday night off, thereby reducing the time six hours a week.” This, the paper reported, “has given strength and enthusiasm to the organization.”

This exclusivity hindered the growth of the union, and soon the Mt. Kilburn Lodge died out. By 1897, there were only three active locals: Holyoke, Massachusetts and Watertown and Felts Mills, New York. Burns wrote that officers and organizers tried to revive the union in the summer of 1897 by admitting and giving “equality to every member regardless of his class of work.” Machine tenders in mills in New York objected to this movement toward inclusiveness by founding a rival union, the International Paper Machine Tenders Union. The union was centered in Watertown, New York, but attracted members from across the Northeast, including Bellows Falls and Franklin. Because the A. F. of L. had granted jurisdiction of all the workers to the U. B. P. M., however, Gompers would not grant a charter to the Machine Tenders’ Union. This fragmentation kept both unions small and weak.

The consolidation of the International Paper Company gave a new impetus to workers and union organizers, who reasoned that organization and centralization of industry made workers’ organization necessary. By 1901, the rival unions were strong enough that they could
start working for their primary goal: shorter hours. The Machine Tenders won some limited victories, including Saturday evening shutdowns at the Winnipiseoge mill. The fragmentation of the unions made the ultimate goal of the eight-hour day unattainable, and in 1902 the unions held a convention in Niagara Falls and finally agreed to merge and form the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers. The Niagara Convention was a victory for modern pragmatic unionism in the paper industry in that rejected divisions among workers and focused the union on fighting for shorter hours. The organization of the I. B. P. M. was also a victory for the skilled workers, for the Machine Tenders Union was heavily represented in the new union. Thomas F. Kiniry of Bellows Falls, who had formerly been the national secretary of the Machine Tenders Union became the first treasurer of the I. B. P. M.

The goal of the Niagara Convention was to unify organized labor within the paper industry, but while the skilled unions came closer together, the unskilled and semiskilled workers felt increasingly alienated, and began to talk of organizing a separate union, the Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers. The Pulp and Sulphite Workers were first organized in a local union in Fort Edward, New York in 1901. In 1937, John P. Burke, president of the union, wrote in a convention address that the first organizer was George Johnson, a mattress maker who had been blacklisted from his trade for union activities. At a meeting of the local, Johnson was elected president and John H. Malin, a paper mill worker, was elected secretary. Malin soon began to travel, organizing locals near Fort Edward, in Hudson Falls, Glens Falls, and Palmer, New York, and in Northampton, Massachusetts, Bellows Falls and Wilder, Vermont, Franklin and Berlin, New Hampshire, and Livermore Falls and Rumford, Maine. The union met in Bellows Falls in April, 1902 and elected as president James F. Fitzgerald, another paper mill worker from Fort Edward, New York.

The A. F. of L. gave the P. S. and P. M. W. the status of an affiliated union. They had the right to organize in separate locals but lacked a full charter; they were completely subservient to the I. B. P. M. Fitzgerald sat on the executive board of the I. B. P. M. and was paid as a professional organizer, but this was the only contact the P. S. and P. M. W. had with the A. F. of
This arrangement worked for three years because Fitzgerald and the Paper Makers’
president, George Mackey, got along well. Both were energetic organizers, but Mackey was not
too concerned with maintaining discipline. By 1905, the I. B. P. M. would begin to be more
interested in centralizing their authority, but for the first few years of the century, Mackey was
more concerned with stimulating growth than with centralized authority. As long as Mackey
remained in power, Fitzgerald remained loyal to the Paper Makers and work worked tirelessly to
bring members into both unions. He brought about 6,000 members into the union.

The two unions took hold early in the paper towns. Bellows Falls and Franklin both had
locals of the Machine Tenders’ Union and quickly embraced the I. B. P. M. Turners Falls never
had a local of Machine Tenders’ Union but had an active local of the U. B. P. M., organized in
the fall of 1900. By 1902 the local was successful enough that it boasted 225 members. From
the start, the local was conservative and wholeheartedly behind the cautious conservatism of the I.
B. P. M. The leaders of the local Pulp and Sulphite Workers, Benjamin Eddy and John La Point,
were firm allies of the Paper Makers. La Point especially, worked closely with J. T. Carey, who
represented the conservative and even authoritarian wing of the union. Pulp workers in Bellows
Falls were also cautious, recognizing that a strong organization of both unions would help them
be successful in winning shorter hours.

The Pulp Workers found their greatest success in Franklin. Fitzgerald first visited
Franklin in December of 1902. The Journal-Transcript reported, “A new labor union, the
International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers, was organized at Judkins
and Wallace hall Saturday evening, and officers elected. Organizer Fitzgerald of Fort Edward,
N.Y., was here to assist in the organization. The union includes the inside workers in the mills of
the I. P. Co. mill in this city.” Fitzgerald found a ready audience, and the Pulp Workers would
soon be better organized than the skilled Paper Makers. Franklin was also different from the
other towns in that it had a more radical group of unskilled and semiskilled workers. In 1903, the
Pulp Workers elected George C. Brooks Secretary-Treasurer of the local, and at the same time
Brooks became Recording Secretary of the city’s Central Labor Union. Brooks was skilled as a
writer, with a sharp rhetorical style. Of French Canadian background (the parish records of St. Paul’s Catholic church listed his name both as Brooks and Brousseau), he was also a socialist, and would become one of the most outspoken radicals in the Pulp and Sulphite Workers’ Union. Working with Brooks beginning in 1904 was John P. Burke, a twenty-year-old native of North Duxbury, Vermont. Burke entered the mill in 1904 with an interest in socialism and a personal drive to improve working conditions. In 1901, his father, while working to remove the flashboards on a dam, lost his footing and fell to his death. Burke entered the mill very much aware of the dangers of working long hours, but he also had an intellectual interest in socialism. He lasted only two years at mill work, resigning in 1906 to follow his political interests, but he remained active in the union, becoming international president in 1916. His early writing for the union journals showed a strident ideological stance. The socialist leadership of George Brooks and John P. Burke gave the unions in Franklin a distinctive character. Brooks and Burke were both interested in industrial unionism and became prominent nationally in the bitter dispute between the Pulp and Sulphite Workers and Paper Makers, which raged from 1906 to 1910.

The unions in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls were interested only in bread and butter issues. Few, if any, of the members in either place objected to the pulp workers’ subservient position in the I. B. P. M. There were, however, important differences in how the unions worked. In Bellows Falls both unions were focused on winning shorter hours, and the leaders recognized they could only win through united action. Turners Falls, under the conservative leadership of Benjamin Eddy and the ambitiously partisan John La Point, seemed interested in maintaining an organization, but not in fighting actively for shorter hours. Eddy wrote in lofty and vague terms about unionism bringing about a “universal brotherhood” and turning “scabs and traitors … [into] men,” but he did not write about demands. Similarly, La Point was outspoken and controversial, and focused on leadership. In 1904 he was elected Second Vice President of the I.B.P.M. Although not apparent for another year, he saw himself as a reformer, advocating tighter organization for the union, and closer connection between the Paper Makers’ and Pulp Workers’ unions. At the convention of 1905, the I. B. P. M. underwent a power struggle and Jeremiah T.
Carey, a veteran of the Machine Tenders’ union was elected international president. Carey’s goal was to strengthen the central administration of the union. Benjamin Eddy and John La Point became firm allies of Carey.

The Pulp Workers’ Secession

Carey’s election as president marginalized Fitzgerald and his supporters in the Pulp and Sulphite Workers Union. The Pulp and Sulphite Workers responded by calling a separate convention, in Burlington, Vermont in January 1906. Fitzgerald, working with the Paper Makers’ organizer, John Malin, proposed that the Pulp Workers disaffiliate from the Paper Makers. The convention skillfully silenced opposition from the I. B. P. M. by denying admission to members of the executive board, in this case John LaPoint.22 Carey and the Paper Makers described Fitzgerald and Malin’s action as secession. Carey denounced Fitzgerald and his supporters roundly. Carey claimed that Fitzgerald was “the main cause of dissenion in our ranks. …”23 Carey accused Fitzgerald and his followers of putting personal ambition before the good of the unions and organized labor in general. “Now brothers,” Carey wrote, you can readily see that this movement is founded on prejudice, hatred and ignorance, and can never make progress. In fact, they defy, not only us, but the whole labor movement.”24 The metaphor of secession was lost on no one, and the Paper Makers were ready to engage in a virtual civil war to return the Pulp Workers to their control, and Fitzgerald was ready for the same. As he put it in the a circular letter in March of 1906, “the Pulp-Workers have declared their independence.”25 Two months later he continued his theme, “[If it is a fight to the finish between us, let the Pulp-Workers show them that they have the spirit of 1776, and we are amply able to [fight] it out.”26

The pulp workers recognized that they were in for a fight. Fitzgerald explained his position simply, writing to Pulp Workers’ local, “We believed that Carey was an enemy to both organizations, hence the reason for our rebelling. …”27 The Pulp Workers’ union that had existed within the I. B. P. M. continued to exist. The unions were amalgamated to form the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers.” The union’s executive
board appointed John La Point to fill Fitzgerald’s old positions of International Representative and organizer. “We believe that he will look after the interests of the Pulp Workers better than ever James Fitzgerald did,” the Executive Board noted bitterly. The Paper Makers considered Fitzgerald a “seceder,” but La Point, writing to his brethren in Turners Falls, claimed that Fitzgerald had been expelled from the union, “for a just cause.”28 Carey authorized La Point to start traveling as an organizer, and together they visited Pulp Workers’ locals through New England and New York to try to convince the workers to stay loyal to the I. B. P. M. La Point was particularly successful in his home of Turners Falls, where Carey became popular.

Turners Falls was the focal point of the anti-secessionists. Bellows Falls greeted news of the Secessionist movement cautiously. The Pulp and Sulphite Workers were skeptical of both Fitzgerald and La Point, and were not inclined to become involved in union politics. Fitzgerald wrote a letter to local president John Lynch soon after the Burlington convention and asked the members of the Bellows Falls local to join the independent union.29 Lynch was noncommittal but invited Fitzgerald to visit one of the local’s meetings.30 Members of the Bellows Falls local decided to remain loyal to the I. B. P. M. and to focus on the practical goals, particularly the eight-hour day.

Franklin was a different story. The Burlington convention announced the secession of the pulp workers on January 12, 1906, and by January 21 the Franklin local was almost ready to turn in its charter to the I. B. P. M. and join Fitzgerald. The only concern of the Pulp Workers was the charter. William Bruce, corresponding secretary of the Franklin local, wrote to Fitzgerald, “I think I may safely say the ‘Boys’ are with you only they are a little anxious about the Charter of the A. F. of L. They have decided to keep still until we get a charter from the A. F. of L.”31 Bruce was cautious, but Burke and Brooks, as well as the local president, George Warburton, were eager to join Fitzgerald and to find relief from what they saw as the autocratic rule of Carey. Burke reassured Fitzgerald that the split was “simply a case of the expected happening.” Most of the members, Burke wrote, were aware that they were not “receiving proper treatment at the hands of the Paper Makers.” Burke wrote to Fitzgerald that the decision to send a
delegate to Burlington to vote for secession was unanimous: “Members who had been absent for months,” Burke wrote, “were in attendance. Every face wore expressions of seriousness and the usual laughter and light talk was not in evidence before the meeting.” Burke pointed out that Carey had actually pushed the Franklin pulp workers into the secessionist camp by visiting the local shortly after the Burlington convention. Burke wrote that Carey “set in circulation a number of serious mis-statements and from his talk it would seem that Fitzgerald was a dangerous man to have out at large. In fact he went so far that he slopped over.” Burke continued, “At our next regular meeting, amid great enthusiasm [the local Pulp and Sulphite Workers’ Union] withdrew from the Paper Makers. …”

Omar Towne reported on the Burlington Convention in the Franklin Journal-Transcript. If he was aware of the antagonism between Fitzgerald and Carey, he did not comment on it. He noted simply that fifty delegates had met in Burlington to set up the Pulp and Sulphite Workers’ Union. This was important news for the community. In Bellows Falls, the Pulp Workers’ union was much smaller than the Paper Makers, and in Turners Falls, the two unions remained unchanged, but in Franklin, the Pulp Workers were larger and more outspoken than the Paper Makers. The Franklin Pulp and Sulphite Workers joined the seceders at the end of January. The Journal-Transcript reported the officers and trustees. The president was William Bruce; John P. Burke was Secretary-Treasurer; and Louis Douphinett, who would remain active in local union activities through the Open Shop drive of the 1920s, was a trustee.

The Bellows Falls Strike of 1907

An important reason why the pulp workers did not mount a more serious threat in Bellows Falls was that the Paper Makers’ local remained firmly focused on winning three tours for skilled workers and the nine-hour day for unskilled. J. J. O’Connor, now president of the local Paper Makers’ Union, noted that this goal would have been impossible if the Pulp and Sulphite Workers had split from the Paper Makers. International Paper agreed to shorter hours in June of 1906, and by June of 1907, the only mills that had not either already adopted the new
schedule or been schedule to were those in Bellows Falls, Franklin, and Turners Falls.\textsuperscript{37}
International Paper argued that it could not run these old mills profitably on shorter hours.

Only workers in Bellows Falls were in favor of striking to win the shorter hours. Workers in Franklin were too badly divided to support a strike. Only the local of the I. B. P. M. supported striking, but the Pulp and Sulphite Workers refused to support them.\textsuperscript{38} International Paper strengthened this division by giving these unskilled workers the nine-hour day without giving the shorter schedule to the skilled workers.\textsuperscript{39} Workers in Turners Falls were not divided but they emphatically opposed striking. Benjamin Eddy wrote to the \textit{Paper Makers’ Journal},

Turners Falls represented the right wing of the paper unions:

It is true that an old time unionist naturally clings to the old time weapons. And perhaps the old time weapons may be useful in some instances today in order to bring the unscrupulous capitalist to time. Just as an old time cannon is useful in bringing the unruely savage to a better civilization. But when the manager of a great company will say that he agrees with the eight and nine hours proposition and simply asks for time to adjust themselves to the circumstance and there and then outlined a plan without seriously affecting their interests. Would you, Dear Brother..., reject such a plan?\textsuperscript{40}

Bellows Falls stood between the active, though fragmented, Franklin locals and the well-organized but apathetic Turners Falls local. The Bellows Falls local was firmly, as J. J. O’Connor pointed out, a bread-and-butter local. International Paper had promised eight and nine hour days, and the Bellows Falls local wanted to see that the company lived up to its promises. By June 11, 1907, when it became apparent that International Paper would not put the mill on three tours, the members of the local voted to strike.

The strike was risky for Bellows Falls. While Carey told the strikers that he supported their struggle, he did not officially endorse the strike. Rather, he decided to let the matter come up for a vote at the Northampton Convention, which was to convene on June 24.\textsuperscript{41} Technically, this made the strike illegal, a wildcat strike that was in violation of the union’s no-strike pledge. The members of the local justified the strike by pointing out that International Paper had not lived up to its end of the agreement. They were further bolstered by the implicit support of Carey, and by the fact that the local’s president was deeply involved in the international level of I. B. P. M.,
having guided the Holyoke local through a disastrous strike in 1903. Still, seen from other locals, if the strike failed it would be no better than the Holyoke strike. If it succeeded, it would be the first successful strike against International Paper, and would be a boon to the local, its president, and even Carey. Ultimately, the international union voted to endorse the strike, giving the Bellows Falls local the necessary strength to win its demands. This did not quiet the criticism that the local had acted rashly, but it gave strength to Carey and to the anti-secessionist movement.

The strike raised important issues for the town itself. Unions had existed for a long time, but now they forced the community to come to terms with the changing nature of the paper industry. The Times presented both sides of the controversy, perhaps favoring the side of business, but being careful not to alienate the workers. The paper’s primary concern was the health of the community and not the cause of capital. If it opposed the strike, it never questioned the justice of the strikers’ demands. It printed J. J. O’Connor’s basic point, that tour workers alternated weeks of thirteen-hour days or eleven-hour nights. This time did not include the two hours it took to prepare for and clean up after work, leaving only nine hours per day of free time. O’Connor noted that workers needed those nine hours for sleep and thus had “no time for leisure, no time for recreation, no time for self-enlightenment, and in fact no time for him to get acquainted with his family.” The paper could hardly say that the strikers’ demands were unreasonable. Still, the Times pointed out, International Paper had a $5,500 weekly payroll, and the other striking mills had another $1,500, so the strike took $7,000 out of circulation in the community. The Times noted that this was “bound to effect local business conditions disastrously.” The paper reported, however, that the economic impact of the strike could be mitigated by the arrival of the annual log drive by George Van Dyke. The drive would close the mills for as much as several weeks and would bring people into town. Still, the impact on the prosperity of the community could not be discounted.

The Times was sympathetic with the workers. John P. Riley, the local superintendent, claimed that the matter was out of his hands and that decisions came from New York. Both the
strikers and the community at large waited for word of negotiations to come from either New York or the Paper Makers’ convention in Northampton. The headlines reflected the local business community’s sense of powerlessness: “All Quietly Waiting,” the Times announced on June 20; “Everything Quiet. No Change in Strike Situation—Every One Quietly Waiting for News from Northampton, Mass.” on June 27; and “No Change in Situation. Seventh Week of Strike Wearily Drags On—Conference in New York Today—On General Principles Strikes are Bad” on July 25.

The paper tried to walk a fine line between supporting the strikers and condemning the strike. The Times was eager to point out, “The strikers have conducted themselves finely and are receiving many compliments on the good order they maintain.” O’Connor told the reporter that seventy-five percent of the strikers had taken a total abstinence pledge for the duration of the strike, and that the local had passed a resolution encouraging the strikers to stay off the streets and remain orderly. On June 27, the Times published an article again praising the strikers, noting that they were maintaining “exceptional orderliness.” The paper noted that the I. B. P. M. had enjoyed rapid growth over the last year and now enjoyed a membership on the international level of over 14,500. The union’s victory, winning the promise of the three tour system, was responsible for this growth. This sort of coverage reflected the awkward position of the Times, denouncing the strike but praising the union.

The Times finally reported that the Northampton convention had endorsed the Bellows Falls strike on July 4. The paper maintained its skepticism, describing the union’s action as a move on a checkerboard. It condemned the strike, but criticized both sides equally. “Seven thousand dollars is each week withheld from local circulation,” the paper repeated, “and hold[ing] up that amount of wages in a small place like Bellows Falls hits every business enterprise hard.” The paper continued: “The manufacturers are losing their profits, the strikers their wages, and as a result business generally stagnates. The manufacturers blame the men and the strikers blame the manufacturers while about all that the public can do is to look on. What a pity the whole trouble could not have been arbitrated and a satisfactory agreement reached without suspension of
business.” In taking a moderate position, the *Times* defined three sides to the conflict, with Bellows Falls as the ultimate victim. With this in mind, W. C. Belknap supported arbitration as a way to bring the strike to a speedy end and with the possibility of answering the grievances of both the workers and employers.

Dwelling on this theme of the town’s victimization, the *Times* brought up a worst-case scenario: that International Paper would close the Fall Mountain Mill altogether. It refused to put the Fall Mountain Mill on three tours because it claimed it could not run the mill profitably. Adding a third tour would increase the workforce by between 100 and 125 workers to all the mills in town, and between seventy-five and ninety at the Fall Mountain Mill alone. 49 The *Times* noted that this would add the equivalent of another industry to the village. The paper did not report that the company had threatened to close the mill, but it asked the question of J. J. O’Connor. O’Connor tried to put the paper’s fears to rest. He told the *Times*, “Of course there is nothing to prevent the company from shutting down permanently any mill that it chooses to. In the case of the Fall Mountain Mill there is no indication that preparations are being made for a permanent shut down. On the other hand preparations are being made to start up.”50 O’Connor noted, however, that the Fall Mountain Mill was at a disadvantage competing for skilled labor, because the adoption of the three tour system by many mills had created a shortage of machine and back tenders.

The news of the endorsement of the strike came with the surprise, to the town at least, that O’Connor had been elected Secretary-Treasurer of the I. B. P. M. The *Times* praised O’Connor, lamenting that the town would lose “a good citizen.”51 Critics of the strike, including Father Edward Reynolds, pastor of St. Charles Catholic Church, suggested that O’Connor and his supporters used the strike to further his political ambitions. The lasting controversy over the strike was between the union and Father Reynolds; his criticism made criticism by the local business community and even the *Times*, unnecessary.

The controversy between Reynolds and local Paper Makers’ union began on August 1, when the paper printed a long letter under the headline, “Strikers Should Return.” Reynolds
posed as an “outsider” who wrote a letter only with the “hope that it may have some influence in bringing about a settlement of the question and of bringing to an end the unfortunate condition of affairs which is menacing the prosperity and imposing severe hardships on some people of this village.” Reynolds tried to distance himself from his clerical role, even signing his letter simply “Edward Reynolds,” omitting his title. The strike, Reynolds argued, was “premature and injudicious.” “It was not,” he argued, “the result of the cool, calm, deliberate reason which a question of such grave importance should command.” The strike was premature because the local called it two weeks before the Northampton convention. He asked, “Why not wait for that convention before taking any action?” The convention was a representative body, and the delegates should have been allowed to call the strike. “You were supposed to give them authority to act in your name,” he wrote. “Why not leave your grievance in their hands and let them thrash it out as they have been doing for the last seven or eight weeks with the executive board of the company?”

Reynolds was particularly harsh in his treatment of J. J. O’Connor, claiming that the rank and file had allowed themselves “to be led or misled” when they “resolved to strike.” O’Connor, Reynolds argued,

became so intensely absorbed in the justice of your cause and the reasonableness of your demands that he lost sight of the vital question, namely the best weapons to use, the most efficient means to employ to obtain the ends you looked for. The refusal of the company to meet your demands for an eight hour day’s work, the time to be definitely fixed, was the signal for him and others of the leaders to sow the seeds of distrust of the company in your minds and to water that seed by appeals to prejudice and passion until your minds were imbued with the conviction that no faith could be placed on the company’s promise, that it would grant to concessions unless reluctantly forced to do so. Hence the strike, not a strike of the union but a mere remnant of it, and without sanction.

Reynolds caused reasonable workers to distrust the company by claiming that International Paper had “discriminated against” the Fall Mountain mill. Reynolds argued, “The idea that the officers of the I. P. Company would think of discriminating against its employes of Bellows Falls is too absurd to imagine.”

Reynolds finally appealed to machine tenders, as the leaders of the workforce in the
mills, to call off the strike. The strike threatened “misery and want” for many in the village. He recognized that O’Connor could not easily reverse his stand, but pleaded that he end the strike. He wrote, “To deprive labor of its wages is a sin that cries to Heaven for vengeance. Closely akin to this is to prevent a man from earning a living by tying the wheels of industry which give him employment. … A slight sacrifice of your own feelings should be prompted by compassion at the thought of the hardships that must be endured by your friends and neighbors.”

Reynolds’s letter was the start of an interchange that lasted several weeks. On August 8, as the paper announced the settlement of the strike, it also published the response of the I. B. P. M. The article systematically spelled out the union’s relationship with each of the six paper companies in town. The press committee of the union only addressed Reynolds’s comments at the end of its letter. On the charge that the strike was premature, the committee did not address Reynolds directly, but wrote sarcastically, “We would say that depends on the viewpoint of the man who makes the statement. People say that the eight-hour day would come in its own good time. We never doubted that for an instant, we don’t doubt it now. So, also would the millennium [sic], the universal observance of the golden rule and all those other beautiful things the dreamers, the idealists tell us about.” In addressing Reynolds, the committee was harsh and lacking in deference, but at the same time it refused to separate him from his clerical role:

In regard to the advice of Rev. Fr. Reynolds that we return to work, we will say his advice was unasked for and is unheeded. If this advice had been given in the public press prior to several pulpit utterances and stopping individual members of our union on the street advising them to go to work it might seem more disinterested. … It does seem strange to us, though, that some revered gentleman never take [sic] any cognizance of the institution of trades [sic] unionism except on occasions like the present. When we go before the legislature with a request for laws that would keep the child at school instead of in the factory, when we seek a weekly payment bill, when we seek the passage of sanitary measures by law-making bodies, when we seek equal pay for men and women where equal work is performed, when we try to get a weekly wage to meet the family requirements, no word of encouragement, of hope, of advice is tendered us, but when we strike to obtain what we at least believe to be our rights, we are furnished, gratis, with columns of advice.

