

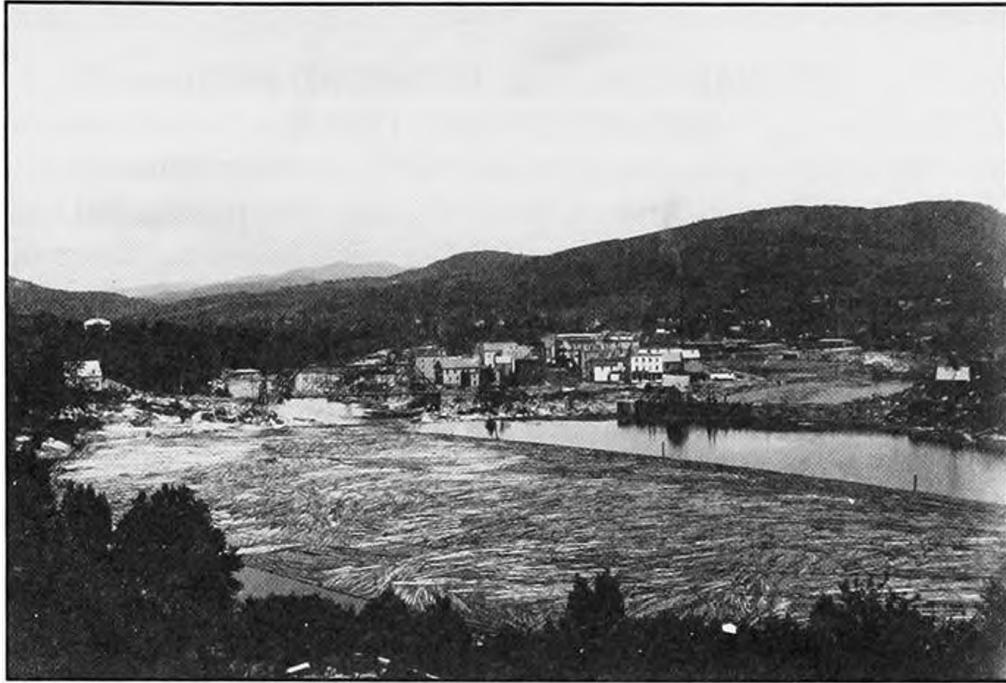
ANDERS LARSON

FRANCO-AMERICANS AND
THE INTERNATIONAL PAPER COMPANY
STRIKE OF 1910

In 1910 International Paper Company workers in Livermore Falls successfully engineered a thirteen-week strike. Meanwhile, the same effort in Rumford Falls failed dramatically. Historically, Franco-Americans have been characterized as conservative and reluctant to join labor unions. This holds true for Rumford, but those in Livermore Falls stood behind the strike effort. Anders Larson explores this stereotype as he analyzes the strike experience in the two communities.

In the spring of 1910, several hundred mill workers at the International Paper Mill in Livermore Falls held a successful thirteen-week strike, conducted without a single dollar in the treasury of the union. In nearby Rumford Falls, the strike, under somewhat similar conditions, failed dramatically. Even more significant than the victory in Livermore Falls was the identity of the community's striking workers: the largest ethnic group represented in the work force was Franco-American. Long regarded as difficult to organize into labor unions, Franco-Americans supported this action as members of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulfit, and Paper Mill Workers.

Among historians, turn-of-the-century Franco-Americans were reputed to be difficult to organize. The behavior of the paper workers of Rumford Falls and Livermore Falls challenges this perspective. A comparison of the two communities suggests that it was not the character of any single ethnic group that



Rumford, Maine, at the turn of the century. Rapid expansion of the pulp and paper industry strained the social fabric of the town, bring tensions within the community leadership and, more spectacularly, between paper workers and mill management.

Maine Historical Society Photo

determined the outcome of the strike; rather it was the overall mix of gender and nationality – and the attitude of the community itself toward organized labor.

Ethnicity was an important ingredient in the strike. Rumford Falls, the larger of the two, was a town characterized by diversity. Several recently immigrated groups and a large number of female workers made up the work force. The Livermore Falls mills, on the other hand, employed only two major ethnic groups and contained few women workers. Ethnic and gender cohesiveness was an important advantage for the workers in Livermore Falls. Aside from this, the influence of local elites was the most important source of differences between the two mill towns. In both cases, the city council appealed to the union organizers to leave town, but in Rumford Falls local elites actually ran out two organizers, an action applauded by the local newspaper and by local mill officials. Livermore Falls offered greater support for the organizers without the overt aggression found in Rumford Falls.

