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The Editor and Les Travailleurs: How Albert Tenney Championed the Rights of the French-Canadian Mill Workers During the 1886 Diphtheria Epidemic in Brunswick, Maine

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THE EDITOR AND LES TRAVAILLEURS

*HOW ALBERT TENNEY CHAMPIONED THE RIGHTS OF THE
FRENCH-CANADIAN MILL WORKERS DURING THE 1886 DIPHTHERIA
EPIDEMIC IN BRUNSWICK, MAINE*

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THE ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

AMERICAN AND NEW ENGLAND STUDIES

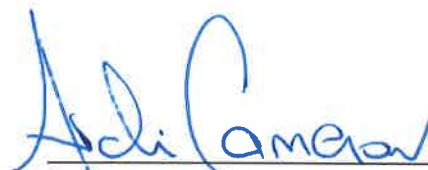
BY LAURA MOSQUEDA ALMASI

2017

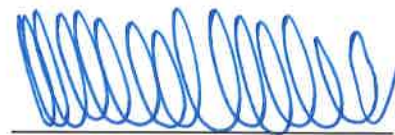
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We hereby recommend that the thesis of Laura Mosqueda Almasi
entitled, "The Editor and Les Travailleurs: How Albert Tenney championed the rights
of the French Canadian mill workers during the 1886 diphtheria epidemic in
Brunswick, Maine" be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts.



Ardis Cameron, Advisor



Elizabeth Bischof, Reader

Accepted



Adam Tuchinsky, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Acknowledgments

Like so many other families of French-Canadian origin, my ancestors migrated to the United States from Quebec at the end of the nineteenth century to work in a mill. It was upon researching this history of migration that I discovered a rich story of struggle and redemption. What I did not initially realize was that it was a personal story as well. After studying the lives of more than seventy men, women and children who died during the 1886 epidemic, what stared back at me was my own family. Elezebert and Hermione Brilliant, my great-great-grandparents, lived in one of the tenements with their firstborn, my great-grandfather, Albert, who was just three years old at the time.

What I learned was that my family suffered a death during that terrible summer along with numerous others. George Brilliant, Elezebert and Hermione's fourth child, was born and died on March 26, 1886, a mere two and half weeks before Claire and Albert Ste. Marie breathed their last, the first victims of diphtheria that year. In 1880, the families lived near each other. George was their third consecutive child to die within months of its birth. George was most likely a premature baby, not a victim of diphtheria, but the story of his family's life in the tenements and the disease that enveloped the community was one that needed to be told.

I am indebted to so many people who guided me and supported me through this journey into the French-Canadian mill experiences. First on that list is a quartet of incredible teachers who helped me shape this tragedy into a comprehensive story. Donna Cassidy who guided me beyond the written word and showed me that the visual is just as significant as the pen; Lorrayne Carroll who pushed me to develop language beyond what I thought I was capable of; Libby Bischof whose editorial guidance helped advance this

work; and especially to Ardis Cameron who showed me that the immigrant story and the labor experience is rich and compelling and deserves to be told. This thesis is a product of their knowledge, direction and passion for their work. If I can present even a fraction of their scholarly capabilities, I will have succeeded.

The Maine Historical Society, Pejepscot Historical Society, Curtis Memorial Library and Bowdoin College have all been willing accomplices in this journey. The treasures within each archive were very helpful in telling my mill story. Without the preserved editions of *The Brunswick Telegraph* on file at Curtis, I would never have known how passionately Albert Tenney fought.

My parents have long been proponents of learning, so I am indebted to their nurturing and encouragement in all that I do. My mother's passion for history has inspired me and she has shown me that knowledge does not always come in a formal presentation. To my husband, George, my best friend and partner for nearly twenty years, I give the most thanks. Besides being a great sounding board, he has been my editor, my wordsmith and compass in all that I do.

Introduction

The outbreak of measles in California in 2015 continues to fuel the discussion about the risks parents take by not vaccinating their children. After the outbreak was officially deemed over in April of that year, two months later, Governor Jerry Brown enacted what was then called one of the strictest vaccination laws in the country. Eliminating personal and religious belief exemptions, the law required children who attend school or daycare in the state be vaccinated for measles, mumps and whooping cough. Only those children who had immune-system deficiencies, or certain allergies, were exempt. Sadly, not only is measles seeing a resurgence, whooping cough (pertussis) – a contagious respiratory disease that causes violent coughing which can be life-threatening to infants and young children – is also on the rise across the country.

In Reno County, Kansas, more than seventy suspected cases of whooping cough were reported at the end of July 2015 – forty-one of them probable or confirmed – up from eighteen just the month before. New cases cropped up in surrounding counties. This spike caused some school districts to set up vaccination clinics in the hopes of preventing a “micro-outbreak” once school started.¹

In Maine, the numbers have been rising at an unsettling rate. In 2013, there were 332 cases of pertussis. In 2014, there were 557 cases, and in 2015, the last year reported, 281 cases were diagnosed. However, it was in 2012 where the state saw the greatest uptick – 737 – the highest outbreak of the disease in fifty years.² This increase represents a growth rate that medical professionals worry about. A potential cause of this increase is because the current vaccine does not provide adequate protection. Its effectiveness wanes three to six years after the shots are administered. New findings recommend that

adolescents get a booster shot, but with the controversy surrounding vaccinations and autism,³ some parents are weary of over-vaccinating their children.⁴ Their fear is that vaccinations increase the risk of autism and other behavioral disorders, so they opt to not inoculate. Today, as Americans continue to grapple with the benefits and potential harmful effects of vaccinations, we must look back a century or so and examine how parents dealt with childhood diseases. While parents today have the luxury of choosing to vaccinate, as well as benefit from the advances of modern science in treating a wide range of diseases should their children become inflected, those living around the turn of the twentieth century did not. Some diseases, now eradicated in America, were death sentences for many.

Measles and whooping cough, as well as smallpox, scarlet fever and diphtheria, took the lives of thousands of young victims every year well into late-nineteenth century – an astonishing 11.5% of the population.⁵ Between 1870 and 1920, diphtheria outbreaks reached epidemic proportions and in 1886, the disease took hold of the New England population. Both Boston, Massachusetts, and Portland, Maine, experienced large numbers of cases that year. Several families in Portland, especially the Deering communities, witnessed horrific deaths of their children, some losing as many as three children in a span of few short months.

For example, Frank and Laura Bradford of Portland buried two daughters, Nellie and Ada, ages five and twelve, respectively, two and a half weeks apart in May of 1886. They probably thought that their family had seen the worst of it, and tried to mend the heartbreak. Perhaps they did not dispose of the infected clothes or bedding properly or maybe it was still lingering in their neighborhood as there were other deaths reported all

that spring and summer, but that September their nine-year-old son, John, became infected and he died.⁶ The Reed family also endured multiple deaths. Living in Deering, a neighborhood on the outskirts of the city, Leonard, a stonecutter and his wife, Louisa, buried one child every week for three weeks, all under the age of nine. A few years before, two of their children had already succumbed to scarlet fever and tuberculosis. It was a brutal blow many experienced. German immigrants Wendel Kirsch and his wife, Margaretha, buried three children that July in 1886, including a four-year-old. Like other families, burying children was, sadly, not an unknown experience. Their ten-day-old son, Otto, died of cholera nine years prior.⁷

Farther up the coast, death from these diseases also shattered families. In 1886, in the small Midcoast town of Brunswick, Maine, about thirty miles north of Portland, diphtheria planted itself firmly among the town's cotton mill community, mostly occupied in the late nineteenth century by French Canadians. At the end of the Civil War in 1865, mills, which had populated riverbanks throughout New England since the 1830s, increasingly relied on immigrant labor to work their machinery after native-born American workers moved onto other industries or out of the region all together.

"Unnoticed and unopposed" alien workers flocked to the factories. By 1852, half of all factory operatives were foreign born.⁸ After the number of Irish mill workers began to dwindle, the French Canadians dominated the textile workforce. As the Civil War came to a close, fewer and fewer Irish worked in the mills. Irish parents were determined not to subject their children to the toils of the textile mills and their population began to claw its way up the social chain entering into politics, and obtaining employment as firefighters and policemen.⁹

As the numbers of Irish immigrants in factories dropped, mill agents did not need to worry about who would operate their machinery. When economic conditions in Quebec deteriorated, migration south began to increase and New England mill cities began to see an influx of Quebecois who were willing to work under conditions that the Irish would not, namely low pay and long hours.¹⁰ One such French Canadian immigrant was Alexis Ste. Marie of La Prairie County, Quebec.

On May 20, 1870, seventeen-year-old Ste. Marie arrived in America.¹¹ Like so many before him, he was in search of a better life and a chance at prosperity offered by the expanding textile industry south of the border. Stepping off the railroad platform in Brunswick, Maine, must have been both exciting and terrifying for a young man with dreams of a bright future. His destination? The Cabot Mill, where he hoped to gain employment.

By the time Ste. Marie arrived in Brunswick, there were about 220 fellow Canadian workers at the textile cotton mill. He lodged with another French mill worker, Prudent Racine, twenty-four, and his family, wife, Helen, twenty-two, and two-year-old son, Prudent. Also living with the family were four other teenaged boarders, Etienne Lamarque, eighteen; Eugene Harell, sixteen; Georgianna Atwood, sixteen; and Louisa Drouillard, seventeen, all listed as mill operatives,¹² a vague (and often meaningless) term.

By 1880, however, Ste. Marie left the mill and became a baker. He was still living in tenement housing, but now he was married to the former Eliza Trudeau and they had two children: Emma, born in 1876, and Albert, born in 1878. Another baker, Dominique Mailly, twenty-two, lived with the family. Life was looking up for the Ste.

Marie family as the New Year rung in 1886. Nearly two years earlier, he became a naturalized citizen with fellow Canadiens Philip F. Root, a Civil War vet, and Xavier Paiment, a Cabot cotton mill worker, as witnesses.¹³ Paiment previously lived in the same tenement building as Ste. Marie's in-laws, Louis and Emelie Trudeau.¹⁴

Like most French-Canadiens, New Year's Day was the traditional day of exchanging gifts and cards, not Christmas. On this Holy Day of Obligation, families gathered at homes after attending mass and celebrated with food, wishing each other a "bonne et heureuse annee." They then spent the rest of the day visiting relatives. By this New Year's Day in 1886, the Ste. Marie's had welcomed four more children into their household: Lucia in 1880; Alice in 1882; Claire in 1884; and baby Florilda in late 1885. Alexis and his family finally said goodbye to the tenements and rented a house with boarders on the corner of Mill and Cushing streets.¹⁵ It was close enough to the mill and still within the confines of the growing French community. The family lived in the lower half of the building.

While there, the death knoll began to toll not once, but twice for the family. Alexis and Eliza lost two children that fateful year. In April, diphtheria paid heed. Cruel and merciless, diphtheria is "caused by a germ that usually found its way to the mouth, throat, and nose of an infected person, causing breathing difficulties, suffocation, heart failure and paralysis."¹⁶ Highly contagious, diphtheria is spread through contact with an infected person's clothes or possessions or by airborne transmission, such as coughing or sneezing or by coming in contact with infected human waste. The latter may have been the origin of the disease for the Ste. Marie children. Just days before their deaths, large amounts of waste from the nearby mill privies were dumped near their home and

possibly contaminated the play area and the children became ill. Albert spent his eighth birthday in bed; his sister, Claire, who just turned two, lay in her sickbed nearby – their siblings most likely whisked away to avoid further contamination. As there was no treatment at the time, all the children’s parents could do was wait and hope, but as the days went by and neither child’s condition improved, Alexis and Elise came to the realization that both children were losing their battle to the disease. Their last hours most likely resembled that of a child who died later that year: “Intense agony, distressing beyond all expression to his parents who watch him breathe his last.”¹⁷ On April 13, both children were dead, marking the beginning of a diphtheria epidemic that brought Brunswick’s Franco community to its knees.

As the Ste. Marie family helplessly watched their two children die, the town of Brunswick did little to comfort their family or the scores of other French Canadians who watched with trepidation to see whether or not this horrifying disease would claim one of their own children. Considered to be migratory workers by many native-born Americans, the Quebecois were ignored at best, distrusted and discriminated against at worst. Many believed the French came to America just to make money only to return home where they would spend it. Although there were some who did exactly that, many others, like Ste. Marie, came to the U.S. to take advantage of new opportunities and to escape their British rulers. Slow to assimilate, the French were also criticized for not becoming American quickly enough, either by naturalization or by adopting “American” traditions. Nativist thinking was evident in Brunswick, even as the diphtheria epidemic surged through the Franco community. The town government turned a blind eye. One resident, however, a passionate reformer and editor of *The*

Brunswick Telegraph, named Albert Tenney took note. He condemned the deplorable conditions and vowed to right the wrong he saw being played out just a few blocks away from his office on Main Street.

Over the course of six months between April and October 1886, more than 150 French immigrant children were infected and twenty-two died,¹⁸ setting a record for the highest death rate among children in a single year in the town's history. This thesis explores the devastating diphtheria epidemic that rocked the small Midcoast community and how Tenney, through his weekly editorials, championed for the French immigrants and called attention to not only the shocking living conditions of the Cabot Mill's housing, but also convinced the Maine Board of Health that there was in fact an epidemic decimating the population. He wrote that he wanted the town of Brunswick to "know the full extent of suffering and death from Cabot company's and private boarding houses' neglect" and vowed not to let what was happening to "drop out of public notice."¹⁹ It is a story of passion, courage and partnership in acting upon what is right regardless of race, religion or nationality.

Chapter one lays the groundwork for the mass immigration of French into the United States after the Civil War. British oppression, depleted farmland and a rising industrial state south of the border provided the impetus for many to seek a better life and improved conditions in cities across New England. This chain migration resulted in ten percent of the population from Quebec leaving the Province, mainly by rail, creating pockets of densely French populations where they were slow to assimilate, determined to retain their cultural heritage. This behavior created tension with Americans who dismissed the newcomers as "birds of prey," whose only purpose was to make money and return home.

Alienation from their host towns and cities resulted, causing locals to all but ignore their northern neighbors.

Chapter two provides in-depth analysis of the birth of the industrial revolution and life in the mills for the French Canadians and how unsanitary conditions were not unique in Maine textile factories or at the Cabot Mill in Brunswick. In this chapter, I show how crowded tenements were commonplace around New England's industrial cities and how this congestion led to rampant disease, causing incidents such as the diphtheria outbreak in Brunswick.

The final chapter provides firsthand evidence of how Tenney took on, not only the Cabot mill and its agent, Benjamin Greene, but also local and state health officials, and forced change in the living conditions of the immigrant workers. Using excerpts from *The Brunswick Telegraph*, I show just how impassioned Tenney was in eradicating the events he witnessed and how his determination to clean up the mill tenements helped end the diphtheria epidemic.

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Chapter 1: The Quebec Diaspora or La Grande Hémorragie

After the American Civil War, immigrants from Western, and later Eastern Europe, flooded the Emigrant Landing Depot in New York City, searching for the “Promised Land.” Whether it was the Irish seeking relief from the famine, Jews escaping religious prosecution, or the Italians fleeing political and social unrest, thousands of immigrants flooded the northern United States in the late nineteenth century.

Emigration to the United States from Canada and Quebec, 1840-1940					
Period	Canadian Emigration	Rate of Emigration (%)	Quebec Emigration	Rate of Emigration	Quebec at % of Canadian Emigration
1840-1850	75,000	4	35,000	5.4	47
1850-1860	150,000	7	70,000	7.8	47
1860-1870	300,000	11	100,000	10 (est.)	33
1870-1880	375,000	11	120,000	10.1	32
1880-1890	450,000	11	150,000	11.3	33
1890-1900	425,000	10	140,000	9.6	33
1900-1910	325,000	6	100,000	6	31
1910-1920	250,000	4	80,000	4	32
1920-1930	450,000	6	130,000	5.6	29
1930-1940	25,000	0	-	-	-
1840-1940	2,800,000		900,000		32

Table 1 Yolande Lavoie, *L’émigration des Québécois aux États-Unis de 1840 à 1940*, Quebec, 1981, 53.

Many of these new immigrants found work in the textile manufacturing towns of New England. For the French Canadians, mass migration to the United States occurred between 1870 and 1890 (Table 1). Between 1860 and 1900, more than 500,000 Québécois emigrated to New England, representing thirty-three percent of all Canadian emigration. By 1900, populations in towns such as Biddeford, Maine; Stockbridge, Massachusetts; and Woonsocket, Rhode Island were more than sixty percent French-Canadian.¹

Prior to the late-nineteenth century, the French were all but invisible to the Protestant population in America. Living in small groups of ten to one hundred people and scattered in various communities, many of the French Canadians who came to New England before 1860 had no intention of staying permanently. At that time, (Table 1.2) there were only about 19,000 French in America, mostly in Maine and Vermont, but by 1900 that number had swelled to 573,000 across all of New England.²

Distribution of French Canadians in New England, 1850	
State	1850
Maine	3,680
New Hampshire	250
Vermont	12,070
Massachusetts	2,830
Rhode Island	300
Connecticut	250
New England	19,380

Table 1.2 Ralph D. Vicerio, *Immigration of French Canadians to New England 1840-1900*, 275.