The dispute raged in the Times over several weeks. The Union’s Correspondence Committee felt that Reynolds was meddling in union affairs while Reynolds saw O’Connor as disrespectful and
as a cunning politician who was out to serve his own ambitions even if that meant attacking the Church. The implication that Reynolds was not sympathetic with the union’s cause of shorter hours and better working conditions particularly struck a nerve. Reynolds responded, “Whether in my remarks in the church or to individuals or in the press I never called into question the justice of the union’s cause nor the reasonableness of their demands.” He claimed that he did not object to the union’s demand for the eight-hour day, but only “the means employed to obtain it.” Reynolds then accused the union of being anti-Catholic and claimed that its criticism of his denunciation of the strike must have been “inspired by the hatred of the renegade Catholic or the fanaticism and narrow-minded bigotry of ‘know-nothing days,’ or its more recent spawn, A. P. A.ism.” The union denied Reynolds’s charges, but asserted, “We will interpret affairs economic in the light of our own judgment, well or ill as that may be. We will act as seems best for our interests, and we will not hesitate to reply to our critics, no matter what their station in life may be.”

Finally, the committee responded to the Reynolds’s charge of anti-Catholicism:

As to the matter of religious sects mentioned in last week’s article we would say there are many creeds represented in our union. How many we don’t know and we don’t care. The bread and butter problem takes up so much of our time that we haven’t any left for drawing religious distinctions. Inside of the trade union hall all men stand on the same plane of equal rights and equal responsibilities.

As for Bellows Falls itself, the religious controversy was perhaps fortunate, for Reynolds had done the job of the local business leaders, and had received the union’s ire. The Times tried to maintain a careful balance between supporting the workers and condemning the strike. After the strike was over and Reynolds was making his final statement, the Times published an editorial under the headline, “Industrial Future of Bellows Falls.” The article pointed out that while Bellows Falls was still “one of the smartest business centers in Vermont,” business growth had stagnated. Belknap noted, “It has not forged ahead in the last two or three years as many would like to have seen it.” The labor situation had not created the problem, but it did not help either. The paper noted, “The strike of the summer has given the village wide advertising of an undesirable nature. It is a pity that what was fated to come anyway could not have been brought
about without a cessation of business. Capital looks askance at a town that cannot settle its business differences without strikes.” Belknap ended with a reassurance:

Bellows Falls, however, has all of its old stand-by’s in the manufacturing line, the paper mills, the snath company, the machine shop, the cream separator manufactory and other smaller concerns. It is just as good a railroad center as it ever was, and there are indications that, while the place may not increase in wealth and population very fast it will continue to be a live business center, a good place to live in, and a village that its citizens can speak of with pride.62

The strongest criticism of the strike came eight months later from Lyman S. Hayes, the local historian. Besides being a local businessman (beginning in 1910 he would serve twenty-four years as town clerk), Hayes reported for local newspapers and even the Associated Press. Locally he wrote for the Brattleboro Phoenix. Hayes published his assessment of the strike in order to look at, “reliable data after the lapse of eight or nine months.” The article was titled, “Disastrous Results of the Paper Mill Strike.” Hayes’s perspective was not detached, for he consistently took an anti-Union stance. If the Times saw the local business community stuck between the fighting sides of capital and labor, Hayes saw the interests of the town and capital as one. He argued that the strike had cost the town $75,000. This sum was a combination of lost wages for the nine weeks the mills were closed, and the subsequent partial shutdown of the mill since the strike. The ultimate effect of the strike, Hayes argued, was an increase in poverty, or “an unprecedented call for assistance from the town fund.”63

Hayes gave his version of the narrative of the strike. He pointed out that International Paper had warned the workers, “because of the primitive style of the paper machines in this plant,” that the company could not run on two tours and remain competitive. The company warned, “that with the then prices of paper in market they would be forced a little later to shut down at least a portion of the mills making the same grades of paper and with whom they had to compete that had the two tour day.” This warning was not recorded at the time of the strike in either the Times or the Paper Makers’ Journal. For Hayes, however, the workers, having been warned, were foolish to press ahead for their demands. He exaggerated the time Carey and the International Union took to endorse the strike, claiming that the endorsement came after only
“two or three weeks.” The amount of time was closer to six weeks. For Hayes there was no foot dragging in order for Carey to teach the local a lesson—local or international union, the results were the same. The workers then pressed the strike, and entered into the three tour system “with the understanding that they should a little later probably be forced to shut down at least part of the mills.”

By Hayes’s calculation, 450 workers were out of work for nine weeks. With an average wage of twelve dollars per week, the town lost $48,600 in wages that would have circulated in the local economy. The balance of the $75,000 came from the partial shutdown of the plant.

Hayes put too much blame on the union for the shutdown. International Paper was concerned about labor costs and efficiency. Doubtless some of this was due to rising labor costs as the company shifted to three tours. By November 1907, as a financial panic gripped the nation, manufacturers saw the demand for newsprint decline. But even before this, International Paper looked to increase efficiency. In Turners Falls, where the Paper Makers’ union did not support the strikers in Bellows Falls and was not even particularly interested in winning the eight-hour day, International Paper still shut down part of its plant. The shutdown came while the workers were striking in Bellows Falls. The Turners Falls Reporter announced the shutdown on July 17, 1907, when it reported, “The ‘New Mill’ to be Closed.” The new mill was the mill of the former Turners Falls Paper Company, which stood between the Griswold Cotton mill and Esleeck paper mill. Built in 1879 to manufacture a high grade of newsprint, the mill was some distance from the rest of the Montague plant and was awkwardly placed. The company continued to operate it, but, with the prospect of running on three tours, finally decided to abandon it. On top of that, International Paper announced that it would shutdown one paper machine in the “old mill,” and would close that mill’s rag room. The Montague plant would run “on wood fibres entirely” and with “but three machines.” The Reporter noted,

At one time the mill was next the largest if not the largest producer of wood papers in America, but gradually it was passed in the race by mills situated nearer the supply of raw material, and with machines of greater capacity, until now it is well down among the tailends in quantity of product. When mills cease to pay, for any reason, now-a-days they cease to exit. There is no sentiment or local pride in business—business must pay or stop, and do either mighty quick. The days of chasing after a forlorn hope are passed in a
big business. The little fellows may yet work the game so long as they get trusted. Bagnall summed up the chief problem with the old mills aptly. By 1907, the Oxford Paper Company on the Androscoggin River in western Maine was the most modern paper mill in the country and ran six paper machines between 118 and 148 inches wide. The sixty-six inch machine in Turners Falls was dwarfed by comparison. Moreover, mills like the Oxford were close to the supply of wood. Even though log drives passed through Turners Falls, the Montague plant was the southernmost mill in International Paper’s portfolio, and this location hindered the plant’s productivity. Bagnall mixed sadness for the decline of local spirit in industry with a hard-headed fatalistic attitude. He lamented the passing of a local spirit, noting that the only hope for entrepreneurs was to be bought out by large corporations, or to “get trusted.” But Bagnall, consistently a foe of organized labor, complained of unions on the same grounds, that they took away local control and forced workers to answer to an organization that lacked a sensitivity for local conditions. Unions hindered the ability of local mills to remain competitive.

Turners Falls suffered the first shutdown in the wake of the strike of 1907. Hayes did not refer to this, but he was doubtless aware of it. While newspapers and union papers did not record threats from International Paper to shutdown part of the Fall Mountain plant, the shutdown in Turners Falls made the threat plausible. The union apparently did not foresee a shutdown in Bellows Falls; for it, the strike was an unqualified success. But if the union could not foresee a shutdown, it also could not foresee the financial panic that hit Wall Street in the Autumn of 1907. The financial panic weighed heavily on the paper industry and may have had more to do with the shutdown than the strike.

The Strike of 1908

By the spring of 1908 International Paper began to shut down parts of the Winnipiseogee Mill. Paper Mill C, the old Daniell Mill (or Lower Paper Mill) shut down in March, and soon after Paper Mill B (the “Upper” or Fisher-Aiken Mill) also closed. On April 9, the Journal-Transcript announced the shut down. The paper noted that Pulp Mill Number Four, which
supplied Paper Mill B, would probably have to shut down, but for the time being there were still four pulp mills and one paper mill running. The mill that remained open made book paper on the plant’s largest machine. The paper reported of the shut down of Paper Mill B, “No cause for the shut down was announced and no length of time was stated.”\textsuperscript{68} At the end of April, the \textit{Journal- Transcript} reprinted L. S. Hayes’s article from the Brattleboro Phoenix, although Omar Towne declined to comment. Paper Mill B reopened in May, but closed again in August.\textsuperscript{69}

This was not simply a local issue: the paper industry was in a state of crisis. Mathew Burns wrote that by May, 1908, “the paper industry was almost at a standstill. Quite a number of companies could not meet their obligations and went into bankruptcy.”\textsuperscript{70} Locally, in Franklin, the Winnipiseogee Plant was predominantly manufacturing pulp; the only paper machine running was the book paper in Paper Mill A, the largest and most modern machine in the plant. The Montague mill had shrunk to become a minor part of the International Paper Company’s portfolio. In July, the corresponding secretary of the Fall Mountain local of the I. B. P. M. summed up the condition of the mills in Bellows Falls. He wrote that the Fall Mountain mill was running only three out of ten machines, that the John T. Moore mill was running “about every other week for the last five months,” that Moore and Thompson were running only two and a half days per week, and that Wyman Flint had been closed for most of the year. Of the local mills, only the Robertson Paper Company, a major producer of wax paper, was running full time and on three tours. The secretary concluded, “Better times will be coming soon and then we shall be on the firing line again, only to stand upright for our rights.”\textsuperscript{71}

The union returned to the firing line quickly. International Paper responded to conditions in the industry by cutting wages. It started with wages of managers and office staff but warned that it might cut workers’ wages. The company claimed that it would not implement the wage cuts immediately but would cut the pay only of salaried employees. The union still objected because it felt that cuts to workers’ wages were inevitable. The secretary from Bellows Falls promised that the local would “resist all attempts and never consent to any lower wages.”\textsuperscript{72} Finally, Paper Makers refused the company’s working agreement, and voted to strike beginning
August 1.

Carey explained the reasons for the strike in a letter to the *Paper Makers’ Journal*. He wrote that International Paper had admitted in congressional hearings that the price of paper had actually risen recently and that despite shutdowns in many of the mills the company’s earnings for the fiscal year ending on June 30 were actually $12,000 higher than those of the previous year.73 “When the company is getting a higher price for their paper,” Carey asked, “is it reasonable for them to reduce the wages of their employes, and as they have the right to set a price on the paper they sell, is it justice on their part to deny to labor in an arbitrary manner the market price of labor they would purchase. [sic]” The Paper Makers were in a difficult position, because a protracted strike in Hamilton, Ohio had depleted the union’s war chest. Carey continued, answering charges that the union would be unable to sustain another strike, “That strike has now gone on for over seven months and there is the healthiest looking lot of starved men there that it would be hard to find.” He also noted the success of the strike in Bellows Falls the summer before: “We know that if one local can do so others can, and the Bellows Falls local seemed to have lots of courage last year when their strike was settled.”74

Another problem for the I. B. P. M. was the lingering dispute with the seceding faction of the Pulp Workers. For the paper makers the strike was as much a struggle against he pulp workers as it was International Paper. The unskilled workers, now represented not only by the Pulp Workers but also by a third union, the Stationary Firemen, were willing to accept the wage cuts, but they also saw the strike as a way of gaining recognition as separate unions. Therefore, the strike was most contentious in Turners Falls, where opposition to the Fitzgerald faction was strongest. Support for the strike was relatively weak in Franklin, where the Fitzgerald faction found strong support. Bellows Falls was strongly a bread-and-butter local, and thus supported the strike even if it lacked that zeal of Turners Falls against the seceders. To make matters worse for the Paper Makers, International Paper seemed to welcome the strike at first because it would help the company reduce its inventory. In Bellows Falls, the mills were going to close anyway for much of the summer while the Canal Company replaced the dam with a new concrete one.75
The strike was set to start at the beginning of August, when mills tended to shut down anyway. A. N. Burbank, president of International Paper, announced that the company would close down the mills in Glens Falls and Fort Edward, New York, Berlin, New Hampshire as well as “two other small mills” in Vermont and New Hampshire. The Winnipiseogee mill was one of these smaller mills. Burbank explained, “These mills will be shut down, not because we have reduced wages, for we have not, but because the month of August is low water time and the natural time for closing down for making repairs and alterations. This is particularly true this year, for now the water supply is not one half of what it was at this time last year.” In Franklin, Burbank put it simply that Paper Mill B was closing, “because business is decreasing instead of increasing.” The strike was thus beneficial to the company. By the end of the first week of the strike, the Turners Falls Reporter quipped, “Everything is so awfully amiable all around, it is thought the manufacturers have joined the union.”

If the strike was conducted amiably, it was still troubling, particularly in Bellows Falls where the newspaper worried about the pattern of two strikes in as many years. For W. C. Belknap, the strike underscored the point that Bellows Falls was dependent upon outside organizations, whether International Paper or the I. B. P. M. At the beginning of the strike he commented,

Here in Bellows Falls there are many stories about the cause of the strike, but very little information is being given out at headquarters. Enquiry at the local office of the International Paper Company generally elicits a polite reference to the officials at the company in New York city. Enquiry at the Union headquarters brings an equally polite reference to President Carey in Watertown, N. Y. The whole strike proposition seems to resolve itself into a New York affair, an affair between officials of the company on one side and officials of the union on the other. Meanwhile Bellows Falls interests which are affected by the strike must patiently await the outcome, and be satisfied with such crumbs of information as drop either by accident or design from the conference table in the empire state.

For Belknap the strike drove home the point that the Fall Mountain mill, while essential to the prosperity of the village, was of relatively little importance in the company. The Bellows Falls Times reported that International Paper had little motivation to settle the strike. As far as the company was concerned, it had closed the mills for want of orders and in order to make repairs.
“The company,” the *Times* reported, “so far as being able to take care of its customers is concerned, has matters well in hand and has a sufficient quantity of the manufactured product in stock to meet all the requirements of consumption for some time to come.”\textsuperscript{80} Similarly, the strikers were content to remain on strike, especially because the mills were closed anyway. The union had no trouble maintaining the strike. Commenting on conditions in Turners Falls, the *Times* noted that strikebreakers could not have found work in any case. The paper reported about 200 workers were on strike there but that “there were no open doors to receive them at the mill, which indicated that the unsettled conditions between the labor leader and the mill officials in New York is rather suggestive of a draw between a strike and a lockout.” The workers simply had to wait out the strike, as did the town in general. The paper quoted A. N. Burbank, “No change in condition is to be expected for a while.”\textsuperscript{81}

The strike remained quiet for the first month, but at the beginning of September International Paper announced that it would reopen its mills. The Pulp and Sulphite Workers and the Stationary Fireman’s union both signed working agreements with the company, accepting wages cuts amounting to an average of five percent. Now the strike was no longer simply over wages but over jurisdiction. The company and the rival unions successfully isolated the Paper Makers, who in the face of economic hard times seemed unreasonable in their demands. On September 3, the *Times* published a statement from John P. Riley, superintendent of the Fall Mountain mill, explaining the causes and conditions of the strike. He explained how International Paper had tried to economize by closing some mills and shutting down parts of others, how it had cut salaries and even dividends on preferred stock, and had finally cut the salaries of foremen. He wrote that the I. B. P. M. had asked the company to submit a proposed wage schedule but had refused to negotiate once the schedule was received. He noted that the company had not cut wages after the old working agreement expired. Finally, he wrote, the I. B. P. M. agreed to wage cuts but on the condition that it “receive exclusive jurisdiction over all the paper and pulp workers, thereby destroying the organization of paper and pulp workers with which the company had signed agreements during the past two years.”\textsuperscript{82} Riley explained, “the
organized members of the firemen and the paper and pulp workers wished to continue at work but the stopping of the paper makers threw most of them out of employment.” Finally, the company signed agreements with the two unskilled unions and prepared to open the mills with strikebreakers. The I. B. P. M. now looked intransigent. The agreement between International Paper and the Pulp and Sulphite Workers put the Paper Makers on the defensive, threatened the success of the strike, and helped to sap local support.

In Bellows Falls, this would not become apparent until after Labor Day. Labor Day had been an important celebration in Bellows Falls for most of the previous decade. In 1902, Theodore Roosevelt had been the keynote speaker. In 1907, coming in the wake of the Paper Makers’ victorious strike, the celebration had been impressive, despite rain during the day. In 1908, the Times declared Labor Day “a grand success,” but noted that the parade had fewer marchers than the year before, and that 100 of the 450 marchers represented local unions in Keene, New Hampshire, twenty miles to the south. Still, the parade was a grand sight, and was covered by the local postcard photographer, R. C. Bristol. The procession included three bands as well as marchers from three of Keene’s local union, the Amalgamated Woodworkers, Garment Workers, and Machinists. The I. B. P. M. made up the middle of the parade, with its members wearing white shirts and hats. The most impressive part of the parade was the float carrying the “Cutter Girls,” the women who operated paper-cutting machines, who were particularly celebrated for their loyalty to the I. B. P. M. The highlight of the Labor Day celebration, however, was the entertainment at Barber Park, the streetcar park between Bellows Falls and the village of Saxtons River. With a picnic, baseball game, and “different amusements,” including a movie and dancing, about 2,500 people filled the park. The paper commented, “This was pretty good when one considers that only 1500 attended the festivities at Rutland, a strong union center having four times the population of Bellows Falls.”

The strike had little effect in Franklin, where the mill was running only one paper machine anyway. The Winnipesogee mill had become more a pulp than a paper mill, and consequently, the Paper Makers’ union was relatively weak. The Pulp and Sulphite Workers
were particularly powerful and radical, especially under the leadership of George C. Brooks and John P. Burke. Brooks and Burke were self-consciously industrial unionists and supported Fitzgerald’s suggestion that the union affiliate with the I. W. W. In February of 1908, Burke wrote that the Franklin local looked forward to a visit from Big Bill Haywood and declared, “We will give this ‘undesirable citizen’ a royal welcome.” The Pulp and Sulphite Workers remained solidly behind Fitzgerald. The mills quietly started up at the beginning of October, with the strike broken by the Pulp and Sulphite Workers. The Turners Falls Reporter noted about the workers in Franklin, “A few union men got sick of loafing and went back, which carried the crowd.”

The strike became particularly contentious in Turners Falls where opposition to the seceding Pulp and Sulphite Workers was strongest. Cecil Bagnall, in the Turners Falls Reporter was characteristically acerbic and was particularly severe in its condemnation of the Paper Makers’ union. The Reporter commented sarcastically about the jurisdictional dispute,

A cat comes creeping out of the bag … and between purrs and scratchings, it is hinted that there are two unions, and there there is a good deal of politics in those unions, and a desire among certain leaders to down other certain leaders in the management of the rank and file workers. It would not be surprising if it did turn out that the leaders had a little war of their own and had called on their armies to obey. There never was a big, real war where lots of men were led with bands of music and flying colors to shoot to death everything in sight, but had back of it more or less of personal feud among its generals.

Bagnall warned that the strike would ultimately harm the community and the workers, and that International Paper would not rush to reopen the mill because, “from all accounts no one here wants to work in the mills without instructions from the head union office in New York.” Bagnall concluded, “Gentlemen, enjoy yourselves in your little skirmishes. There will be labor troubles and disputes, vanities to air, and all that, a thousand years after we are all dead.”

A month later, Bagnall reported that the strike was actually beneficial to the town and that it fostered industry. He pointed out that the river was low enough that the Esleeck fine paper mill would not have been able to run if the Montague mill had run. Bagnall argued that strikes often were often beneficial in unforeseen ways. He wrote, “So you see that strikes are often of the greatest benefit to humanity in general, and should be treated reverently for all the good they
do for posterity, although they may not accomplish what was first intended.”

By the middle of October, the strike was essentially lost. On October 14, the *Turners Falls Reporter* noted that a crew of pulp workers from the International Paper Company mill in Milton, Vermont had reopened at least the pulping operations at the Montague mill. The mill in Milton, the paper reported, had been “idle since July 1st on account of want of water, and the workmen are glad to obtain employment to support their families.” The workers, the *Reporter* hastened to point out, were not strikebreakers but union members in good standing. Bagnall pointed out that enough mills were idle from low water and lack of demand for paper that many workers were eager to find work. He wrote,

“

To say that it is impossible to find men who are willing to work, and that a certain lot of men have great corporations completely at their mercy, for all time, is beyond the pale of reason and contrary to every previous experience in the world. While men may strike or not, for any purpose they choose without creating any ill feeling whatever, there is no good reason why they should not use a little individual common sense. They know, and everybody knows, that it is the habit of a leader to be over sanguine, and not to be possessed of a judicial temperament upon all occasions, otherwise he wouldn’t be a leader.”

The Paper Makers naturally objected to Bagnall’s position. The seceders, J. J. O’Connor argued, were indeed strikebreakers, and were used by the company to break the Paper Makers’ union.

The Montague mill quietly reopened, although the strike continued. On October 21, Bagnall reported that the Montague mill was “quietly making pulp and paper daily.” He reported that the mill was running only one out its three machines but would start up the others as soon as the company could hire workers. He commented, “No local help shows the slightest disposition to go to work.” In this instance, Bagnall reported only part of the story, for the *Bellows Falls Times* reported that strikebreakers had been treated with such hostility that they fled Turners Falls. The Paper Makers threatened that printers would not use paper without a union label and even railroads would refuse to transport. The *Times* reported that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen had pledged $50,000 to the striking papermakers, making a sympathetic strike plausible, but also enabling the strike to continue. The paper also noted that sympathy for the strikers was such that the Star movie theater in Greenfield donated one day’s receipts, forty-five dollars, to the
Bagnall wrote, “To do all that the idle say will be done, would be to enter upon a reign of anarchy such as would stagger the country. A strike in one trade over a five per cent. cut in wages will never be the means of compelling uncounted thousands to suffer infinite misery. Keep cool and let your hair grow. It’s going to be a cold winter.”

The strike continued with more force in Bellows Falls, where International Paper had little inclination to reopen the mill. By October 22, the company was running two pulp machines, but the paper pointed out that the Fall Mountain mill was not a priority for International Paper:

Bellows Falls is not in the thick of the fight between the I. P. company and portion of its employees represented by the Carey Union. Local employes all belong to the Carey Union and no effort has been made to bring strike breakers here and probably will not be. If the former employes want to return to work they can. If not the company is not over anxious about running the whole plant. An official was predicting this week that the Fall Mountain plant might ultimately become a four machine instead of a ten machine plant, the four being two news machines and the two best cylinder machines. The other six machines are getting out of date and expensive to operate.

The strike forced the *Times* to recognize the increasingly tenuous position of Bellows Falls. International Paper made this point clear in a statement to the communities in which it had its mills. In a statement published on October 22 the company explained its policy toward labor unions, noting that it had friendly relations with the unskilled unions, but would henceforth refuse to recognize the I. B. P. M. The company argued that the union had signed an agreement and then repudiated it, and that because of this, “We will have no further dealings with that organization. Paper Machine men must go to work as individuals.” The statement continued, trying to enlist the assistance of townspeople in support of strikebreakers:

Communities dependent upon the paper industry are the greatest sufferers from the policy of the paper makers to rule or ruin. It is to your interest to assist in restoring normal business activity in the paper trade by showing your disapproval of the acts of radical men, hostile to the good name and welfare of your community. You can help the situation by affording protection and by showing respect to those independent workmen, who are now seeking to earn a living for themselves and families.

This statement by International Paper was part encouragement for the local business communities, part denunciation of the strikers, and part threat. If the Paper Makers wanted to “rule or ruin,” the company wrote, the strikers could destroy the mills. They justified the fears
that L. S. Hayes had expressed in regard to the strike of the previous summer. The company may have shut down parts of the mills in response to business conditions, but it did not try to calm fears that the shutdowns were in response to strikes. International Paper was eager to place blame, and found the Paper Makers easy to demonize.

The company finally won, for on October 29, the *Bellows Falls Times* ran a front-page headline, “Strike Broken in I. P. Mills. Gradual Resumption of Manufacturer in Most of Company Mills—32 Machines Now in Operation. …” The paper reported that the strike had “fallen through,” and that the company had started machines in Watertown, the headquarters of the IBPM, and in Turners Falls. The *Times* reported, “most of the men have returned to work in Turners Falls, Mass.” This was significant because Turners Falls was the center of the anti-Fitzgerald forces. The failure of the strike was an admission of defeat not only by International Paper but also by the seceders. The failure of the strike left much bitterness and substantially weakened the cause of organized labor in the village.