**THE *HABITANTS* OF RUMFORD FALLS
AND LIVERMORE FALLS**

How did Franco-American workers gain this reputation for conservatism and aversion to labor unions? The perception was derived from several studies of the textile-producing cities of New England, which were predominantly Franco-American in their ethnic makeup. Gary Gerstle, who researched the trade-union movement in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, argues that Franco-Americans harbored a “feudal ethos” originating in the hierarchical nature of rural Canadian society – a society dominated by rich landlords and the powerful Catholic church. Gerstle believes the *habitants* of French Canada carried with them to New England notions of reciprocity, mutual obligation, hierarchy, deference, and inequality in social relations.¹ The *habitant* believed in a stratified social system. Gerstle contends that French-speaking immigrants accepted the class nature of the industrial system and that this discouraged them from participating in union activity.

Supporting this feudal ethos was the dominant Catholic church. In Gerstle’s description of rural Canada, the church was a major proponent of established social hierarchies. With the exodus of *habitants* in the second half of the nineteenth century, the French-Canadian religious elite, in an effort to ensure their hegemony, worked to sustain the feudal ethos by sending hundreds of clergy to the “little Canadas” of the United States. These clergy, considered advance scouts for French Quebec, were charged with developing the Franco communities to sustain French culture and heritage.²

Until 1900 the French clergy was violently opposed to labor unions and worked to keep Franco-Americans from becoming members. It was during this latter part of the nineteenth century that Franco-Americans were labeled the “Chinese of the Eastern States,” due partly to their reluctance to embrace American institutions but mostly to their willingness to work for low wages.³ Gerard Brault writes that most Franco-Americans were “shocked by labor violence and were instructed by their pastors not to participate in work stoppages.”⁴

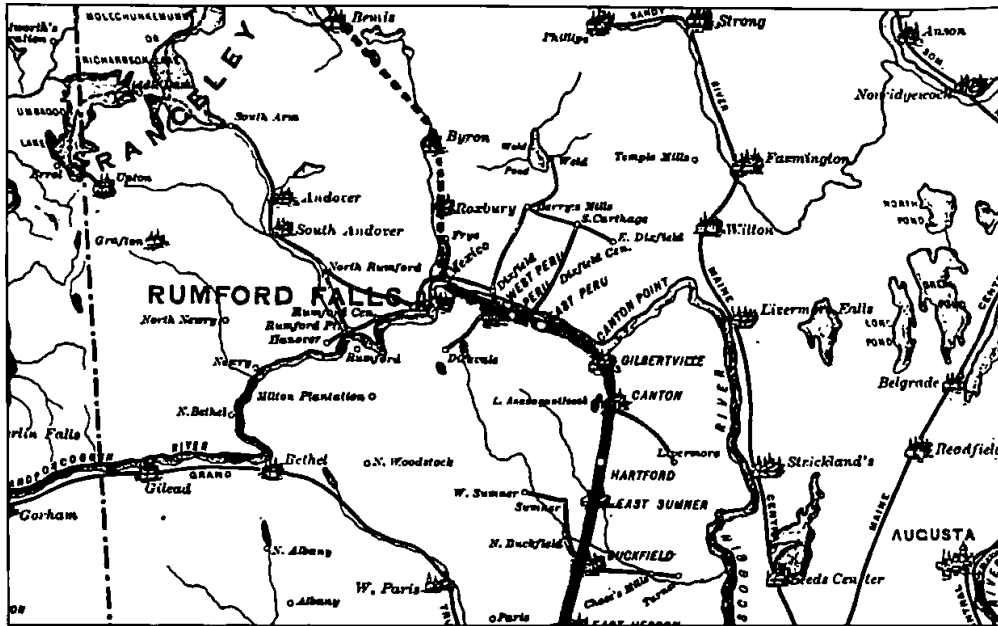
The early Franco-Americans, like most recently immigrated groups, turned to their own people for support and identity in the industrial cities of the United States. C. Stewart Doty writes that "kinship and ethnicity initially facilitated satisfactory work rules and employment," while creating "distrust of potential trade union mentors." But by the early twentieth century these means of industrial survival failed to maintain satisfactory wages, hours, and work conditions.⁵ The decline of ethnic consciousness and the development of class consciousness mark the beginning of Franco-Americans' interest in the potential of organized labor.