After 1860, poor living conditions in Canada increasingly brought French-Canadians from the Quebec region to the United States. Most of those who migrated to America came from rural areas where land was scarce, soil was depleted from overuse, and poverty rampant. Quebec was not conducive to rich farming and antiquated nineteenth century agricultural practices did not help. Like most farmers at the time, the Quebecois laborers did not rotate crops or fertilize the land, making rejuvenation of the soil nearly impossible. The aforementioned problems, combined with insects and blight, led to agricultural failure throughout the region.³

For these debt-ridden farmers and their families, the mills of New England seemed a better option than staying on a dying farm, and many began to believe that wage labor in a neighboring country was better than rural poverty at home. Since the British gained power, many farmers were denied voting rights in Canada, and they could not hold office under British rule, so what was the incentive to stay? In order to fully understand the conditions farmers found themselves in, it is important to consider the history of the

Province of Quebec. In 1763, long after Jacques Cartier claimed Quebec in the name of France, the British, by way of Royal Proclamation, took control of the province after coming out on the winning end of the French and Indian War. New France was renamed the Province of Quebec. Their conquerors were more understanding of the Catholic faith in Quebec than they had been of their Irish counterparts. The British rulers permitted the church to continue its authority over the region with parés (priests) retaining spiritual authority over its flock.⁴ More than a century later, when thousands of French immigrants crossed the border into America looking for work, their new neighbors were not so hospitable. Here they were expected to shed their French heritage and assimilate into Americans, but just as they were able to retain their identity with their new conquerors, they held fast to do the same in the United States.

During the seventeenth century, most Quebecois were rural farmers – “habitants” – and had semi-feudal relationships with “seigneurs,” who were given large tracts of land by the French Crown. In the next century, they were granted land rights and the government also encouraged growth and expansion into unsettled areas. After the British conquest, the population could no longer support such expansion. Within a hundred years, land became fragmented and overpopulated.⁵ The Lower Canadian Rebellion in 1837 created a divide between the ruling British minority and the French Catholic majority who wanted to be free from English rule.

Later in the century, the Canadian Confederation of 1867 was signed, creating the Dominion of Canada. Previously, the area called British North America consisted of only four regions: Ontario and Quebec – which formed the Province of Canada – along with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The rest of the area consisted of a few provinces,

including Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory. In 1864, Canadian leaders convened to write a constitution that would combine all the disparate territories and provinces into one country. The British Parliament passed what became known as the British North America Act in 1867, bringing together Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec into the country of Canada.

Socially, culturally and politically, the French were all but ignored by the British and their fellow countrymen, but they had strength in numbers. The high birthrate in Quebec was not just to produce farm hands. The French refused to be a dying race despite British political dominance. From 1800 to 1850, the French population grew from one hundred thousand to one million. "La revanche du berceau," or, "Revenge of the cradle" became the rallying cry among the Quebecois.⁶ In 1871, the French population totaled 1.082 million or thirty-one percent of the total Canadian population even as thousands made the trek south to work in the mills of New England. This perseverance carried them through hard times as they settled in American cities and towns. As they struggled with poverty, discrimination and deplorable living conditions in their new homeland, the kinships they created and the bonds they forged with other French Canadiens, helped them survive even the worst of times. And in Brunswick, this forging of fellowship would be put to the test as disease enveloped their community.

At first, early emigrants who chose to leave and cross the border didn't pick any particular state or community, but once word reached those back home that mills were open, and looking for workers in New England, increasing numbers of French-Canadians headed to the industrial cities of Lowell, Massachusetts, Manchester, New Hampshire, and Lewiston, Maine. As families from Canadian villages began to settle in certain mill

towns in New England, other families from their region followed suit, starting what became known as “chain migration.”⁷ Family members were used to secure jobs and housing, creating a network that increased the populations in various towns and cities. In certain small New England towns immigration was heavy. In Brunswick, for example, the French Canadian population doubled nearly every ten years and by 1891, there were about 2,500 Quebecois in town, representing about thirty percent of the population.⁸

By the late nineteenth century, the flow southward from Quebec to New England became a flood. Families from the Quebec province, such as Saint-Ours, settled in Woonsocket, Rhode Island; Worcester, Massachusetts; and Concord and Manchester, New Hampshire.⁹ Residents from Rimouski and Sainte-Flavie headed to Salem, Massachusetts. Yamaska River Valley villagers went to Fall River, Massachusetts, and approximately 2,000 citizens from Champlain County settled in Lowell, Meriden, Woonsocket and Waterbury, Connecticut. Richelieu Valley natives moved to Woonsocket, making it the most Franco-American city in the United States. Coaticook-area villagers settled in Berlin, New Hampshire. St. Hilare witnessed such an exodus that the local baker, upon seeing his fellow villagers leave for Lowell, closed his business, followed them south and opened up a new shop in order to provide their bread.¹⁰

“Scarcely a single day goes by that whole families are to be seen setting out for the United States,” wrote one priest and colonization officer in 1871. “It is as if a war has ravaged the countryside, bringing desolation to the very heart of our beautiful parishes.”¹¹ As scores of French citizens left Quebec and migrated south – often as families – whole villages and towns turned barren. By following their family and friends to the same cities

and communities in America, they transported their parishes from Canada to the United States, fueling a cultural pattern of separateness.



Figure 1.0 Map of the Dominion of Canada, including L'Islet and Kamouraska counties. Illustrated Atlas of the Dominion of Canada by Belden, 1881. www.mapofantiquity.com.

Maine followed the same pattern. Villagers of the Beauce region headed to the mill towns of Augusta and Waterville.¹² For Brunswick, of the 876 residents who can be traced back to Quebec, 270 came from the county of L'Islet and 133 from its neighboring county of Kamouraska, both located along southern the shore of the St. Lawrence River, fifty miles east of Quebec (Figure 1.0).¹³ Others came from west of the Gaspé Peninsula, east of Montreal, and Montmorency and Chicoutimi counties. According to Amedee Berger, the first man to arrive in Brunswick from L'Islet took three weeks by ox cart in 1850 to reach the growing mill town. He went back to Canada and returned with Berger, Octave Gamache and another man. They subsequently wrote home, telling their families and friends to come, perpetuating the chain migration.¹⁴

Until the railways arrived, horse-drawn wagons were the most popular means of transportation. With the construction of the Grand Trunk Railroad (GTR) in 1853, and its subsequent main hub in

Portland, many Quebecois found the trip to Brunswick a long, but easier journey than Berger and his friends made by ox cart a few years earlier (Figure 1.1). By 1867, the GTR was the largest railroad system in the world, with more than 1,277 miles of track.¹⁵ As a result, the

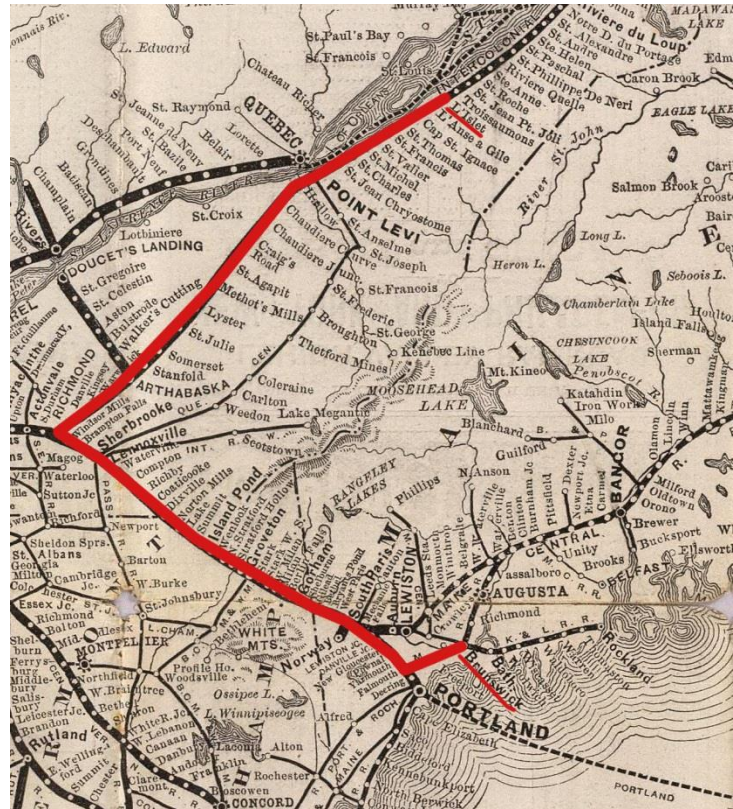


Figure 1.1 Map of the Grand Trunk and Great Western of Canada with highlighted route from L'Islet to Brunswick, Maine, 1885. Public domain.

French Canadians became the largest population to emigrate by train. Newly arrived immigrants, with their large families, packed the depots like Biddeford, where the Sunday evening train was popular with new arrivals. Large crowds, sometimes of 500 or more would be waiting for the train and nary a word of English was spoken.¹⁶

For those traveling to Manchester and Lowell, emigrants could connect in Montreal, and head south via the Vermont Railroad line. Lewiston's French newcomers who came to work at the cotton mills such as the Continental, arrived at the GTR station on Lincoln Street. After 1874, those heading to the Twin Cities' station (Lewiston and Auburn) saw

Lewiston “framed” by an iron bridge over the Androscoggin River.¹⁷ For those headed to the Cabot Mill, just down the Androscoggin river, travelers arrived in Portland and then made the connection to Brunswick where rail service was established in 1849 (Figure 1.2). Once there, they made their way across town toward the river and the Cabot Mill complex that dominated the landscape.

By this time, the French Canadians had replaced the Irish, who had previously replaced native mill workers. As the *Brunswick Telegraph* reported in 1886, “The sons and daughters of New England depart, and their places are filled by immigrants. Maine has shared with her sisters in this change, and the census of 1880 showed accurately what had long been known approximately.”¹⁸ For instance, in Massachusetts by 1880, 443,491 of the 1,783,085 residents, or nearly a quarter of the population, were foreign born.¹⁹ The French, like the Irish before them, worked the jobs that no one else wanted. As conditions in the mills deteriorated, natives and the Irish left openings, a vacuum French Canadians



Figure 1.2 Maine Central Railroad Station, Brunswick Maine. <http://www.rrpicturearchives.net>.

rapidly filled. Whether in the shoe factories, the paper mills or the more popular textile mills, these proud men and women were hard workers, but employment came at a price. Because mill owners knew that the Quebecois seldom joined unions and were separated from organizations by both language and poverty, many families were, in turn, forced to send their children to toil in the mills along with them. Pauper wages sent nine out of ten women and children in these communities to the mills. Wage reductions forced all members of a family to work in order to survive. Labor leader George E. McNeill told the Massachusetts legislature how many mothers and children were taken “from the sanctity of the home and had become the prey of this devouring monster.” While weakly enforced state laws ostensibly limited child labor, parents lied about their children’s ages to get them on the roster of mill employees.²⁰

As prices for basic necessities rose and wages plummeted, women and children often had to contribute to the household income. Skilled and unskilled workers alike – their husbands and fathers – simply weren’t making enough to be the sole breadwinner of the family.²¹ These economic conditions not only deprived their sons and daughters of an education, but long hours in the mill often ruined their health and stunted their growth, allowing diseases like diphtheria to take hold of their weakened bodies. For those too young to work in the mill, poor sanitary conditions, inadequate food, and no access to health care paved the way for disease.

Before the Civil war, migration was seasonal. Most French Canadian workers spent summers on the farm back home and toiled at the mills in winter. It was only after 1865 that families began to migrate together and for longer periods of time, but still with the notion of returning to Quebec. “We were prepared to rush off anywhere to make money,

afterwards we returned home,” said one migrant worker.²² This back and forth, like the tide’s ebb and flow, was one reason why Quebecois workers were sometimes chastised for being birds of prey: swooping down, making money and returning to “la patrie” (the homeland).

At first, the Canadian government took little notice of this cycle. But once the Civil War ended, citizens began to leave in large numbers, resembling, according to historian Yves Roby, a “veritable demographic bloodletting.”²³ It is estimated that between 1860 and 1880, about 118,000 French left for New England, with a majority of this migration occurring in 1865 just before the Canadian Confederation and ending with the Panic in 1873. Upon hearing these numbers, one Canadian parliamentarian cried, “What a mutilation of the homeland.”²⁴ This population loss not only signified a loss in French presence in the region, but also an assured loss of power among the ruling French in a British-dominated country.

New England began to swell as more Quebecois arrived. (Table 1.2) The French population of Massachusetts exploded from 2,830 in 1850 to an impressive 162,000 in just thirty years. In 1860, Lowell had 266 French Canadians. Twenty years later that number had risen to 10,000. In Maine, the French Canadian population went from 3,860 to 29,000 in the

Distribution of French Canadian in New England 1870-1880		
State	1870	1880
Maine	15,100	29,000
New Hampshire	7,300	49,000
Vermont	29,000	38,000
Massachusetts	34,600	162,000
Rhode Island	19,800	36,000
Connecticut	18,500	28,000
New England	208,000	365,000

Table 1.2 Ralph D. Vicero, *Immigration of French Canadians to New England 1840-1900*, 275.

same time two-decade period. By 1873, there were 477 French Catholics in Brunswick,²⁵ and seven years later there were 1,041 Quebecois in a community that included 76 Irish,

and 3,789 “natives.”²⁶ Like other mill communities, the French represented a sizable portion of the population and they clustered together in one area of town. In Brunswick, they hugged the mill side of Main Street.

As the outmigration intensified, the Canadian government held inquiries and discussed ways to keep citizens from leaving. Colonization, modernizing agriculture, building factories and constructing railways were some of the ideas government officials came up with to try to staunch the demographic hemorrhage. “The damage is now so widespread,” said one House member, “that strong measures must be adopted at once to stop the march, otherwise, it will be fruitless to seek remedies.” It wasn’t just the government that feared mass migration, the clergy also panicked as they watched in vain as their flocks headed south and with it the fate of the French Canadian culture.²⁷ These Catholic priests did not want to see their parishioners fall under the grasp of Protestant influence or enter into a pattern of American profligacy.

Failing to understand this calamity, the government and the clergy instead sought to discredit those who left. The press, the government, and most of Quebec’s poets, dramatists, and novelists were merciless. “Let them go; only the rabble are leaving,” Baronet Sir George-Etienne Cartier, a Canadian statesman is reported to have said. Citizens who left for New England were called cowards, traitors, and turncoats.²⁸ Priests and government officials called them deserters and the priests sent out warnings that the Protestant nation was corrupt and its followers were heretics, sinners and materialistic, making the U.S. out to be a virtual Sodom to the south.²⁹ This constant barrage of discrediting insults took its toll. “If you want nothing more to do with us.” wrote Joseph Montmarquet, editor of Lewiston’s *The Messenger*, “Be good enough to leave us at

peace.”³⁰ Not every government official, journalist or priest was against the emigrants, however. Coming to their defense, some officials and poets argued that poverty, debt, lack of jobs and limited industrialization were the reasons for their departure. But these defenders were few as most Canadians believed the Quebecois left out of a desire for wealth, and intemperance, indolence and needless spending were real reasons for their leaving. If farmers and workers would learn to save, live frugally and practice temperance, critics charged they would not find themselves in debt. If immigrants had their critics at home, they only encountered more criticism and derision when they arrived in their new land.

What many French Canadians discovered was that communities who greeted them were sometimes not so welcoming. To this end, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Massachusetts was scathing in its 1881 annual report:

With some exceptions the Canadian French are the Chinese of the Eastern States. They care nothing for our institution, civil, political, or educational. They do not come to make a home among us, to dwell with us citizens, and so become part of us; but their purpose is merely to sojourn a few years as aliens...and when they have gathered out of us what they will satisfy their ends, to get them away to whence they came...They will not send their children to school if they can help it, but endeavor to crowd them into the mills at the earliest possible age. To do this they deceive about the age of their children with brazen effrontery...Those people have one good trait. They are indefatigable workers, and docile.³¹

This view was indicative of an ever-increasing nativist opinion that was creeping into American society. Foreigners were viewed as untrustworthy, scheming and corruptive, especially those who were Catholic like the French Canadians. Parents were seen as greedy, sending their large broods across the border to work in the mills and factories rather than send them to school. In reality, for many, staying in Canada was not an option. “The Franco-Canadian emigrant has journeyed to and remains in the United

States because he can earn a living there more easily than in Canada,” said novelist Honoré Beaugrand. “And that is the naked truth.”³² These emigrants had little choice but to seek employment and sometimes a new life elsewhere. With no help from the government, increasing poverty, and no indication that things were going to change, many willingly exiled themselves and their families to the United States. As livable wages were nearly impossible for families to survive upon in Canada, families had to make the difficult decision to leave everything behind with the understanding that they may never return.