The strike may have been broken, but in Bellows Falls as well as other places such as Niagara Falls, the Paper Makers continued to stay away from the mills. In Niagara Falls, the *Times* reported, a citizens’ committee sent a circular to the community denouncing J. T. Carey and the Paper Makers’ union. The letter asked the community to support the merchants in trying to end the strike. The author of the letter wrote, “You merchants can influence the situation if you will and help us to get rid of such tyrants [as Carey], wielding power so great in an irresponsible manner.” W. C. Belknap, who was no fonder of the seceders than he was of the Paper Makers’ union, wrote, “The English in this circular, which is signed ‘Citizen’s Committee,’ is so crude that it may lead to the suspicion that it was inspired by some of Fitzgerald’s minions.” Belknap was aware that the seceders were using the strike for political advantage, a point that was moot in Bellows Falls, where the Fitzgerald faction had never taken root.

Belknap reported that the strike had become bitter. The Fall Mountain plant had two pulp machines running and had started one paper machine with “two back tenders, who came from other parts.” The paper noted, “No local machine tenders have applied for work, but the
company’s doors are thronged by common laborers asking for employment.” Belknap downplayed the reaction of the local papermakers to this strike breaking. The paper reported sarcastically, “There have been numerous reports of trouble between the strikers and strikebreakers, such as slugging, the reckless hurling of the opprobrious word ‘scab,’ etc., but in each instance these reports have vanished in thin air when run. However, if anybody has been slugged and he would like publicity given the fact, his desire will be gratified if he will stand up.”

News of conflict came from the Fall Mountain Boarding House, a popular establishment on the Island, near the Vermont Farm Machine Company and railroad depot. When the strikebreakers who started the paper machine arrived in town, mill superintendent Barrett took them to the house. The Times reported:

Monday morning Landlord Stevens had a fair sized riot on his hands. Eighteen union men who boarded with him, many members of the Moulders’ union, gave notice that the two paper men must go or they would go.

The landlord thought he would rather lose two boarders than 18, and so the paper men were quietly dropped.

The Moulders’ Union represented workers at the Vermont Farm Machine Company who shaped the steel bodies of the cream separators. The moulders seldom made news; in the history of Vermont Farm Machine they never struck. They were still sympathetic with the paper makers, or at least the cause of organized labor in general. Stevens did not back down to the demands of organized labor for long, for the following week, as more strikebreakers arrived in town, and workers continued to picket and harass new arrivals, he announced that the Fall Mountain House was “open to all who apply for board and have the price.”

Belknap tentatively sided with the company, or at least warned the paper makers that the strike was lost: “If the local machine tenders would return to work the Fall Mountain mill would hum as soon as the water rose, and the company may be able to make it hum anyway.” The next week, Belknap was more cautious, trying to criticize both sides. He argued that while International Paper was wrong to try to cut wages, the union was wrong to refuse to accept the agreement Carey had struck with the company:
This paper, while not offering suggestions to anybody, believes that it would have been good business policy on the part of the I. P. company not to have tried to force a reduction of wages last August. But inasmuch as wages have been cut, it also believes that it was poor business policy of for the unions not to sanction the settlement made by President Carey and go to work. One often hears it said here in Bellows Falls that the great majority of the men would like to return to work on the conditions offered but that the way is blocked by a few machine tenders. If that is true, the judgment of a majority of the union is warped by a minority and that is contrary to the system of government that is supposed to prevail among unions.  

Belknap continued, stating that the he believed the strike was ultimately doomed. He continued, writing that the Paper Makers should be careful not to alienate International Paper. He pointed out that the International Paper Company claimed to be friendly to unions, and that the willingness of the company the previous year was evidence to support this claim. Still, he noted, “All the labor troubles that there have ever been in Bellows Falls have been between the I. P. company and its employes.” Belknap was quick to point out, however, that the strike had destroyed the relationship between the company and its unionized workers. The paper published a brief statement from W. A. Whitcomb, Manager of Manufacturing Department of International Paper, repeating the company’s position that it would run machine rooms as open shops.

On November 12, the Times finally declared, “Strike in I. P. Mills Passes into History.” The paper reported that representatives the workers had met with company officials on the previous Saturday, “and voted to give up the fight” and commented, “In this strike the union has been trimmed to a stand still.” The defeat was harsh. Over most of the decade, the Paper Makers had gradually won concessions from the company in regards to pay and hours, but now they suffered a considerable setback. First, they accepted a five-percent wage reduction. The Times announced that the Fall Mountain mill would go back to a two tour schedule, with workers earning the same pay, minus five percent, for eleven or thirteen hours that they had formerly earned for eight. To make matters worse, the Times reported that workers had to reapply for their old jobs “as individuals and not as members of a union.” The paper noted that some men had been rehired, but that that low water prevented the mill from opening more than three out of its ten machines (the paper reported that a fourth machine would begin running as soon as there was enough water). Moreover, the paper noted that some of the men had been let go in favor of
strikebreakers who had been en route to Bellows Falls at the time of the meeting in Albany settling the strike. The *Times* summed up the local results of the strike: “When the situation is sized up the union has lost about all it gained in the past two years, has lost a good deal of time and wages, and faces the future with a demoralized organization. The company and the community have also lost something.”

What the community lost, besides wages, was the goodwill of the company and goodwill within the community. While there had been no violence, the strike stirred up bad feelings between the workers and the local management of the mills, as well as the merchants who tended to side with the company. Further, the strikebreakers who remained in town threatened to keep memories of the strike alive. The *Times* worried that relations between the Paper Makers and the company would further harm the place of the Fall Mountain mill in the company’s larger corporate plans. Belknap wrote,

> The strikers made their principal mistake when they refused to endorse President Carey’s settlement of September 24. Had that settlement gone through, the old men generally would have been taken back, work would have been resumed earlier and the union would have saved its face. The New York office seems to have it in for the Bellows Falls machine tenders in particular. Two strikes in one year is more than the company will stand for. 

Belknap concluded, softening his judgment with faint praise for the strikers: “However, those who are personally acquainted with these machine men do not consider them such a bad lot. They are better stayers than some of the fellow unionists elsewhere, and this time they have made the mistake of staying too long.”

The situation in Bellows Falls was not as grim as Belknap first believed, for in December the corresponding secretary from Bellows Falls wrote to the *Paper Makers’ Journal* that all of the village’s independent mills were “running on full time again,” and that the International mill had eight machines running. The correspondent reported, “All the old help at this writing were hired, with the exection [sic] of four, Bros. J. H. Collins, C. C. Tidd, D. Brown, machine tenders, and Thomas Hayes, Jr., calender man. Our members in the I. P. Co. and the Independent companies are working the eight-hour day. The boys in the I. P. mill have to work Sunday night.”
of the correspondent’s letter was one of relief; he noted, “Peace reigns once more in this locality.”

For the members of the I. B. P. M., the greatest impact of the strike was that they now had to recognize the separate Pulp and Sulphite Workers union. In May 1909, Fitzgerald resigned as president of the Pulp and Sulphite Workers and that John H. Malin was elected to fill his place. Malin, Carey, and Healy began to work on hammering out an agreement regarding jurisdiction among the three unions. In June, 1909, Carey announced that the Paper Makers, Pulp and Sulphite Workers, and Stationary Firemen had signed an agreement that tied the unions closely together and gave equal representation to members of each union. The end of the jurisdictional struggles was encouraging for the growth of the unions, but organizers had to overcome the lingering demoralization of the workers in the local unions. This would be difficult partly because International Paper was intent on running an open shop, at least in the skilled positions.

Locals in the different towns had different responses to the reconciliation of the skilled and unskilled unions. The Turners Falls local had fought tooth and nail against Pulp Workers, and it remained silent, at least in the pages of the Paper and Pulp Makers’ Journal. The Paper Makers remained unorganized for years after the strike. In Bellows Falls, the transition met with much support, and the Bellows Falls local kept up a steady correspondence with the Journal. The corresponding secretary, however, noted that there were “kickers” who refused to accept the agreement and to attend joint meetings and social events. Attendance at local meetings and even the Labor Day Parade in 1909 were small. Still, in August 1909, the Corresponding Secretary noted with relief, “The Pulp & Sulphite Workers are organized now. They did take very many of our members, but they got a very nice local just the same. They average about 30 members.”

In Franklin, where the pulp workers were stronger than the Paper Makers, the unions were also eager to put the struggle over jurisdiction behind them. The reconciliation of the unions, however, alienated the Pulp and Sulphite Workers from the International Paper Company. The struggle between the unions suited the company, but reconciliation potentially strengthened
all of the organized labor in the mills. Moreover, the company to declare an open shop as far as
the Papers Makers were concerned the company continued to enforce its Open Shop policy. The
company refused to accept any sort of agreement that involved the Paper Makers. Workers came
up against this company opposition after the convention that ratified the agreement between the
two unions. Pulp worker William Bruce represented Franklin at the convention, and when he
returned, the Paper Makers’ Journal reported, “he was notified that his services were no longer
needed.” A correspondent from Franklin noted, “Inquiry at other paper mill towns discloses the
fact that the Paper company has discharged other delegates who attended the conference, and the
members of the local union are speculating on what the action of the company means.”
Carey’s agreement with International Paper had guaranteed that union members would work for
the company without prejudice, but when the union rejected the agreement, the company was no
longer bound by the agreement.

The Strike of 1910

International Paper’s Open Shop policy caused a crisis in January 1910, when the
company fired Cornelius J. O’Leary, a back tender at its Hudson River Mill in Palmer, New
York. The union filed a grievance, but the company refused to recognize the union, and in
March, the Paper Makers’ and Pulp and Sulphite Workers’ unions declared a strike. The Paper
Makers’ Journal argued that the time was opportune for a strike. Business conditions had
improved. Increased demand for paper, combined with a six-month closure of the Hudson River
Mill because of low water, had depleted the company’s store of stock. If the strike extended to all
thirty-two of International Paper’s mills, with 12,000 employees, it could do considerable
damage. The Journal noted, “This may be the opening of the hardest fought battle ever waged
by the paper craft and the enthusiasm and determination shown by the men gives every assurance
of success.” The harmony between the two largest unions in the mills created a “solid phalanx”
that would “prove a bulwark of strength which no power of greed and intimidation can break.”
The strikers were enthusiastic, and seemed united, and the Journal reported at the beginning of
the strike that the company had been unable to recruit strikebreakers.

The *Journal* was more optimistic than it should have been. Just before the strike began, the Bellows Falls local’s Corresponding Secretary reported that a majority of the workers in the mills were not unionized. The union was rebuilding its membership, and the secretary noted, “we hope we will have as large a membership at the expiration of 1910 as we ever had. …” The mill, however, was running steadily with seven of its ten machines. The International Plant was running a long schedule, with work on Sunday nights. The correspondent wrote, “I don’t know if they intend to keep it up. I expect they will as long as the majority of their help remain away from the union. Some of the small mills also run Sunday nights. If all the brothers would try to build up the local they would not dare ask us to run Sunday nights.” The Bellows Falls local was ill-prepared to present a “solid phalanx.” The Franklin local did not send letters to the *Paper Makers’ Journal* and were apparently more poorly prepared than Bellows Falls.

J. T. Carey explained the causes of the strike in article in the April issue of the *Paper Makers’ Journal*. By this time, in the heat of the strike, the union charged International Paper with a pattern of intimidation. The article did not mention O’Leary by name. His firing was the grievance that sparked the strike, but it was only one of many instances of similar behavior by the company. The author pointed out that part of the strike settlement of 1908 was an agreement that “there would be no discrimination shown against any man on account of the strike. …” Despite this promise, International Paper

have discriminated against the men on account of the other strike; have maintained a blacklist on account of which some of the men, active members of the organization, have ever since worked for the I. P. Co. or any other paper Company [sic]; have compelled men to sign an agreement not to belong to any trade union while in their employ, in order to secure employment with the I. P. Co.

The article continued, noting that representatives to the conference that settled the controversy between the Paper Makers and Pulp and Sulphite Workers were discharged or forced to sign yellow dog contracts. The article continued,

Since that time many abuses have been heaped upon the workmen. Men have been discharged for having been seen talking with other men known to be union men; men
have been discharged without cause whatsoever when an officer of the organization went to a town where they were employed, which was done simply to intimidate the men and prevent them from strengthening their locals; men have been discharged on numerous occasions and no cause whatsoever being given—simply when the reported for work they would be handed a blue ticket without any excuse whatsoever being given; the company has maintained a secret service agency and while it is a fact that some of the reports sent to the company by this agency may have been true true, in other cases their information has been absolutely misleading as their agents have been known in several of the towns.

Adding to this complaint of intimidation, the union complained of Sunday work, claiming that in some cases the company opened the mills on Sunday simply to intimidate the workers:

On a few occasions they have started their machines at six o’clock Sunday [sic] evening and shut down at midnight and then the employes be laid off the balance of the week. In other instances they have started their machines at six o’clock Sunday afternoon and shut them down Monday morning and the help be laid off for the balance of the week. We can attribute this either to spite on the part of the company in their attempt to break the spirit of the workmen, or absolute mismanagement.121

The article charged that the union had sent letters to International Paper Company officers W. A. Whitcomb and Warren Curtis stating the grievances and warning that they could lead to a strike, but that Whitcomb and Curtis had refused to respond. The union further charged that Sunday work violated New York state labor laws. In Corinth, New York, when “a man who had been in the employ for a number of years and had always been a faithful employe …” (O’Leary) approached the “slave driving Superintendent” of the Hudson River Mill, he was discharged.122

O’Leary’s firing may not have been enough of a grievance to stimulate a widespread sympathetic strike, but the addition the grievance regarding Sunday work and the demand for a pay increase gave strikers something to fight for. The workers in Turners Falls, still smarting from their failure in the strike of 1908, did not strike. The locals in both Bellows Falls and Franklin, however, did, with Bellows Falls on March 11 and Franklin on March 29.123 Both of these towns were in awkward positions, for A. N. Burbank, International Paper Company president, took a more vocal role in the strike than he had in the previous strikes. Burbank had been born in Franklin and had worked for the Winnipiseogee Paper Company. As general manager of the Fall Mountain Paper Company, he had spent much of the 1890s in Bellows Falls. That he took a personal interest in the strike, particularly in Bellows Falls and Franklin, worked against the strikers, for many in the business communities of both towns were loyal to him
personally. But even the unions were reluctant to engage in a sympathetic strike. In Bellows Falls, where there were about 150 union members, only about thirty showed up for the meeting at which the strike vote was cast.\textsuperscript{124}

The Franklin locals delayed voting on the strike until March 29, but the city watched the course of the strike carefully. On March 10, the \textit{Journal-Transcript} published a statement from A. N. Burbank asserting that the strikers had not informed him of the causes of the strike or the union’s demands. The company found enough sympathy in Franklin that it recruited strikebreakers there. On March 17, the \textit{Journal-Transcript} reported, “Four men left here last Thursday night for Corinth, NY, to take the places of strikers in the I. P. Co.’s mills. Nearly 18 men from this vicinity have gone out to act as strike breakers.”\textsuperscript{125} Sympathies began to change as news of the conduct of the strike reached Franklin. In Rumford, Maine workers charged that union officials were met by an angry mob, and John Malin had been forced to leave town. When Malin stopped in Franklin, the city council instructed the police to “keep him under constant surveillance.” Malin spoke at the Central Labor Union’s hall and invited the city marshall to attend the meeting. The \textit{Journal-Transcript} reported, “At its conclusion he said that the sentiment was that the action of the city council would force a strike. Mr. Malin talked as if he intended to show the Franklin officials what he could do. … He wished, he said to force the I. P. Co. to live up to the contract made with the union, also force it to eliminate Sunday work and to eliminate the spy system.”\textsuperscript{126} These heavy-handed tactics by the city helped changed the sentiment of the workers. They voted to strike on March 29.

The strike of 1910 was more bitter and damaging than the previous strikes. Union leaders misjudged the solidarity of the workers, but International Paper was also better prepared to recruit strikebreakers and to send guards to meet and intimidate the strikers than before. In Bellows Falls, the strike began with a crowd lining the streets to watch the strikers as they filed out of the mill. The \textit{Times} reported, “Shortly after 3 p. m., a long line of men, carrying baskets and overalls on their arms, came out in groups and left for their homes. No disorder of any kind and by a stranger nothing amiss would have been noticed.”\textsuperscript{127} The strikers downplayed their
demands, stating that they were following instructions from union headquarters. Judge T. E. O’Brien met with local president Dominick McDermott and secretary John Fitzgerald. The paper reported, “They told the committee that the settlement of the strike was then out their hands; the matter could not be treated by the local union and any settlement must come from headquarters at Watertown, N.Y.” Once again, the community felt caught in the middle of a conflict that was being waged by outside parties.

From the beginning, support for the strike was weak in Bellows Falls, for within the first week, three of the leaders of the local union had broken ranks and returned to work. These were Daniel Brown, who had served on the strike committee in 1908, Edward Barry, who had been first vice president of the international union, and finally David Sencebaugh (or Sensabaugh), a veteran of the old Paper Machine Tenders’ Union. Strikebreakers from Holyoke, Massachusetts and Groveton, New Hampshire soon arrived to help reopen the mills. The Times reported, “Small groups of strike breakers have arrived daily, the men coming here from Holyoke, Mass., Groveton, N. H., and other points.” By the end of the second week of the strike, the company had started three machines, although the Times reported, “There has been much difficulty in getting out paper of proper quality, the product being either too thin or too thick.”

By the end of the next week, the company considered the strike broken, and claimed that it was running all the machines that it needed. Superintendent Barrett told the reporter for the Times, “The output is nearly equal to that produced previous to the strike and the quality is good.” Finally, adding to the troubles the Paper Makers faced, the Times reported that the Stationary Firemen, the third union in the mills, persistently refused to strike. The Times commented, “the paper makers realize this union in one way, controls the local situation.” As the strikers faced defeated, the Paper Makers bitterly blamed the firemen.

The Fall Mountain mill settled into a stalemate. On March 24, the Times covered the strike under the headline “Strike Situation Remains the Same.” The following week the paper led with the headline, “Strike Situation Bad for Strikers.” On April 7, 21, and 28 the strike was not front-page news, and the headline was the same for each date: “Strike Situation Unchanged.”
April 7, the mill had 353 workers employed, or only about fifty short of the number employed before the strike. Further, the company claimed that the quantity and quality of paper was equal to the product before the strike. A project laying water pipe in the hamlet of Gageville (or North Westminster), for example, employed twenty-five.\textsuperscript{134} The situation in Bellows Falls was calm, but the \textit{Times} published news of other mills, where the situation was more menacing. The paper reported violence in Livermore Falls, Maine. No strike had been called in Rumford, but only because the strong citizens’ committee prevented union officers and organizers from speaking. The \textit{Times} reprinted stories from the \textit{Londonderry [Vermont] Sifter} and the \textit{Rutland [Vermont] Herald} supporting the action of the citizens of Rumford. In both cases the papers derided the use of outside agitators, or union officers and organizers. Communities had lost control of local economies; an outside corporation owned the mills, but the towns should still be able to control their labor markets without interference by outside parties. The \textit{Sifter} commented, “The citizens of this Maine town [Rumford] rose to the occasion and chucked out these inciters of a strike. Bellows Falls in our own county ought to have done the same thing. ‘An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.’”\textsuperscript{135} The \textit{Rutland Herald} tried to distance itself from the harsh tone of the \textit{Sifter}, but its message was the same. The \textit{Times} published these editorials without comment. Editor Belknap had a lighter touch than these other editors, although his stand was clear: the strike was doomed to failure and ultimately would be counterproductive.

The \textit{Times} reported the strike as a lost cause from the beginning. The Bellows Falls local, however, had an active corresponding secretary who kept the \textit{Paper Makers’ Journal} abreast of the local’s perspective of the strike. In the April issue of the \textit{Journal}, the correspondent reported, “All brothers here intend to fight this out. . . .” The correspondent noted the workers who did not honor the strike, but stressed that they were a minority. He wrote, “One day the first of this week Smiling Joe [Aumond] left here with a gang of Polanders for either Corinth or Palmer. They will probably be paper makers by the time they get to their destination, but very little paper they will make. . . .” The correspondent downplayed number of people who broke ranks and returned to work, but he reported the incidents nonetheless. Noting that a group
of finishers had not joined the strike, he dismissed them as “deserters from the Kerry
Moonlighters,” and commented, “so you cannot be surprised what their class will do.” The
implication was that these Kerry Moonlighters (a reference to Irish vigilante violence during the
Irish Land War of the 1870s) were unprincipled radicals who acted to suit their own agenda rather
than work with the union. The correspondent noted the arrival of strikebreakers, writing, “They
also expect some more cattle, I understand, but this does not worry the Bellows Falls boys any as
they have seen what they have done before with the same class of steers.”

The correspondent dismissed the skills of the strikebreakers, asserting that the company
would not be able to produce good paper without union members. He stressed their inexperience
and lack of skill, even their lack of knowledge of the vocabulary of the mills. In May, the
correspondent reported, “We got quite a lot of farmers and peddlers making paper now and they
do more harm than good as they spoil a great deal of felts and wires. They call the felts
“blankets,” so you can imagine what they know about the business. They very often have a free
fight in the machine room and call one another scabs and poor miserable foremen.” The
correspondent pointed out that the strikebreakers’ inexperience put them in danger. He wrote,
“On the second week of the strike one of the guards thought he would make No. 5 machine go
with his club but he found out to his sorrow that No. 5 was not to be monkeyed with by loosing
[sic] three of his fingers in the stack [calender].” Moreover, the correspondent reported with
disdain that the company allowed the strikebreakers to smoke in the mills, something that was
dangerous to the safety of the workers, the paper, and the mills.

Feelings toward the strikebreakers quickly turned bitter. In April and May, the Journal
published three poems written someone who signed himself “A Loyalist,” “A Loyalist to the
Cause,” and “A Dream” naming and condemning scabs. In the first poem, “A. Loyalist” began,

Away down in the I. P. mills everything is through and fro,
All their paper is coming back, I hear,
And I really think it’s so.
But it’s just the very price of them,
For they have used their help so mean,
Hiring every hobo that never saw a machine.
He continued, listing the scabs:

There is Joe Aumond and Dave Sensebaugh,
And Jerry Collins, too, likewise,
And our organizer, Edward Barry.
They had ought to blacken both his eyes,
For only for those few
The boys would have their way,
But they’re going down,
Sucking around their jobs,
To Ed. Barrett and Dan Cray.

He concluded:

So now to conclude and finish,
I have no more to say,
But I hope and trust,
The Union boys will surely gain the day;
And when they do, I hope in God,
They will kick those damn scabs out,
And hunt them out of Bellows Falls,
With their fingers in their mouths.139

The other poems were much the same and continued to name the strikebreakers.

The strike started later in Franklin than it did in Bellows Falls, but it became a harder fight. Franklin’s city council tried a policy like Rumford, but it backfired, as attempts to intimidate John Malin only enraged the workers.140 The Journal-Transcript reported that Malin was “well pleased” by the effect of his treatment by the city council. Sympathy for the strike grew slowly, but in the last week of March, union members gradually fell in line. The Journal-Transcript reported, “Tuesday morning the strike microbe began to work again and some of the machine tenders at Paper Mill B refused to go to work when their tour of duty came at 7 o’clock.”141 With this, strikebreakers began to arrive; the paper reported that thirty had traveled from Wilder, Vermont.

The paper soon began to report problems. On April 14, it reported the death of strikebreaker Addison W. Heath who was found in the Winnipesaukee River near Paper Mill A (the sulphite paper mill outside of Franklin Falls). The paper did not suggest foul play but speculated that he “went into the river” at the footbridge at the mill. The paper commented, “how he died will probably never be known.”142 Two weeks later, however, newspapers reported
violence between strikers and strikebreakers, and also between a guard and bystanders not employed by the company. The first incident was reported in the Bellows Falls Times. The paper reported that a strikebreaker was assaulted near Paper Mill B. The paper reported,

Near the Franklin & Tilton railroad, a few rods from paper mill B, is a fine spring where workmen are in the habit of securing drinking water. While a man who is working in the mill, alleged to [be] a strike-breaker, was at the spring he was assaulted by a gang of men who were hidden in the woods nearby. He was severely pounded, but managed to escape, and running for the mill cried for help at the top of his voice. Detectives here on duty at the mill hurried to the spring, but the man’s assailants had disappeared. The workman went back a little later with one of the guards, but no trace of the men who committed the assault could be found.¹⁴³

Unlike Rumford, Franklin’s localism worked against the strikebreakers. The assailants were able to slip away, and local people did not seem terribly concerned by the assault. This story was not reported in the Journal-Transcript. Rather, in the same week the paper reported that a guard had ordered a man standing near Paper Mill B (the Upper mill at the eastern end of Franklin Falls) to move, and when he “didn’t comply in a manner to satisfy the New Yorker and he was pushed away.” The man “swore out a warrant for the arrest” of the guard. The tone of the article suggested sympathy for Paige, the “Franklin young man,” rather than Clarke, the “New Yorker.”