ETHNICITY AND GENDER IN LABOR ORGANIZING

Most studies of Franco-American union participation have focused on the textile industry, where Franco-Americans were quite visible. Yet the work force in this industry was diverse with respect to both ethnicity and gender; in particular, it employed a large number of women. For example, figures for the year 1900 in the New England towns of Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Manchester, and New Bedford show that Franco-American women outnumbered Franco-American men almost two to one in the mills. Largely for these reasons, the textile industry as a whole was not successfully organized until after World War I.⁶

It is important to recognize the specific challenges women and, in particular, ethnic women, faced when it came to labor organizing and membership in unions. Historian Colette Hyman notes that "by its very structure, the organized labor movement at the turn of the century all but excluded working women."⁷ Labor leaders often reiterated the prevailing belief that women belonged at home and that it was unnecessary for the wife to contribute to the support of the family by working.

Despite this view, women, again particularly ethnic women, were joining the labor force in large numbers. The response to their presence ranged from benign neglect to efforts aimed at driving them out of factory and mill work.⁸ When labor leaders organized women, the major incentive was the need to protect the earning power of men.⁹ It is unclear from the available



The Androscoggin River valley in central Maine. Rumford Falls (center) hosted several paper mills, as did the somewhat smaller Livermore Falls (right and down river from Rumford Falls). The heavily industrialized river valley attracted numerous immigrants, notably French Canadians.

Maine Historical Society Collections

documents whether any attempt was made to organize the women mill workers of Livermore Falls and Rumford Falls. But given the propensity of historians to generalize about Franco-Americans based on the trade-union movement in the textile industry, where women constituted such a large part of the work force, the Rumford Falls and Livermore Falls examples take on additional importance. Studies of textile industry towns suggest that Franco-American women were difficult to organize. But was this also true of Franco-American men?

THE PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY OF MAINE

A brief examination of the history of paper making in Maine will provide the context necessary to examine this question. The pulp and paper industry in Maine was expanding in both size and number of employees at the turn of the century. Between 1899 and 1909, the number of mills grew from 35 and 45 and the number of wage earners from 4,851 to 8,647. Employment in the industry in 1909 was quite steady, with a peak

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of 8,841 in December and a low of 8,334 in September, a decline of only 507 workers (5.7 percent).¹⁰ In that year pulp and paper production led the rest of the state's industries in the value of its final product, and it employed 10.8 percent of the state's 79,955 working wage earners.¹¹

The paper industry's work force was more homogeneous in terms of sex and age than the average of both Maine and national industries. For all Maine industries, men averaged 75.8 percent, women 22.5 percent, and children (under 16) 1.7 of the total work force. Nationally, the work force was made up of 71.8 percent men, 19.5 percent women, and 2.4 percent children. In the state's pulp and paper industry, men made up 94.4 percent, women 5.4 percent, and children 0.2 percent of the work force.¹² By comparison, in the New England textile industry, women outnumbered men almost two to one.

Until 1893 there were no labor organizations in the paper industry. In that year, the paper machine tenders were given a charter by the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and were called the United Brotherhood of Papermakers. These tenders essentially dominated the workers in the mills, having the "power to hire and fire any member of the crew without appeal." Paper makers were soon added to the charter, which caused the tenders to break away and form the International Paper Machine Tenders Union in 1899. These two unions merged in 1902 to form the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers (IBPM).¹³

In 1906, the unskilled and semi-skilled pulp and paper mill workers formed the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill union (IBPSPM), but they were denied a charter by the AFL. The rift between the IBPM and the IBPSPM came to a head in a strike against the International Paper Company in 1908. The IBPM walked out to protest a wage reduction, while the IBPSPM accepted the new wage and continued to work in the mills. The IBPM strike ended in failure, and by 1909 this ongoing feud had nearly ruined both unions. The number of organized paper makers dropped from 4,300 to 1,000 and union pulp and paper mill workers fell from 4,500 to 1,000 between 1908 and 1909.¹⁴