Despite such criticism and ridicule, the Quebecois elite pledged to bring those heading to New England, and those who were already settled, back to Canada. First, however, they needed to set the stage. The one thing the government and the clergy did not want was for the French to go to America and lose their faith, so they sent a convoy of priests, nuns and brothers to help provide spiritual guidance to their ever-increasing flock south of the border. By setting up schools, churches, and mutual aid societies, their aim was to ensure the French language and culture remained intact among their parishioners. Known as “la survivance,” clergy hoped to keep the French traditions – both cultural and religious – alive in the cities and mill towns of the United States. It was important to the elite that those who chose to leave their homes in Canada remained true to their French roots. They did not want those venturing south to become corrupt by adopting sinful American ways, only to bring such behavior back to Quebec when the government convinced them to return home.

Professionals, including doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and lawyers, were also encouraged by the elite to make the journey south to and establish themselves as leaders

among the new arrivals. The result was the creation of vibrant “petits Canadas” sprinkled all over New England. Together they created a collective strength in an alien land, making it easier for newcomers from home to join them.³³ Entrepreneurs and shopkeepers also emigrated from Canada, helping to sustain la survivance wherever the French Canadian immigrants established themselves. While the policies of la survivance provided a sense of community and connection to home, it also isolated the community from the rest of the town. In some cases, they were simply ignored and left alone. For those who settled in Brunswick, however, their isolation would prove deadly as the diphtheria outbreak gained traction in the French Canadian community.

In 1880, Brunswick boasted a few French businessmen: a couple of bakers, a barber, a glassmaker, a shoemaker, and a physician. Two years later, there were 160 French Canadian families in town.³⁴ Since the Cabot Mill had its own employee store, it wasn't until at least twenty years later that French entrepreneurs would successfully set up businesses and cater to their fellow countrymen.³⁵ Until then those like baker Alexis Ste. Marie catered to the families.

In Lowell, the Old Depot and New Depot part of the city was where the French made their homes. They began to move to an extension of the Old Depot that became their “Little Canada,” comprising forty-six percent of the population. Ten years later, however, the entire one square mile area south of the site of the Moody Street Bridge was a French Canadian district.³⁶ Those who settled in Manchester developed a French community on the west side of the city, and even today it is still known as “Little Canada.”³⁷ The French district in Lewiston was located in the shadows of the Continental

Mill, within walking distance from the railroad station. In Brunswick, many of the French lived around Mill Street along the Androscoggin River, mostly in company housing. It wasn't until after 1900 when they began to build their own Franco network away from the mill, still on the east side of Main Street, separate from the Yankees, but also removed from mill housing and the controls they imposed. They continued to live among themselves, making *la survivance* a living principle.

Once these communities were established, it was difficult for the clergy to image a “*rentrer au pays*” (return home). Both the elite and clergy alike feared that if these Little Canadas were successful and the French-Canadians were able to retain their faith and ethnic traditions right here in New England, would they return? Was the idea of repatriation doomed before it began? It has been estimated that about fifty percent of all emigrants from French Quebec returned home at some point, many doing so several times, before settling for good in the United States.³⁸ Four main reasons caused the French to migrate back and forth between Quebec and the United States.

The first was debt. Because of failing farms and high unemployment, many left rural Quebec for the factories in New England to work long enough to pay off their debt so they could return to their farms. Unfortunately, what landed them into debt initially often did so again and so they repeated the cycle, resulting in a return stay in the United States. Other emigrants were purely migratory, never intending to stay. Like many migrant farm workers today, their objective was to come to the U.S, make money and go home. They worked only seasonally in New England, always going back to the land of their ancestors. Secondly, older generations had a harder time adapting to unfamiliar cities and cultures – no matter how much Canada had come to an American town – and

often moved back home. The migratory workers were often unjustly disliked by their host communities, further adding to the difficulties of settlement in New England.

The most common reason many Quebecois returned home to Canada, however, was because of the poor American economy. A severe depression between 1873 and 1878 resulted in substantial layoffs at textile manufacturing companies across New England. Without any savings, some mill workers had no choice but to return home and wait for the economy to improve. When the economy turned around in 1879, back they came, and, as we will see, many more followed.

The final reason many of the French Canadians considered returning was on account of the marketing programs instilled by the Canadian government, namely the Repatriation Act. Passed in 1875, the act offered a repatriated family 100 acres – four acres cleared – from a select area, and a house, all for \$.60 an acre plus \$140 for improvements. A settler had ten years to repay the minimal costs, interest free. All that was needed to apply was a reference from their parish priest. Very few took up the government's proposal, however. Passed in the middle of the American depression, few had any money to purchase land, especially land that proved not to be very fertile. "If only our Canadians were being dispatched to the beautiful parishes along the noble St. Lawrence," said one Quebecois. "But such is not the case, they are being sent into the bush or even worse into the swamps of Manitoba with the savages."³⁹ Once again, economic circumstances landed the French in a dire situation and the government did not help, so most expats ignored the offer and waited for prosperity to return to the United States.⁴⁰ "Repatriation is an utopian notion," said Doctor Gedeon Archambault of Woonsocket. "Attempting to repatriate us is like trying to fill the jar of the Danaides

with a sieve...Once back, he feels stifled and something stronger than himself compels him to return to the United States.”⁴¹ Now that they had lived in America and experienced all that it had to offer, for good and for ill, the French had no intention in returning to Canada. No matter how hard and how tough the work was, to most, living in New England was better than what they had back home. Whether they realized it or not, they were becoming Americans.

Still, others tried to lure single men and women back home, realizing it would be harder to uproot established families. “We should encourage the unmarried young people [of the United States] to become settlers,” said Edmond de Nevers, a Quebecois economist, essayist, and lawyer. “But we must stop trying to encourage households to return to the homeland when they have managed to acquire a measure of affluence...Let us instead strive to keep alive in their hearts the felicitous hope of an imminent union under a single flag.”⁴² As foreigners and Catholics, the French did not have any influence in local government to lift themselves from their working backgrounds, but they were not going to go back to Canada. For example, this lack of sufficient funds and local clout greatly hindered Brunswick’s French population when diphtheria arrived in the spring of 1886. It would take an unlikely ally and local leader, Protestant Albert Tenney, to fight the battle alongside their families.

Despite numerous attempts at repatriation, these “idlers and delinquents” from Canada were slowly adapting to life in New England. As years went by, more and more of those who emigrated learned English, had children who were born in the United States, and as a result, felt more at home in their adopted land. “Our return to the native land would have the appearance of exile,” Biddeford, Maine lawyer Godfroy Dupre

said. “We feel just as American as the passengers on the Mayflower.”⁴³ With each subsequent generation, they were becoming more and more assimilated. Embracing American culture did not mean losing who they were, however, and the Quebecois leaders were beginning to understand that concept and how integration could result in political power.

After U.S. economy improved in 1879, scores of additional French Canadians headed south into New England. This time, the Canadian elite refrained from calling them traitors and adjusted their views on the decisions of their countrymen to leave the motherland. They eventually realized that the outmigration was not going to stop, so they embraced it. The Little Canadas sprinkled throughout New England were often thriving communities that grew in strength with each additional family. Their culture was intact, the language was preserved and churches were erected, easing fears of French government officials.

Quebecois immigrants who once refused to become naturalized were now being chastised by the influential Canadians for not doing so. In a complete turnaround, the Canadian government and Catholic clergy were now promoting the benefits of naturalization in the United States – voting power through sheer numbers – with the hope of converting New England into New France. Instead of being reviled by the Quebecois elite, they were now considered “providential missionaries,” bringing the Yankees into the modern era under Catholicism by not just proselytizing New England, but ruling it.⁴⁴ If they were going to fight for their rights, and in the case of Brunswick’s French, for clean living conditions and respect from the local communities, naturalization was the first step.

Most leaders within the French communities, however, condemned this approach as unrealistic and damaging to those living among the Anglo-Saxons. Given the small population of Canadians in New England as a whole, Godfroy Dupre asked his fellow countrymen to set aside nationalist goals when it came to politics, as it would only create hostility among the Nativists.⁴⁵ Instead, he explained, they should claim a “republican legacy,” within the pluralist society. “Because we are here to stay, we want, under the aegis of the American liberties, to take up our part of the duties and responsibilities, the same way we want to take our part of the privileges and rights we are entitled to.”⁴⁶ Once they tasted democracy and all that it had to offer, French men in America wanted the chance to become involved in politics, something they were denied at home. To do so they needed to first become naturalized citizens.

Regardless of differing opinions within the French Canadian communities, American politicians were taking notice of these new voters. By the late nineteenth century, the Quebecois were now being courted by native politicians, including both the Irish and Anglos. For the first time they were able to command respect from their host country. “We have served long enough as stepping-stones,” said an article in Manchester’s French newspaper, *Le National*. “The time has come to play a somewhat more estimable role,” it concluded.⁴⁷

Assured that naturalization did not necessarily mean American assimilation, both the Quebecois power brokers and the French clergy came to realize that becoming United States citizens provided a means for the French to wield political influence and resist those who still believed that they were not here to stay. “Once we were naturalized, those good Yankees would no longer be able to hurl that infamous epithet,

‘Chinese of the East,’ in our face,” argued Franco-American journalist Ferdinand Gagnon, hopefully. “Our naturalization would prove that we fully intend to settle here and that we did not come to this country solely to earn a few miserable dollars.”⁴⁸ Throughout the 1880s, a movement to gain citizenship began with the hope to not only find the respect they deserved, but also to move into the social and political realms where power existed. With that respect, they could move out of the mills and rise in society.

The younger generations tended to embrace naturalization first, especially those who came to America as children. In 1885, seventy-five percent of those who became citizens in Holyoke, Massachusetts, were thirty years old or younger. When thirty-two-year-old Ferdinand Gagnon became naturalized in 1882, he declared, “I am happy to be a loyal citizen of this country, but I am equally proud of being French Canadian.”⁴⁹ In Lewiston, more than 500 men became naturalized during the 1880s.⁵⁰ They could retain both their French heritage but also be American with all the rights and privileges as such. But more importantly, naturalization meant having a voice in local politics so conditions in the mills and the community could dramatically improve.

In 1884, a group of local French Canadians met at Brunswick’s town hall to discuss the topic of permanent American residency. The vote was to apply for citizenship was unanimous.⁵¹ One of the first to become an American citizen was Alexis Ste. Marie, who swore his allegiance to the United States in August of that year. Elzebert Brillant, twenty-four, did so two years later with Ste. Marie as one of his witnesses. Louis and Thomas Caron, along with Thomas Carrier, all pledged to uphold the Constitution of the United States on September 5, 1888.⁵² By 1900, nearly 130 Quebecois men in the

town of Brunswick were now citizens of the U.S.A. and a handful more had filed papers of intent. The commitment to naturalization fostered the planting of more permanent roots. By 1885, the local paper in Brunswick reported that, “The French-Canadians are putting up several dwelling houses on land recently purchased in the northwestern part of the village and the way they put together a wooden building is

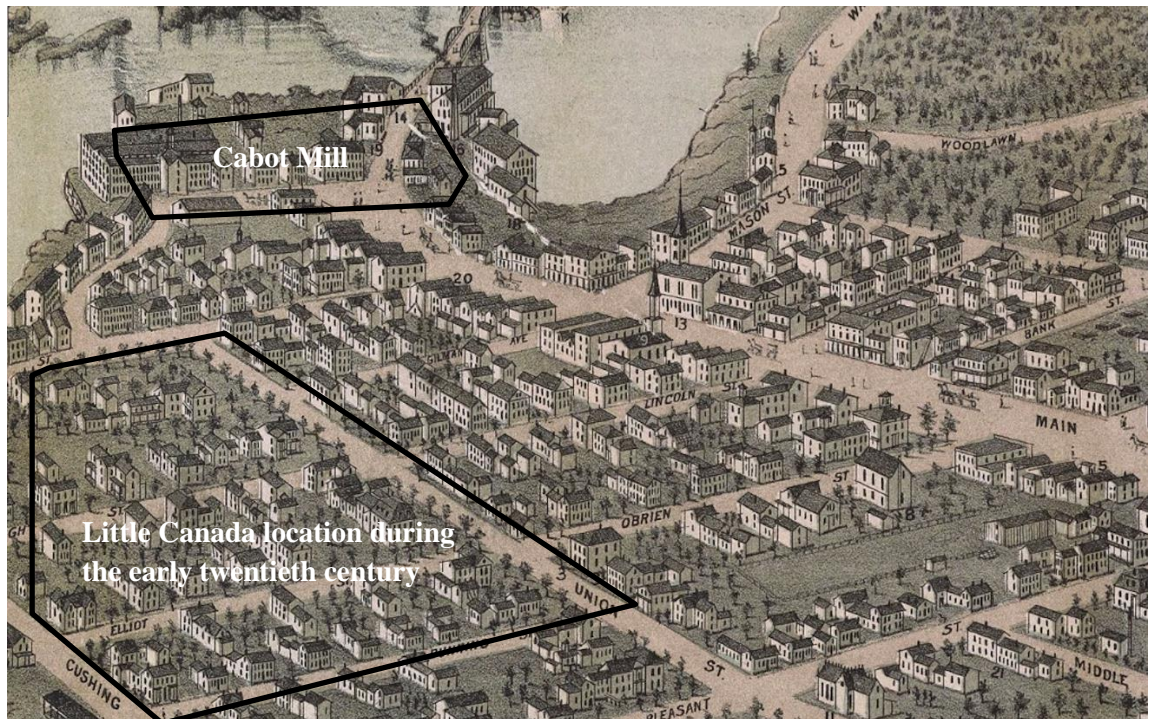


Figure 1.3 Brunswick, Maine, 1877, www.oshermaps.org/maps/id.1158.0001.

something of a marvel.”⁵³ This was the foundation of Brunswick’s non-tenement Little Canada that by the early twentieth century encompassed the area between Union, Oak, Cushing and Dunning streets. (Figure 1.3).

These new citizens, however, were not entirely welcome, despite the political appeal from local politicians. In 1896, William MacDonald, a history professor at Bowdoin College, wrote about these new citizens in *The Nation*. “As a class they are treated considerably in public because of their votes, disparaged in private because of general

dislike, and sought by all for the work they do and the money they spend.”⁵⁴ MacDonald went on to say that this Gallic collective was making strides in their new country. They were creating a place for themselves not just in the mills, but also as skilled laborers and in public offices such as the State Legislature. “In the State as a whole they are being steadily, though slowly, worked into the conglomerate that we call the American people,” MacDonald concluded. Those who were firmly planting their roots were making sure they were strong.⁵⁵ They were determined to fully embrace their new homeland and for Brunswick’s Frenchmen and women, owning their own businesses, buildings and holding office was a way for them to put their own stamp on the community. After the turn of the twentieth century, Little Canada would move out of the shadow of the Cabot Mill.

Not every Canadian wanted naturalization, however. No matter how much the French church or the government encouraged it, some Quebecois refused to relinquish their Canadian citizenship even though it was explained to them that only their political status changed, nothing more. “Nationality is not an artificial fruit,” explained Ferdinand Gagnon. “It is a gift from God. ... No one can appropriate it and it is impossible to lose it.”⁵⁶ Not everyone believed this. By 1887, of the 306,000 Quebec immigrants living in America, only 28,000 had become naturalized. Those who did not become U.S. citizens chose to remain tied to Canada for several reasons, most notably because of the language barrier. Furthermore, many of those who had farms in Quebec still hoped to return, and since they paid taxes back home, they did not want to be taxed again in the United States.⁵⁷

Of the 430 eligible Frenchmen living in Brunswick in 1900, 300 still held alien status.⁵⁸ Others chose to return home. Take for instance the Langelier family from St.

Paschal in Kamouraska County, Quebec. Sometime after 1874, Antoine and his wife, Francoise, and their thirteen children, came to Brunswick to work in the mill. In 1880, ten of the children were employed there. Their stay was not long, for the following year the family was once again living in St. Paschal. In 1885, seven members of the family, including Antoine and Antoine Jr., a carpenter and machinist, respectively, were living in Providence, Rhode Island. By 1901, however, Antoine and Francois were back in St. Paschal – potential birds of passage.⁵⁹ For those who stayed, it was a new beginning away from their British occupiers, but as we will see, for some French mill workers in Brunswick, life in New England came at great cost. They struggled to assimilate in a new land and faced extreme adversity by their host communities, yet they built tight conclaves where they kept their faith, values and culture. La survivance would live on.