The Journal-Transcript reported that Judge Omar A. Towne, who was also the editor of the paper, heard the case. Paige testified that “he was talking baseball with Lucien Chabotte just before the alleged assault took place. The detective came along and told him to get off the railing and move on as he was obstructing the sidewalk. Paige said that he refused to move and the detective pushed him by taking him under the arm.” The paper pointed out that Paige was “a knitter and does not belong to any union,” though one the witnesses was Archie Mahan, an officer in the Paper Makers’ Union. Clarke’s lawyer, Edward G. Leach, moved that the complaint be dismissed, and argued that the guard was only trying to protect the company’s property. Towne denied the motion and finally ruled in favor of Paige.¹⁴⁴ Towne was not an advocate of organized labor but he took the case seriously. The incident in his newspaper suggested greater sympathy for Paige than Clarke.

A. N. Burbank took the strike in Franklin personally. He pointed out to the Journal-
Transcript, “I have a great interest in the city of Franklin; I was born there and hope to be buried there, …” but he also noted that he was frustrated by organized labor.\textsuperscript{145} In April, 1910, the Franklin Board of Trade wrote to Burbank to ask if International Paper had plans to close mills, to lease the old Daniell mill (which had been closed since the financial panic of 1907), or to sell or lease waterpower. Burbank responded with little of the warmth local business people would have hoped for from a native. “I have received your letter,” he began, “At the present time our company would not wish to sell or to make a lease for any length of time of the water power at the lower mill, and I hardly suppose that anyone would wish to buy or lease the buildings without the power.” He laid out a vague possibility that the company would enlarge the Winnipiseogee Mill and perhaps convert some of it to generating electricity, but then warned the city that labor threatened any potential development: “If we are to have frequent strikes, without any apparent good reason, I fear it would be difficult to get our Board of Directors to consider such extension of our business. We are more likely to add to our business in the towns where the men are more willing to continue at work.”\textsuperscript{146}

Burbank had successfully sown discord in both Bellows Falls and Franklin, but in terms of actual demands and sympathy, the strike was going in favor of the workers. In Palmer, N. Y., where the strike started, the \textit{Paper Makers’ Journal} reported that the strikers had broad support in the community. The \textit{Journal} reported that the village’s Presbyterian minister had addressed a community meeting and said, “Men ought to have, and by right, should have one day’s rest in seven and act as workmen should work and act as a unit as well as corporations.” The \textit{Journal} noted that seated on the stage during the address were village trustees, the village president, and members of the village Board of Education. At another meeting, the school superintendent, Methodist minister, Catholic priest, “and other men of affairs advised us that we were in the right and that ‘right is might.’”\textsuperscript{147} The \textit{Journal} correspondent continued, “The farmers are bringing in vegetables and wood. The various labor and secret organizations also the firemen, have donated in a very liberal manner. They say ‘We are all one and will empty our treasury if necessary in behalf of the men on strike.’”\textsuperscript{148}
The heavy-handed tactics of the company only increased local sympathies for the strike. In Palmer, as in Fort Edward and Glens Falls, the company had the assistance of the local militia. Making matters worse for the company, J. T. Carey accused A. N. Burbank and the company of attempting to bribe him to call off the strike, offering him as much as $20,000. The Bellows Falls Times reported the story on April 14, along with Burbank’s denial, and Carey gave details of the controversy in the Paper Makers’ Journal. Carey explained that Burbank had announced that “the company endorsed every action that is being taken to get the mills of the company in operation again.” Attempted bribery was thus one of the actions Burbank endorsed. Burbank denied the accusation tersely, writing, “This charge is unqualifiedly false. The International Paper Company has not offered Mr. Carey one cent for this purpose, and would not and will not have anything whatever to do with him at any time in any way.” Burbank did not answer any of Carey’s charges specifically, and the story did not continue. International Paper fought Carey and the strike assiduously, and Carey’s charges were thus plausible.

By the beginning of May, the company and the two paper unions agreed to arbitration to settle the strike; New York law gave the state the authority to demand arbitration. Because the grievance was at the Hudson River Mill and the strikes in other mills were sympathetic, the New York State Board of Mediation and Arbitration arbitrated the grievances. The union and company officers, together with the Catholic priest from Corinth met with the Board over a week in New York City. The Bellows Falls Times published the International Paper Company’s statement to the Board on May 19, and the Paper Makers’ Journal published the official report of the mediation written by John Lundrigan, chairman of the Board of Mediation and Arbitration. The Board hammered out an adjustment of the grievances that answered most of the unions’ concerns. The unions received most of what they asked: a five percent pay increase, return to the three tour system as it had been established in 1907, the end of Sunday labor, guarantees that the company would address grievances, and recognition of the unions. The agreement amounted to a defeat for Burbank and the International Paper Company, for the unions regained what they had lost in 1908.
The local unions ultimately lost more than they gained, for the company’s actions during the strike, and the hard feelings within the unions, shattered organized labor in the paper towns. Turners Falls remained unorganized, still bitter over of the strike of 1908, but Bellows Falls and Franklin had at best weak organizations for two years. In 1912 the unions won a closed shop, and the local unions in Bellows Falls and Franklin quickly scrambled to rebuild their organizations.

For Bellows Falls, Franklin, and even Turners Falls the closed shop came at a pivotal moment in newsprint mills. In 1907, newspaper publishers began a campaign to lower the cost of newsprint. They appealed to the justice department to prosecute paper manufacturers for price fixing, and at the same time to remove duties from paper made in Canada. Canadian manufacturers could produce paper cheaply, because the wood could be harvested from crown lands. Theodore Roosevelt quickly threw his support behind the publishers’ demands. Finally, the Underwood-Simmons Act of 1913 removed import duties on cheap paper, thus opening American markets to a flood of Canadian newsprint. At the same time, the new mill that Lord Northcliffe was building in Newfoundland destroyed a valuable market for American newsprint.

The Underwood Tariff weighed heavily on the oldest mills. Newer mills, such as one in Rumford, Maine and the Hudson River Mill in Corinth, New York (which had been enlarged and modernized through the years) could remain profitable. Bellows Falls, Franklin, and Turners Falls were at a disadvantage because they were relatively distant from supplies of pulpwood, and because they had not been kept up to date. By 1912 they had suffered continual partial shutdowns. The Fall Mountain Mill seldom ran more than seven of its ten machines; the Winnipiseogee Mill no longer used the original mill on the site of the old Daniell mill; and the Montague Mill had also closed one of its mills.

**Hydroelectric Development**

As the mills declined, the towns looked for development to offset the losses in the paper industry. One solution was both promising and troubling: converting the waterpower to
hydroelectricity. Hydroelectric generating had a long history in the old paper towns. Electrification in the towns had begun in the 1880s, when the mills installed dynamos, lights, and other equipment. Turners Falls installed electric streetlights in 1886. Bellows Falls and Franklin followed over the next several years, with power generated by private companies, the Fall Mountain Electric Light and Power Company in Bellows Falls, and the Franklin Light and Power Company. In 1904, the Turners Falls Company widened and lengthened its canal, more than tripling its width, and built a power plant capable of generating 7,000 horsepower. While the power mostly went to the mills, the plant showed the potential of the canal.

The development of electricity for consumer use began in 1912, when hydroelectric developers bought interests in both the Turners Falls Company and bought the Bellows Falls Canal Company from the Russell heirs. In Turners Falls the development began when promoter Philip Cabot, bought interests in the Turners Falls Company. The Turners Falls Reporter announced the reorganization of the Turners Falls Company in January 1912. Cabot and Alvah Crocker, grandson of the village’s founder, replaced the dam connecting the mills and island in the middle of the river with a modern concrete “O-G” dam. The Reporter noted that the dam would be of “immense strength,” and the company advertised that it would be the heaviest dam in New England. The canal was extended to Montague City, where a second power plant, capable of generating 40,000 horsepower was added. No longer was the power used only in Turners Falls and mostly by industry: the Turners Falls Company distributed power as far as Amherst and Easthampton, and planned to extend its lines to Springfield. Turners Falls was becoming a hub for regional power developments that stretched north to Vernon, Vermont on the Connecticut and west to the Deerfield River.

Cecil Bagnall of the Reporter embraced the development, reporting gleefully on the work as it progressed. He emphasized the vastness of the undertaking. Holbrook, Cabot, and Rollins, the contractors digging the extension to the canal, had to remove 120,000 cubic yards of rock and 820,000 cubic yards of earth. They would use 18,000 cubic yards of concrete. Fred T. Ley and Company, building the dam, had to excavate 30,000 cubic yards of rock and 50,000 cubic yards
of earth, and use 18,000 cubic yards of concrete. The entire project would employ about 1,500.

The work was complete in the summer of 1913. The Reporter enthusiastically reported the completion of the work in a long article about the celebration in honor of the superintendent of the Bates, Rogers, and Company firm of contractors under the headline, “Turners Falls At Its Best.” In August, the paper reported that the Turners Falls Company had further reorganized, spinning off the real estate aspect of the business. The new company was the Montague Company. The company’s principal officers were Cabot and Crocker, but the company was devoted solely to developing land in Turners Falls. “It is practically a land and development company,” the Reporter glowed. The company was “an offshoot from the Turners Falls Company” but would develop land in a “vastly better way. …” Bagnall recognized that the company, like its parent, was controlled by “out-of-town officers,” but reassured his readers that they would “be ever alert” to anything that would “bring business to Turners Falls, or be of benefit in any way to the community.” Bagnall was enthusiastic about the power development, accepting that the future of the village lay with out-of-town capitalists. This was consistent with his opinions of the old Turners Falls Company, as well as the International Paper Company.

When hydroelectric developers bought the Bellows Falls Canal Company from the Russell heirs in December 1912, they received a much chillier reception. W. A. Russell had been deeply admired by people in Bellows Falls, but his sons never had the same level of commitment to the community as he. W. A. Russell, Jr. died in 1906 at age thirty-three, leaving his brother, Richard S. Russell, as the principal owner of the Canal Company and Fall Mountain Electric Light and Power Company. By 1912, Russell had his properties, valued at about $1,000,000, in Bellows Falls on the market, and in December sold them to the firm of Chace and Harriman, of Boston. They planned to build a power plant at the head gates of the Bellows Falls canal, generating power that would be combined with the power generated by the Vernon Dam, and in the future with power generated in McIndoe Falls, upstream from Bellows Falls about ninety miles.
The Fall Mountain Electric Light and Power Company was founded in 1900. By 1912 it was generating 1,200 kilowatts, with generators in the “Forest” at Twin Falls on the Saxtons River, at the head gates of the canal, and with a steam plant on the Island. With thirty-five miles of lines, serving the villages of Bellows Falls, Saxtons River, and Westminster in Vermont and Walpole, North Walpole, Drewsville, and Charlestown, in New Hampshire. The power was generated, and much of the stock of the power company, was owned locally. Chace and Harriman assured the people of Bellows Falls that they could generate power more efficiently than the Canal and Electric Companies had, increasing the capacity by at least fifty percent over the 13,885 horsepower then being generated. The buyers suggested that they would soon string lines to Brattleboro, and eventually connect the Bellows Falls system with Vernon and the Deerfield River development in Searsburg, Vermont.

It was this last point that troubled the Bellows Falls Board of Trade. Chace and Harriman seemed to be proposing nothing less than an octopus that could potentially suck the life out of Bellows Falls. Soon after Chace and Harriman bought the dam, Henry I. Harriman met with local manufacturers and business leaders to explain the “policy of the new company and future plans which may be adopted.” He promised the manufacturers that he would supply electrical power at the same price as the waterpower they had been using. The Bellows Falls Times reported, “The mill men questioned the advisability of this move and claim the cost would be too great.”

International Paper, which used more than eighty percent of the canal’s waterpower, showed no interest in modernizing the plant, even in 1912. Even greater than the question of affordability of electrification, was that of local control. The Times reported,

That there is a wide feeling of opposition to taking power out of the state was evidenced by Representative H. D. Ryder, who was present. He stated he was preparing a bill for the reorganization of the Canal Co., and stated the rights of the people of Bellows Falls must be safeguarded. The people here, he said, must have all the power they want, before outside firms be considered. There was a general discussion on the matter of suitable legislation in regard to the local plant, and Senator Babbitt, Representative Ryder and a mill owner were named as a committee to draft a bill that would be fair to the company and conserve the rights of the village and the state.¹⁶⁴

The following week, Belknap reprinted an article from The New England Homestead under the
headline, “Are Appropriating Peoples’ Property: Progress of the Water Power Trust—Public Waking Up—Remarkable Developments and Big Profits—Maze of Corporation Control Large Potential Horse Power.” The title referred to the fact that Chace and Harriman had acquired water rights at Shelburne Falls and the French King rapids in Millers Falls, Massachusetts from the Fitchburg Railroad (by that time part of the Boston and Maine Railroad). The Fitchburg Railroad had acquired those water rights “from the state of Massachusetts which owned them at the time the state was building the Hoosac tunnel.” Chace and Harriman estimated that the developments in Massachusetts would generate 250,000 horsepower, but the Homestead noted that this was probably for eight hours per day. If the dams ran around the clock, they could triple their generating capacity. “Should science, invention and experience,” the author argued, “perfect a means for storing the electric energy during the 10 to 16 hours out of each 24 when the demand for the current is much less than during the eight or 10 working hours, the possibilities of profit would be well-nigh limitless.” In good muckraking fashion, the article traced the finances of Chace and Harriman’s interests in Massachusetts and found that the company was owned by the New England Power Company, a holding company in Maine, which also owned the Connecticut River Power Company with a dam in Vernon (near the Massachusetts state line, the Connecticut River Transmission Company, and the Bellows Falls Canal Company and Fall Mountain Electric Light and Power Company.

The article’s denunciation of New England Power as a trust helped to heighten local worries of “foreign” control. The Bellows Falls Board of Trade existed to encourage local economic development. Since the consolidation of International Paper in 1898, people in Bellows Falls had increasingly worried about the effects “foreign capital.” In 1906, T. E. O’Brien, a judge and active member of the Board of Trade had told a meeting of the board, “Bellows Falls cannot prosper financially so long as the profits from its principal industries are turned into the pockets of non-residents. For the best interests of the community these resources and business enterprises ought to be owned by Bellows Falls citizens.” By 1912, business leaders in Bellows Falls were nervous about prospect of a power trust partly because they were
increasingly dissatisfied with the responsiveness of International Paper to the village’s needs. A few months before the sale of the Canal Company, the village had written a letter of complaint to International Paper president, A. N. Burbank, complaining of the pollution caused by the mills. The letter read, “Our maple trees are dying in the pathway of the fumes and even grave stones seem to be crumbling under the effect of the acid fume. … Strangers and visitors are given a bad impression of our beautiful town, our hotels are handicapped and in short we are in need of effective relief.” The problem was the pollution, but also that a large, outside corporation was insensitive to the needs of the community. This perhaps accounted for some of the caution of the townspeople. In any case, the prospects of a foreign-owned hydroelectric octopus, making profits from the village’s chief resource while putting little of that money back into the community was frightening indeed. Chace and Harriman were quick to reassure local manufacturers and members of the Board of Trade that the development would benefit the community greatly, for the increased power would be incentive for industries to build in the vicinity, and it would decrease the cost of electricity for everyone. This argument did little to calm people’s fears.

The alarm—and for that matter, the excitement—over the Chace and Harriman purchase was premature. The company did develop the village’s generating capacity, and bought the Rockingham Paper Company, which had recently burned, in order to use its power plant. The purchase happened with great fanfare, but ultimately Chace and Harriman seemed to falter in their enterprise. Bellows Falls had had long experience with people who promised valuable enterprises for the village but did not follow through on their schemes. People in the village were keenly aware of local history, and if they were not, L. S. Hayes, town clerk and historian, was eager to inform them. By 1915, W. C. Belknap pointed out that the hydroelectric developed seemed to have amounted to little. Belknap commented on September 2, 1915,

This paper recently ventured the assertion that the development of the water power at Bellows Falls under its new ownership has not proved all that many had hoped and expected. The dam and canal remain as when the transfer of ownership was made and generators are still housed in the ruins of the old Rockingham Paper Company’s plant. The statement of facts, it was not kick, reached interested eyes and the Times has been informed that the officers of the electric company still believe strongly that there will be a
great development of this power at this plant within a few years. Belknap admitted, “Considerable has been done toward developing power at this point, and much more will be done in the future,” but he warned that the village needed to look out for itself, and the village needed more industries. He wrote,

However the thing for Bellows Falls to remember is that no matter how much of development there is it will benefit the community but little unless the power is used right here at home. Furthermore nobody has to wait for power on further developing operations. Any reliable party can go to the local company and contract for 10,000 horsepower tomorrow and get it, cheaper than the power will be sold anywhere else. The power is here now. What is needed to increase the hum of industry is a few more wheels brought into contact with the power.167

Between 1898 and 1915, the paper towns, like many places in this period, underwent the pains of centralization. The consolidation of International Paper, organization of labor unions, partial shutdown of the mills, and development of hydroelectric power all contributed to the sense that the communities were losing their ability to control their fates. No longer were the mills the centerpieces of thriving, growing communities; now they were relatively minor parts of International Paper’s portfolio. The mills stagnated and began to shrink, and the towns themselves also stagnated. They all tried to respond, but with varying success. All of them hoped for more development. The best hope for Turners Falls was hydroelectric development. The falls could produce abundant power, and boosters hoped that this power would attract new industries. The fact that the grandson of the town’s father undertook the development eased whatever worries boosters may have had. Hydroelectric development was also a source of hope for people in Bellows Falls, but this hope was diminished by the worry that the village would get little from the development, while the electric power would mostly go to other places. The best hope for the village was still the industries—paper and farm machinery—that had made it famous. Briefly at least these industries remained prosperous. Paper was an important product as the country began to prepare for World War I. Moreover, the Vermont Farm Machine Company grew rapidly is it tried to keep up production even as it took on contracts to build shells for the Russian army. Franklin was probably in the best shape of the three towns because it had a more diversified local economy. If paper manufacturing was on the decline, the town still produced
hosiery, flannel, knitting needles, and knitting machines.

In all the towns, however, there was sense of the fragility of prosperity. The depression of 1893 and the Panic of 1907 both weighed heavily on the towns, and the fact that a large corporation owned the paper mills meant that managers would make decisions to benefit the interests of the company, not those of the communities. The early labor activities added to the alienation of the mills from the communities. Anti-union ideology ran deep in the communities, but the distant union leadership, combined with the seemingly arbitrary sympathetic strike of 1910 seemed to justify the anti-union feelings. In both the issue of corporate consolidation and organized labor the issue was the loss of local control. Even the unions’ fiercest foes claimed to be sympathetic with their basic goals of shorter hours and adequate pay. The strikes, however, underscored the fact that the mills were becoming relatively unimportant to the company made in New York, Watertown, Albany, and Fort Edward could have a dramatic impact on the towns. Indeed, whether from corporate centralization.
NOTES


3 Ibid.; Burns, 57.


5 Burns, 56.


7 Burns, 59.

8 Ibid., 59-60.


13 Burns, 94; “City News and Notes,” FJT, December 19, 1902, p. 6.

14 Burns, 120;


16 “City News and Notes,” FJT, December 19, 1902, p. 6.


18 Franklin, New Hampshire Marriages (1884-1937), Baptisms (1884-1921) and Marginal Notations from Baptismal Records of St. Paul's Parish (American-Canadian Genealogical Society), 9.


21 Burns, 114.


24 Ibid., 3.


26 Ibid., May 18, 1906.

27 Fitzgerald, Circular letter, Feb. 15, 1906, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1906/1p

28 John La Point, Letter to the Turners Falls Local, March 2, 1906, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1906/1P.

29 Fitzgerald to John Lynch, Letter, February 2, 1906, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1906/1P.

30 John Lynch to James F. Fitzgerald, Letter, February 11, 1906, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1906/1P.

31 William Bruce to James F. Fitzgerald, Letter, January 21, 1906, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1906/1P.

32 John P. Burke to James F. Fitzgerald, Letter, April 10, 1906, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1906/1P.

33 Ibid.


35 “City News and Notes,” FJT, February 1, 1906, p. 4.

37 “All Quietly Waiting,” BFT, June 20, 1907, p. 1.


39 Ibid.


44 Ibid.

45 “All Quietly Waiting,” BFT, June 20, 1907, p. 1.


48 “Strike was Endorsed,” BFT, July 4, 1907, p. 1.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.


52 “Stikers Should Return,” BFT, August 1, 1907, p. 2.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 “The Strike from the Union Viewpoint,” BFT, August 8, 1907, p. 2.

57 Ibid.


59 Ibid.

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Ibid.

“The 'New Mill' to be Closed,” TFR, July 17, 1907, p. 1.


“The 'New Mill' to be Closed,” TFR, July 17, 1907, p. 1.


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“Concrete Dam Across the Connecticut,” BFT, July 16, 1908, p. 1.


“Mill to Close,” FJT, August 6, 1908, p. 6.

“Local Matters,” TFR, August 12, 1908, p. 8.


“No Change in Strike Situation,” BFT, August 20, 1908, p. 6.

Ibid.


John P. Burke Letter to Journal, February 10, 1908, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1908/1P


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“Strike will Prove Fight to the Finish,” BFT, October 22, 1908, p. 1.

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Ibid.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
113 Ibid., 10-11.
117 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
121 Ibid., 2.
122 Ibid., 2-3.
130 Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., p. 15

Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


This was the term used by the Turners Falls Company in an advertising pamphlet. The dam had an ogee curve, concave at the top and convex at the bottom.

“Development of the Water Power of the Turners Falls Company,” TFR, January 24, 1912.


“An Important New Corporation for Turners Falls,” TFR, August 20, 1913, p. 2.

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“Plan is Proposed to Change Power,” BFT, December 12, 1912, p. 12.


CHAPTER 12
THE OPEN SHOP MOVEMENT AND STRIKE OF 1921-1926

The paper towns gradually declined in the twenty years after the consolidation of the International Paper Company. In attempts to run the mills profitably the company focused on developing plants modern plants close to the source of timber. The old mills ran fewer machines and produced less pulp and paper than they had before the merger. With fewer machines, the company could run on three tours but without increased labor costs. Finally, the waterpower companies began to convert their power from manufacturing to hydroelectricity. The significance of the mills to the communities was gradually declining.

The final blow for the paper mills finally came in the early 1920s. The period following the end of the strike of 1910 was peaceful for the labor unions and the management of the International Paper. The strike of 1910 was devastating to the locals, but the unions gradually rebuilt their organizations after 1912 when they won the closed shop. After World War I, however, Philip Dodge, President of International Paper, started to turn his attention to developing mills in Canada in response to opportunities created by the Underwood Tariff of 1913. At the same time, he fought to destroy the closed shop. This combination of the Open Shop movement, development of mills in Canada, and development of hydroelectric power finally closed the mills in the paper towns. The Fall Mountain Mill was first, closing in 1926. The Winnipiseogee Mill followed, maintaining limited production until 1930. The Montague Mill was last, closing after it flooded in the spring of 1936.

John P. Burke, who had grown up in Franklin, became President of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers in 1917. A socialist, he learned the practical concerns of bread-and-butter unionism during World War I. By 1920, his chief concern was organizing locals to fight what he saw as the inevitable beginning of an Open Shop movement. In November 1920, he wrote a letter to the union’s executive board, proposing that
the union should try to build its defense fund. Burke was cautious regarding strikes, but he recognized that the companies might force one. He wrote, “No doubt you are familiar with the attempts that are now being made to reduce wages in many industries. There is also being conducted by the manufacturers quite a campaign for the Open Shop. While it doesn’t do any particular good to be unnecessarily alarmed, it is well for us to be on our guard.”

In Bellows Falls and Franklin, there were hints that the company was about to declare an Open Shop in January 1921. The company, noting a “depression” in the paper industry, cut production and started laying off workers. In Franklin, Charles Bean wrote to Burke on January 1 reporting that the local had lost a member, a “thick french man [sic] who is easily led astray.” He continued, complaining that Frank P. Lyden, the mill superintendent, whom Bean called “Bull Shit Lyden,” was laying off workers, claiming there was no work. In March, James Beard wrote to Burke that the company was running one paper machine and two pulp mills. The finishing rooms were full of stock, but the company was not hiring. At the end of March, Thomas Lane wrote to Burke complaining that orders had come from New York to lay off the oldest employees. Burke responded that he could not do anything, but stressed that it was important to hold the organization together to fight impending wage cuts.