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The failure of the 1908 strike and the subsequent decline of both unions led to a peace between the two unions in June 1909. The following month the AFL gave the IBPSPM a charter, accepting them into their ranks with the IBPM, and the two unions agreed to support each other in future labor disputes. By 1911, IBPM membership stood at 2,400, and IBPSPM membership had reached 2,800.¹⁵ Both unions were chartered in Livermore Falls and Rumford Falls.¹⁶

THE COMMUNITIES AT RUMFORD FALLS AND LIVERMORE FALLS

To understand the individual community's reaction to the 1910 strike, a brief history of each is helpful. Rumford Falls and Livermore Falls were both primarily mill towns. In addition to the town of Rumford Falls, the Rumford mills also drew workers from Mexico, and the IP mills at Livermore Falls, Riley, and Otis Falls (Chisholm) employed in addition workers from the towns of East Livermore and Jay.

At the turn of the century, the town of Rumford Falls was undergoing a period of abrupt change. By 1906 Rumford Falls hosted five paper, pulp, and sulfite mills, all situated on the Androscoggin River. Three of these belonged to IP. The largest was a paper mill producing 190 tons of paper, 70 tons of newsprint, and 120 tons of bag and envelope paper per day. The latter product was sent to the adjacent Continental Paper Bag Company, which was independent of International Paper Company.¹⁷ International Paper also operated a sulfite mill producing 130 tons of pulp per day, along with a groundwood (pulp) mill producing 100 tons per day. Finally, there was the Oxford Paper Company, another independent mill, which in 1902 secured the contract for postal cards for the United States Post Office, producing 3 million per day.¹⁸

The town's population grew from 898 in 1890 to 3,770 in 1900. By 1910, the year of the strike, 6,777 people lived in Rumford Falls.¹⁹ Between 1890 and 1910 the town became a "melting pot for people of many nationalities." An agent in Providence, Rhode Island, was employed to "steer incoming

Italians northward to Rumford.” Along with the Italians, the end of the century brought Polish, Scottish, Lithuanians, Irish, Canadians, and French Canadians. Textile mills in New England were paying five to six cents an hour, while labor brokers for the mills in Rumford Falls were paying 10 cents an hour to attract workers to such an out-of-the-way place.²⁰

This ethnic variety fractured the work force, as each group found solidarity among its own members. Thus, areas of town became known for the nationality of the people inhabiting them (Italians in Smithville, Polish and Russians along River Street, and Irish on Waldo Street, for example). Each group inherited a stereotypical label: “Canucks” or “Frogs” for Canadian French, “Dago or Wop” for Italians, “P I’s” for those from the Maritime Provinces generally, “Skishmen” for those from New Brunswick, “Bluenose” for those from Nova Scotia, and “Herring Choker” for those from Prince Edward Island. Among Catholics, the French-speaking parishioners attended St John’s, while the Irish, Lithuanians, and Polish went to St. Athanasius Church, which was also known as the Irish Church.¹⁶

Rumford’s elites were not exactly benevolent in their attitudes toward these new arrivals. The local paper, *The Rumford Times*, upon whose board sat Waldo Pettengill, one of the mills’ financial backers, published an editorial characterizing the new immigrants as the “beaten from beaten races,” representing “the worst failure in the struggle for existence.” The editor felt that “next to the liquor problem, immigration is the most serious problem American people have to contend with.” Yet the Yankee community was itself divided in its impressions of the changes the mills brought to Rumford Falls.

In his history of Rumford, John J. Leane gives us a flavor for the changes the town was experiencing, along with insights into the dynamics of the town’s elite. Some townspeople characterized Pettengill as one of the “ring of big city financiers who have taken over the town.” Critics of the new paper-industry elite formed their own newspaper, *The Rumford Citizen*, which served to voice concerns about the “elements of feudalism” in Rumford Falls created primarily by Hugh J. Chisholm, founder of the



Hugh J. Chisholm, the dynamic entrepreneur responsible for much of the industrial growth in the upper Androscoggin Valley, was considered a benefactor by some, and a plutocrat by others.

THE OXFORD STORY (1958)

Oxford Paper Company and co-founder of International Paper Company. The paper argued that a few wealthy men in Rumford Falls “control all enterprise, fix wages and costs of both rented and owned houses.” They drove the point home with the following editorial:

The Rumford Falls Power Co. owns the land, American Realty Co. owns the forests, the Light and Water Co. owns the lights and water, Rumford Falls Realty Co. owns the houses for rent, the Dunton Lumber Co. owns the timber for building houses, the Rail Road Co. owns the transportation, the Banks control finances, the Corporations own the mills and control the labor, and Hugh J. Chisholm owns and controls them all.