Chapter 2 ‘They didn’t leave the homeland. They brought it with them.’

Some of the first French Canadian emigrants to the United States were political refugees from the unsuccessful 1837 rebellion in Lower and Upper Canada. Many more arrived when men left the mills to fight during the Civil War and the industry was in need of help. When the mill agents discovered they had cheap and able workers in the Canadiens, they combed the Quebec countryside looking for recruits. The dire economic situation in the Province benefited both agents and the Quebecois. Owners sent French-speaking agents to the countryside, and advertised in their papers. “I have a letter from an agent of the Boston and Maine Railroad,” said the editor of *Le Travailleur*, a New England newspaper, in 1882, “who says he is ready to testify that since two years, no less than one-hundred superintendents for agents of mills have applied to him for French help, one mill asking for as many as fifty families at a time.”¹ Even with the Foran Act of 1885, prohibiting contract labor, recruitment continued. Priests often worked to bring in families and the French knew about the towns and the mills from others who had already settled there.² So what were these towns like that these emigrants were risking everything to move to?

In order to fully understand what the French-Canadian immigrants were encountering upon arrival, it is essential to first contextualize the growth of textile manufacturing in New England in the decades before their arrival. The American textile manufacturing city was the creation of Francis Cabot Lowell, a Boston Brahmin and merchant whose decision to become a manufacturer affected the lives of millions of people through many generations in ways he never imagined. When industrial manufacturing became an

alternative for creating capital after America's trade embargo with France and Britain was in place from 1807 to 1812,³ Lowell conceived of the country's first complete factory to transmute cotton bales into finished cloth after visiting the mills in Manchester, England, , one of the world's largest and most famous textile cities. As he observed the factories he visited, he couldn't help but notice the working conditions of the operatives, especially those of the children employed there. His aim was to reproduce the factory's production capabilities, not the dismal conditions. When a pamphlet was printed in 1818 for members of the British Parliament around the condition of children employed in cotton factories, one doctor's entry revealed his observations surrounding the children's health. "Out of the 181 children that were examined by me, only 23 of the number were healthy looking. These persons, in general, were thin, slender, and in many instances emaciated...and languor of constitution pervaded the whole; so striking, as not to require the eye of a medical observer to discover."⁴ Another doctor noted that children were often made to work from six in the morning to eight at night with only an hour off for meals.⁵ Under these challenging working conditions, high mortality rates were prevalent as weakened children were more likely to become sick.

Upon his return, Lowell built the first mill town in farmland along the Merrimack River in Massachusetts and named the town Waltham. He hired unskilled females, mostly from farms, to tend machines that spun thread out of cotton, and experienced weavers to guide the thread through looms, creating finished fabrics. What was unique about mills like Waltham and later Lowell, was that corporations weren't independently owned, but rather held through joint stock, boarding houses were supervised and it was an integrated

system. These women were among the first workers of the American Industrial Revolution.

Lowell lived only to see one mill erected, Waltham, before succumbing to pneumonia in 1817. After his death, The Boston Associates honored their founder by building another new textile city along the same river and named it Lowell.⁶ Ten miles north, they founded Lawrence. In New Hampshire, they created the mill cities of Manchester and Nashua, and in Maine, thousands of looms hummed in factories that sprang up in the farm towns of the Saco River Valley.

Meaning “abundance of fish” in Penacook, the falls of Amoskeag in New Hampshire were harnessed for their waterpower. As with Lowell and Waltham, the Amoskeag Company founded the city of Manchester, New Hampshire.⁷ During the 1830s, the Boston-based entrepreneurs purchased the Merrimack River’s waterpower and on New England’s second-largest river they established a 15,000 area across falls for their city.⁸ The strategically-located mill was named after Manchester, England.⁹ They modeled the city after Lowell, and like most of their other endeavors, the headquarters resided in Boston.

As with many mill towns, Amoskeag’s railroad route – between Montreal and Boston – gave recruiters the advantage of easy access. Owners advertised in Quebec papers in the hopes of luring workers to their mills. Their ads described good working conditions and a family-like atmosphere. “More than 15,000 persons work in these mills that border on both sides of the river,” a typical Amoskeag ad read. “Their wages allow them comfort and ease and all seem to be content with their lot... [The Amoskeag Company] treats [employees] not as machines but as human beings, as brothers who have a right not

only to wages but also to the pleasure of life.”¹⁰ Meant to entice potential workers, these conditions were anything but true for the Canadian workers who came to work in these mills of New England.

Unlike Lowell and Manchester, Brunswick was already established long before the mill was erected. In fact, two forts were built and later dismantled where the Cabot Mill now sits. Fort Andross and Fort George were constructed to protect the town from Indians in the early years of its settlement. In 1735, settlers petitioned the Massachusetts Bay court to incorporate the town. Four years later, it became the eleventh town in the province of Maine. At the start of the industrial age, the potential of Androscoggin River’s waterpower was realized. Around 1753, the first dam was built between it and the town across the river, Topsham, and mills and factories followed. The town was growing, too. In 1742, there were only nineteen homes in Brunswick, but by 1753, there were eighty males who could vote. Four years later, that number rose to ninety-two and in 1765, there were 173 families or 500 people, including four former slaves, living in this small coastal village.¹¹

When the Continental Congress presented the colonies with the Declaration of Independence, the people of Brunswick unanimously voted that “the Honourable Congress should, for the safety of the United Colonies, Declare themselves Independent of the King of Great Britain, that they will solemnly engage with their lives and fortunes to support the Congress in that measure.” The closest the town got to the action during the American Revolution was when some of the sick and injured soldiers from Benedict Arnold’s expedition to Quebec in 1775 quartered in town. When the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, ending the war, Brunswick received a letter from Boston asking for its

opinion on whether loyalists should be allowed to return. A town meeting was held and it was declared that the “Refugees and Conspirators who endeavored to deprive us of our rights and privileges” should be “excluded from having lot or porting in any of the United States.”¹²

When the citizens of Maine, as well as Brunswick’s residents, witnessed a successful separation from the mother county, the quest for an independent state began. In 1786, when discussion began about separation, Brunswick held a special town meeting and voted unanimously in favor of releasing York, Cumberland and Lincoln counties from Massachusetts. They also voted 23-7 in favor of the Constitution ratified in Philadelphia later that year.¹³

In the years following the Revolutionary War and before statehood in 1820, Brunswick was known for its shipbuilding skills and as an academic town when Bowdoin College was founded in 1794. Factories along the Androscoggin were also being built, dominating the town’s economy for the next 150 years. One of those industries was the cotton mill. The first cotton textile mill in Maine, the Cabot Mill, began in 1809 as a manufacturer of cotton yarn, but the venture proved unsuccessful. A second mill was



Figure 2.0 Cabot Manufacturing Company housing. (Author photo)

built in 1813 by the Maine Cotton & Woolen Factory Company and was in operation for a number of years. By 1820, it boasted 100 operatives and produced 100,000 yard of cloth a year, but five years later both mills were destroyed by fire. A stone mill built nine years later operated until 1840.¹⁴

After a few more iterations, the Cabot Manufacturing Company bought the mill in 1857 and employed 175 workers, spending \$3,000 a month in payroll. The mill began with twenty-five looms with 9,000 spindles and produced plain and drill cotton only. In 1867, the mill was renovated, and new equipment added which increased the spindle count to 26,000. There were seventy-five tenements (Figure. 2.0). More changes were made in 1878 that increased the capacity of the mill to 35,000 spindles, which employed 550 hands. The number of tenements increased to one hundred and the property now housed a mill store.¹⁵ The Boston Brahmins who owned the mill claimed dividends averaging eight percent, but despite these healthy profits, the managers constantly pressured the town to lower its taxes on company property.¹⁶ This subject was brought up again during the heated debates about the company's treatment of its workers in 1886. Regardless, the millwork increased so much that in 1890 the company asked the town to move Maine Street so it could add to the building. The town complied and the building which stands today was the result.

Most operatives lived in Cabot's housing which flanked the mill on either side, hugging the river. The mill now owned more than one hundred buildings, some built to spec, while others were bought for anywhere between \$75 and \$125 and then moved to the mill's property. Tenants paid about \$7 a month in rent and when private owners, like Alexis Ste. Marie, discovered how lucrative this was, they also rented out rooms to

families. Buildings were often two to three stories high, divided into eight tenements (96 to a house), which contained from five to seven rooms and housed about twelve people.¹⁷ Bedrooms were small and many had only one window. The four privies per building were cleaned once a year, and accommodated twenty-five occupants.¹⁸ These conditions became ideal incubators for diseases such as diphtheria.

Given the size of the typical French family at the time, one tenement was designed to hold one family, but in 1880, forty-three dwellings accommodated 131 families or 2,150 inhabitants along one side of the river. In dwelling number four, for example, there were five families listed, totaling thirty-four men, women and children. Within this building, there were three Label families and chances are, they were all related. Despite the crowded environment of the tenements, families often took in boarders to supplement their income. The Label families had three boarders, along with extended family members, such as a mother, mother-in-law and a sister who shared their home.

This resulted in a lack of privacy for most mid-sized families. Many families rented three rooms measuring around a dozen square feet for about four dollars a month, while four or five rooms cost a couple dollars more. In all tenements, kitchen, dining, bedroom and parlor areas folded into one space.¹⁹ Some observers remarked, “Why, it is not a rare case to find several families of perhaps eight or twelve members of each contentedly housed in a two story dwelling.” Winter was especially hard as even the most “industrious” found it “almost impossible to keep the wolf from the door.” Some dwellings were so crowded that sunshine was “entirely out of the question.”²⁰ Conditions like this percolated into the perfect breeding ground in what became town’s summer of death and disease in 1886.

The situation in was heartbreaking. The two-to-three storied buildings were clustered tightly together with sheds – housing cows, pigs and chickens – and privies nearby. It was estimated that there were about 500 people every square acre. A contemporary description during the 1886 crisis is telling. “Sink spouts are running only a few feet or so outside of the houses where all dirty water is poured out – falling on the surface of the ground, some of which drains into the cellar and leaves one of the most prolific sources of disease.” In some cases, wells were less than twenty-five feet away from these spouts.²¹ The evidence was clear, there were too many occupants in the Cabot Mill company housing. That said, while the conditions outside the tenements may have been appalling, the Quebecois could not be accused of being filthy. According to a Manchester priest, “they are generally clean people but the tenements for them in the city are bad; their sanitary condition is awful bad, I guess, in some places in the city.”²² As much as they kept their lodgings clean and neat, they were at the mercy of the mill owners to provide fresh water and clean sanitation. They were powerless to improve the state of their water supply and privies and as the condition of both deteriorated, their health and survival were at risk.

By the 1880s, the town has reached “maturity,” as local historian Edward Chase Kirkland said.²³ The town, he said, was built on wetland and did not have a proper sewage system.

Sink-spouts flowed their discharge over the ground or were. . .connected with the gutters in the streets or the brooks and drains that sluggishly moved to swamp or river. In some instances, privies emptied into the last two channels. Short of a town system it was realized that cesspools should be constructed to catch these wastes. But they cost money and besides it was clearly recognized that the ‘fouling of wells’ was hastened by their

proximity. Seepage from surface drainage was slower, some thought it non-existent. People prayed for rain, not for their own lawns' sake, but to flush the gutters and drains clear of odors and filth.²⁴

For part of the year, Brunswick was muddy and under water. Cellars flooded and streets became impassable quagmires. Even though the mill installed its own pumps, it later proved ineffective. Given these conditions, the town had become a veritable petri dish for disease. Dysentery and diarrhea were seasonal visitors, and typhoid kept local doctors busy. Smallpox created a panic earlier in 1886 as an outbreak of the disease ran rampant in Quebec and Montreal, and only through the efforts of the recently appointed state board of health was an epidemic avoided in town when vaccination of all workers at the mill became compulsory. However, on its heels came diphtheria and it ravaged the French population.²⁵ As the situation became more dire, the only thing the French had to hold on to was their faith.

The French had “powerful emotional ties” not only to their land and language, but also to their faith.²⁶ Their churches and cathedrals stood tall in their villages, towns and cities. “The families were the bricks and stones of an immigrant community, but the Church provided the mortar.”²⁷ St. John the Baptist was a venerated patron saint to the Quebecois back home. St. Anne de Beaupré, was their guardian. Sons were named in honor of St. Joseph, patron saint of all Canada, and girls, Marie, after the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through thick and thin, they held fast on to their religion and culture, despite being treated as second-class citizens by their British rulers.²⁸

When the French came to America they sought sanctuary of established Catholic churches within their communities, the Irish parishes, but they soon found out that they were not entirely welcome. The Irish American bishops and priests told their immigrant

parishioners that they must become part of society and to do that they must learn English and study American history, as well as obey their new clergy in all matters of the church. To the French, this was a threat to la survivance. What resulted was tension between the groups and petty behavior from priests. Some clergy would not to baptize Quebecois babies or to officiate at Franco-American funerals and burials.²⁹

For Brunswick's French Catholics, their Irish priest was a rare exception. Father James P. Gorman (Figure 2.1) was well loved by his Franco congregation. Born in 1853 to Irish immigrants, and trained in Canada, in 1881, as a young priest, he came to



Figure 2.1 The Rev. James Gorman, Pastor of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Brunswick, Maine.

Brunswick from Berlin, New Hampshire, and catered to the Canadien population by saying mass in both English and French.

Under his guidance, Fr. Gorman moved his congregation from the “second-hand Protestant temple” – a hand-me-down church located on the corner of Federal and Franklin streets – to land on Pleasant Street purchased by a previous pastor for \$4,000. It was here that Paré Gorman built a new church and named it St. John the Baptist, in honor of Quebec's patron saint. The only remnant he brought from the old church was an organ he purchased from the Congregationalists. St. John's was dedicated on June 24, 1886,

St. Jean de Baptiste Day.³⁰ “The handsome new church was tastefully decorated with flowers, banners and other appropriate devices,” the local paper wrote. With around thirty visiting clergy a mass was held, which included a musical program under the direction of Olivine Trudeau, Alexis Ste. Marie's sister-in-law.³¹

Like many other churches around New England, Franco-American parishioners scrimped together every spare nickel and dime they could afford to part with and put them in collection plates during mass to help build their own churches. Sprinkled across the region's mill cities and town, "these majestic granite structures still add architectural beauty to the skylines." These spiritual and cultural beacons, and the priests who inhabited them, were the "sturdiest guides leading the Franco-Americans through the pitfalls of American life."³² The priests who came from France and Quebec were more than just spiritual leaders to their congregations. They advised, provided stability, aided in the transition between the old world and the new, and like Father Gorman, they were builders. They not only erected churches, but also schools, hospitals, colleges, and universities.

Father Gorman also purchased land for a Catholic cemetery – where many of the victims of the diphtheria epidemic now rest – and established a school for the French children. It's no wonder that by the mid-1880s he had 1,400 parishioners, consisting of both French and Irish families.³³ He truly cared for his parishioners for it was he who first to called attention to diphtheria when in June 1886 he let it be known to *The Brunswick Telegraph* that he buried more children than baptized that year. Records show from January through April at least twenty-three children under the age of fifteen died of various diseases within the French community. Life was hard for the French, both in the tenements and on the mill floor.

In her 1908 report, Eva L. Shorey, a special agent with Maine's State Labor Bureau, recounted the longstanding sad story of child labor in Maine. "It is evident that there are a large number of boys and girls employed in the mills, and some of the children seen at

work particularly in the spinning rooms of most of the cotton mills, appear to be under fourteen. Their slight frames and pale faces show that they are too young to be at work.”³⁴ These slight frames and pale faces were the perfect host for diphtheria and other airborne diseases.