Labor representatives gathered at the Murray Hill Hotel in New York City on April 8, hoping to negotiate working agreements as they had done in the past. Instead of sending representatives, a committee of representatives from various paper manufacturers (headed by John Lundrigan of the International Paper Company) simply sent a proposal for the next year’s working agreements. The companies (a total of twenty-one, represented by five men) presented five provisions: that hourly employees would work nine hour days, overtime pay would be discontinued, union agreements would cover only people working inside the mill buildings, that wages would be reduced by thirty percent, and that the wages and conditions would go into effect on May 15. The unions immediately rejected the proposals, but still sent them to the locals for a vote. The locals overwhelmingly rejected the proposals: out of 5,887 members voting only five voted to accept the companies’ offer. The unions waited until May 1 for another proposal, but
did not present counterproposals, and when the companies did not present another group of proposals, the workers struck. By May 11, fifty-one locals in twenty-two paper companies were on strike. A number of mills settled with the unions early. These included the Great Northern Paper Company of Madison and Millinocket, Maine, as well as several other paper companies in Maine. Mills in New York and Ontario, Canada, which had been in bitter strikes in 1916 and 1917, also settled with the unions. All the mills of the International Paper Company, however, went out on strike.

As the strike began, P. T. Dodge was in no mood to negotiate: he had enough stock on hand to supply the demand for newsprint. While the Open Shop was not the chief cause of the strike, it soon became the most important issue. During the third week of May, Carey and Burke met with other paper manufacturers, led by Floyd Carlisle of Watertown, N. Y., and agreed to arbitration, but International Paper, as well as a group of smaller manufacturers, refused to recognize the unions. On May 24, International Paper offered to rehire striking workers with wage cuts of sixteen and two-thirds percent for skilled and semi-skilled workers and twenty-seven percent for laborers, and a workday beginning at seven in the morning and ending at six in the evening. The company offered a policy of “mutual bargaining,” which Burke did not explain explicitly but wrote amounted to little better than an Open Shop. The Unions flatly rejected the offer. Burke wrote, “The members of all the Labor Organizations, employes of the International Paper Company, are standing firm and expect to fight to the last ditch for the Union shop, Union Wages and Union conditions.”

The workers went into the strike of 1921 with remarkable unity. For the vote rejecting the companies’ initial offer, a member of the international union’s executive board counted 5,887 votes of which only five supported accepting the offer. Bellows Falls, Franklin, and even Turners Falls voted unanimously to reject the offer from International Paper. Brooks wrote to Burke in May, “I was surely surprised when I learned that they had walked out at Turners Falls.” Turners Falls would remain loyal to the unions only briefly, but for a time the locals in the International Paper Company presented a united front.
The strike started quietly. None of the officers of the unions seemed to think it would last long. They imagined that the company would eventually be forced to negotiate, as it had in past strikes. James Beard wrote to Burke from Franklin in May, “One would never know there was a strike on to go on the street.”16 A week later he wrote, “A good many of the boys are working at odd jobs from chopping wood to laying asbestos shingles and painting. … We now await a move by the I. P. Co. as our members are determined to have a living wage for them this year.”17

In Bellows Falls, workers remained on civil terms with the local management. Burke ordered “firemen and electricians to remain to protect mill property.”18 On May 15, Patrick McDermott, secretary of the local, wrote to Burke, “Some of our members are working but there is not much of that at present. But we are having a good time most every day playing baseball; one day the game is between the Paper Makers and the A. O. H. or some other team and the next it is between the Pulp and Sulphite and Paper Makers.” A week later, he wrote again, “Do you know that this is about the funniest strike I have ever been through? There is no information from the Manager of the Paper plants as to what the next [sic] intend to do or if they even intend to do anything. And there is mighty little news coming from Headquarters either. And it is the same with the Paper Makers Union.”19 Burke responded noting that there was little news because there were few developments. The only major news was that International Paper had split from the other manufacturers, and that “I. P. Company intends to fight it out. … It is going to try to install the open shop.”20

The strike seemed uneventful to the strikers, and the company seemed little inclined to want to open the mills during the spring of 1921. This caused considerable anxiety in Bellows Falls for it put about 400 workers out of work. The village was still reeling from the loss of the Vermont Farm Machine Company, which had declared bankruptcy in 1919 but was still in business.21 Combined with the loss of the Vermont Farm Machine Company the unemployment caused by the strike threatened the prosperity of the village. W. C. Belknap reported at the beginning of the strike,
Never in its industrial history was Bellows Falls quite as hard hit as at the present time. Sunday at 7 A.M. all operations in the Fall Mountain plant of the International Paper Company ceased and about 400 men were temporarily without work. This plant in normal time employs 600 to 650 hands. The number employed in the last few months has varied but the number employed last week was about 400. The strike cuts off a weekly pay roll of perhaps $9,000. The Vermont Farm Machine Corporation, which is employing outside a small office force 25 or 30 men, had in its best days a weekly pay roll of $12,000 and more. In other periods of depression, one of these two big companies has usually been operated. Now both are down.  

Belknap seemed alarmist. For most of the next two months, the paper reported little except that there was little to report. On May 12, for example, the *Times* reported, "No strike news. The strike of the Fall Mountain plant of the I. P. Company in effect since May 1, continues without local developments." On June 2, Belknap commented, "At the Fall Mountain plant of the I.P. Co. all is quiet. All seem to be waiting for developments in New York." On June 9, the *Times* reported that the company’s office workers had held their annual picnic. Belknap reported the scores of the various games played at the picnic, as well as humorous incidents of the day. Everyone in the village simply waited for something to happen. On June 16, the *Times* reported hopefully that the unions and company would begin wage conferences. Very quickly, however, the paper reported that the talks had broken down and that the unions and company were deadlocked. With the talks stalled, and Dodge intent on declaring an open shop, the quiet of the strike was about to end.

By the end of June, Burke and many others braced themselves for the company to attempt to reopen the mills.

The Strike in Franklin

International Paper set July 5 as the date to start reopening its mills. On July 5, however, the company did not attempt to start up the Fall Mountain mill. Rather, the company began the process of breaking the strike in Franklin. On July 7, the *Journal-Transcript* reported that twenty strikebreakers had arrived in Franklin:

A big crowd was at the depot when the train pulled in and jeers greeted the strike breakers. Six of the 20 left the ranks of strike breakers and joined with the union men. Two were overseas men and one claimed that they had been told their work was in hotels in the White Mountains and that they did not know a strike was on here. It was expected that more strike breakers would arrive on the 10 p.m. train and a large crowd visited the
Franklin depot. No workmen arrived. Then 30 automobiles carried a big delegation of union men to Tilton to meet the late train, but there were no strike breakers aboard. Excitement is running high but there has been no signs of violence and everything is conducted in a law abiding manner.\textsuperscript{28}

The report in the \textit{Journal-Transcript} was restrained, but the \textit{Manchester Leader} was more colorful. The paper reported in its “Labor” column on July 7:

The arrival of a bunch of alleged strikebreakers here last night … produced more excitement than has been seen here since Armistice day. At no time, however, was there any disturbance or disorder, though there was no doubt of the hostility of the crowds towards the alleged strikebreakers. … There were a few “’boos,” somebody shouted “Scabs,” and “Rats,” but there was no attempt at any sort of personal violence. In fact, the crowd was more animated, apparently, by the spirit of good-natured derision, determined to laugh the strikebreakers into discomfort.\textsuperscript{29}

The \textit{Leader} reported that the International Paper had fitted up a room in Paper Mill B to use as a dormitory, and had taken delivery of a “truckload of mattresses, cots and cookstoves. …” The unions immediately filed a complaint that the company was in violation of city health codes.

Dodge seemed to single Franklin out, but the unions and even the community were ready to face the challenge from the company. On July 8, Charles H. Bean sent a telegram to Burke reporting that sixty-seven strikebreakers had arrived the night before. He asked if other mills were “having the same trouble …,” and noted, “We stand One Hundred Percent.”\textsuperscript{30} Burke responded on July 9 that Franklin was the only mill with strikebreakers, although two days later he wrote to Bean stating that Berlin and other mills were receiving strikebreakers. Bean wrote reassuring to Burke on July 9, “We are still 100% union men and we will never go back. Believe me.” He warned however, the “boys are gentlemen who are on the picket line but I am afraid they are get [sic] awful desperate.”\textsuperscript{31}

On July 11 and 12, strikebreakers were greeted in Franklin with jeers and rocks. One of the strikers, John O’Brien, accused a guard for the company, Walter Decato, of firing a pistol at him; Decato filed a complaint against O’Brien accusing him of throwing a rock. The \textit{Journal-Transcript} tried to downplay the violence, reporting vaguely, “It was claimed Monday that stones were thrown and shots fired Sunday morning.”\textsuperscript{32} The incident frightened Franklin’s Mayor, Daniel N. Whittaker. On July 12, he travelled to Concord to meet with Governor Albert O.
Brown and ask him to keep the National Guard ready to respond to violence. People in Franklin read of Whittaker and Brown’s meeting in that evening’s Concord Evening Monitor, which ran a banner headline reading “State Guard in Readiness.” The paper reported, “Mayor Whittaker of Franklin was in conference with the Governor this noon and asked that the state troops be held in readiness for use in his city should need therefor arise; although he did not anticipate that such would be the case. This request the Governor granted and took the matter up at once with the state military department.”

This news outraged many in Franklin. Members of the American Legion particularly objected to the potential use of soldiers to quell disturbances. The veterans circulated a petition demanding Whittaker resign.

Whittaker refused to resign immediately but said that he would if the citizens still wanted his resignation after the excitement over the strikebreakers had died down. In response to Whittaker’s unilateral action, the city council held a special meeting and instructed him to write to Dodge to ask that the strikebreakers be withdrawn. On the following day, Brown met representatives from the local unions and State Federation of Labor and on July 14, the Monitor ran a story on the front page with the headline “Troops to Demobilize. Order Returning State Guardsmen to their Homes. Quiet Reigns Today in Franklin and Berlin.”

In both Franklin and Berlin, the sympathy of the communities was almost completely with the strikers. By refusing arbitration International Paper seemed intransigent. Labor representatives asked the governor to use his position to encourage Dodge to submit to arbitration. Many of the merchants in Franklin refused to sell goods to strikebreakers, and George Brooks asked merchants in Laconia and Concord to do the same. Mayor King, of Berlin, went so far as to ask Dodge formally not to send strikebreakers. The Monitor reported that King remained “firm in his stand not to allow any strikebreakers in the city. …” and to refuse to use the city police force to guard the mills. The strike began in New Hampshire with sympathy on the side of the strikers. This was particularly true in Franklin where there was a particularly strong local spirit. The workers were more a part of Franklin’s community than the company was.
By the end of July, however, the orderly conduct of Franklin’s strikers started to break down. Brooks wrote to Burke from Franklin on July 16, “The people were doing a lot of riot talk when I landed here but I have got that pretty well under control. My efforts have been towards trying to make them understand that if the strikers keep their ranks intact that this, and MONEY, will be the factors which will bring desired results.” Brooks complained that the company was exacerbating the problem by issuing false reports of strike news; in a letter he wrote to Burke on July he included a clipping from the Manchester Union Leader reporting that the Fort Edward, New York local had “adopted a resolution offering to return to work at the 1919 wage scale and working conditions recently offered by the company.” Brooks reported that he had just come from a meeting (he wrote the time, 12:30 a.m., after the date). He wrote, “The ‘pack’ were yelping and something had to be done to quiet them. The union fellows put no stock in piece reported but townspeople were up in the air.” Brooks worried that the company could divide Franklin, and destroy popular support for the strike. Burke responded with an exasperated tone, “How many times have I got to write to the Locals, telling them to pay no attention to rumors and stories, but to rely upon their International Office for correct information? Was there anyone in Franklin so simple minded [sic] as to believe that story about the Paper Makers at Fort Edward accepting the 1919 schedule[?]”

The situation in Franklin turned worrying between July 21 and July 25. On July 28, the Journal-Transcript reported, “The wire that furnishes electricity for the International Paper Co. was cut near the Franklin & Tilton railroad trestle.” An employee of the Franklin Light and Power Company found the wires neatly cut and tied, but the mills were left without electric light for several hours and were forced to close. The same night, a strikebreaker named Frank Glines was “showered” with eggs, and on the following night was assaulted. On July 28, the Journal-Transcript reported,

A large number of shots were heard late Monday night and early Tuesday morning in the vicinity of the pulp mill known locally as “Harry Daniell’s mill. . . .” The mill superintendent declared the shots seemed to come from both sides of the river and to be directed in the direction of the mill. A woman was found who said she could hear the
click of the revolvers near the house. Officer Bassett reports that the flash when the firing took place could be seen in the woods on the south bank of the river opposite the mill. Superintendent Lyden was told that two cars were seen hurrying along Central street soon after the shooting. One was a Ford and the other was a Packard with white wheels. No Packard with white wheels is owned in Franklin as far as can be learned.\textsuperscript{42}

The report suggested that Omar Towne, still editor of the \textit{Journal-Transcript} and still a judge, was skeptical that strikers had done the shooting. The paper reported the next night, “some more shooting was reported. This was said to have been done by the mill guards.”\textsuperscript{43} In any case, the result of the shooting was that it helped divide the community. The paper reported that Mayor Whittaker “said that he intended to maintain law and order.” He authorized the City Marshall to appoint “as many special officers as he considered necessary to cope with the situation.”

Businessmen called a public meeting to discuss the issue of law and order. The meeting was scheduled for the city council room, but had to be moved to the Opera House when “paper mill strikers and sympathizers … flocked to the hall in large numbers.”\textsuperscript{44}

The unions gave a different account of the meeting. While Towne stressed Whittaker’s resoluteness and the need for law and order, Brooks wrote of the unions’ strength, claiming that they had gotten the upper hand. He described the union members’ actions at the meeting with Mayor Whittaker as an “invasion”:

\begin{quote}
Last night old Whittiker [sic] tried to pull off a little stunt but we got wise at the right time and his well thought out plans did not work. He has wanted to get in the State forces and failing in this his big idea was to get in some outsiders to do police work. … About seven o’clock we got wise to what was brewing and we made an invasion of City Hall and demanded that meeting be held in [sic] Opera House.

Whittiker got his good and plenty. Douphie [Louis Doupheinet] gave him hell, Crosby asked him how much stock he held in I. P. Co. Archie Mahan made a dandy talk and Bryson and Reeves each came in with some sarcastic remarks. I told his Honor that it was not apperant [sic] that the “public” outside of the select circle, did not appear to count much with him.\textsuperscript{45}

Brooks explained that Lyden had agreed to “disarm the guards if the City would give the necessary protection.” Brooks continued,
\end{quote}

I asked the misfit Mayor if he swallowed all of the bunk that Lyden was handing him and the crowd laughed and his nibbs became real peaved [sic]. Anyhow, I said to Tom Lane that we had better beat it and when we started out the whole meeting followed and Whit was left alone with his troubles. Some Mayor, I’ll say!\textsuperscript{46}
The unions denounced the vandalism and shooting, and Towne admitted, “So far as can be learned the little rowdyism which has cropped out has been by those not connected with the Union.” Towne was cautious in his reporting, not wanting to denounce the strikers but also not wanting to condone disorder. He had been editing a newspaper for almost as long as the wood pulp industry had been in Franklin, and by 1921 he was one of the wise elders of the city. As he encouraged townspeople to become special officers, he also voiced his and the city’s sympathy for the strikers. He wrote:

The sympathy of the citizens of Franklin is almost unanimously in favor of the striking paper makers. It is not in the least surprising that this is true. The larger number of the men who are out are men who have lived in Franklin for many years. Some of them were born here. They have been prominent in municipal affairs. They have been interested in seeing Franklin grow and prosper. They are our friends and we are their friends, and as one friend to another we dislike to see them suffer. We think that they ought to have received terms equal to what other paper companies are giving their employees. This is the sentiment of a large majority of the people of Franklin. So far as the Editor can learn, it is the feeling of the business men, of the city officials, of the pastors and members of the churches, of employees in other industries.

Towne stressed, however, that the people of Franklin were caught in the middle between two groups that were not local organizations: the International Unions and the International Paper Company. He noted Burke’s complaint that the company was trying to force an Open Shop. He explained that the company proposed allowing the workers to organize local unions but not national or international ones, and he recognized Burke’s point that a “union of all the paper makers in the country would be much stronger than any number of local unions acting independently.” He questioned the wisdom of both the company, cutting wages and breaking the union, and the union, for calling the strike, especially in “a time of general business depression.”

Towne may have been sympathetic with the plight of the strikers, but he was clearly ambivalent about the strike itself.

If Towne reflected the general sympathy of the townspeople for the strikers, he roundly denounced the violence and vandalism of the previous week. He called on the unions not only to denounce the “rough house,” but actively to work to end it. He wrote,

But in Franklin [the public] can say one thing, and that is that “rough house” must cease.
Franklin people do not propose to allow the town to be “shot up” after the manner in vogue a few years ago in some western towns. The disturbance of the people during hours set apart for sleep by firing of guns or pistols is something which will crystalize sentiment and force an issue. … Rowdyism must be frowned upon by the strikers, yes, the strength of the Union must be exerted for maintenance of law and order, if the goodwill of the public is to be retained.50

Gunshots, vandalism, and assault reached their peak in the last week of July, and Towne had no further reason to complain of the “rough house.” The Local union officers, including Louis Douchinett, Archie Mahan, Joseph Newton and James Beard, as well as George Brooks, who spent much of his time in Franklin, were wise enough to avoid the behavior that Towne denounced. The mills reopened and the strikers continued to picket, but there were no more gunshots. The strike became a standoff. Lyden claimed that the mills were producing paper up to the standard of production before the strike. Beard reported that machines were running slowly and with large crews of eight men to a machine. He wrote to Burke, “Can you imagine that they are producing with such a crew falling all over each other. Brother Mahan and I watched for four hours last Saturday night there wasn’t one reel taken off.”51 He claimed that Lyden was a “scared man,” noting, “he doesn’t move without one of his kind with him (I mean a scab).”52

The strikers held their lines and mostly remained loyal. They had some success turning strikebreakers away. Beard wrote, “The scabs are leaving faster than they arrive. Seven of them were turned back last Monday. …” He reported, “A Polish fellow by the name of Tony went to work in the pulp mill thinking he was going to fall into Bro. Douchinett’s job. But he was short lived. The Polish people got after him and threatened to kill him if he remained. (He did not remain).”53 Despite the attempts to discourage strikebreakers, they remained and gradually settled into town.

By the end of August, as the weather started to turn cold, International Paper made provisions for the strikebreakers to spend the winter. Lyden had the old White Row, a block of tenements on Nesmith street by Pulp Mill No. 3, “dusted up.” “It is also reported,” wrote Beard, “that two women have appeared on the scene. Both strangers and it is supposed they are wives of some of the filth. They are also camping on the white row.”54 Lyden also rented what Beard
called the “Bow Street lodging house,” a thirty-five room tenement house (and presumably the notorious lodging house owned by the Howe sisters fifteen years earlier). Beard noted that the house had to hold 245 men, and noted, “So you can see somebody has got to sleep on the floor.”\(^{55}\) For these cramped quarters, the company deducted $3.50 per week for room and board. Still, the mill was shorthanded, and Beard reported that it was running on two tours. The mill set to remain open through the winter not for the sake of profitability, but simply to break the union.

Lyden continued try to show his strength. Beard reported, “The company has hired three deputies to watch their property and ride around on the trucks. They claimed our weak kneeded [sic] cops would not or would not take care of them.” This alienated the company from the local police force. The police were not necessarily on the side of the company anyway; indeed, Beard was a deputy.\(^{56}\)

By this point the strike had settled into a stalemate. The strikers were strong and united, but the mills were operating. The strikers were certain that they could win if they remained strong and that the union had the company and strikebreakers running scared. In October, C. H. Bean reported that International Paper had begun to seek injunctions against picketing strikers. Lyden pressed charges against a worker named Mack Merrill for intimidating strikebreakers, and won an injunction.\(^{57}\) Bean assured Burke, “The boys hear [sic] are standing firm,” and noted, “it’s a hard old fight … but I guess we can hold our own.”\(^{58}\) But the company was gaining ground, and divisions in the community as well as the unions were starting to show. The support of the merchants was starting to fade. In August, two merchants had begun selling goods to strikebreakers and the strikers had responded by draping his front door with crepe.\(^{59}\) More dangerous was the revival of tensions between the Paper Makers and Pulp Workers. On October 27, Bean wrote to Burke complaining that J. T. Carey had promised to attend a mass meeting but “did not show up and I can tell you the people as well as the strikers were more than mad, but I don’t see what in Hell kept him away so.” In his place was a Paper Maker from the local in Bellows Falls, “but he was nothing extra.” Bean commented, “they have a little to [sic] much booze over there.” Fortunately, the Rev. L. G. Chase, a pro-union minister from Wilder,
Vermont, “gave a talk so did our old stand by Geo. Brooks.”

The strikers claimed a few small victories. In November, International Paper stopped providing board, leaving the strikebreakers at the mercy of local businessmen. On November 12, Bean reported, “Now John, there are twenty eight goying from hear [sic] on Sunday Nov. 13. Clearing out and some are Paper Makers and the Cooks that were cooking for the scabs are leaving as the Co. is done feeding them. …” Bean continued, reporting that conditions in the mills were bad. He wrote, “Up at A Paper Mill last week some thing happen to the Machine and it took forty eight hours to repair.” When the workers got the machine running, it broke down again after six hours. Bean wrote, “Old Lyden said he kill the man who done all this if he could find out who it is but I guess it’s a little bird as it look to me things are turning our way every day.” The following week, Bean reported that two beater engineers had left the mill. Further, John Charland, one of the strikers, had gone into a mill to retrieve some tools. “He said,” wrote Bean, “the mill is a reck. The beater rooms are just like a pig pen. They have not any pulp left. Out side it all gone.” The company seemed, as Burke put it, “trimmed to a frazzle.” Bean noted, “We are still on the fireing line.”

Bean also reported to Burke that Louis Douphinett, President of the local Pulp Workers’ union and Franklin’s Central Labor Union, as well as the Sixth Vice President of the New Hampshire State Federation of Labor, had received the Democratic nomination for mayor. Bean wrote, “Well John we are goying to try and land Louis Douphinett for Mayor. We hope we can.” Douphinett’s nomination was a surprise but also an indication of the city’s support for the strikers.

Douphinett had to convince the voters that he was not a radical. On November 17, the Journal-Transcript published a letter from him on the front page of the weekly paper. He introduced himself: “I have lived in Franklin 50 years and my father and mother were two of Franklin’s earliest settlers. My family name is well known to most of you, and I, and my brothers and sisters also, have always striven to keep that name respected.” He stated his working-class sympathies firmly but argued that he could represent the entire community. He downplayed
whatever Socialist sympathies he had. He wrote, “My interests and affiliations have always been with the working people. I am one of them, and one with them. I pride myself, however, that I am not so radical that I cannot see both sides of a question, and realize that both parties in a controversy may be in some extent wrong.”

He argued that he could lead the city during the strike without serving only the workers’ interests. He assured the newspaper’s readers that he would serve in a disinterested way: “No citizen nor industry would need to fear any hostile action on account of my affiliation with organized labor, and no person would receive any special favor because of my association with him in this movement. My motto would be ‘Equal Rights to all, and Special Privileges to none.’ I am under no obligations and have made no pledges to any one.”

Douphinett appealed to the strikers and other workers, but he also managed to muster substantial support from Ward One, which usually supported Republican candidates. Omar Towne suggested that he had much support from women, whom he noted voted in much larger numbers than ever before. The turnout for the election was unusually large, with almost most 2,300 votes cast. Douphinett won the election with about fifty-seven percent of the vote. Towne later noted that Douphinett won by the largest margin of any mayor in Franklin’s history.

Douphinett immediately set about addressing issues raised by the strike. In February 1922, he petitioned the New Hampshire Governor to call a special session of the legislature to discuss a law mandating the eight-hour day. Douphinett wrote to Governor Brown asking him to support legislation to mandate an eight-hour day. He wrote, “The eight hour day for work conforms to the best judgment and mature deliberation of economists and mature deliberation of economists and the far-sighted employers for labor. It is reasonable and just.” Brown responded cordially, but was not sympathetic with Douphinett or the strikers. Douphinett did not get state support to attempt to end the strike. In December 1921, the state Labor Commission had passed resolutions asking the strikers to end the strike and for the company to agree to arbitration. Agreeing to arbitration would have separated the Franklin locals from the international organizations; workers in Franklin could not break from the International Unions and expect to have strength bargaining with the company.
Doughinett had little power in labor relations, but as mayor he was able to address the problem of unemployment. In May 1922, the *Boston Post* reported in an article reprinted in the *Franklin Journal-Transcript* that Doughinett had begun a municipal labor program. The city needed to replace the Daniell Bridge crossing the Winnipesaukee River between the Sulloway hosiery mill and the old Daniell Paper Mill (now used for storage by the Sulloway mill). Doughinett negotiated a contract for the bridge that promised work to “every unemployed man in Franklin … at a wage not less than $3.25 a day in any case before a single outsider is employed.” The article concluded, “The work will last through the summer and then Mayor Doughinett will have something else ready.” Doughinett remained popular. He served an unprecedented three one-year terms and in this time also served as president of the local Central Labor Union and Pulp and Sulphite Workers’ union.