Published from 1905 to 1907, the *Rumford Citizen* folded for lack of support. “After 1907, little criticism of H.J. Chisholm was heard in Rumford.”²² The town council itself took a conservative stand similar to that of Pettengill.

Livermore Falls also went through some dramatic changes around the turn of the century. In 1883, there were only three

houses in town, but by 1912 there were over 1,000. The first paper mill in Livermore Falls appeared in 1888. By 1910, the nearby town of Chisholm, named after the “man who did so much to develop the paper industry at Rumford Falls,” contained a large IP Company mill with nine newsprint machines and one wrapping paper machine. There were also two pulp mills, one at Livermore Falls and the other at Riley, and a sulfite mill at Livermore Falls. All these mills were on the Androscoggin River and were owned and operated by the IP Company.²³

WAGE EARNERS

The Thirteenth U.S. Census provides a wealth of information for both communities regarding occupation, language, nativity, year of immigration, sex, and housing status. With respect to the mills in Rumford Falls, this study surveyed the towns of Rumford Falls, Rumford Village, and Mexico. For the mills near Livermore Falls, the towns of Livermore, East Livermore, Chesterville, and Jay were examined.²⁴

The labor force in the paper mills of Rumford Falls was considerably more heterogeneous in gender and ethnicity than that in Livermore Falls. Of the total number (1,634) of paper industry workers in the Rumford mills, 182 (11 percent) were women, with 4 (0.2 percent) under the age of 16. The number of women employees was higher than the state average of 5.4 percent. The following tables show the nativity and ethnic makeup of the Rumford paper industry workers. As these statistics show, the paper industry labor force at the Livermore Falls mills was much more homogeneous.

Comparing the overall composition of the two communities brings out significant differences in ethnicity. In Livermore Falls, two major ethnic groups – Franco-American and U.S. native – made up most of the labor force; in Rumford Falls, these two groups made up only 53 percent of the labor force. Livermore Falls had 4 percent fewer non-English speaking workers and 10 percent fewer women than Rumford Falls. The Franco-American population in the Livermore Falls paper industry – 55 percent in the paper mill and 37 percent in the pulp mills (46 percent

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overall) – was substantially larger than Rumford's 297 Franco American paper mill employees (24 percent), excluding the Continental Company's 190 additional Franco-Americans.²⁵

A significant challenge for labor organizers at the Rumford mills was the ethnic diversity of the work force. There were 276 Russian Lithuanian, Polish, and Lettish workers. Only 117 of these workers spoke English (44 percent), only one owned property, and the majority had immigrated within the previous ten years. This ethnic diversity did not exist in the labor force of the Livermore Falls mills, where Europeans numbered only 44, or 8 percent of the paper industry workers.

Home ownership (see Tables 1 and 2) was more frequent among paper industry workers in Livermore Falls than in Rumford mills. In Livermore Falls, 20 percent of paper workers owned houses, with ownership among the three major ethnic groups about equal. These figures suggest a less transient population with a greater stake in the community. In Rumford Falls, home ownership was only 11 percent for all paper industry workers and was not equal among the different ethnic groups.²⁶

TABLE 1: ETHNICITY IN RUMFORD

Ethnic Group	Total	Homeowner[^]	Women
French-Canada Born	327 (23%)	39	79
French-Canadian Parent(s)	125 (08%)	46	50
U.S. Born	361 (22%)	62	21
Other*	776 (47%)	43	32
Totals	1,634 (100%)	190[^]	182

[^]These figures include all workers who lived in houses that they or their immediate family owned. They do not include the Continental Company.

*Includes English, Scottish, Italian, Irish, German, Danish, Swedish, French, Turkish, Norwegian, Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Lettish.

[^]168 of these women were employed at the Continental Paper Bag Company, which did not participate in the IP strike.

Source: U.S. Census Manuscript

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TABLE 2: ETHNICITY IN LIVERMORE FALLS

Ethnic Group	Total	Homeowner*
French-Canada Born	209 (40%)	40
Franco-Canadian Parent(s)	29 (06%)	11
U.S. Born	201 (38%)	41
English-Canada Born	40 (08%)	10
Other	44 (08%)	3
Total	523 (100%)	105
*The figures include all workers who lived in houses that they or their immediate family owned.		