The conditions of the mill were debilitating. When coal-fed boilers were installed in the mills, workers and their families were exposed to carbon monoxide poisoning from the smokestacks. Inside the buildings, operatives waged a “futile war against filth.”³⁵ Rat infestation meant protecting lunch food from contamination and at the end of the day, operatives tried in vain to rid their clothes of vermin before leaving for home. Subsequently, the state and many towns established a board of health in the 1880s – Maine did so in 1885, however, many were virtually ineffective since sanitary conditions were so appalling, and lack of funding, public indifference and sometimes out-and-out opposition made the boards largely unsuccessful.³⁶

Millwork was monotonous and often required an operative to stand for hours on end. The din of the machinery was deafening, cotton dust choked them, and eyestrain was common, especially among the female weavers. Robert Fournier’s mother worked in the weave room in New Hampshire mills for forty-five years in the early twentieth century. He remembered that after she came home, she involuntarily moving her hands up and down from hours of doing repetitive work. “It’s wasn’t a physical condition,” he explained. “It was just that so many hours were spent with her hands moving over the fabric, that even in her relaxed moments her hands would be moving.”³⁷ Those long hours equated to 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., six days a week or 60 hours a week, all for less than \$2 a day.³⁸

New England girls and women, Irish immigrants, and many Franco-Americans spent their whole working life employed in the mills. Conditions had not improved with the passage of time and the work was dangerous and unhealthy. Alice Blais recalled the deafening noise of the Lewiston cotton mill where she worked fifty-four hours a week: “If someone wasn’t used to it, he was nearly deaf when he left. Where there were fifty to sixty machines in the same room, they all made the same noise. What a racket that made!... it was a drone, a boring noise. It was necessary to talk real loud because there were so many machines. There were five to ten machines to each operator, and they weren’t that far apart.” Like those before them, the French-Canadians soon grew accustomed to the monotonous work. “It came to a point where there was a rhythm to it,” Cecile Doyon remembered. “And we’d start to sing to that rhythm when the work was going fine, but when the work was going badly, there was no singing.”³⁹

Worker’s lives were dictated by noises and one of the most important sounds was the mill bells. They rang to start the day and again to end it. In between they marked lunchtime when children of the workers were let out of school to deliver lunch to their families. Lugging three-tiered pails containing a hot liquid at the bottom, meat and vegetables in the middle, and dessert on top, children could walk for two miles through a mill’s complex to find their kin. They shouted above the factory noise to greet fathers, brothers, and sisters, most of who were covered with cotton lint. They also saw friends and other neighborhood children, some of whom were so small that they had to stand on platforms or boxes just to reach the machines.⁴⁰ This atmosphere now resembled the atrocities that Francis Cabot Lowell condemned all those years ago as he toured England’s factories. Sadly, it was now all too commonplace in the business he founded.

Mule spinners were among the best paid, earning between \$9 and \$10 a week; women loom workers made \$7 or 8, and spinners earned a dollar or two less. Compare this with the Dennison box company just down the street where “twice a day a flood of girls poured forth, pretty enough in their gay clothes ‘to charm the heart of the wheelbarrow.’” Skilled workers there made \$20 a week, an exceptional wage at the time. The cotton mill workers’ wage was not the lowest, however. Teachers and their assistants in the village schools averaged \$5.20 a week or \$270.31 a year. To put it in perspective, stove coal cost \$6.50 a ton, eggs 25 cents a dozen, milk was six cents a quart and pork was 10 cents a pound.⁴¹

For the French Canadians, everyone in the household worked and as there were many children, upwards to twelve or more and many followed their fathers and siblings into the mill. What was unique about millwork was everyone in the family unit could participate. Children as young as seven contributed to the household’s income by working as doffers. In America, French children’s earnings made up thirty-nine percent of the family income and twenty-two percent of those earnings were contributed by children under the age of sixteen.⁴²

Mill owners and managers welcomed children, preferring the uneducated. “There is such a thing as too much education for working people sometimes,” said Thomas Livermore, an agent at Amoskeag. “I have seen cases where young people were spoiled for labor by being educated to a little too much refinement.”⁴³ Concurring, the Fall River school board wrote, “An exclusively bookish education has created in the minds of many of the [mill children] a radically wrong attitude toward life which would make the child look upon working at cotton manufacturing” as something to avoid.⁴⁴ While the Bureau

of Labor Statistics of Massachusetts chastised French Canadian parents for pulling their children out of school and sending them to the mills, Livermore and the Fall River school board appeared to condone it, explaining that an education would be virtually useless for these children and may even deter them from a life of work at these factories. To the board, an education appeared to be a waste of time for these children who they viewed would never rise above the rank of a mill worker. This philosophy appeared to be shared by the citizens in Brunswick who watched with ambivalence at the goings on at the other side of town. As diphtheria spread among the mill community, the rest of the town looked away. To them, these men, women and children were foreign to them in every sense of the word.

The *Lewiston Evening Journal*, as part of a series about the textile industry, wrote that children as young as eight, many illiterate, were working in the mills – mainly as doffers – earning from thirty to fifty cents a day. Children labored alongside their parents and other workers for about eleven hours a day in “dimly lit and ill-ventilated” buildings.⁴⁵ Employing children under the age of twelve in manufacturing establishments was prohibited unless the child had attended school for three months. In 1870, only about half of school age children were attending school.⁴⁶ Once again, French families needed every means of income to survive, even if it was at the expense of their child’s education.

The situation was no different in Brunswick. Children as young as age eight were also working in the Cabot Mill. Youngsters Victoria Racine, Leon Letarte, Victoria Mathurin, Angelina Blanchard and Louis Godfois were all working with their older brothers and sisters in 1870. By 1880, the age increased by only one year. Seventeen out of twenty-one laborers at tenement house number four who were age twelve or older were employed by

the mill, most of them sons and daughters.⁴⁷ They were employed as doffers, batter hands and bobbin boys. While most fathers are listed as laborers and all but a few mothers as “keeping house,” the greatest number of mill workers among the French population were children. In most households, children older than ten were employed at the Cabot Mill. Emma Tourangeau’s mother, Emma Mailly, was ten when she started working at the mill in Westbrook in the 1870s. “She was so small they had to stand her on a box so she could reach her work,” she said.⁴⁸ For Octave Laplant’s family in Brunswick, the Cabot Mill employed six of his seven daughters, age sixteen to twenty-six. Only his youngest, Emilia, fourteen, was at school, but all the girls could read and write.⁴⁹ However, most of Brunswick’s mill children didn’t go to school on a regular basis beyond the age of twelve, and many were illiterate. The Fall River school board would certainly have reiterated here that an education for an immigrant child was not needed or encouraged to work in the mills in Brunswick or anywhere else.

With this influx, the French Canadian population in Brunswick grew exponentially from 1860 to 1880. By 1860, Quebecois made up 118 of the total population of 4,723 or two percent; in 1870, it was 415 out of 4,687; and by 1880, 1,041 out of the 5,384 residents or nineteen percent were from Canada.⁵⁰ On March 28, 1875, the *Brunswick Telegraph* reported, “Quite a lot of French Canadians came here last week to work in the Cabot mill.” It was one of the few times they were mentioned in the local paper until 1886.⁵¹ In Maine, the native population decreased by nearly 800 people between 1860 and 1880, while the foreign population increased by more than 21,000, which included children born of foreign parents. Although the numbers of immigrants in New England increased rapidly, that was not necessarily a bad thing, the story read. The “severe

notions” of the Puritans were not only improved by the presence of the immigrant, it reduced their “fiery potency,” and the children of the immigrants were “among the best members of the community.”⁵² How the population would come to the aid of the children of the immigrants over the course of 1886 would put that declaration to the test.

Chapter 3: A very bad condition: Diphtheria strikes Brunswick

Although the town was about to witness one of its worst years in its history, Brunswick wasn't the only locale that experienced unrest. In the middle of what is often called the Gilded Age, 1886 was a year that began in turmoil across much of the country. On January 9, an extratropical cyclone¹, considered one of the most severe to pass through New England, caused temperatures to plummet and heavy snow to fall. Two February storms produced more snow and winds.² In March, there were anti-Chinese riots in Seattle and the Carrollton Massacre claimed the lives of twenty African Americans in Mississippi. In May, a strike in Chicago that became known as the Haymarket Riot began. The Cabot Mill also experienced a strike in March of that year. "Cabot Company's cotton mill closed its doors last night, on account of a strike, throwing 700 hands out of employment," reported a New York paper.³ Although it happened just down the road from the *Telegraph's* offices, the newspaper admitted it had been scooped. "You must go away from home to get the news," the paper declared. Demanding higher wages, more than a dozen spinners went on strike on that previous Friday and Saturday, which they were granted.⁴ Because the French Canadians were less likely to strike, chances are those strikers were non-Quebecois. As we saw in Chapter 1, diphtheria was also making the rounds in New England and by spring, it had a firm grip on the Cabot mill community.

Diphtheria, once called the "Strangling angel of children"⁵ is an airborne disease that is spread through coughing or sneezing, as well as from exposure to objects contaminated with the bacteria. Officially called *Corynebacterium diphtheria*, the disease attacks the

respiratory system and produces a poison that causes a thick coating to build up in the throat. It forms a membrane which blocks the airwaves, causing the child to suffocate to death. Toxins also enter the bloodstream, potentially causing damage to the heart, kidneys and nerves. The survival rate before a vaccine or cure was discovered was fifty percent.⁶ One Canadian doctor recalled his sense of helplessness as he witnessed the death of one of his young patients at a time before modern treatment was discovered.

“I recall the case of a beautiful girl of five or six years, the fourth child in a farmer’s family to become the victim of diphtheria. She literally choked to death, remaining conscious till the last moment of life. Knowing the utter futility of the various methods which had been tried to get rid of the membrane in diphtheria or to combat the morbid condition, due, as we know now to the toxin, I felt as did every physician of that day, as if my hands were literally tied and I watched the death of that beautiful child feeling absolutely helpless to be of any assistance.”⁷

It was not uncommon for families to lose one or more children to the disease like this family, and more often than not, several family members also became infected. The number one enemy for those living in the tenements was filth, and due to this filth, diseases such as measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, and typhoid continuously threatened children. The French mortality rate in Brunswick was as high as forty-seven deaths per thousand people that summer in 1886. Most were under the age of five.⁸ In these areas, *la mort subite* (sudden death), was sadly common. Few French families could afford to go to the hospital, and accepted death with “Christian resignation.” When it did come, some families didn’t have the means of employing services of a funeral parlor, so the mortician embalmed the body in the kitchen.⁹

Up until the early eighteenth century, diphtheria was often clumped with other respiratory diseases, so epidemics occurring at that time may have had multiple sources.¹⁰ For example, diphtheria and scarlet fever were both called simple throat distempers.¹¹ By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, diphtheria was identified as a separate disease, quickly becoming one of the most deadly. As the industrial revolution began in the 1800s, millions of rural laborers left their farms to find work in the city factories where everyday household items at affordable prices were being made. These workers often endured long hours, short pay and were forced to live in dirty, overcrowded housing. Their diet lacked proper nutrients and the fifteen- to sixteen-hour days exhausted them. Well water, contaminated with waste, and drinking water from polluted rivers, provided the perfect breeding ground for germs.¹² Lacking enough privies for the occupants of tenements, wells became undrinkable, and animals were being housed too close to the living quarters. In Brunswick, swine, cows and hens were kept in sheds, and pig-pens were near wood sheds, while wells were right in the middle of it all. Immigrant families, packed into a few rooms, animals living nearby, and contaminated wells all created the fertile breeding ground for this deadly disease.

There was no cure or effective treatment for diphtheria at the time, so parents could only hope their child was strong enough to survive. But a year after the 1886 outbreak, twenty-nine-year-old Maine Medical School student Henry W. Ring wrote in his thesis paper on diphtheria that “no trust should be placed in the vaunted efficiency of nostrums.”¹³ At that time, cure-alls (nostrums) were marketed as the answer to a myriad of diseases, all claiming to cure even the most contagious of them. Most were created

using a combination of alcohol, cocaine and morphine or even laudanum (water, alcohol and opium).

The only medically approved remedy administered up until that time would shock most parents today – alcohol. “Difficulty may be experienced in inducing children to take sufficient food,” Ring continued, and he further noted:

If they cannot be persuaded to quietly take small quantities of milk or beef-tea, enemata of beef-tea and brandy must be used. ...Emaciation is rapid and therefore alcohol is positively necessary to support life and when other foods are rejected may be the only means of doing so. It acts not only as food but also prevents systemic infection. Large doses may be taken, even by children, and its benefits will be observed in the character of the pulse, the temperature and the general condition.¹⁴

Quinine, combined with alcohol was also given as a means of sustenance, as well as an antipyretic, while morphine was administered to relieve nausea and vomiting.¹⁵ Dr. Robert Hunter Semple of the Royal Academy of Physicians of London who did extensive studies on diphtheria did not hesitate using this method, no matter how young the patient. He recommended and “insist[ed] upon the free and even forcible employment of alcoholic stimulants,” he wrote in his 1879 book on the disease.¹⁶ This treatment was soon abandoned after inoculations for the disease became available in the 1890s and the medical community shunned using such remedies as a viable treatment. In 1910, the *London Times* reported, “According to recent developments of scientific opinion, it is not impossible that a belief in the strengthening and supporting qualities of alcohol will eventually become as obsolete as a belief in witchcraft.”¹⁷

As diphtheria first began to take hold of Brunswick's mill community, it caught the attention of the local newspaper editor, seventy-year-old, Albert Gorham Tenney (Figure

3.0). Born in Massachusetts in 1814, he attended Dummer Academy and graduated from Bowdoin College in 1835. After a stint at the *Baltimore Transcript*, he taught at a ladies school in Baltimore for three years before moving to Boston in 1840, where he worked at several papers, including the *Daily Times* (editor) and the *Boston Daily Journal*, where he was chief reporter for seven years. He then became a private secretary on a receiving ship before working at Boston's Custom House for four years. In 1855, he came back to Maine to take the position of editor of the *Bath Daily Tribune* before succeeding G.W. Chase as publisher of *The Brunswick Telegraph* in April 1857.¹⁸

A well-respected publisher, Tenney was a prominent citizen of Brunswick and was thought of highly among his fellow editors who called him “handsome brother” Tenney.



Figure 3.0 Albert Gorham Tenney, Editor of *The Brunswick Telegraph* (photo courtesy of the Pejepscot Historical Society)

“Upright, independent, conscientious, steadfast, fearless – these were marked traits of his character. Frank, open, straight-forward in speech, courteous in bearing – these were the manners of the man.”¹⁹ He served on the school board for several years and was an advocate for education. He regularly attended town meetings and enjoyed the friendship of several medical and academic faculty at his alma mater. His politics were conservative, but he was considered a progressive in all matters pertaining to the “intellectual, social, physical and moral good of the community.”²⁰

He was not progressive in everything, however. The Lewiston Gazette reported that, “With refreshing candor [Tenney] declares that he has not a particle of sympathy with the woman’s suffrage movement,” claiming that intelligent women wouldn’t vote even if they had the right to do so.²¹ Regardless of

his views on suffrage, he was considered “a cultured gentleman with his own individual ideas”²² and for this he was respected by his fellow journalists. This relationship would be put to the test when he voiced his ideas around the epidemic during the summer of 1886.

He was an active member of the Maine Historical Society (formed in Brunswick in 1822) and was described as “fearless and untiring in his efforts to correct public abuses.”²³ As editor of the *Telegraph*, his aim was to produce a paper that “promotes the interests of the town at times at some personal cost.”²⁴ With each child’s death, Tenney knew what every parent must have felt. He too had experienced loss. His first wife, Frances, died in 1858, and their only child, twenty-six-year-old Albert Francis, died of tuberculosis nine years later. “None but who have suffered like losses know how desolate becomes the once happy home and how dense the cloud which hangs over the future,” he commented on a story about the death of the six-year-old son of a fellow editor, Thomas Calvert, in July 1886.²⁵ Like some of the French families at the mill, Calvert and his wife, Grace, had just buried a child four months previous.

Given his background, Tenney was, in many respect, the perfect man to take on the men who he referred to as “the grasping Shylocks of the cotton and woolen mills of Maine.”²⁶ One of those Shylocks was Mill Agent Benjamin Greene (Figure 3.1).

Born in 1818 in Eastford, Connecticut, Greene began his long career in the cotton mill industry at age twenty-three in his hometown. Two years later he moved to Southbridge, Massachusetts, where he resided for two years, continuing his work in the mills. He married and had a son, Benjamin D. Greene. After his wife’s death, he moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he lived and worked for a number of years before moving

to Webster, Massachusetts, in 1850 after he was appointed to be the mill's agent. After a short time in Rhode Island, he became the Cabot Mill's agent in 1855. Not long after



Figure 3.1 Benjamin Greene, Cabot Mill Agent (Photo courtesy of the Pejepscot Historical Society)

moving to Brunswick, he remarried a local woman, Susan T.

Holmes, and the couple had two children. He became part of the

community, serving as a director of First National Bank and

president of the Brunswick Savings Institution.²⁷ In 1874, he built

what was described as a mansion on the corner of Main and

O'Brien (now Cumberland) streets. Seven years later his second

wife died and five years after that, he married a thirty-three-year-

old Massachusetts native. They had no children. Before Tenney

moved closer to Bowdoin College, he and Greene were neighbors,

and *The Brunswick Telegraph* office was located across the street

on the second floor.

As soon as Tenney learned of the situation at the mill, he took pen to paper. "We shall speak plainly in the line of denunciation, ... of the horribly filthy and stinking conditions of the outhouse and pig pens in the rear of the factory boarding houses on Main Street, overlooking the cove." So begins the first notice of the conditions around the mill on April 30, 1886, in *The Brunswick Telegraph*. Further on, Tenney warned his readers, "Let an epidemic arise and the people of the entire village will suffer from barbaric filthiness of a few. We ask the Board of Health to look over the grounds."²⁸ But it wasn't just company-owned housing that was affected by the outbreak. Although the numbers of infections were far less, privately owned boarding houses also were not immune to the disease. One week for instance, of the twenty-five cases reported, six were at Alexis Ste.