**The Strike in Bellows Falls**

In Bellows Falls, the strike began quietly, but gradually became bitter. International Paper tried to reopen the Fall Mountain mill during the first week of July, 1921, but this caused little excitement. The *Bellows Falls Times* reported on July 7:

> The blowing of the 7 o’clock I.P. mill whistle Tuesday morning heralded nothing more than a display of special police. The cool reception given the announcement of the mill’s opening last week predicted the fact that the union men here would stick by the union and in following out this policy union fire stokers and watchmen who had been on duty since the calling of the strike last May were withdrawn."

The problem for Bellows Falls was pulpwood, which needed to be removed from the Connecticut and loaded into the company’s lumberyard in North Walpole, New Hampshire. As long as the pulpwood was in the river, it was property of the Champlain Realty Company, a subsidiary of International Paper, headed by John P. Riley, former manager of the Fall Mountain mill and current manager of International Paper’s Woodland Department (and still resident of Bellows Falls). As long as the wood remained in the river, strikers accepted that the workers were not under their jurisdiction. Mill employees, members of the Pulp and Sulphite Workers union,
however, had customarily done the job of removing the wood and loading it into the plant’s
lumberyard. Workers on the river and in the lumberyard, therefore, were strikebreakers. The
Times reported on July 14:

The arrival of outside laborers is looked for with some uncertainty, for while the men
coming will not be in the employ of the International Paper Co., they will be regarded as
strike breakers by most union men. The many million feet of pulp logs in the Champlain
Realty drive have lain in the Connecticut for the past two months, and must be removed
soon if the wood is to be saved. In years past employees of the International Paper
Company have done the work of hauling the logs to the log piles in the I. P. yard.
However, the contract reads that the logs do not become the property of the International
Paper Company until on land. Labor trouble here leads the Champlain Realty Co., to send
men here to do the work. The out-of-town laborers are to be housed in tents in North
Walpole, is the report. … There is no denying that the strike situation here will be greatly
complicated by the arrival of outside workers, and while violence is not anticipated, local
strikers look upon the men coming as “scabs.”

The excitement over the logs began on Saturday, July 9, when the Bellows Falls locals
received a telegram from Franklin announcing the arrival of strikebreakers. The strikers,
misreading the telegram, thought it announced the arrival of strikebreakers not in Franklin but in
Bellows Falls. About 300 strikers gathered at the depot to meet the ten o’clock train. The Times
reported, “The train’s arrival without sign of strike-breakers was a signal for dispersal.” On July
13, Patrick McDermott reported to Burke, “Here in this place the mills in the I. P. is dead. Not
one of our members disgraced themselves to go back.”

McDermott noted particularly the unity
among the various ethnic groups in the union. He wrote, “We have a picket line, a mixed one
consisting of the head members of the different nationalities of our local. It is all right, in fact
every member of our local is a damn Good Picket.”

McDermott praised the loyalty of the
Polish union members, who in places such as Turners Falls and Niagara Falls were reluctant to
join the union. McDermott explained that Myers, the manager of the Fall Mountain plant, had
tried to enlist the assistance of the Polish priest in telling the parishioners, “the strike was settled
and all that bull. He also noted that Myers had tried to convince a Mr. Duffy, a Polish
storekeeper in North Walpole to deny credit to strikers. McDermott commented, “probably the
same work is going on other mill towns—but here by God it won’t work.”

The first gang of workers sent to remove logs from the river arrived in Bellows Falls on
July 14. The *Times* reported that the strikers remained peaceful, but McDermott told a more exciting story. He wrote:

> Yesterday afternoon a large truck arrived here with the scabs, but we were ready for them as we knew all about their coming for 24 hours before that. We had at least 200 men waiting for them and an equal number of women and small kids. When we seen the truck load of scabs we surrounded the whole outfit and let me tell you we made them surrender unconditionally. But the Superintendent of the Realty Co. tried to persuade the men to go away from us and go the camp in the mill yard; but after he got chucked around quite a bit he thought better and skipped (his name is Wilson). We brought the lot of them (24) I think down to the town hall and talked the situation over to them and we were surprised when they insisted that they did not know there was a strike here. Perhaps they did or perhaps they did not, but I am sure they do now. 81

The Associated Press picked up the story and on July 16, the *Concord Monitor* carried the headline “Strikers Stood Guard, But Strike Breakers Did not Appear at Bellows Falls.” 82 The *Boston Globe* reported “Strike Pickets Watch the Roads to Prevent any Outsiders Going to Paper Mills.” 83 On July 18, McDermott reported that the strikers’ efforts to keep the Champlain Realty Company from removing logs had been successful. He wrote, “The I. P. Mill here also the log pile is down as flat as a pan cake and we intend to stay that way.” 84

The situation in Bellows Falls was complicated by the fact that the community crossed state boundaries. This meant that two governors—James Hartness of Vermont and A. O. Brown of New Hampshire—two sheriffs, two local police forces, two National Guard companies, and two local governments had to coordinate efforts to keep the peace. The log pile and sawmill were in North Walpole, and many of the strikers lived in the village. Enough of the strikers lived in North Walpole that they were able to control that village’s actions. On July 19, the *Boston Globe* reported, “Strikers Refuse Special Police. Paper Workers Control Town Meeting. North Walpole, N. H. Denies Request of International Paper Company.” 85 The paper reported that George H. Cheadle, “director of the Champlain Realty Company for Vermont and New Hampshire …” and Wilson, the local superintendent, asked the town of Walpole to appoint special deputies, paid by the town, to protect company property and workers. The *Globe* reported that W. J. King, town meeting moderator, “explained that an official of the International Paper Company had telephoned him asking the Selectmen to furnish six deputies.” The *Globe*
continued, “Mr. King said that the request had been made for men who would shoot and shoot straight.”

King called a special town meeting, which was attended mostly by strikers. The voters objected to the appointment of deputies on the grounds that public money should not be spent for the protection of private property. Father Duffy, Pastor of St. Peter’s Catholic Church, entered a motion that deputies be appointed only to protect the community at large, and that those deputies should be residents of the town.

At the beginning of the strike, the strikers had broad support in the community. The merchants tended to favor the strikers because they were members of the community. Strikers were local and their wages were important to the prosperity of the village. International Paper was an outside corporation, and it seemed increasingly indifferent to the community. This did not mean, however, that the merchants were sympathetic with the goals of organized labor generally. W. C. Belknap objected to the strident language of union sympathizers as much as the heavy-handed tactics of the company. He hoped for a quick settlement and return to normal. The merchants and strikers were allies because they both called for arbitration. Beyond that issue, however, their alliance was tenuous. Belknap, while recognizing that the “closed vs. open shop is the milk in this cocoanut,” asserted, “Any company has a right to say by itself what kind of shop is going to run.” He rejected the most important of the workers’ grievances—the Open Shop—but he also rejected the company’s unwillingness to negotiate. For the time being, the village’s merchants saw the attitude of International Paper as unreasonable and continued to support the strikers. On August 4, Belknap reported, “If signs count, the sympathy of Bellows Falls merchants is strongly with the strikers. In probably 98 per cent of the store windows this sign is displayed. ‘Strike Breakers not wanted here.’”

The Champlain Realty Company remained determined to remove the logs from the river while the weather was still good. The company made a second attempt to remove the logs in the last week of July, and again the strikers successfully kept the strikebreakers away. McDermott wrote on July 29, “Everything is O. K. here the Co. sent in about a dozen scabs last Monday but we surrounded them on the new bridge between No. Walpole and Bellows Falls, and ran them
clear up to Jamaica in Autos.” Jamaica is about thirty miles west of Bellows Falls. McDermott assured Burke, “No scab will get in here in either the mills or log-yard.” Neither Governor Brown of New Hampshire nor Governor Hartness of Vermont was eager to send troops, but both governors kept the National Guard ready for whatever violence might occur when the rivermen would arrive to move the logs.

The rivermen finally arrived on August 1. Champlain Realty began to set up camp for the workers on the afternoon of July 29. The company sent crews to set up tents in a pasture north of Bellows Falls, across the Connecticut River from the lumberyard in North Walpole and, the Manchester Leader reported, “overlooking the Mastadonic raft of four foot logs boomed alongside the Vermont intervale.” The Leader reported that Windham County Sheriff Frank Wellman and thirty-five deputies (the New York Times reported the number as eighteen) guarded the trucks. The New York Times reported that Wellman was able to disperse the crowd of protestors, but that in the night someone fired shots from the lumberyard toward the camp on the Vermont side. No one was injured, and the shooter was never found. While the shooting was “mysterious,” the Bellows Falls Times reported, it still convinced Governor Hartness of the need for greater protection. He authorized the deployment of National Guard troops from Brattleboro and Rutland. The Leader reported that the preparations for the rivermen took place “so secretly … that no voice of protestation was heard from the strikers of the International Paper Company or from their sympathizers. There was no time to decide on methods of opposition and no opportunity to carry them out if they had been made.” The paper reported that the people of Bellows Falls had “a gasp of astonishment to find officers and militia men pacing the streets.”

With military protection, the Realty Company sent truckloads of rivermen to remove the logs from the river. The Manchester Leader ran a banner headline on August 1 that read, “Excitement Reigns in Paper Towns on River.” The article reported that the Vermont National Guard protected the workers and prevented people from gathering on the streets of the village. On the New Hampshire side, police from Manchester served as guards and prevented onlookers from gathering. The Leader reported, “The arrival of additional workers today caused a good
deal of shouting at the railroad station and a chorus of voices yelled, ‘Strike is on! Strike is on!’

There were many jeers, but no attempt to man the new workers as the military had spread a
cordon about the station and up the street for a thousand yards.” The Leader covered the story
from the perspective of law and order. It concluded “William J. King, chairman of the Walpole
selectmen, who lives at North Walpole, declares there will be no disorder and that neither the
property of the company nor the men will be injured.”

The strikers told the story from a different perspective. On August 3, Patrick McDermott
wrote an account of the incident in a letter to John P. Burke:

Business is rushing here at present—in the line of excitement. We got a cargo of scabs
for the log pile yesterday afternoon. It was surely amusing at the depot when the rats
came here on the 1:35 pm train from Boston. There was two companies of militia (about
120 men) and 64 sheriffs and deputy sheriffs who formed a line from the depot to the
Bridge going to No. Walpole, N. H. with bayonetted guns to guard them. … We in North
Walpole got rid of the dirty bunch as we ran them out of the village on three different
occasions and now they are out to stay. But in Bellows Falls the scabs got protected by
the militia better than they could get in No. Walpole.

Troops stayed in Bellows Falls only briefly, and by August 5, the Leader reported conditions
were peaceful enough that they were withdrawn. Police officers from Manchester went home
soon after. The strikers won a part of the dispute, for instead of hauling the logs out of the river,
the rivermen drove them over the falls to Hinsdale, N. H., about thirty miles south. Patrick
McDermott reported on the progress of the drive on August 9: “There is some rats trying to get
out some logs in No. Walpole Log Yard. But they are meeting with poor success as there is not a
river driver in the whole damn outfit.” On August 18, the Bellows Falls Times reported that
most of the logs had passed over the dam, but that strikers or their supporters had thrown rocks at
the rivermen. A week later, the paper reported that the last of the logging crew had left town,
but that there had been one incident in which the rivermen had been fired upon and sheriffs’
deputies had returned fire.

The drama around the log drive was a turning point. The incident attracted negative
attention to the town, and the strikers began to lose the support of the merchants. On August 9,
McDermott reported to Burke that Dodge had visited the village to meet with the Merchants’
Association. Dodge had told the merchants that the strikers could return to work if they accepted the company’s terms of an open shop and wage cuts. The merchants called on the strikers to compromise. “We told them,” McDermott wrote, “that when Mr. Dodge, Mr. J. P. Burke and Mr. J. T. Carey fixes this thing up satisfactorily to all locals, we would then think of going to work.” He commented, “There is nothing doing in the plant of the I. P. it is as still as a grave yard.” On August 11, the Bellows Falls Times reported that merchants opposed showing a newsreel portraying the strike in Bellows Falls, alleging that the “facts are distorted. …” Now the strikers seemed unreasonable, for Dodge seemed ready to negotiate, at least locally.

The strikers hoped that the approaching Labor Day celebration would help them regain momentum. McDermott reported on August 31, “We are going to have the biggest parade in our history next Labor Day.” Three drum corps were training, and a delegation from the Keene, N. H. of the local “Railway Brotherhood” had promised to attend with “their own band.” On September 8, the Times carried the headline, “Union Men Have Labor Day Parade. Biggest Turn-Out in Years Monday when Hundreds Celebrate Occasion.” The paper reported, “More than 600 participated in a mammoth parade which threaded its way through the main streets of the village, returning to the Square for other parts of the Labor Day program.” The program included speeches by the Rev. L. G. Chase and Frank P. Barry, an organizer for the Paper Makers Union from Albany, N. Y. McDermott reported, “We had a splendid day and everything worked without a hitch.”

By the middle of September, however, the strikers had lost much of the support of the merchants. While Burke had been careful to cultivate relations with community leaders, Carey tactlessly alienated those leaders. On September 15, the Times carried the headline, “Unions Forbid Outside Meddling. Merchants’ Association not Wanted—Carey Launches Drive on Production and Stock.” The paper reported that Carey had introduced a resolution at a union conference forbidding “outside meddling.” The “Carey Resolution” read in part,

Be it resolved that this conference declares and insists that in the future no member or members of any of the unions affiliated, enter into any conference with any committee of
business men [sic], or chamber of commerce, or officials of the International Paper Company without the approval of the International unions are represented by an authorized representative of the International Unions. 105

Belknap wrote indignantly,

The Bellows Falls Merchants’ Association had hoped to use its good offices in helping to straighten out the situation in Bellows Falls, but the last resolution puts a damper on all such good intentions. The resolutions forbid any conference with any committee of business men, chamber of commerce, etc. In other words the unions don’t want any outside suggestion or assistance, except such as they control. 106

Belknap seemed alienated from both sides, but his disappointment with the union was greater. Bellows Falls was caught between two outside organizations, neither of which seemed concerned with local conditions. Belknap explained his bitterness in an editorial on September 22:

The Bellows Falls Merchants’ Association was willing to act as mediator. Their idea was that a committee of the Association and officials of the I. P. Company could meet and do business, that is, that terms could be agreed upon regardless of the union. The union, through its national officers, say “No, there can be no committee from the union which we do not sanction nor any conference at which we are not present. . . .” The strike will continue its prolonged agony and finally peter out rather than than die. Meanwhile the company will act its own pleasure about attempting to start the mills.

Well, the outlook is not rosy. Fortunately Bellows Falls is not dependent on the I. P. Company wholly for its prosperity. Other companies are beginning to show signs of activity. Business in neighboring towns is good and the greeting should be, “Cheer up, better times are just ahead.” 107

There was hope for the village. In the same issue of the paper, Belknap reported that the Liberty Paper Company was about to open with fifty employees. 108 The company made gummed paper tape, although it did not manufacture the paper itself. The factory was a large, modern concrete building at the confluence of the Connecticut and Saxtons Rivers, at the south end of Bellows Falls but in the town of Westminster, on the site of a short-lived casein plant of the 1890s. Belknap and the Merchants’ Association were now eager to see business return to the village, and began to support opening the mills even if International Paper had to use strikebreakers.

By the end of September, the Fall Mountain mill was, in McDermott’s words, showing “more signs of life here lately than has been in some time.” He noted on September 22 that the company was making repairs. 109 He sent a list of strikers who had returned to work, but reassured
Burke, “Bro. Burke don’t feel one bit discouraged over these fellows. Any of them cannot make a pound of paper or cook a digester of Sulphite pulp in five years.” On September 29, the Times reported that ninety people had applied for work at the mill. The paper commented, “This fact together with little business in sight prevents an immediate opening of any portion of the local plant. As soon as enough skilled labor is available, the business will be sought which will justify the working of two or more machines.” Burke was particularly worried about the strikebreakers in Bellows Falls. On September 30, he wrote to McDermott warning him that Lyman Simpson Hayes, Town Clerk and Historian, had “set up an employment bureau for the I. P. Co.” in the town hall. Burke wrote, “We do not know if there are any direct means of preventing this, but he should not be forgotten should he come up for re-election as Town Clerk.” Burke added a postscript: “There is a question in our minds whether this man has a right to use the Town Hall for private business of this kind.”

The Times reported on October 13 that the mill was ready to reopen with one or two machines, and that the village police were prepared for violence against the strikebreakers. The paper reported, “The attitude of union men toward those who had returned to work at the I. P. mill led Chief of Police McKinnon to post last Friday several bulletins of the law relative to disturbing the peace, the riot act, etc.” The paper reported two instances of violence:

A hundred or more hooted the few men who came up Mill hill from the I. P. Stone throwing by boys annoyed several of the I. P. teamsters who attempted Monday afternoon to remove some timbers from the log yard in North Walpole. A similar disturbance on new Terrace resulted in a call for the police Tuesday night, the complaint being made that a gang of boys insisted on serenading the houses of certain men on new Terrace who had returned to work at the I. P. mill. Officer McKinnon appeared on the scene too late to make any arrests.

The village trustees responded to the harassment and stone throwing by ordering the streets to remain clear, and appointing special police to enforce “a policy of strict adherence to the letter of the law.”

The trustees’ action had little effect at first. On October 20, it reported four incidents of violence and intimidation against strikebreakers. The first was notable for its theatricality:
Michael Moore, machine tender, residing on Brown Street, New Terrace, has been the goat for the past week or ten days of his union sympathizing neighbors, who on three occasions the latter part of last weekend had torchlight processions past his home, accompanied by a serenade of catcalls and loud language. One night, on returning from work he was met by a group of women, disguised, who chided him on his going back to work at the mill and called him a “scab.” On another evening, when returning from a call upon a neighbor, he was met by a mob and serenaded. … The mob, mostly women and children, have paraded with tin pans and grotesque disguises. Moore is still at work for the I. P. 114

In another incident, two workers from Walpole were met by strikers and told to “clear out of the town and to stay out.” In another incident a worker named Charles Wolak was chased from the village square to his home about a half mile away. The paper noted, “Wolak started running, and according to his story, was chased and stoned all the way down School and Atkinson streets to his home on George Street, where stones broke down a screen door and otherwise damaged the house.”115

The paper reported two incidents of assault. In one, five strikers or sympathizers on Wells Street, at the north end of the village, assaulted a strikebreaker named Clifford Smith. The other attack was bloodier. The Times reported,

Thomas Usher, who lives at 16 Underhill Avenue, was assaulted early last evening while returning from work at the International Paper mill, and was beaten up so badly with a club that a doctor was called. Mr. Usher states that after leaving the mill at 7 o’clock he went up the stairs to School street, where a gang of eight men hooted at him, then followed at a distance. Mr. Usher took a “beer” bottle from his lunch kit and with this in hand, hurried towards home. The men hurried nearer so Mr. Usher entered the yard at the W. A. Graham residence. This move led the men to turn back toward the Square. He then continued down School and turned up Atkinson toward his home on Underhill Avenue. As he started to cross the street in front of the Haines’ house a man sneaked out from behind a tree and according to Mr. Usher, struck him square in the face with a heavy club, knocking him over backward onto the sidewalk. Anticipating the blow, Mr. Usher had raised this lunch box in front of his face and this in part shielded him from the club which struck squarely across his mouth, knocking out two teeth and breaking three others. He states that four others were in the party that attacked him. …116

Following these incidents, the village trustees held a meeting at which Village Attorney H. D. Ryder and Judge T. E. O’Brien introduced a resolution, the Times reported, “Asking the trustees to provide adequate protection for the men now at work in the mill, to prevent any ‘razzing’ or abuse of these men and to keep the streets cleared at all times.”117

Belknap portrayed actions against the strikers simply as a question of law and order.
Patrick McDermott, Michael Curtin, and John P. Burke saw the resolution as more sinister. Burke wrote, “I believe that was a part of the new scheme on the part of the company to break the strike.”\textsuperscript{118} McDermott supported this view, reporting that Plant Manager, J. E. Myers and Superintendent Barrett had visited the International Paper Company offices in New York and on their return called a Merchants’ Association meeting. McDermott reported that the association ordered “any merchant giving credit to union men … not to do so any more.” McDermott wrote, “The Trustees swore in about 40 Special Police men and got about the same number of deputy sheriffs and gave those gun men orders to keep us off the side walks. Only this very morning the Police ordered those in the Picket Line to get off the streets and to step off.”\textsuperscript{119} McDermott continued, writing of a rumor that Myers had a list of twenty-five names of “the most prominent or active members of the Pulp and Sulphite Union also of the Paper Makers’ Union.” He wrote, “he was heard to remark if he could only get those whose names are on the list in Jail the others would rush back to work in the mills. Father Duffy told me yesterday that Michael Curtin’s name was first and my own second, then [Michael] Manning and so on.” He noted, however, “Our President, Bro. Curtin got a new position he is a Police Man in No. Walpole now, and I think the scabs will have new cause to worry if Curtin sees them.”\textsuperscript{120}

In other times, the charges of intrigue by the local mill management would have seemed unreasonable, but evidence soon supported McDermott’s charges. On October 27, the Times reported that seven strikers had been arrested on charges that included assault and intimidation, and that Curtin was the most prominent of the men arrested. Curtin was charged with intimidating a strikebreaker named Joseph Dousello. The paper reported that Curtin was accused of saying, “You are a scab. You are a damn scab, and if you continue to work for the International Paper Co. I will fix you.”\textsuperscript{121} Although others were charged with assault, Curtin received the largest bail, $600, which was paid by Stephen J. Cray, a grocer and butcher who broke with the Merchants’ Association.\textsuperscript{122} Of the seven arrested, Curtin was the only one tried. McDermott and the other strikers felt he had been singled out as an example. Curtin’s arrest was part of a pattern of systematic suppression of the strike, for the company had won injunctions in
Wilder, Vermont, Franklin and Berlin, New Hampshire, Livermore Falls, Maine, and Niagara Falls, New York. In Palmer, New York, Bat Doody, a union officer, was also arrested under circumstances similar to Curtin’s.123

As Curtin waited in the county jail in Newfane, the list of former union members who had returned to work grew. On November 7, McDermott reported to Burke that three of their old friends, Sliver Mack, Humpy Mike [Moore], and former Local President Hugh MacLeod were all at work in supervisory positions. McDermott noted that the workers were so poorly trained and overworked that they caused more harm than good. When they started a ground wood mill, they burst three stones, and in another incident broke the main shaft of one of the water wheels.124 The troubles in the mills may have been encouraging, but the loss of members was troubling, as was Curtin’s looming trial.

The county court heard Curtin’s case on November 7. McDermott reported Curtin’s conviction and sentence of six months in the State House of Correction on November 9.125 Burke wrote to Curtin that news of the conviction was “about as raw a thing as I have ever heard.” He advised Curtin to appeal, noting, “If the strike comes to an end before the time comes for your next trial, I doubt your case will ever be brought to trial. It is always better in cases of this kind to appeal to every court you can before serving any time.”126 Curtin’s lawyer did not file papers in time for an appeal, and on November 29, McDermott reported, “Bro. Curtin, Pres. of this local was called upon to serve his sentence of six months in the state prison in Windsor, Vt. for intimidating the scab Douselles.”127 McDermott wrote that Curtin was met by police officers as he left a meeting of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. McDermott commented that the whole affair with Curtin looked “rather crooked on the outside. … But the methods that the I. P. and the Merchants’ Association, backed up by the Trustees of the Village, is trying to pull off here is only welding us stronger than ever and from now on Unionism in Bellows Falls will be on the offensive instead of the defensive.”128
The Strike in Turners Falls

Turners Falls responded much differently to the strike than either of the other villages. There the strike began, albeit surprisingly, and continued strongly through May and June. In July, however, as International Paper prepared to reopen the mill with strikebreakers, many of the strikers decided to accept the terms of the new working agreement and return to work. Local Secretary Samuel Bray wrote to Burke on July 5, “Well Turners Falls are the same slackers. 56 of the Pulp & Sulphite workers went in the mill this morning & two of the Paper Makers & about 1 half of the others are on the verge of returning. … Glad to hear that their [sic] are not any mills as bad as their is here in Turners Falls.” Burke sent a circular letter to Pulp and Sulphite Workers with news that Turners Falls was the first union to break the strike. He commented bitterly, “Turners Falls never was any good.” The response in Turners Falls was hardly surprising. Burke’s dismissiveness may have been bitter, but it was accurate: Unionism had been shaky in Turners Falls from the time of the Secessionist controversy of 1906 and the union had not joined the strike of 1910.