Source: U.S. Census Manuscript

**TABLE 3: ETHNICITY IN RUMFORD PAPER MILLS
(PULP, SULFUR, PAPER), INCLUDING OXFORD PAPER**

Ethnic Group	Total	Homeowner	Women
French-Canada Born	251 (20%)	28	7
French-Canadian Parent(s)	46 (04%)	23	1
U.S. Born	284 (23%)	45	3
Other	669 (54%)	39	3
Totals	1,250 (100)	135	14

Source: U.S. Census Manuscript

THE 1910 IP STRIKE

In 1910 IP workers held a successful thirteen-week strike involving several thousand mill workers. The IBPM and the IBPSPM supported each other in the strike and effectively slowed paper production to such an extent that IP officials were forced to negotiate. The most important reason for the strike was not higher wages or shorter hours, but union recognition. The strike was organized under difficult conditions. Following the unsuccessful 1908 strike, the company had established an elaborate spy system to discourage union participation. Spies reported union men to the company and the men would then find a "blue card" (pink slip) attached to their timecards.²⁷ IP's

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position on the 1908 strike, according to President A. N. Burbank, was that the two unions held an “antagonistic attitude” toward the company. An editor in the pro-business *Paper Trade Journal* felt that union leaders had no real reason to strike and were simply out to “wreak vengeance.” It was the “absence of a good cause [that had] defeated the men in 1908,” and the paper predicted that the same weakness “fore doomed” the 1910 attempt by “bad leaders to wreak personal spite on the company.”²⁸

The IP strike began in Cornith, New York, on March 9, and spread readily to other New York and Vermont mills. By March 24 it reached the Otis Mill at Livermore Falls. The *Paper Trade Journal* put the number of affected workers at 7,000 throughout the Northeast. Although IP was able to keep many of its mills producing, albeit under capacity, with scab labor, negotiations were under way with the two unions by the end of April. By May 21, the company and the unions reached an agreement. The union called off the strike, and workers began returning to work on May 23. The company agreed to end Sunday work and gave a 5 percent increase in pay beginning in August. It recognized the unions as the legal representatives of the workers and allowed workers who had participated in the strike to return to their jobs, “without discrimination, until all strikers are hired” before the company hired any others.²⁹ It is important to note that the Livermore Falls workers participated primarily out of sympathy for the strikers in IP’s New York mills. Although the grievances were probably the same throughout the region, the Livermore Falls walkout demonstrated a strong sense of solidarity with the union and what it stood for.

RUMFORD AND LIVERMORE FALLS DURING THE 1910 STRIKE

This solidarity notwithstanding, the strike and organizing activity were not equally successful in the two Maine IP towns. An important consideration in comparing the experiences in Rumford Falls and Livermore Falls was the mood among the community leaders in the two towns. Judging from the coverage

of the strike given in the *Rumford Falls Times*, the *Lewiston Evening Journal*, and the *Paper Trade Journal*, the town of Rumford Falls was more hostile to union organizers.

The *Times*, Rumford's weekly paper, published many articles and editorials with a definite antiunion flavor. The first was an editorial from the president of the International Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen, who claimed that J. T. Carey, president of the IBPM, wanted to create an "Industrial Organization of all mill workers." He charged that Carey was "untruthful and prone to seek self interests." In late March, J. H. Malin, president of the IBSPM and G. J. Schneider, vice president of the IBPM, were both driven out of Rumford Falls by a "citizen's delegation," members of which informed the organizers that "their disturbance of labor in the town would not be tolerated." A *Times* editorial titled "the Rumford Way" praised the action as a proper method of dealing with "agitators," since neither the town nor the workers could afford the hardships a strike would bring. Malin and Schneider returned to Rumford two days later with a police escort.³⁰

Not only did union organizers face outright physical hostility, they had to contend with more subtle forms of exclusion by the community. In their search for a place to hold meetings, the organizers often found it necessary to meet in the streets or in empty lots. In March, Schneider obtained permission to use the Salvation Army building to hold an organizing meeting, but at the last moment the lessee blocked it. On April 9 the *Times* reported that Carey had to address a crowd in a vacant lot on Waldo Street. Carey moved across the river to Mexico to organize but encountered the same difficulty in obtaining a hall. Two Mexico town assessors asked him to leave, but he refused.³¹