Marie's boarding house and three in a house near a former slaughter house. Although it was found that the Ste. Marie house was "in good order," diphtheria made a house call anyway.²⁹ No family was safe within the French community. Since January 1886, twenty-seven French Canadians were dead of various diseases, eighteen of those were children age four and younger. There indeed was something terrible happening within the confines of the mill community and Tenney was determined to find out just what that was. By raising questions about the living conditions of those who lived in the Cabot housing, Tenney soon set off a maelstrom between him and the medical community, one that would play out in the pages of his newspaper.

The following week, Tenney composed a longer story, revealing "we did not more than half tell the story of the infernal nuisance existing there, in the way of the discharge of privy matter right over the surface of the soil, from the out houses serving mainly the factory boarding houses." He offered a "simple" solution. Excavate the rock along the bank "to afford subsoil drainage to the water." He claimed it would cost half the profits of owners of the boarding house, "mainly the corporation of the Cabot Company."³⁰ In a story reporting upon the State Board of Health quarterly meeting at the end of June, Tenney laid down the gauntlet by adding an editorial addendum. "The health of our people is of the highest importance, and no one man, or two, or three, or more, should be permitted to commit nuisances to endanger the lives of the people at large. If we may hang a rascal to protect communities, we surely should have some speedy form of punishment for him who commits slow murder by poisoning the air which we all breathe, or the water we are compelled to drink."³¹ It was the first of many open attacks on the Greene and the mill owners that Tenney would engage in to get the attention of the

medical community, as well as his readers. If he could incite some reaction from both, Tenney believed he could force much needed change at the mill that would benefit all of Brunswick. In the meantime, more children were dying.

After the death of the Ste. Marie girls, six more children died that spring, including Zelia Label on April 30. The daughter of Octave and Mathilda (Mathurin) Label, Zelia just turned three six days before her death. She shared the tenement with older sister, Odelie. The Label's first child, Mathilda, died in December 1882 at the age of three. Like the Ste. Marie's, diphtheria struck twice at their home when sixteen-month-old Louise died a month and a half later.³²

It was common for families to share tenements and in 1880, the elder Mathilda lived with her sister, Rosalie Desjardins and her family. Like Octave, Benjamin Desjardins worked in the mill. Sadly, they also would find themselves comforting each other in the weeks ahead.

In the meantime, more children died. On May 19, 1886, Alfred and Claudia Gaudreau's first-born child, two-year-old Alfred, was laid to rest. The stone tender and his wife just found out they were expecting their second child. A week later, Alfred Jacques succumbed to the disease. The son of Charles and Julia (Leclerc) Jacques, the thirteen-month-old was, like the Gaudreaus, their first-born. Charles had moved to Brunswick from St. Cyrille in L'Islet county in 1881 to work in the mills as a weaver just after his nineteenth birthday. Three years later, he married Julia.³³

Two-year-old Delia Fortin died on June 11, 1886. In 1880, her family lived next door to the Desjardins and the Labels. Her parents, Auguste Fortin, a railroad worker and his

wife, Fedeline were expecting their sixth child in the summer. They were now living on Mill Street, near Cushing Street.

By the time summer officially arrived, the heat proved oppressive. The fourth of July holiday weekend witnessed highs around ninety degrees. The following week saw temperatures soaring to ninety-six. It was only later that week that the mercury offered some relief when a cooling breeze enveloped the area. This stifling air did not help victims suffering from illness. On June 30, 1886, nine year-old Rose Anna Leblanc died from diphtheria. Her parents, Pierre, a farmer, and Adele Deschene, emigrated just six years before, bringing with them their twelve children, ranging from age twenty-two to one-year-old Phedeline. Five of Rose's siblings worked at the mill. In 1880, they lived next door to the Labels and Desjardins and in the same building, dwelling twenty-nine, as the Fortins and like other families, death did not pass them by. Tragedy struck the family soon after their arrival. On March 24, 1880, both Phedeline and eight-year-old Gaudelie died of scarlet fever.³⁴

Mathilda Label's sister, Rosalie and her husband, Armand Desjardins, must have tried in vain to keep their son, Armand, cool as the effects of diphtheria ravaged his two-year-old body. He succumbed to the disease on July 5 when "a careful person reported [the temperature] at 100 in the shade at nearby Topsham."³⁵ Like her sister's family, tragedy struck twice. A little more than seven weeks later, Armand's younger brother, ten-month-old Elbridge, died of the disease, too. They had already buried two children, both under two years of age.³⁶

Between April 30 and September 3, twenty-two children died of diphtheria, all of them either family or neighbors, and around 150 became infected. The first victim

reported in the *Telegraph* was not a French child, but a 12-year-old boy Bath Primary schoolboy named Frederick S. Ham, ironically the son of a domestic employed by Benjamin Greene. His father told Tenney that their well had become foul, so much so that the family couldn't use it. In fact, they removed a toad from it. Every member of the family became sick with colic pains, except Freddy, who contracted diphtheria. In a cruel twist of fate, he survived diphtheria only to get colic and die of stomach trouble. Tenney surmised that the diphtheria "left the throat and attacked other organs."³⁷

Serving as secretary of the State Board of Health was Albion Gustavus Young, who later proved a formidable ally to Tenney in his quest to right the wrong for the French. It was during a lecture at the Maine Medical School on hygiene that Tenney first broached the topic of the boarding houses to Young, including Fr. Gorman's remarks about burying more children than baptizing. The doctor told Tenney that conditions seemed to be "in a bad way."³⁸ That summation proved correct when after a few weeks after their meeting, Dr. Young made a visit to Brunswick to look at the conditions around the tenements and agreed that the local board should be notified. But there was more than filth enveloping the premise during his visit. Diphtheria was in town. What Tenney would later discover was that by this edition, twenty-three children under age of nineteen were dead, thirteen from diphtheria. In the meantime, Tenney asked the local French doctor, Onésime Frank Paré, in the July 16, 1886 edition to report the conditions so the citizens of Brunswick may see what "dangers they are exposed to."³⁹

Dr. Paré was born June 8, 1854, in St-Gervais-de-Bellechasse, Quebec, and trained to be a doctor at the University of Michigan after attending school in Kents Hill, Maine, to learn English, as well as to prepare for a life of medicine. After graduating in 1884, he

came to Brunswick to practice his trade. Described as a man of “warm and tender sympathies,” Dr. Paré often treated his patients either for free or at a reduced rate. “It is certain that he held the loving regards of the French people,” Tenney recalled later. “We have yet to find one who well knew the Dr. to say a word of dissatisfaction with him in his word or work.”⁴⁰

In the July 23 edition, Tenney printed Paré’s findings.

Brunswick, July 20, 1886

Mr. A. G. Tenney:

You desire a statement of the number of cases of diphtheria that have occurred in my practice this present season. During the month of May there were twenty-nine cases of diphtheria; out of this number there were seven deaths.....At this present writing there have been fifty-seven cases, but new cases appear every day. There were four deaths at the last outbreak. The oldest patient who died was a girl nine years of age. Four adults have been sick with the disease, one of whom has been very sick. So that the whole number of cases thus far from May is eighty-seven.

Any other information that will be in my power to give you, I will give it with great pleasure.

Respectfully,

O. F. Paré, M.D.

That nine-year-old was most likely Rose Anna Leblanc. Her family, like so many others, had already lost children to other diseases such as whooping cough, the coup and typhoid fever. Having to bury another child was surely a devastating blow to the Leblanc family.

In the same edition, Tenney also stated the laws of Maine’s newly formed State Board of Health. “When any source of filth, or other cause of sickness is found on private property, the owner or occupant thereof shall, within twenty-four hours after notice from said committee or officer, at his own expense remove or discontinue it; and if he neglects

or unreasonably delays to do so, he forfeits not exceeding one hundred dollars and said committee or officer shall cause said nuisance to be removed or discontinued; and all expenses thereof shall be repaid to the town by such owner or occupant, or by the person who caused or permitted it.” 1885 marked the formation of the board whose duty it was to supervise “the interests of the health and life of the citizens of the State....They shall make sanitary investigation and inquiries respecting the causes of disease, and especially of communicable diseases and epidemics.”⁴¹ Little did they realize that the following year the goings on in a small coastal community would put their agency’s effectiveness in the spotlight.

Dr. Young visited again and Tenney reported that a friend said the doctor “had never seen things in worse condition that he found them here. We always favored the establishment of a State Board and we believe in it now more than ever.”⁴² As much as Tenney had faith in the board, its members were slow to acknowledge the evidence before them surrounding the deplorable conditions of the mill housing, regardless of its pledge to investigate communicable diseases and epidemics.

Perhaps in an effort to convince the board and the citizens of Brunswick that there was something amiss at the mill, Tenney, for the first time, printed the number of diphtheria cases up to that point – 112 in “two months and a half” in his July 23rd edition. This recording, under the “Local Affairs” section of the paper, marked the beginning of his crusade against Mill Agent Benjamin Greene and the Cabot Company. When the situation grew steadily worse, the editor elevated it to the editorial section and there it stayed for the duration.

The July 30 edition of *The Brunswick Telegraph* (Figure 3.2) marked this

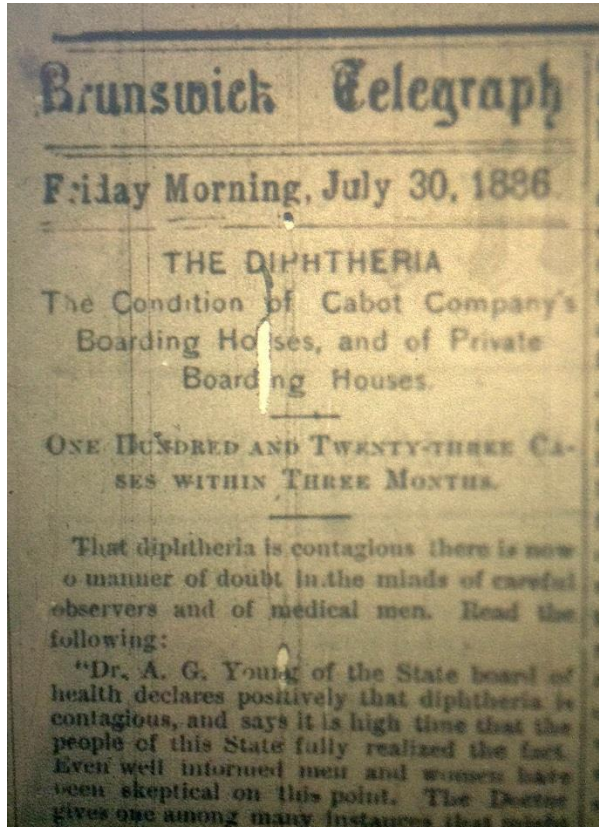


Figure 3.2 Page 2 of the July 30, 1886, edition of the *Brunswick Telegraph*. (Photo courtesy of Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick, Maine)

commencement of a weekly column dedicated to the fight to eradicate the disease within the French community. It occupied page two, top left – Tenney’s editorial space – for the next two and a half months and it nearly always began the same: Diphtheria spelled out in large block letters, followed by the number of cases so far – which for the July 30 edition was 123 – and later on, he included the number of deaths for the week. Most of the cases that week occurred in the Cabot Company’s dwellings. Included in that first editorial

was a reproduction of a circular that declared that the disease was contagious, and it is “high time that the people of this State fully realized the fact.” Tenney went on to tell the story of how a woman in Maine went in Massachusetts to help her sister care for her children, only to return home carrying the disease and subsequently infecting her own daughter who later died. If that wasn’t enough to scare his readers, Tenney relayed the story of how a family packed away the clothes of a dying patient and when a family member unpacked them several months later, that person fell ill.⁴³ It was time the citizens of Brunswick had a wakeup call about the dangers of diphtheria.

Despite doctors and health reports, Tenney had his detractors, namely competing newspapers in the area. Fellow editors accused him of not only lying about where the cases were, but also that he was telling readers that the town was unhealthy, an accusation that occurred frequently throughout the summer. Although he explicitly stated that the cases were not anywhere else but at the mill, Tenney was adamant that calling attention to the issue was for the good of the town and hiding the fact would be “criminal.” If the condition continued to be ignored, yes, he would tell people to stay away.⁴⁴

Although this was alarming, the conditions concerning the tenements sadly were not new, he wrote. “Three years ago we described in more general terms much the same condition of affairs, and a gentleman who formerly served on the Board of Health informed us that the Cabot Company and a few other proprietors of boarding houses near there have too long been permitted to pollute the air of Brunswick.”⁴⁵ Given the conditions of the town in general as previously described, as well as the continuous increase of the French population in a relatively small area, it is no wonder that the situation had now reach a precipice. This did not change Tenney’s determination to remedy this situation once and for all, but he was reaching his breaking point.

In the August 13th edition, Tenney, incensed, once again reported the new number of cases since May 1 – four, for a total of 131 – and in apparent frustration added in all caps, “In heaven’s name is our board of health going to act?” He was exasperated that nothing was being done by the Board of Health to force the mill to clean up their housing, even though they clearly saw the conditions were dire. His column that week discussed how the Cabot Company was allowed to “pollute the air of Brunswick, to menace the health of

every individual within our borders”⁴⁶ without recourse. He vowed to continue to write about it until something was done.

He blamed greed for this situation, which for textile mills was not a new revelation, but Tenney was quick to add that not all manufacturers were like the Boston Cabot men. He knew men who were as wealthy and as successful as the gentlemen of Boston, but “infinitely their superior in all that goes to make up the true man, regardful of the lives and healthy of the men and women whom they employ.” These businessmen scorned mill owners for tainting the good name of manufacturers, Tenney continued. He refused to name names,⁴⁷ but instead let Greene imagine whom he was referring to and perhaps wonder the next time he attended a meeting or function. Was anyone in attendance secretly reviling him? Would H.G. Dennison, owner of the Dennison Box Manufacturing Company rebuff him? Or was First National Bank President Nathaniel T. Palmer rethinking Greene being on his bank’s board? Or how did other businessmen, like Thomas Riley, the town’s clerk and local insurance agent, think of him?

Although Greene was a pawn in this game, behooven to the Boston owners, Tenney still held him accountable. The directors of the mill were at fault and he knew it was all about money. They didn’t care about French immigrants. They could easily be replaced. First and foremost, they were taking advantage of the town, so he raised the issue of tax exemptions. “The amount of money from the Cabot company has received from the Town Treasure in its ten years’ exception and the abatement of its taxation” was substantial, he wrote. And the refusal to sell water power prevented the town from developing any other manufacturing on the river.⁴⁸ In a word, greed and monopoly were

the doctrines of the Cabot Manufacturing Company, so why would they ever help poor workers in their factory rid themselves of diphtheria now running rampant on the falls?

The following week, Tenney reported there were who those believed his paper was driving people out of town, but he was determined to tell it like it was. “Could we believe ourselves capable of concealing facts as monstrously heartless as the record of the Cabot company shows, we should think ourself a fit subject for a mad house and that is where some people who speak of present Brunswick sickness should be sent.” He would not be doing his duty as a reporter or a citizen, he believed, if he did not report such goings on. Despite this animosity from fellow journalist, he was happy to write that he was not alone. He included a brief from the *Damariscotta Herald* reporting the situation in Brunswick which lauded Tenney. “Bro. Tenney has done some good work for the improvement of Brunswick...and we are glad to see him looking out for the welfare of the French operatives.” Other papers continued to castigate him. *The Bath Times* chastised him for asking for a “public indignation meeting” that would allow the townspeople to “free their minds on the subject.” “Tenney will frighten everybody into keeping away from this really beautiful and thriving village,” it said.⁴⁹ In the true journalistic style of the nineteenth century, Tenney hit back with, “Ho! My boy; you are a little out; we are striving to render the village attractive and desirable, which it never can be if you bury the diphtheria cases under a thousand wet blankets of concealment, amounting in fact to healthful lying.”⁵⁰ He ended his column by calling for the resignation of the board if they did not act. It seems Brother Tenney’s patience was running thin.

It was with this impassioned fervor that Tenney continued to report the deplorable conditions week after week during the summer of 1886. By the August 27th edition, 151 cases had been reported, leading Tenney to write, “We cannot say that ‘Diphtheria’ may not be the standing head of the first column, second page, during the entire year.” As long as those who by an oath of duty continued to do nothing, namely the board of health, he continued, then he would “continue the fight” by writing about it.⁵¹ Part of that was dispelling rumors.