The Lingering Strike

After Curtin’s conviction, the strike quickly lost energy in Bellows Falls. McDermott’s leaders showed a steady decrease in active members. He tried to assure Burke that the workers had turned out “one saleable [sic] roll of paper …,” but also admitted that the company had hired skilled workers in Holyoke. The mill was producing inferior grades of paper, using cylinder machines, overseen by one of the strikebreakers. Curtin became a reluctant hero for the strikers and brought attention to Bellows Falls. He sent reports to Burke from the Vermont House of Correction, and Burke had them typed and sent as circular letters. Curtin agree reluctantly, and wrote to Burke, “I don’t want to be posed as a martyr because some of the boys may look at it in a different light but if it pleased you I don’t offer any objections.”

Curtin was an inspiration to the strikers in Bellows Falls and for the international union, but the local situation in Bellows Falls began to deteriorate at the beginning of 1922. The
meeting and election of the village trustees took place on January 23, and became a fierce battle between the “Law and Order Ticket,” which McDermott described as “composed mostly of people against Unionism such as Merchants, Bankers, I. P. Mill Officers, etc.,” and the “Citizens’ Ticket,” which was “union members mostly.” The Citizens Ticket hoped to “get some satisfaction out of the Birds that sent Michael Curtin to jail,” but the Law and Order ticket won the election. McDermott claimed the election had been fraudulent and Robert J. Riley, teenage son of John P. Riley had voted. With Curtin’s conviction, International Paper won an injunction. This stopped all picketing and intimidation of strikebreakers. Strikers were not allowed to gather near the mills or even to assemble on the Square, Westminster, Bridge and Mill Streets, “or upon any street leading to or adjacent to said Public Square or said Westminster Street.” The injunction effectively silenced the strikers. McDermott wrote that the provisions of the injunction were so strict that he was not allowed to cross the river from his home in North Walpole, because both bridges connected to roads leading to the Square. “In fact,” he wrote, “when I go over to Bellows Falls to mail this letter …, I will break the dam old Injunction again.” The strike was effectively broken, and as the strike neared its first anniversary strike benefits began to shrink. On April 20, as the strike neared its first anniversary, the Bellows Falls Times reported ambivalently on the strike. John P. Riley commented ominously that International Paper was looking for a party to buy the log pile in North Walpole. Riley refused to elaborate, but Belknap commented, “It must be apparent even to a blind man that the sale of this large supply of pulp logs means that the company does not intend to resume paper manufacturing in Bellows Falls on a large scale at the present time.” In a second article in the Times, Lyman Simpson Hayes summarized the state of the strike after a year. He wrote, “At the Bellows Falls mills for the last two months or more the production has been as large in both departments as the orders would warrant. The local management started one after another of their machines until a month ago they had seven running out of their total of ten here.” As far as Hayes was concerned, the strike was over. Many of the strikers had either left town or had found other employment, whether at the
Liberty Paper Company, the village’s Cooperative Creamery plant, or building roads. The mills had recovered, at least as far as the demand for paper allowed. The strikers continued to meet and to make their presence known, but the Merchants’ Association and International Paper no longer considered them relevant.

For Belknap, the strike was no longer warranted being reported on the front page. Instead he reported it simply as local news on page nine of the paper. On May 4, the paper reported that the international unions had voted to continue the strike. On the same page, the paper covered Michael Curtin’s return from the state prison. The paper reported that several hundred people greeted him. The celebration of his return began with tolling church and schools. Because of the injunction he had to be driven to Hibernian Hall for a union meeting, and then driven to the New Hampshire side of the Arch Bridge, where he and several hundred strikers and sympathizers marched through the streets of North Walpole. The village trustees voted not to allow a Labor Day parade that year, and while the strikers celebrated at Barber Park, the village remained quiet.

By August 1922, after sixteen months of the strike, the solidarity of the unions was breaking down, and strike benefits dwindled. Even union officers, including James Beard in Franklin and Patrick McDermott in Bellows Falls, both of whom had been among the most steadfast supporters of the strike, finally returned to work. Privately, Burke supported ending the strike, writing to Curtin, “It certainly is heartbreaking to see the men sneaking back into the mills one at a time. Personally, I think it would be much better to call the strike off rather than have the men go back in that manner.” The strike still had considerable support and continued until 1926. When Burke finally called it off in February 1926, members were angry enough that they left the unions. The locals in Bellows Falls and Franklin dissolved.

**Shut Down**

By 1922, the mills were running in all three towns, but those in Bellows Falls and Franklin seldom worked at full capacity. The Winnipiseogee Mill had gradually dwindled in size,
and the Fall Mountain mill had not run more than seven of its ten machines since the strike of 1907. On April 22, W. C. Belknap wrote to Dodge to inquire about the company’s plans for the mill. Dodge responded that the company had a surplus of wood that it had bought during World War One, when the demand for paper was high, and that it needed to shift its supplies so it could use the wood as profitably as possible. The sale of the wood in North Walpole did not indicate that the company planned to shut down the mill. Dodge, however, gave Belknap a stern warning:

We have had more trouble and more animosity in your community than in any other in which we manufacture. We spent over $100,000 a month in your town and have not had the general public support, although we paid the highest current wages and gave the shortest prevailing hours. The business can only be run on sound economic lines and so as to obtain a reasonable return on the capital invested.

I can make no statement one way or another as to what may happen to the Bellows Falls plant. You may rest assured that after the treatment we have received we will not hesitate a moment to shut the plant permanently unless it is found to be profitable.144

Dodge explained that company saw hydroelectricity as a potential use for mills’ waterpower. He wrote, “Electric current is in increasing demand throughout the country. Certain mills will be discontinued because a better profit can be obtained by utilizing the power to produce electricity. In the electric business we would employ only a very small number of men and would be relieved from the capital investment in wood.”145

John Lundrigan, International Paper’s labor expert, visited the Winnipiseogee mill in August 1922 and repeated Dodge’s threat. Joseph Newton, president of the Paper Maker’s local, wrote,

Mr. John Lundrigan has been a visitor in Franklin this past week for four days and he threw out a new kind of Bull in the hotel for I do not know what kind of Audience he had but has [sic] we have friends into every part of the town we got his dope, he said the I P co was not going to Manufactor very little Paper in the U S A (you know WHY) because of the High cost and Labor Trouble also they were going to sell there [sic] mills here, SOONER THEY SELL THEM AND BETTER IT WILL BE FOR FRANKLIN, and all the towns where they have Mills, it seems that John as [sic] got the HYDRO ELECTRIC on the Bean too.146

Hydroelectric development was a threat, and Newton was wrong not to take it seriously, but to a point, he was correct to see it as a bluff. Dodge and Lundrigan may have wanted to suggest that the strike was the cause of the company’s interest in hydroelectric power, but it was only one
cause among many. Mills such as the Fall Mountain and the Winnipiseogee—and even the Montague for that matter—were aging. Modern, efficient mills such as the Three Rivers mill in Quebec, which were closer to the supply of raw materials, were already under construction before the strike began. The Three Rivers mill particularly made the plants the Franklin and Bellows Falls obsolete.\textsuperscript{147}

So far, the closing the mills was only a threat, but evidence trickled suggesting that International Paper was scaling back its operations in Bellows Falls and Franklin. In March 1923, Joseph Newton in Franklin reported to Burke that the company was finally selling the old Daniell mill, which used the same dam as the Sulloway hosiery mill.\textsuperscript{148} The mill had been closed since 1908, but whether because of sentimentality (it was the mill in which International Paper Company President and board member, A. N. Burbank had started his career) or hopes of future expansion, the company had refused to sell it, and instead used it for storage. The Sulloways, who had rights to only one-third of the waterpower, wanted to increase their power, and Newton claimed, offered to buy the property for $80,000. By 1923, he continued, the company paid more than $92,000 per year in taxes on the property, but finally sold the mill for $75,000. For Newton, this sale was a sign of desperation. He asked, “If they are successful in running there bussiness [sic] why sell the water power and property[?]” \textsuperscript{149}

Newton continued to report on the losses the company was suffering. In April, he reported that strikebreakers had damaged a paper machine by dropping and breaking one of the rolls. The company replaced the part by cannibalizing a machine from Bellows Falls.\textsuperscript{150} Newton analyzed the company’s annual report in several letters. The figures, he wrote, gave a “gloomy impression,” with a reduction in the company’s surplus from over $32,000,000 in 1920 to less than $15,000,000 two years later.\textsuperscript{151} He noted Dodge’s argument that the loss was at least partly attributable to the cost of wood, for which the company had signed contracts “at war prices.”\textsuperscript{152} He noted a few weeks later that the company had earned $850,000 in two months, out of which it had paid $450,000 in dividends, and still had to pay for raw materials and “working capital.” He commented, “The same old story of Figures don’t Lie, but they are trying to rock the stock
gamblers to sleep.”

At the beginning of 1924, the company started shutting down the plant. On January 18, Newton wrote to Burke, reporting that the company had shut down the mills in Franklin. The unions saw this as a victory, and Joseph Newton wrote to Burke, “I tell you, John, the boys are rejoicing at the closing.”153 In March, the company restarted one machine but promised it would shutdown again soon.154 By the end of May, the company had shut down the book paper mill, with the newest and largest machine, completely and had removed its belts.155

Conditions were the same in Bellows Falls, where the mill worked on short hours. Jerry Nolan, president of the Pulp and Sulphite Workers’ local, wrote in January, “There are only two machines running and they are not running much.” He noted, “the scabs are leaving town.”156 In March, Nolan wrote that the company had started Number Three machine, a fairly new and large cylinder machine, in order to use up pulp from the mill in Rumford, Maine. The company ran for two or three days at a time, with a break of ten days sometimes between batches of paper.157 In March, the company sold off the log yard in North Walpole, and, Nolan wrote, had “done away with” its horses and teamsters. It also shut down the Sulphite Mill. In May, Nolan reported that the mill had a new superintendent but that he had immediately laid off workers and offered them their old jobs at less pay. The shut down in the mills looked like it would be permanent.158

In May, workers received the news that P. T. Dodge had resigned his position as president of International Paper. Nolan commented, “Mr. Dodge cannot be troubled with I. P. Co. business as he is president of other corporations.”159 Graustein’s hiring highlighted the fact that the International Paper Company was taking a new direction. The new mill at Trois-Rivières, Quebec was about to open, making the mills in places such as Bellows Falls and Franklin obsolete. Graustein focused his attention on places that were close to raw materials, including Trois-Rivières and in a few years, Dalhousie, New Brunswick.160 In August, 1924, Curtin reported to Burke, “everything is flat,” and noted that the management of the company was “deciding whether to remodel the plant or shut it down.” Burke replied to Curtin, “These old mills of the I. P. Company cannot compete with the great modern mills that are now being
erected. The paper industry is undergoing great changes and it is these things, rather than the strike, that are putting the I. P. out of commission.”

As the mills in Bellows Falls gradually shut down, community leaders in Bellows Falls started to warm to the idea of converting the village’s waterpower to hydroelectricity. Initial plans in 1912 had worried W. C. Belknap, but as the strike dragged on, he seemed increasingly interested in the development convinced that Bellows Falls’s prosperity would be tied to hydroelectric development. He covered the hydroelectric development south of Bellows Falls on the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers, and finally recognized that increased demand for electricity was “inevitable” and that Bellows Falls’s prosperity would be tied to hydroelectric development.

News of the hydroelectric development finally broke in November 1925. The Times reported on November 19, “Business Boom May Be on Way.” “A Bellows Falls manufacturer who is in position to have inside dope,” the paper reported, “says the boom is due to arrive inside of two years, and there are straws which indicate that his guess may be based on something besides mere conjecture.” The reporter continued, noting that the manufacturers “under the hill” had all agreed to convert to electric power. The hydroelectric development, construction of new bridges in the vicinity, and improvement in local roads would give the Bellows Falls new opportunities for industry. The article concluded, “The only question is when and to what extent.” In January, the Times, still hoping for a formal announcement, reported that the New England Power Company had bought farms along the river, north of the dam. In order to create enough power to run turbines, the company would have to raise height of the dam and flood farms in the valley. The Times reported that New England Power would build its generating plant below International Paper’s plant. The paper noted, “This would necessitate considerable change in the International mill, if true, and lends strength to the report that the International will scrap about $350,000 of their taxable property, real estate and machinery by April 1, replacing this in part with modern paper machines.” This report was optimistic: the power development would supplement the industrial infrastructure of the village; the loss in taxable property would be offset
by the new development and the modernization of the paper plant.

The next week, the *Times* reported more troubling news under the headline, “International Paper Co. Sells Bellows Falls Property to International Hydro-Electric.” The paper reported that International Paper had sold all of its property on January 8. The company sold the entire plant, consisting of “twelve lots, all mills, buildings, dams and other structures, all machinery and fixtures, all water powers, all canals, ponds, shores, and sluices, all railroad rights, all real property rights, privileges [and] leases. …” The paper reported, “Nobody at Bellows Falls knows how this sale will effect the manufacture of paper. Presumably the I. P. Company will lease buildings and paper making machinery, buy power and go ahead as at present.”

The paper could do nothing more than speculate, and report the slow trickle of information as it reached the village. In March, the *Times* reported, “I. P. Co. Will Continue in Bellows Falls After Power Development.” W. B. Glynn, president of the Bellows Falls National Bank, had interviewed the “powers that be” and had been assured that “Bellows Falls will continue to be a paper mill town after the power development and that the International Paper Co. will increase the scale of its operations here. …” Glynn stated that he expected the development would help the village’s industries because it would increase the supply and decrease the cost of power. The following week, the paper reported that the extent of the power development would be greater than people had supposed. New England Power planned to issue “100,000 shares at $55.00,” for a total of $5,500,000 rather than the $4,000,000 that the paper had reported earlier. Engineers were visiting the site and the company was preparing camps for construction crews and buying more real estate. Still, there was little word.

Finally, in April, the village’s community leaders decided to take action and ask New England Power and International Paper what their plans for the village were. They organized a mass meeting at the village’s state armory. The meeting’s organizers also recognized that the village needed a broad-based civic organization and proposed organizing a Chamber of Commerce to replace the Merchants’ Organization. The meeting took place on April 13, 1926. The *Times* reported that the meeting was the “largest meeting ever held in Bellows Falls, with
fully 1000 people present. . .” The high school orchestra entertained the crowd, and W. B. Glynn read a poem entitled, “Be a Booster.” The main speakers were D. F. Lawlor, Superintendent of the Fall Mountain Mill, and William W. Brooks, Vice President of the New England Power Association, the holding company that owned the New England Power Company, the Fall Mountain Electric Company, and other companies. Lawlor reported that International Paper intended to continue to run the mill that made cardboard cores for paper rolls. This would keep one paper machine running. Otherwise, Lawlor was noncommittal, saying only that “engineers and experts” were “studying the situation.” Glynn was remained optimistic, telling the meeting that “he believed the I. P. Company ‘intends to stay with us.’” To defuse tension he “asked the hard-pressed orchestra for another selection.” Brooks was more encouraging than Lawlor. The Times reported that Brooks told the crowd, that the New England Power “Association believes in New England, believes it is a good place to live in, invest in and work in. It will help to make New England the greatest and best section of the country.” He gave his support to the Chamber of Commerce, stating that the Association would “help Bellows Falls to become as big and good as the best, but Bellows Falls must also help itself.” He told the audience that the power plant would generate about 130 megawatts per year and that he would like to see as much of it used in and around Bellows Falls as possible. The meeting concluded with the election of officers for the Chamber of Commerce and a speech by John Barrett of neighboring Grafton. Barrett “gave a rousing booster speech. He was still wondering why Bellows Falls rather than Burlington was not the biggest city in the state and seemed optimistic that the rank may yet be reversed.” This was simply hubris, but the crowd seemed to appreciate the sentiment. The paper noted that many expressed “the opinion that it was the best meeting ever held in Bellows Falls.”

The mass meeting was a pep rally and gave the people of the town little more information than they already had. In another column, the Times reported briefly on the building program, noting that work would begin immediately, would take two years, and would employ as many as 400 men. Local men would be given preference in hiring. In July, the paper reported the construction of the new dam that would raise the water level eleven feet. It would consist of two
sections, and unlike the old dam, would form a single line across the river. Flashboards would control the height of the dam, and two heavy floodgates would control the flow, allowing water to pass over the dam in the spring and in case of floods.

By the summer of 1926, construction was underway, with the demolition of mill buildings, and the beginning of work blasting the flume for the power plant. By the winter, crews were blasting 200 cubic feet of rock per day. The electrical industries trade journal *Contact* reported in December that 25,000 of rock had been removed to date. Some rock was being used to build coffer dams, to hold back the water in the Connecticut for construction of the new dam; crews were dumping some of the rock in the eddy below the mills. Some of the rock would form a level platform for the power distribution company’s substation.

Blasting intensified at the beginning of January 1927, as the Sherman Power Construction Company blasted a fifty-foot gorge where the largest block of the Fall Mountain Paper Mill once had been. In order to get enough waterpower to turn the generators effectively, the company had to remove 110,000 cubic yards of rock, volume equivalent to a 100-foot square, thirty-story building. Townspeople complained as large rocks showered down on the Square, and the concussion of the blasts broke windows in buildings on the south end of the village. The construction company officials were apologetic, and fixed windows as soon they were broken. The chief engineer assured the community that the company was using “the same method as is employed in congested areas of large cities by contractors.” The paper reported that the engineer “expressed the belief that danger from the blast is negligible, as well as appreciation of the lenient attitude that the community has taken toward the blasting nuisance to date.”

The engineer assured the people of the village that the blasting would soon abate. Newspapers reported that the construction company was making visible progress. At the beginning of April 1927, the *Greenfield Record* published a richly descriptive account of the development. The article noted the work of converting the waterpower from seventy factory turbines generating 10,000 horsepower to three hydroelectric turbines generating six times that amount. The canal had delivered 1,000,000 gallons of water per minute; now it would handle
4,200,000 gallons. “During nine months of the year,” the Recorder reported, “all the waters of the Connecticut” would be diverted through the canal, and the Falls would be dry. The paper described the development in terms that captured the immensity, if not the sublimity, of the work, noted that the construction company was “excavating of a titanic gorge in the solid ledge at the foot of the canal, broad, and so deep that its bottom will be even below the level of the river at the foot of the falls.” The article continued, describing the power station and function of the turbines once the project would be complete:

The Bellows Falls power station will be set at the top of the ledge, above the gorge. The foundations for its turbines and generators will be the solid rock instead of the customary concrete. Each turbine will rest immediately above the yawning vertical shaft of its L-shaped draft-tube, 20 feet in diameter, down through which it will discharge its 1,400,000 gallons of water per minute. At a depth of 50 feet the shaft will enter the tunnel that penetrates the face of the head wall of the gorge at right angles. 20 feet in diameter at the shaft and belling out to a width of of 34 feet where it opens toward the river. Thus when the station is operating torrents will pour forth from three enormous rock mouths. But these will not be visible, for they will be submerged in the flood.

The development was even more impressive when one considered that it was only part of a much larger development of the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers. The Vernon Dam was not as massive as the dam in Bellows Falls, but it generated 42,000 horsepower. The Deerfield River power plants generated a total of 125,000 horsepower. Finally, New England Power owned rights to waterpower north of Bellows Falls, notably at Fifteen Mile Falls, below St. Johnsbury, Vermont, “which will yield large units of power when the time comes to develop them.”

In July, the Bellows Falls Times published a letter, written by John E. Barrett that touched on the sublimity of the development. He began, “Bellows Falls and its surrounding towns have a tremendous asset in the mighty work that is now going on to develop 60,000 horsepower on the Connecticut river. The words ‘tremendous’ and ‘mighty’ are used advisedly. They are not terms of exaggeration.” “And yet,” he complained, “the average resident of Bellows Falls and surrounding and villages in Vermont and New Hampshire does not appreciate the magnitude and the significance of the digging, blasting and building that is going on now at Bellows Falls.” The hydroelectric development, he argued, was an asset that the community should exploit for self-
promotion. The engineering marvel of the dam and power plant should be an opportunity for boosterism. “Every man, woman and child, who can have accessibility to Bellows Falls,” he wrote, “should be familiar with the big engineering undertaking that is being worked out there and should tell everybody else about it. No tourist should be allowed to come through or near Bellows Falls without grasping the mightiness of the achievement!” He argued that the development should be promoted as a tourist attraction and concluded, “A distinguished national authority on the advertising of towns and cities recently told me that Bellows Falls and vicinity had one of the most extraordinary opportunities in this construction work to gain not only New England but nation-wide publicity and yet how few of the people of Bellows Falls and surrounding towns have awakened to this opportunity!”

Bellows Falls did not wake to the opportunity for self-promotion. Forty years before, the mills had been a source of considerable local pride. The hydroelectric plant was no less impressive than the Fall Mountain Mill had been—the numbers in terms of horsepower and volume of rock removed were perhaps more impressive—but the people of the village were in no mood to look at the development with the same sort of wonder and admiration with which an earlier generation looked at the mills. This was perhaps partly due to the tumult of the decade, the grinding strike in the Fall Mountain Mill, and the loss of many jobs. As Barrett and the correspondent to the *Greenfield Recorder* wrote exuberantly about the power development, International Paper quietly closed down its last operating machine. The *Times* commented that closure threw “18 men out of employment, the last of the once ‘noble 600.’ It looks like a funeral.”

The mill never started again. Hopes that the hydroelectric development would lead to the modernization of the plant were dashed. The *Times* hoped that the parts of the plant that still stood “under the hill,” including Paper Mill Number Three, pulp mills (including the pulp mill on the site of the original mill), and the sulphite mill would start up again after the development the finished, but they never did. President Graustein of International Paper finally responded to a question from W. C. Belknap in April 1928 stating that the company had no plans to resume
operations in the village.\textsuperscript{175} Frances Stockwell Lovell wrote in her town history that the loss of the International Paper Company mill was the “end of a period of prosperity.”

The closing of the International mill was one of a long list of problems that Bellows Falls suffered in the 1920s. Before the mill closed, the village lost both the Vermont Farm Machine Company and the Derby and Ball Scythe Snath factory. During the war, the Vermont Farm Machine Company had contracted with Canadian Car and Foundry to supply shells to the Russian government. At the time, the \textit{Times} saw this as a boon to the local economy, for the company continued to make cream separators. By May 1916, the company was employing 600 men (about the same as International Paper) and had a weekly payroll of over $10,000.\textsuperscript{176} Two years later, however, the paper reported that the Russian government had defaulted on its payments. In March 1919, the paper reported that the company had purchased the Monarch Evaporator Company of Newport, Vermont, a competing producer of equipment for making maple syrup.\textsuperscript{177} The combination of the Vermont Machine Company’s loss from its Russian contracts and the costs of acquiring Monarch Evaporator proved too great a burden. In December 1919, the company reorganized in order to raise capital, but in July 1920, company president, Nathan G. Williams, filed for bankruptcy.\textsuperscript{178} The bankruptcy court appointed Frederick L. Thompson, of Moore and Thompson, and Williams as receivers. In May, 1921, as Belknap assessed the impact of the paper strike on the community, he noted that the Vermont Farm Machine Company was employing only between twenty-five and thirty men.\textsuperscript{179} Williams tried to recover by branching out into other types of machines. By 1922, the company started to manufacture washing machines as well as parts for radios. In September 1922, the company ran a radio station.\textsuperscript{180} The company never recovered. In 1926 E. C. Townshend, an investor in Boston bought the factory, hoping to manufacture cream separators and washing machines.\textsuperscript{181} Williams enthusiastically sought investors for the reorganized company, but was not able to reestablish the business. The company’s assets were finally auctioned in May 1928.\textsuperscript{182}

The decline of the Vermont Farm Machine Company was long and dramatic. The company was the second industry of Bellows Falls, and the source of considerable local pride.
The Derby and Ball Scythe Snath factory was a much smaller concern, but like the Fall Mountain Paper Mill and the Vermont Farm Machine Company also tended to be described with superlatives. At one time it was the largest manufacturer of wooden scythe handles (snaths) in the country. In 1924, it merged with the Monarch Scythe Snath Company of Waterbury, Vermont, and the company directors voted to consolidate manufacturing to Waterbury, closer to the supply of hardwoods.\textsuperscript{183}

Belknap was careful to stress hopeful economic prospects. If the mainstays of the local economy were failing, new businesses were starting up. This included the Liberty Paper Company, not a paper manufacturer but a “converter,” that is, a manufacturer of gummed paper labels. More hopeful even than this was the construction of a cooperative dairy on the Island near the railroad depot. In February 1921, the \textit{Times} announced that plans were underway to build a creamery that would accommodate 300 farmers and about 3,000 cows.\textsuperscript{184} Farmers would buy shares in the dairy according to the number of cows they had. The depression of 1920-1921 hit dairy farmers hard, and the creamery was a response to this “demoralized” market. The \textit{Times} reported proudly that the plant would have twice the capacity of a similar operation in Brattleboro. It was important regionally, helping farmers north to White River Junction and Rutland, south to Putney, and east to the Connecticut River towns in New Hampshire find markets for their milk, but it also eased, if only slightly, the growing problem of unemployment in the village. It became an important source of employment for striking paper mill workers, including local union presidents Michael Curtin and Dominick McDermott. Signs were hopeful but the new jobs were insufficient to stem the loss of local jobs.