Although in the end the effort failed, the ambitious organizing in Rumford Falls was not without its successes. On March 24, Schneider was able to sign up eight men for his union, in addition to the thirty-five who registered the previous night. The following day he mused that the "people of Rumford find I'm not so bad," and claimed to have "already forty names to start a local union of paper makers." Schneider noted that the "pulp workers

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[were] also being organized.” On April 4, Carey ordered a strike, but only three or four participated. The following day at McMerramin Hall workers voted 150 to 51 not to strike. This event proved to be the last major effort by the union organizers in Rumford Falls. The *Times* reported on May 7 that there would be no strike at Rumford; the “final attempt died when Carey, Malin, and a dozen lieutenants left town.” Labeling the organizers “parasites of industry, trying to outlaw the right of the employees to make a living,” the editor crowed that the “men of Rumford have displayed a higher sense of duty to their wives and children than the men of Livermore, Glens Falls, and other places.”³²

In Livermore Falls, organizers had better luck. By March 21, 400 to 500 men were out of work, half of them striking and the other half idled by the shut-down. The pulp mills were less affected than the paper mills: sixty men continued to work in the Livermore Falls pulp mill and 100 at the Riley pulp mill. Interestingly, these were the mills that contained the lowest percentage of Franco-Americans (37 percent, as compared to 55 percent in the paper mills). The two IP pulp mills at Livermore Falls and Riley continued to supply the ten-machine paper mill in Chisholm (Livermore Falls).³³

The striking workers in Livermore Falls were quite active, sometimes even violent, in supporting the strike. On March 25, 250 strike sympathizers hurled rocks at the arriving scabs. The following day a crowd of roughly 200 strikers met the trains carrying scabs at the Chisholm station. Although the union did not condone violence, workers were eager to express their determination to “keep out the scabs.”³⁴

The town of Livermore Falls was more receptive than Rumford to union organizers. During the early stages of the strike, the Livermore Falls Board of Trade met with union representatives to exchange information and to discuss their respective concerns. Among the nine men on the Board were three bearing Franco-American names: A. A. Merscreau, Napoleon L’Hereux, and the Reverend Father Desjardins, pastor at Saint Rose de Lima parish in Livermore Falls.³⁵ Reacting

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cautiously to the strike and the ensuing violence, the town called in Sheriff Hastings from Auburn. When asked by IP to deputize the company's loyal workers, Hastings refused, explaining that he did not want to take sides. Instead, he conferred with the strikers and mill workers in an attempt to get their cooperation in securing the peace. He was not entirely successful, and at the end of March the town selectmen ordered in the militia, which had to be brought in from Farmington in Franklin County because 75 percent of the militia of Androscoggin County was out on strike. During the rest of the strike, there were only a few relatively insignificant fights, most of them among young boys looking for fun. Two of the more serious encounters involved four men of Franco-American descent.³⁵

During the course of the strike, union leaders trying to organize in Rumford Falls stopped by from time to time in Livermore Falls to reaffirm the union's goals and to generate enthusiasm for the strike. Carey arrived in town on April 4 and succeeded in procuring the Dreamland Theater for a rally. Before a crowd of eight hundred strikers and sympathizers, he denounced IP for its vicious antiunion policies.³⁶

On May 21, the strike ended, and two days later 75 percent of the striking workers were back on the job at the Livermore Falls mills. The *Paper Trade Journal* estimated, and the *Lewiston Journal* agreed that a total of about four hundred workers were

**TABLE 4: LIVERMORE FALLS PAPER MILL
(INTERNATIONAL PAPER)**

Ethnic Group	Total	Homeowner
French-Canada Born	128 (48%)	32
French-Canadian Parent(s)	18 (07%)	8
U.S. Born	90 (33%)	11
English-Canadian Born	19 (07%)	1
Other	14 (05%)	1
Total	269 (100%)	57

Source: U.S. Census Manuscript



A Fourth of July parade in Rumford, held a few months after the divisive 1910 strike. Such events helped to smooth over ethnic and class tensions in towns like Rumford Falls and Livermore Falls, as communities joined together to celebrate their Americanness.

idled. According to the figures of the Thirteenth Census, this would include most of the paper workers in the Livermore Falls area. (See Tables 4 and 5.)