Four weeks previously, orders were given to clean out the privies at the boarding houses and deposit the waste at the corner of Mill and Cushing street, presumably by Greene, for Tenney wrote, “no employee would dare to commit such a nuisance without orders.” The rumor was that when Greene attempted to remove it, the French people tried to prevent it. “The story upon face value is too absurd ... to believe.” The truth, Tenney continued, was it was the French who complained and it was removed at the cost of the mill. It must be remembered that this location was where Alexis Ste. Marie and his family lived and once again diphtheria made a house call, this time to the upper rooms. Filth was fifty or sixty feet from the first deposit. Since Tenney mentions no casualties, it appears the building was spared.⁵²

Despite his tactics, Tenney was still attacked for misleading the public. On August 31, there appeared in the *Argus* a story about the severity of the disease in Brunswick. “It was felt in justice to both the Cabot Company and the town to have a thorough examination made by the resident physicians, which was done Saturday.” Three local doctors, N. T. Palmer, Alfred Mitchell and M. V. Adams visited the tenements and examined “various alleged cases” of diphtheria in the tenements presented by Dr. Paré.

They claimed that one was follicular tonsillitis, two were not diphtheria, one the patients was too far along in recovery to make a sound judgment, and the last was a tossup between diphtheria and follicular tonsillitis.

As if to contradict their lack of substantial evidence, as well as call attention to the severity of the situation, Tenney printed the names, ages and date of death of all the victims who died so far that year. It is a powerful list. From January 1 to the end of September, there are 71 deaths listed, revealing the names of children and adults who died of “filth diseases.” Ages range from one day to 69 and several families had more than one death. Alexis St. Marie’s two children, Claire and Albert were on the list, so was Pierre Lablanc’s Rose Anna, but it wasn’t just diphtheria. Euchariste and Louise Renaud’s daughters, age 15 and 17, died of typhoid two weeks apart. The year’s death rate was unprecedented. Comparing the two previous years to the current one, Tenney published a chart in that same edition. In 1884, there were 39 deaths for the year. In 1885 the number was 28, but through August 1886, 71 people had already died. Unfortunately, it was not the end.

Those lists and charts, compounded with Tenney’s constant harassing seemed to finally get the message to Greene and the Cabot Company. “The Telegraph has at last brought the Cabot Company to its knees, but not to pray,” Tenney wrote in the September 17 edition.⁵³ The previous week, under the very large heading exclaiming, “Dr. Paré and the Editor Triumphantly Vindicated,” the Board of Health agreed that diphtheria was indeed widespread in the Cabot Mill houses. “We were credibly informed that a dozen or more deaths had occurred within a few months from the disease which was called diphtheria by Dr. Paré, who has treated a majority of the cases; and this fact confirmed

our opinion that the malady which has afflicted the French quarter of the village was what it had been alleged to be.” Tenney also printed the report in its entirety where it spelled out the severity of the conditions, but most importantly, gave its recommendations for improving the health and well-being of that part of town. Topping the list was the way human filth was disposed of. The board suggested the implementation of box vaults “into which dry earth or coal-ashes shall daily be strewn for the purposes of absorbing the moisture.” Most importantly, they would be emptied far more frequently and be moved to a more accessible location. In conjunction with the vaults, the board insisted that sewage be installed. If done right, they surmised, it would be a “credit to any town or corporation.” If both of these are done, then the water supply from wells and cisterns would be sure to improve. Next they proposed that all garbage not disposed of by vault and sewage be carted off regularly, and lastly, in order for all of these to be successful, the board stressed, “careful inspection” should be made by both the mill and the local health board to ensure “everything is neat and clean.”⁵⁴ Time would tell.

With this report, the mill had “commenced to clean up,” Tenney declared in that next edition. Unbeknownst to Tenney, the Board of Health also submitted a report to Greene, but that did not take away from his jubilation. “If there is thorough work done on Cabot property we will as cheerfully give it credit as to any other party doing similar work. This is not an individual fight on our part,” Tenney wrote. That said, he once again declared that the results served as a “triumphant vindication” of Dr. Paré and himself, although he was happier for the French doctor. “We felt vastly more satisfaction for the Dr. than for

ourself – an old editorial sinner we can stand any amount of hammering” but the doctor endured a good deal of “unpleasant feeling” and this vindication “set it all right.”⁵⁵

He clearly was proud of his role in helping the French. “In a long editorial career, we have had many controversies but from none did we ever emerge with armor brighter, and with not a dent upon the shield of truth,” he beamed. While he would not expose further transgressions, he continued to report out any cases or deaths from diphtheria until the situation was eradicated, adding that if Greene had acted when Tenney first called out the situation in July, less families would have suffered. As that was not the case, he wanted to make sure Greene kept to his word and clean the tenements as he promised.⁵⁶

As a show of good faith, Greene asked his former neighbor to visit the mill to see the improvements, but it was not filled with pleasantries. “The intercourse was not intimate,” Tenney revealed, “but we think not disagreeable on either side.”⁵⁷ In the end, Greene saved his words for a more public berating of Tenney. At a town meeting, he made an opening speech in what Tenney considered an “outrageous attack upon us.” It’s not revealed what was said, but apparently it was enough to make Tenney get up and defend himself, replying with “all the severity of which we were capable.” This caused an overwhelming round of applause from the audience and a “three cheers for the speaker [Tenney].” Greene tried to counter, but was “hissed by the audience, an evidence that public sympathy was on our side.” This incident must have affected Greene for when Tenney and he met outside later that afternoon, Tenney “spoke to him as cordially as ever, and he refused to recognize the courtesy.”⁵⁸ Their relationship was certainly strained and it's not known if it ever recovered.

Apparently, Greene and the Cabot Company kept their word. As reported in the September 24 edition, there was only one mild case reported by Dr. Paré, but Tenney was not going to give the mill agent credit. If cleanup was underway, he said, it was a “concussion to public sentiment.” It appeared things were improving throughout the state for Tenney reported that, save a few towns experiencing diphtheria outbreaks, including Brunswick, and typhoid fever, “the general health of the State appears to be good.” He concluded his half column editorial – the shortest in months – with the statement that many “brethren of the press,” as well as friends and doctors, “have expressed their great gratification at the full vindication of Dr. Paré and the editor.”⁵⁹ Tenney may have been a crusty old publisher, but he was clearly happy to be exonerated and justified for calling attention to what was happening in the mill. He never wavered.

The following week, however, there was a slight setback. Three cases were reported as well as one death. This death might have been Lorea Leclair, who at fourteen days succumbed to an unknown illness. The only other death recorded in the French enclave during that time was Charles Sebastian Ragot who died of bronchitis at three years of age. What was also unsettling was a week after a reasonably good state of health for Maine, ten locations, including Brunswick, reported scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, erysipelas, as well as outbreaks of typhoid fever.⁶⁰ Deaths from all locations totaled 35. The epidemic was not entirely over it seemed.

That said, this setback seemed to be short-lived, at least for Brunswick. In the October 8 edition, Tenney claimed victory once and for all. The epidemic was over. “We rejoice to record the fact that no case of diphtheria has occurred this week – the first week for months when we have not had a new case to report,” he wrote.⁶¹ That was the last

Tenney wrote of diphtheria that year. The only other contagious deaths in the French community were five children who succumbed whooping cough. Through Tenney's perseverance to do what was right, no matter what race, nationality or background, and through his use of the pen, he was indeed, "neighbor to Catholic and Protestant, native and foreigner, farmer and college professor."⁶²

Conclusion

With the end of the epidemic seemingly over, Albert Tenney could perhaps celebrate quietly in his victory. His weekly editorials caught the attention of not only local officials, but also the state's medical community. Determined not to allow his beloved Brunswick to be exposed to a deadly disease, he used his standing as a revered journalist to call out the goings on in an area of Brunswick that was otherwise largely ignored. Tenney understood the French Canadians were as much a part of Brunswick as the locals were, contributing to the town's economy. Their prosperity meant the town would also flourish.

Later the following year, Tenney received his copy of the state's 1886 annual health report. Although he was surely pleased to see that the epidemic was important enough for the State Board of Health to include the incident within its pages, it was bittersweet. In "Diphtheria and Other Diseases in Brunswick population," Dr. Young reported "an excessive death rate prevailed" among the French in Brunswick of the "worse possible kind" and July proved to be the most devastating month. His overview was followed by a reprint of the report given to Benjamin Greene and *The Brunswick Telegraph*, as well as a complete listing through December of all the deaths in the French section of town. Also included was a write-up by Dr. Paré, as part of the medical correspondents' section. In his report, he verified there were 152 cases of diphtheria resulting in nineteen deaths, seventy-eight cases of typhoid fever and eleven deaths, and sixteen deaths from diarrheal diseases. He believed the last was attributed to a poor milk supply. With the cows being kept so close to privies, the combination of overflow from the vaults and the "putrid

swill” were to blame. His evidence? Before that year only a few cows were kept among the French, but in 1886, there were 27, most of which supplied milk to the population.¹ But what pained Tenney was that the good doctor couldn’t share in his glory.

When Tenney visited Dr. Paré to wish him well at his clinic at the end December 1886, he came upon a startling discovery. The doctor was dying. He had taken ill on Monday, December 27, but worked Tuesday before spending Wednesday in his rooms. A doctor was sent for the next day and diagnosed pneumonia. He died January 3, 1887, at the age of 32. “The disease had taken so firm a hold that medicine and nursing failed to afford relief,” Tenney told his readers in the January 7 edition. Their relationship was so special that Tenney devoted a considerable amount of space memorializing the young doctor. He relayed that even the mill closed for the day on January 5 so workers could attend the 9 a.m. mass at St. John the Baptist Church. The church was crowded, Tenney reported, a testament to the doctor’s standing within the French community.²

Tenney’s resolve to end the pestilence that plagued the mill, in time, helped improve the conditions of Brunswick’s sewage issues, something Dr. Paré would have been pleased about. After a few starts and stops, mainly because of cost, the town laid nearly nine miles of pipe by the mid-1890s, setting the stage for improved conditions for everyone. Even the sewer committee proclaimed, “The time will come when joining [the sewage line] will be thought quite as desirable as having glass in the windows, or chimneys for the fire place.”³ Clean water would mean less disease.

Tenney also rejoiced when the state established a ten-hour day for manufacturing and mechanical factories in 1887. Under these new laws, children under twelve were barred from employment and anyone under fifteen had to attend some school in order to be

employed.⁴ “We quite agree with what the *Portland Advertiser* has to say upon this subject,” he wrote. The excerpt outlined the proposal, that if enforced, would “give Maine a more stringent ten-hour law than that of Massachusetts.”⁵ It enabled children to leave the factories and be in a more healthy environment where they could learn and grow. These regulations allowed younger generations to prosper and perhaps move away from mill life altogether. In Brunswick, a number of first- and second-generation Franco-American children did just that, by establishing their own grocery stores, tailor shops, bakeries, and milliners in the early years of the twentieth century.

Later generations would also reap the benefits of modern science as vaccinations for several childhood diseases were discovered and implemented throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. In 1894, a diphtheria antitoxin, but not yet a vaccine, was developed. To be effective, it had to be administered early in the stages of the disease. In many cases, however, it was given too late and death rates continued to soar. However, in 1924 a true vaccine was developed. At last, those children who lost siblings to the disease in 1886 were now able to prevent the heartache their own parents and grandparents endured.

Tenney lived to see only some of these improvements. After a series of heart attacks and a period of ill health, the venerable journalist died two days shy of his eightieth birthday in 1894. The newspaper, now managed by Eva L. Shorey’s brother and Bowdoin graduate, Albert Currier Shorey, featured a long tribute to “brother Tenney,” noting that he was “part and parcel” of the goings on in Brunswick and “nothing was foreign to his keen observation and his lively pen.” Although the article didn’t mention his efforts around the diphtheria epidemic by name, it was inferred when Shorey wrote that among Tenney’s many accomplishments, he “exposed mercilessly the weak spots in the village

sanitary system.”⁶ The commentary was a fitting homage to a man who refused to sit on the sidelines.

As we embark on the second half the 2016-2017 school year, the topic of vaccinations has once again risen to the top of conversations as schools welcome new and returning students. This time, however, the debate has moved beyond the classroom. On Aug. 29, 2016, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a message urging the medical community, as well as states, to take stronger measures against parents who refuse to vaccinate their children. This announcement came in conjunction with their 2013 survey results. According to the report, seventy-five percent of parents said they believed vaccines weren’t needed because they believed some diseases have been eradicated. The survey also revealed the number of doctors who dismissed parents for refusing to vaccinate their children doubled since the last survey in 2006. “They can’t convince some families about the importance of vaccinations and for families who completely reject vaccinations, some have decided to ask them to leave their pediatric practice,” said Dr. Ari Brown, national spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics.⁷

This thesis presents, in detail, the devastating effects that the lack of vaccinations can have on a community. If the children of Brunswick during those six months in 1886 had been inoculated with the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) vaccine, around thirty children could have been saved. While the conditions of the mills were extreme, the environment was the same – hundreds of children in close proximity to each other, exposing disease to countless others and their families. What they did have was a crusader in Albert Tenney who worked tirelessly in keeping what was unfolding within the mill complex top of mind at both the local and state levels. Through his unique style

of writing, his collaboration with the medical community, and his innate sense of moral injustice, Tenney was able to influence an organization as powerful as a cotton manufacturing conglomerate to challenge and ultimately change existing conditions for its workforce.

Appendix: French-Canadian Deaths in Brunswick, Maine in 1886

Date	Name	Cause	Age
Jan. 2	Edward Gagnon	Measles	2 years
3	Marie Gagnon	Measles	5 years
5	Carolina Desjardins	Typhoid Fever	2 years
10	Louis Leclair	Epilepsy	26 years
11	Francois Bergeron	Typhoid Fever	1 year
14	William Labbe	Measles	9 months
14	M. B. Cardillao Labbe	Measles	3 years
16	Magen Thibeault	Typhoid Fever	4 years
18	Joseph Drapeau	Pneumonia	28 years
21	Marie Beaulieu	Diarrhea	2 months
Feb. 15	George Mercier	Measles	2 years
Mar. 11	Milfred Coulombe	Typhoid Fever	2 years
13	Marie Dionne	Acute Lung Disease	6 months
14	Adeile Renaud	Typhoid Fever	14 years
18	Aglaie Renaud	Typhoid Fever	18 years
24	Joseph McMahon	Bronchitis	4 years
26	George Brillant		1 day
26	Archus May	Measles	1 year
Apr. 13	Claire Ste. Marie	Diphtheria	2 years
13	Albert Ste. Marie	Diphtheria	8 years
16	Emile Labre		3 years
17	Marie Gauthier	Diphtheria	1 year
19	Napoleon Ray	Typhoid Fever	14 years
19	Pierre N. Letarte	Cerebral Spinal Meningitis	7 months
26	Josephine Tardif	Diphtheria	21 months
30	Exzilia Lebel	Diphtheria	3 years
May 19	Alfred Gaudreau	Diphtheria	2 years
27	Alfred Jacques	Diphtheria	1 year
June 4	Catherine Leclair	Gangrene of foot	60 years
11	Marie Fortin	Diphtheria	2 years
13	Joseph Aubus	Epilepsy	52 years
24	Marie Lebel	Sequel Diphtheria	17 months
25	Joseph Caron	Diphtheria	15 months
29	Joseph H. Baribeau	Diphtheria	7 months
29	Marie L. Dube	Diarrhea	1 year
30	Rose Anna Leblanc	Diphtheria	9 years
July 5	Armand Desjardins	Diphtheria	2 years
7	Marion Desjardins	Diarrhea	3 months
15	H. E. Dumont	Typhoid fever	3 years

	15	Eugene Gamache	Diarrhea	3 months
	16	Alice Belanger	Diarrhea	5 months
	16	Bernadette Caron		
	20	Michael Quintal	Diphtheria	4 years
	20	Amede Theberge		1 month
	20	Louis Lebel		1 day
	21	Marie O. Lebel	Sequel Diphtheria	8 months
	22	Adelord Silvester	Diphtheria	18 months
	28	Gloria Levesque	Exhaustion	4 months
Aug.	7	Joseph Thibault	Diphtheria	5 years
	9	Marie Dumont	Typhoid Fever	8 years
	9	Marie O. A. Tetu	Diarrhea	4 months
	10	M. E. Laplante	Diarrhea	5 months
	17	Alphonse Bevando		1 month
	20	Auguste Caron	Typhoid Fever	32 years
	21	Horace Michaud	Consumption	33 years
	21	Hannah Terrien	Diphtheria	2 years
	23	Rose Caron	Diarrhea	69 years
	24	Remued Thebault	Typhoid Fever	6 years
	25	Elbridge Desjardins	Diphtheria	1 year
	26	Joseph E. Lapointe	Diphtheria	1 year
	28	Joseph Alford Duchaine	Diarrhea	7 months
	28	Francois Caron	Diarrhea	9 months
Sept.	3	Joseph Chuonard	Diphtheria	2 years
	3	Joseph Couiltard	Diphtheria	2 years
	5	Pitre Dufort	Whooping Cough	5 mo. 15 days
	20	Charles Mercier	Consumption	34 years 6 mo.
	24	Charles Sebastian Ragot	Bronchitis	3 years 6 mo.
	25	Lorea Leclair	Unknown	24 days
Oct.	10	Adelaid Panquette	Whooping Cough	1 year
	16	Joseph Thomas Tetu		1 day
	22	Joseph Legros	Whooping Cough	2 months
	28	Joseph Couinard	Whooping Cough	1 year
Nov.	9	Marie Olevine Normand	Consumption	5 years
	21	Margarite Bougoin nee Laforge		85 years
Dec.	14	Joseph Amede Caron	Sore Throat	2 years 8 mo.
	26	Albert St. Pierre	Whooping Cough	6 months
	26	Julian St. Pierre	Whooping Cough	6 months