To make matters worse for the village, it was plagued with fires. In 1921, the old railroad passenger depot burned. People in the village had complained of the old depot for thirty years. In 1891, the \textit{Times} wrote that the building looked “out from a grim old age.” When Benjamin Harrison visited the town, the \textit{Times} asked, “By the way, what do you suppose President Harrison’s idea of the town was, judged by the station? He must have thought it a mighty poor place.”\textsuperscript{185} The new depot, although smaller, was an improvement. The supervising engineer
boasted that it was “more convenient for the public” than the station in Brattleboro. The Times noted, “It may be ample for as a railroad man remarked, railroading isn’t what it used to be. The automobile cuts big inroads on travel by railroad in the summer.” The paper concluded, “The general impression is very pleasing.”

The second major fire of the decade destroyed the car barn of the Bellows Falls and Saxtons River Street Railway. The fire, in January 1924, gutted the car barn but destroyed six trolley cars, a snowplow, and other equipment. The two cars that were in service at the time were saved, but the company could not recover from the loss and service ended the following November. The failure, the Times reported, was “due to lack of patronage. … The public refuse to avail themselves of this service, such as it is.” Bellows Falls, here, followed a regional pattern, for the paper noted that both Brattleboro and Rutland had recently lost service.

The loss of streetcar service was like the burning of the railroad depot in that few seemed to miss it. Automobile travel lessened the need for both the passenger depot and streetcar line. More troubling was a fire that destroyed the town hall and opera house in May of 1925. The coverage of the fire in the Times suggested that townspeople were ambivalent about the building: it was the village’s “largest and best publicly owned building,” but it was “built along architectural lines which are no longer up to date.” More important than architectural lines, the building was constructed in a way that, the Times suggested, made the fire spread quickly and thoroughly. Still, the building was an important landmark, and the focal point of the Square. Townspeople had been justly proud of it when it was built, almost forty years before. Its loss, Frances Stockwell Lovell wrote, “was a serious blow to the town.” The Times estimated the loss at $200,000, but the building was insured for only $50,000. The two voted to build a new town and opera house, at a cost of $250,000 and hired Dartmouth College architects, Larson and Wells, to design a building “modeled after the old Italian town halls of the 15th century, a type of enduring architectural charm, and of as much interest today as when erected centuries ago.” The design incorporated the old bell and clock.
second major fire. On November 25, 1925, faulty wiring started a fire in the high school. The janitor discovered the fire at 7:00 in the morning, when he arrived to prepare the building for the day. The building was a total loss within two hours. The building was insured for $96,000, but the Times estimated that replacing it with a modern, fireproof structure was cost upward of $200,000. Coming on top of the loss of the town hall, the high school fire was, the Times noted, a “stunning blow.” The paper commented, however, “the people of the town, no doubt, will rise to the occasion and do what should be done promptly.” A special town meeting turned the planning of a new building over to the town hall building committee. On December 10, the Times reported that the town voted to spend $275,000 on a modern fireproof building.

The loss of the Fall Mountain mill was the last of the major blows to the village, and the development of the hydroelectric plant did not completely offset the loss. It helped the village financially, with taxes amounting to half of the total assessment for the town. While it contributed considerably to the village’s well-being, it did not usher in a new era of prosperity. It may have provided opportunities for new industries, but those industries never came. Instead of powering factories, the power was more important for consumer applications. The village had lost much of its industry, and it began to lose population. From a peak population in 1910 of 4,883, the population declined slightly by 1920 (4,860), but by 1930 the village had lost twenty percent of its population (3,930).

Franklin did not undergo the sort of transformation that was reshaping Bellows Falls. The 1920s was a difficult period for textiles, and while both the Sulloway and Stevens mills survived the period, they had to shut down occasionally for want of orders. Hydroelectric development grew much slower than in Bellows Falls and was never as extensive. The end for the International Paper mill in Franklin finally came in March 1930. Brooks wrote Burke on March 23, “Was in Franklin Saturday and learned the old I. P. is due to close indefinitely. We should worry.” The company boarded up the mills and closed them quietly. The event did not even warrant a news story in the Journal-Transcript. The paper referred to the closure in passing in “the Rambler,” a column devoted to historical and other miscellaneous topics. The article
began, “The closing of the paper mills in Franklin calls to mind the fact that paper has been made here for more than 100 years.” International Paper’s history in the paper industry and addressed International Paper’s move of newsprint production to Canada. Paper making in Franklin became part of local history. The mills sat boarded up into the 1930s. In 1935, Paper Mill B burned as workers were removing machinery. Eventually, a hydroelectric plant was built on part of the site of the original Daniell Mill. The Sanborn fire insurance map of 1943 shows that much of the plant had been removed, although the company left foundations, parts of walls, and millstones scattered in what would become second-growth woods.

Turners Falls did not suffer major loss of industry in the 1920s. The Montague Mill, which was little effected by the strike of 1921, continued to operate, as did the Keith and Esleeck fine paper mills (in 2011, the Esleeck mill continues to operate as a mill for the Southworth Paper Company). In 1927, International Paper updated the Montague mill with a new paper machine. International Paper increased its presence in Turners Falls in 1921, with the construction of a new plant for the Montague Machine Company, a subsidiary of the paper company. The Montague Machine Company because International Paper’s major shop for building and repairing paper machinery. The Russell Cutlery Company also continued. Turners Falls would not start to decline until 1936, when a disastrous flood washed out both the Montague Mill and Russell Cutlery. Neither of the plants reopened.

In 1927, independent power companies in Western Massachusetts merged under a holding company. The president of the company was Alvah Crocker, a descendent of the Turners Falls’s founder. The Recorder reported that the merger was a means by which local companies could protect themselves from takeover by corporations such as New England Power. The paper noted, “The underlying purpose of the project is to protect the local electric industry from invasion by financial organizations whose headquarters are in other parts of the country and whose leaders have no real interest in the industrial welfare of western Massachusetts.” The paper argued that electrical power had to be controlled by people who had the communities’ interests at heart. The paper assured its readers that the companies under the larger holding
company would continue to function as they had previously and the arrangement was purely financial. The paper concluded,

If the program of the organizers of the Western Massachusetts Companies is carried out, the lighting companies whose stock may be held by it will continue indefinitely as local institutions, managed by local men responsive to local needs, and owned to a large extent by citizens of the city and towns they serve. Such a program, it is believed, cannot help being for the interest of consumers of electricity in the Connecticut Valley.  

Companies in Western Massachusetts found a solution to the problem of foreign control that had troubled Belknap and others in Bellows Falls. People in Bellows Falls had overcome their anxiety, perhaps encouraged by necessity, but people in Western Massachusetts were more enterprising in fighting foreign control.

In Turners Falls, as in Bellows Falls, the old days of excitement over the natural and technological sublime had passed. If boosters in Bellows Falls were disappointed that local people seemed to ignore the engineering marvel under construction near their homes, the Greenfield Recorder reported a similar disappointment with the Turners Falls dam. In years past, the paper reported in 1927, spectators turned out in large numbers to watch the ice go out of the river in March. The sight was a spectacle that attracted a large audience. The construction of the hydroelectric dam, however, had destroyed the spectacle. In the past the ice would break up with a roar as water levels rose and pressure grew beneath the ice. Now floodgates controlled the water levels. The paper reported, “Since the construction of the new cement dam and the installation of the flood-gates in the dam, the rise and fall of the water can be controlled to a large degree and not nearly so many people are attracted by the event of the ice going out in the spring and the attending flood waters.”  

Turners Falls was the regional center of hydroelectric development, but this development, like that in Bellows Falls, came at the expense of the sense of wonder local people had for the falls and industry.
NOTES

1 John P. Burke to the Members of the Executive Board, Letter, November 12, 1920, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1920/1P.

2 Michael J. Curtin to Burke, Letter, January 8, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

3 Charles N. Bean to Burke, Letter, January 1, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

4 James Beard to Burke, Letter, March 15, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

5 Thomas Lane to Burke, Letter, March 29, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

6 Burke to Lane, Letter, March 31, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.


9 “Result of Vote for Accepting or Rejecting Manufacturers' Proposition Submitted April 8th,” Reel 1921/1P.


11 Ibid., pp. 8-9; John P. Burke, Circular Letter, May 16, 1921, Brotherhood Records, 1921/1P.


of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers 10 (July-August 1921), pp. 3-4. This was the last issue of the Journal for the duration of the strike.

14 “Result of Vote for Accepting or Rejecting Manufacturers' Proposition Submitted April 8th,” Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.

15 Brooks to Burke, Letter, May 10, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.

16 Beard to Burke, Letter, May 16, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

17 Beard to Burke, Letter, May 24, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

18 McDermott to Burke, Letter, May 2, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

19 McDermott to Burke, Letter, May 23, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

20 Burke to McDermott, Letter, May 26, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.


23 “No strike news. The strike of the Fall Mountain plant of the I.P. Compnay in effect since May 1, continues without local developments,” BFT, May 12, 1921, p. 6.


25 “Tuesday was picnic day for the I.P. office force and some of the foremen, 22 in all,” BFT, June 9, 1921, p. 10.


29 “Big Reception to Strikebreakers,” The Manchester Leader and Evening Union, July 7, 1921, p. 2.

30 Bean to Burke, Telegram, July 8, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

31 Bean to Burke, Letter, July 9, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

“State Guard in Readiness. Governor to Hold it for Duty in Franklin and Berlin,” Concord Evening Monitor, July 12, 1921, p. 1.


Brooks to Burke, Letter, July 16, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.

Brooks to Burke, Letter, July 19, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.

Burke to Brooks, Letter, July 21, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Brooks to Burke, Letter, July 27, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Beard to Burke, Letter, August 18, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.
55 Beard to Burke, Letter, August 25, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
56 Ibid.
57 C. H. Bean to Burke, Letter, October 20, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
58 Ibid.
59 Bean to Burke, Letter, August 25, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
60 Bean to Burke, Letter, October 27, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
61 Bean to Burke, Letter, November 12, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
62 Ibid.
63 Bean to Burke, Letter, November 19, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
64 Burke to Bean, Letter, November 14, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
65 Bean to Burke, Letter, November 19, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
66 Bean to Burke, Letter, November 20, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
67 “To the Voters of Franklin,” FJT, November 17, 1921, p. 1.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 “City Election. Louis H. Doupbinet May by Large Vote,” FJT, November 24, 1921, p. 1.
74 Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

Two Companies of Vermont National guard doing police duty in Bellows Falls,” BFT, August 4, 1921, p. 1.

McDermott to Burke, Letter, July 29, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

“More Realty Co. Men Arrive to Salvage Pulp Logs' Jam,” Manchester Leader, August 1, 1921, p. 4.


“More Realty Co. Men Arrive to Salvage Pulp Logs' Jam,” Manchester Leader, August 1, 1921, p. 4.


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McDermott to Burke, Letter, August 3, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.
“Troops Quit Bellows Falls; Police are to Return Soon,” *Manchester Leader and Evening Union*, August 5, 1921, p. 1.

McDermott to Burke, Letter, August 9, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

“Last of logs go over dam; men to leave,” BFT, August 18, 1921, p. 1.


McDermott to Burke, Letter, August 9, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

“Merchants oppose showing of film,” BFT, August 11, 1921, p. 1.


McDermott to Burke, Letter, September 8, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.


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McDermott to Burke, Letter, September 22, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

McDermott to Burke, Letter, September 26, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.


Burke to McDermott, Letter, September 30, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.


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“Trustees to Halt Abuse of Workers. Special Police to Keep Street Cleared--One Man
Stoned--Others Jeered at--Relihan Arrested,” BFT, October 20, 1921, p. 1.

118 Burke to McDermott, Letter, October 21, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

119 McDermott to Burke, Letter, October 23, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

120 Ibid.


122 Lovell, 107.

115 John P. Burke, Circular Letter, October 29, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.

123 Ibid.

116 McDermott to Burke, Letter, October 29, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.


125 Burke to Curtin, Letter, November 14, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

126 McDermott to Burke, Letter, November 29, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/2P.

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117 Samuel Bray to Burke, Letter, July 5, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/3P.

128 Ibid.

118 Burke, Circular Letter, July 21, 1921, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1921/1P.

129 Ibid.

119 Curtin to Burke, Letter, February 5, 1922, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1922/1P.


133 Ibid.

134 McDermott to Burke, Letter, February 27, 1922, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1922/1P.

135 Ibid.

136 McDermott to Burke, Letter, March 15, 1922, Brotherhood Records, Reel 1922/1P.


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177 “Business Increase for Bellows Falls. Vermont Farm Machine Company Purchases Business of Newport Concern,” BFT, March 27, 1919, p. 1


185 “Rehabilitated Station,” BFT, Aug. 27, 1891, p. 10.


188 “Street Railway Suspends Operation This Week Following Appointment of E. A. Pierce Receivers (sic),” BFT, November 27, 1924, p. 1.


190 Lovell, 309.


192 “Town Hall Committee Will 'Unreservedly' Recommend 'Revised Plan No. 4' at Meeting Tomorrow,” BFT, Nov. 19, 1925, p. 1.


Bean to Burke, Letter, May 28, 1924, Brotherhood Papers, Reel 1924/1P.

Brooks to Burke, Letter, March 23, 1930, Brotherhood Papers, Reel 1930/1P.


“Western Mass. Light and Power Units to be Joined. Holding Company is Formed; Local Control Assured,” Greenfield Recorder, January 21, 1927, section 1, p. 5.

CONCLUSION

The wood paper industry began in New England on the Connecticut and Merrimack Rivers and along the upper Hudson in New York. Because of the industry’s requirements for waterpower and an ample supply of wood, industrialists building the original mills chose places in rugged settings. In the 1870s and 1880s, these mills became leaders in newsprint manufacturing. Industrial towns developed around these mills, growing and thriving in the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

The towns that developed around the mills were distinctive for their senses of place. Several things contributed to this sense of place. One was an appreciation of the beauty of the landscape and particularly admiration for the sublime characteristics of the falls in the rivers and the surrounding mountains. Local antiquarians and newspaper editors used local history to foster a sense of place, to define the communities, and to advertise them to potential residents and developers. Townspeople were keen observers of their towns and the natural settings. We see this not only in written descriptions but also more profoundly in photographs. Photographs, sold as stereographs, cabinet cards, postcards, and even reproduced on other keepsakes such china plates, interpreted the towns, mills, and distinctive natural surroundings. Aspects of daily life—particularly sports but also town celebrations and even disasters such as fires—were also important to this vernacular appreciation of the distinctive aspects of the communities. This sense of place helped unite the communities, keeping class and ethnic tensions manageable.

The paper towns were never without conflict. Drunkenness, rowdyism, and violence were persistent problems. Class tensions also developed, but until the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnic differences, and distinctions between skilled and unskilled workers, kept the working class fragmented. Yet, from mansions of industrialists overlooking the mills, to middle-
class houses on serene village streets, to the cottages and tenements of workers, class differences were apparent. The size of the towns, their autonomy, and the democracy of the New England town meeting system helped moderate these tensions.

The 1870s and 1880s were a golden age for the paper towns, but the prosperity and autonomy of the towns was not sustainable. By the 1890s, as patents on wood grinding technology expired and the sulphite process of digesting pulp made the newsprint industry increasingly competitive, sixteen of newsprint and wood pulp manufacturers in New York and New England merged to form the International Paper Company. The mills in this study were among the oldest in the company, and as International Paper grew, they received little improvement. The mills and towns began to stagnate.

At the same time, labor unions began to organize the workers in the towns, and the relations between classes became increasingly tense. Tensions did not remain constant, and the organizers found maintaining solidarity difficult. Particularly difficult was the division between the skilled and unskilled workers. Unions developed late in the paper industry because of the artisanal mentality that remained strong even as the mills became large industrial operations. The skilled workers fought the loss of status that the modern paper industry threatened. They fought not only management but also unskilled and semiskilled workers. This rivalry between the skilled International Brotherhood of Paper Makers and the unskilled and semiskilled International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers was bitter between 1906 and 1909, Pulp and Sulphite Workers received a charter from the American Federation of Labor. The two unions agreed to work together, and in 1912, they won a closed shop from International Paper.

As the unions finally achieved some success, however, International Paper shut down parts of the mills. The first shutdowns came in 1907, when a strike in Bellows Falls put the mills there and also in Franklin and Turners Falls, on three tours, or shifts. In 1912, the waterpower companies in Bellows Falls and Turners Falls began to redevelop the power for hydroelectricity. The following year, the passage of the Underwood Tariff dropped import duties on Canadian Paper, and International Paper began to expand into Canada. Because the mills in Bellows Falls,
Franklin, and Turners Falls were some of the oldest in the company, they were particularly vulnerable. By the end of World War I, International Paper began to shift its newsprint manufacturing to Canada.

The breaking point came in 1921, when construction of Canadian International Paper Company’s mill in Trois-Rivières, Quebec was well underway, and International Paper announced that it would put its mills on the Open Shop system. The company cut wages by about thirty percent, forcing a strike. The strike was bitter in many places, but especially in Bellows Falls and Franklin. The situation was different in Turners Falls, where the unions had been weak and disorganized since a disastrous strike in 1908. There the strike lasted only a few weeks. In Bellows Falls and Franklin, however, the unions remained remarkably strong at least through 1922. The towns responded to the strike in different ways. In both towns, merchants supported the strike for the first several months. In Bellows Falls, however, that support began to wane when strikebreakers were met with violence. In Franklin, however, the strikers kept much of their support. One of the strikers was elected Mayor of Franklin in November 1921 and served three one-year terms. The mills in these towns never recovered. The Fall Mountain Mill shut down permanently in 1926, and the following year was mostly razed to make room for the hydroelectric generating plant. The Winnipiseogee Mill in Franklin was finally closed in 1930, but the Montague Mill in Turners Falls lasted only a few more years, until 1936.

Community leaders in Northern New England began to reinvent their communities 1920s. Bellows Falls and Franklin were both marginalized by the simultaneous decline of industry and growing importance of automobile travel. As long as tourists travelled mostly by rail, they had to pass through Bellows Falls and Franklin, but as people travelled increasingly by automobile, they could pass through quickly or bypass the towns altogether. As industry, declined, however, communities recognized that they needed to take advantage of the growing tourist trade.

This involved considerable advertising. There was little in Turners Falls to attract tourists, who were now more interested in pastoral and woodland scenery than the sublimity of
industrialized falls. To be sure, business came to Turners Falls with the automobile, as the village, long notorious for its bars and rowdyism, became a stop for bootleggers during Prohibition. Bellows Falls and Franklin also struggled with bootlegging: police officers in Franklin captured “booze runners” traveling south from Burke, Vermont near Daniel Webster’s Elm Farm in March 1921, and in Bellows Falls, the *Times* announced the capture of the state “King Pin of Rum Runners” in December 1924. The towns hoped for honest tourist traffic.

Franklin early recognized that its appeal to tourists and summer residents was limited. In 1908, H. C. McDougall, the city’s Unitarian minister, told the Board of Trade that trying to make Franklin a summer resort was “useless” because of the tendency of people to stay at camps rather than in towns and large hotels. He advised the board to try to make the village as attractive as possible to people passing through. Daniel Webster’s birthplace and the elegant Daniel Webster Inn were both convenient to the highway that paralleled the Merrimack and Pemigewasset Rivers. Moreover, tourists traveling east passed through Franklin on the way to camps at Lake Winnipesaukee and Squam Lake. Postcards published by a local drugstore in the 1920s called Franklin the “gateway to scenic New Hampshire.”

Bellows Falls tried to take advantage of the growing tourist business. In 1924, 1925, and 1926, the village hosted a winter carnival with skiing events, including the state championships in ski jumping, and skijoring, with motorcycles pulling skiers through the streets of the village. In May 1926, businesses and boosters took part in a statewide advertising campaign in the form of a whistle-stop tour called the Vermont Maple Sugar Special. The train passed through cities from Boston to Chicago. The *Times* asked readers to inform friends and relatives living along the route of the train to turn out and view the exhibits that it contained. Special programs were planned for Buffalo and Detroit; in the latter place passengers on the train were treated to an inspection of the General Motors and Ford plants. The *Times* reported that the cost of the train was $40,000, but that it was “wonderful publicity for Vermont.” The paper continued, reporting that the trip was scheduled to end in Burlington on June 4, and that it would bear a “bunch of tired but enthusiastic Vermonter who have never been more than half sold on Vermont’s future but in the
process of selling have gained the enthusiasm which builds for bigger things. They return to their communities convinced that they have been doing work well worth while and with a determination to continue to sell Vermont to their neighbors and friends.²⁶

Whatever attempts there may have been to join the growing tourist trade, the identities of Franklin, Bellows Falls, and Turners Falls remained industrial. Old mill buildings remained along the river. Commercial districts, less bustling over time, retained some of their elegance. In Bellows Falls, industrialists’ mansions remained, frequently converted to other uses including the Masonic Temple, the Loyal Order of Moose, and tenements. Tenements and other workers’ houses also remained. In 1937, a writer for the Federal Writer’s Project described Bellows Falls: “The smoke of factories and locomotives rises to shroud the defile made by the river and hangs in a gray pall over the dark bulk of Mount Kilburn, standing grimly like a backdrop for the Bellows Falls drama of concentrated industrialism and commercialism.”⁷ The grim, gray pall of the village was a far cry from the rhetoric of the sublime used by earlier generations. The writer who described Franklin was kinder, writing that Franklin was a “typical small New England industrial city.”⁸

The towns are haunted by their histories, for their senses of place still have much to do with the industry that left long ago. In Franklin, one can buy pizza in the old counting house of the Winnipiseogee Paper Company near the Daniell Bridge and furniture in a building that was part of Paper Mill B near the Sanborn Bridge. The Sulloway Mill now contains apartments. Most of the Fall Mountain Mill in Bellows Falls is gone, but several of the buildings that became the Claremont Paper Company remain; the Moore and Thompson Paper Company, the Robertson Paper Company, and the machine building of the Blake Higgins mill survive. In Turners Falls, the old Esleeck mill still operates as the mill of the Southworth Company. The former Keith Paper Company Mill was a mill for the Strathmore Paper Company from 1953 to 1994. Part of it burned in 2007, but most of the complex survives, and in 2012 the town of Montague is trying to attract developers to restore the property.⁹

The story of the paper towns is not simply one of the destruction of community. The
shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* was never complete. In Bellows Falls, the high school alumni parade in June and Old Home Days in August both suggest some of the vibrancy of the community of earlier generations. A visit to Odell Park in Franklin, which still has three baseball diamonds, on a summer evening, or even to sit in the city library among the regulars, suggests something the strength of community there as well. All of the towns seek to use their history to encourage development. Community leaders recognize the importance of history to a contemporary sense of place. Walking tours of historic districts, historical museums, historic preservation programs are important. Constructing a sense of place is problematic, because what is constructed is romantic and idealized. The image of quaintness tends to ignore the poverty that is seldom more than a block away from historic districts. The sense of place in these towns still comes from a combination of natural and architectural features, an awareness of history (however politically loaded that is) and repetition of both profound and mundane events.
Notes


4 “‘Vermont Maple Sugar Special’ To Have Best Possible Equipment. Loyal Vermonters Asked to Write to their Friends in Eastern Cities about Coming of the ‘Green Mountain Crusaders,’” BFT, May 6, 1926, p. 1.


6 Ibid.


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