Endnotes

Introduction

- ¹ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jul/27/whooping-cough-outbreak-in-reno-county-persists/> July 27, 2015.
- ² <http://bangordailynews.com/2015/06/12/health/brunswick-elementary-school-reports-case-of-pertussis/?ref=relatedBox> June 12, 2014. http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vaccine/documents/Pertussis_Survey-Report-2015.pdf
- ³ There is a movement growing among parents and activists who believe that over-vaccinating a child could lead to autism and other behavioral diseases. There are also those who think that some vaccines are not necessary since they have been eradicated in the United States and don't prove a threat.
- ⁴ <http://www.livescience.com/35923-whooping-cough-pertussis-vaccine-immunity.html> Oct. 20, 2011.
- ⁵ John C. Waller. *Health and Wellness in 19th-Century America* (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2014), 96.
- ⁶ Maine Vital Records, 1670-1921, database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2HVQ-51M, 1:1:2HVQ-51W and 1:1:2HVQ-51Q> : 27 December 2014).
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ardis Cameron. *Radicals of the Worst Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860-1912* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 28.
- ⁹ Hasia R. Diner. *Erin's Daughters in America*, 96.
- ¹⁰ Vernon M. Briggs. *Immigration and American Unionism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 25.
- ¹¹ U.S. Naturalization Record Indexes, 1791-1992 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA))
- ¹² United States Census, Brunswick, Maine, 1870, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration).
- ¹³ Philip F. Root was born Philibert Racine in Bagot County, Quebec, and lived for a short time with his family in Vermont before settling in Roxton Falls, Quebec. He joined the First Vermont Battery Light Artillery in January 1862 at age 16 in Hardwick, Vermont. Root was wounded and his hearing and eyesight were damaged by artillery fire. After mustering out of the army in August 1864, he returned to Canada. Two years after his marriage in 1865, he and his wife moved to Brunswick and he became a naturalized citizen in 1876. Root died in 1900. <http://frenchnorthamerica.blogspot.com/2012/12/Canadien-American-Civil-War-Philibert-Root.html>.
- ¹⁴ U. S. Federal Population Census, 1880. (NARA microfilm publication Series T9). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D. C.
- ¹⁵ United States Census, Brunswick, Maine, 1900, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration).
- ¹⁶ Philip Margulies. *Diphtheria* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 6.
- ¹⁷ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, November 5, 1886.
- ¹⁸ Second Annual Report of the State Board of Health of the State of Maine (Augusta: Sprague & Son, 1887), 28-30.
- ¹⁹ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, September 17, 1886.

Chapter 1: The Quebec Diaspora or La Grande Hémorragie

- ¹ Gerald Brault. *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, (Hanover: University of New England Press, 1986), 54-55.

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- ² Yves Roby. *The Franco-Americans of New England: Dreams and Realities* (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 2005), 1.
- ³ Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, 52.
- ⁴ Ibid, 6.
- ⁵ Louise Lamphere, *From Working Daughters to Working Mothers: Immigrant Women in a New England Industrial Community*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 70.
- ⁶ James W. Searles, Kent Morse, and Stephen Hinchman, eds. *Immigrants from the North*. Lewiston, Maine: Pen Mor Printers, 1982), 39.
- ⁷ Chain migration describes a process whereby a father or son traveled down and then sent for family, or married couples without children moved to a town and then told their brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends. Tamarak K. Hareven. *Family & Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community*, (Lanham: University of America Press, 1993), 86.
- ⁸ Edward Chase Kirkland. *Brunswick's Golden Age* (City: C. Parker Loring, 1941), 14.
- ⁹ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 10.
- ¹⁰ Claire Quintal, ed. *Steeple and Smokestacks: The Franco-American Experience in New England*, (Worcester, Massachusetts : Assumption College, Institut français, 1996), 91.
- ¹¹ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 11.
- ¹² Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, 56.
- ¹³ Town of Brunswick. *Brunswick, Maine: 250 Years a Town* (Lewiston, Maine: Penmor Lithographers, 1989,) 76.
- ¹⁴ William N. Locke. *The French Colony at Brunswick, Maine*, (Montreal: Laval University, 1946)
Interviewed by Locke, a MIT professor of languages.
- ¹⁵ <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/grand-trunk-railway-of-canada/>
- ¹⁶ Duane Yorke. *The Men and Times of Pepperell: An Account of the First Years of the Pepperell Manufacturing Company, Incorporated February 16, 1844* (Biddeford: Pepperell Manufacturing Company, 1945), 74.
- ¹⁷ Keith Chapman. *Historic Lewiston: Franco-American Origins* (Auburn, Maine: Central Maine Vocational Institute, 1974, 9)
- ¹⁸ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, January 1, 1886.
- ¹⁹ Ibid, January 1, 1886.
- ²⁰ Edith Abbott. *Women in Industry: A Study in Economic History* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), 349.
- ²¹ Cameron, *Radicals of the Worst Sort*, 98.
- ²² Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 18.
- ²³ Ibid, 30.
- ²⁴ Ibid, 30-31.
- ²⁵ Locke, *The French Colony at Brunswick, Maine*, 416.
- ²⁶ United States Census, Brunswick, Maine, 1880," (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration).
- ²⁷ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 30-31.
- ²⁸ Ibid, 31.
- ²⁹ Quintal, ed. *Steeple and Smokestacks*, 149.
- ³⁰ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 41.
- ³¹ Ibid, 53-54.
- ³² Ibid, 33.
- ³³ Claude Belanger, *Rapatriement*,
<http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/events/repatr.htm>.
- ³⁴ Locke, *The French Colony at Brunswick, Maine*, 417.
- ³⁵ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 17.
- ³⁶ Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, 60.
- ³⁷ Hareven *Family & Industrial Time*, 20.
- ³⁸ Belanger, *Rapatriement*.
- ³⁹ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 40.

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- ⁴⁰ Belanger, *Rapatriement*.
- ⁴¹ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 47.
- ⁴² Ibid, 47.
- ⁴³ Ibid, 68.
- ⁴⁴ Bluford Adams. *Old & New England: Immigration and Regional Identity in the Gilded Age* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2014, 54-55)
- ⁴⁵ Nativists practiced the policy that favored the interests of natural-born inhabitants who could trace their family to the Pilgrims over immigrants. In the mid-nineteenth century, there was a deep anti-Catholic movement because of loyalty to the Pope.
- ⁴⁶ Adams, *Old & New England*, 68.
- ⁴⁷ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 66-67.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, 66.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid, 68.
- ⁵⁰ Mark Paul Richard. *Loyal but French: The Neogotiation of Identity by French-Canadian Descendants in the United States* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2008), 36.
- ⁵¹ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 19.
- ⁵² National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; Index to New England Naturalization Petitions, 1791-1906 (M1299); Microfilm Serial: M1299; Microfilm Rolls: 110 and 53..
- ⁵³ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 19.
- ⁵⁴ *The Nation*, October 15, 1896, 286.
- ⁵⁵ William MacDonald. "French Canadians in Maine." *The Nation*, October 15: 285-286, 1896.
- ⁵⁶ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 67-68.
- ⁵⁷ Michael J. Guignard. *La Foi-La Langue-La Culture: The Franco-American of Biddeford, Maine* (M.J. Guignard, 198), 229.
- ⁵⁸ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623, 1854 rolls.
- ⁵⁹ U. S. Federal Population Census, 1880. (NARA microfilm publication Series T9). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D. C.; Rhode Island State Census, 1865. Microfilm. New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Massachusetts; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623, 1854 rolls.

Chapter 2 'They didn't leave the homeland. They brought it with them.'

- ¹ Hareven, *Family & Industrial Time*, 17.
- ² The Foran Act, also known as the Alien Contract Labor Law, prohibited contract labor by which employers enticed foreigners and aliens to work in the United States, its Territories, and the District of Columbia, especially those who were willing to work for low wages.
- ³ Sven Beckert. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), xx.
- ⁴ Nathan Gould. *Information Concerning the State of Children Employed in Cotton Factories, printed for the use of members of both Houses of Parliament* (Manchester, UK, 1818), 6.
- ⁵ Ibid, 7.
- ⁶ Moran, *The Belles of New England*, 2.
- ⁷ Hareven, *Family & Industrial Time*, 9.
- ⁸ Ibid, 9-10.
- ⁹ Ibid, 13.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, 19.
- ¹¹ Town of Brunswick, *Brunswick, Maine*, 53-54.
- ¹² Ibid, 58-59.
- ¹³ Ibid, 59.
- ¹⁴ David Gilman. "Something About Cotton Manufacturing." (Board of Trade Journal, v. 17, no. 7 348-341, 1904), 338-339.

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- ¹⁵ Locke, *The French Colony at Brunswick, Maine*, 98.
- ¹⁶ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 13.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 14-15.
- ¹⁸ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, July 30, 1886.
- ¹⁹ Charles Scontras. *In the Name of Humanity: Maine's Crusade Against Child Labor* (Orono: Bureau of Labor Education, 2001), 13-14.
- ²⁰ Scontras, *In the Name of Humanity*, 13.
- ²¹ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, July 30, 1886.
- ²² Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 61.
- ²³ Edward Chase Kirkland wrote *Brunswick's Golden Age* in 1941, recounting the history of Brunswick and included the diphtheria epidemic in his pamphlet.
- ²⁴ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 21.
- ²⁵ Ibid, 21.
- ²⁶ Moran, *The Belles of New England*, 112.
- ²⁷ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 25.
- ²⁸ Moran, *The Belles of New England*, 112.
- ²⁹ Ibid, 119.
- ³⁰ The Church in Brunswick (The Sacred Heart Review, 1896,) 10.
- ³¹ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, July 2, 1886.
- ³² Moran, *The Belles of New England*, 130-131.
- ³³ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 18.
- ³⁴ Twenty-second Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine 1908,) 16.
- ³⁵ Moran, *The Belles of New England*, 126.
- ³⁶ Yves Frenette, "Understanding the French Canadians of Lewiston, Maine" (Maine Historical Society Quarterly, 1986), 215.
- ³⁷ Dyke Hendrickson, *Quiet Presence: Dramatic, First-Person Accounts: The True Stories of Franco-Americans in New England* (Portland, Maine: Guy Gannett Publishing Co., 1980,) 199.
- ³⁸ Gerard Brault. "The Franco-Americans of Maine in Maine" In *Maine: A History through Selected Readings* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1985), 390.
- ³⁹ Searles, *Immigrants from the North*, 25.
- ⁴⁰ Guignard, *La Foi-La Langue-La Culture*, 122.
- ⁴¹ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 15-16.
- ⁴² Frances H Early. "The French-Canadian Family Economy and Standard-of-Living in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1870." (Journal of Family History, 1982), 186-99.
- ⁴³ Bureau of Statistics of Labor of the State of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1884), 135.
- ⁴⁴ John T Cumbler. *Working-Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure, and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities, 1880-1910* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1979), 153.
- ⁴⁵ Scontras, *In the Name of Humanity*, 11.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 11.
- ⁴⁷ United States Census, Brunswick, Maine, 1860-1880, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration).
- ⁴⁸ Hendrickson, *Quiet Presence*, 115.
- ⁴⁹ United States Census, Brunswick, Maine, 1860-1880.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Locke. *The French Colony at Brunswick, Maine*, 98.
- ⁵² *The Brunswick Telegraph*, January 1, 1886. A reprint of an article in the *Portland Advertiser* in the January 1, 1886, edition of the *Telegraph* analyzes the increase in New England's immigrant population.

Chapter 3: A very bad condition: Diphtheria strikes Brunswick

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- ¹ An extratropical cyclone is a storm that originates outside the tropics.
- ² Winslow Upton. "An Investigation of Cyclonic Phenomena in New England: The Cyclone of January 9, 1886." *The American Meteorological Journal*. (December 1886, 259, 367–382).
- ³ *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1886.
- ⁴ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, March 19, 1886.
- ⁵ Phillip Margulies. *Diphtheria: Epidemics* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 7.
- ⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/diphtheria/about/index.html>, 2013.
- ⁷ Museum of Health Care at Kingston. *Vaccines and Immunization: Epidemics, Prevention and Canadian Innovation - Diphtheria*. <http://www.museumofhealthcare.ca/explore/exhibits/vaccinations/diphtheria.html>, 2015.
- ⁸ Maine State Board of Health. *Second Annual Report of the State Board of Health of the State of Maine* (Augusta: Sprague & Son, 1887), 31.
- ⁹ Guignard, *La Foi-La Langue-La Culture*, 13.
- ¹⁰ The first recorded description that resembled diphtheria was made by Greek physician Hippocrates in the fourth century B.C. and the first known epidemic struck Europe in 1576.
- ¹¹ Margulies, *Diphtheria*, 20-21.
- ¹² *Ibid*, 24-25.
- ¹³ Henry Wilson Ring. "Diphtheria." (*Theses (Disserations)*, 1821-1921. Vol. 47. Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College, 1887). There is no record of any staff or student at Bowdoin's Medical School writing about the epidemic, furthering the theory that the French were isolated and ignored from the rest of the community.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁶ Richard Hunter Semple, M.D., *On Diphtheria: Its Nature, Variety, Pathology Diagnosis and Treatment* (London: Bailliere, Tindall and Cox, 1879.), 68.
- ¹⁷ Martha Allen, *Alcohol: A Dangerous and Unnecessary Medicine*, (Marcellus, N.Y.: Dept. of Medical Temperance of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1910), 7.
- ¹⁸ *Bowdoin College Library Bulletin* (Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College, 1895)
- ¹⁹ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, May 14, 1886.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, July 6, 1894.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, January 21, 1887.
- ²² *Ibid*, October 15, 1886.
- ²³ *Bowdoin College Library Bulletin*, 1895.
- ²⁴ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, March 5, 1886.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, July 2, 1886.
- ²⁶ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 13.
- ²⁷ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, March 18, 1904.
- ²⁸ *Ibid*, April 30, 1886.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, July 30, 1886.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, May 7, 1886.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, July 9, 1886.
- ³² www.familysearch.org
- ³³ www.ancestry.com; www.familysearch.org.
- ³⁴ *Ibid*; Year: 1900; Census Place: Brunswick, Cumberland, Maine; Roll: 589; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0037; FHL microfilm: 1240589; Maine State Archives; Augusta, Maine; U.S. Census Mortality Schedules, Maine, 1850-1880; Archive Collection: 4; Census Year: 1880; Census Place: Brunswick, Cumberland, Maine; Page: .
- ³⁵ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, July 9, 1886.
- ³⁶ www.ancestry.com; www.familysearch.org; <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=81016477>.
- ³⁷ *Ibid*, July 30, 1886.
- ³⁸ *Ibid*, July 2, 1886.
- ³⁹ *Ibid*, July 16, 1886.

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- ⁴⁰ Ibid, January 7, 1887.
- ⁴¹ Maine State Board of Health. *First Annual Report of the State Board of Health of the State of Maine* (Augusta: Sprague & Son, 1886), 7.
- ⁴² *The Brunswick Telegraph*, July 23, 1886.
- ⁴³ Ibid, July 30, 1886.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid, August 9, 1886.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, August 13, 1886.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid, August 20, 1886.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Ibid, August 27, 1886.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ibid, September 17, 1886.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, September 10, 1886.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, September 17, 1886.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid, July 6, 1894.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid, September 17, 1886.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, September 24, 1886.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, October 1, 1886.
- ⁶¹ Ibid, October 8, 1886.
- ⁶² *The Brunswick Telegraph*, July 6, 1894.

Conclusion

- ¹ State Board of Health Annual Report, 1887, 24-31.
- ² *The Brunswick Telegraph*, January 7, 1887.
- ³ Kirkland, *Brunswick's Golden Age*, 26.
- ⁴ Ibid, 16.
- ⁵ *The Brunswick Telegraph*, January 28, 1887.
- ⁶ Ibid, July 6, 1894.
- ⁷ “American Academy of Pediatrics taking strong stance on vaccinations,” KVUE, <http://www.kvue.com/news/health/aap-taking-strong-stance-on-vaccinations/310693734>.

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