Although it is difficult to determine definitely, the predominance of Franco-Americans in the Livermore Falls labor force strongly suggests that their participation was crucial for the success of the strike. However, what emerges as the decisive factor in comparing Rumford Falls and Livermore Falls is not the behavior of any single ethnic group, but the overall gender and ethnic diversity of the labor force. The more diverse labor force in Rumford Falls proved more difficult to organize. Livermore Falls had only two ethnic groups of numerical significance: Franco-Americans and English-speaking natives.

In addition to the difference in the ethnic composition of Rumford Falls and Livermore Falls, differences in elite attitudes were crucial to the outcome of the strike and the attempt to organize. The relatively small class of landowners and industri-

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**TABLE 5 LIVERMORE FALLS PULP MILL
(INTERNATIONAL PAPER)**

Ethnic Group	Total	Homeowner
French-Canada Born	80 (33%)	8
French-Canadian Parent(s)	10 (04%)	3
U.S. Born	102 (43%)	30
English-Canadian Born	19 (08%)	5
Other* 29 (11%)	2	
Total	240 (100%)	48
*Other here represents Irish, French, Italian, Danish, Russian, Hungarian, and Austrian		

Source: U.S. Census Manuscript

**TABLE 6: RUMFORD SULFUR MILL
(INTERNATIONAL PAPER)**

Ethnic Group	Total	Homeowner
French-Canada Born	5 (18%)	2
French-Canadian Parent(s)	1 (04%)	1
U.S. Born	12 (43%)	3
English-Canadian & Other	10 (35%)	1
Total	28 (100%)	7

Source: U.S. Census Manuscript

**TABLE 7: RUMFORD PULP MILL
(INTERNATIONAL PAPER)**

Ethnic Group	Total	Homeowner
French-Canada Born	13 (18%)	2
French-Canadian Parent(s)	2 (04%)	
U.S. Born	5 (07%)	
English-Canadian & Other	54 (73%)	1
Total	74 (100%)	3

Source: U.S. Census Manuscript

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alists who controlled Rumford Falls knew it was in their interest to keep workers ethnically divided and unorganized, and they played a major role in hindering union efforts to organize workers. This elite group controlled the press and used it to persuade workers that unions were self-serving. The message from city leaders was that unions were infringing on workers' right to work. The company successfully alienate wage-earners from the unions, while neighborhood segregation kept these same wage-earners divided by ethnicity. Still, the active participation of Franco-Americans in the IP strike dispels the myth that they were antiunion, an assumption that evidently stems from studies of early immigrants working the textile industry, where women, who were discouraged from organizing by the unions themselves, made up a large portion of the work force.

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NOTES

¹Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 25.

²Yves Roby, "Quebec in the United States: A Historiographic Survey," *Maine Historical Society Quarterly*, 26 (Winter 1987).

³*Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, p. 394.

⁴Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1986), p. 63.

⁵C. Stewart Doty, *The First Franco-Americans: New England Life Histories From The Federal Writers' Project, 1938-1939* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1985), p. 155.

⁶Brault, *French-Canadian Heritage*, pp. 61, 63.

⁷Colette A. Hyman, "Labor Organizing and Female Institution-building: The Chicago Women's Trade Union League, 1904-1924," in Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work and Protest: A Century of U.S. Women's Labor History* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 23.

⁸Meredith Tax, *The Rising of the Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), pp. 36-37.

⁹Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 156.

¹⁰Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the U.S., 1910, Abstract with Maine Supplement* (Washington: G.P.O., 1912), pp. 634, 635.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 457.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 455, 457-59, 620.

¹³Harry Edward Graham, *The Paper Rebellion* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1970), pp. 1-5; James A. Gross, "The Making and Shaping of Unionism in the Pulp and Paper Industry," *Labor History* (Spring 1964).

¹⁴Graham, *Paper Rebellion*. For the union membership figures, see Leo Wolman, *Growth of American Trade Unions, 1888-1823* (New York, 1936), pp. 116-17.

¹⁵Gross, "Making and Shaping of Unionism."

¹⁶Charles O'Leary, "A History of Organized Labor in Maine During the New Deal," M.A. thesis, University of Maine, tables on pp. 137-141.

¹⁷Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the U.S., Maine, 1910*.

¹⁸John J. Leane, *A History of Rumford, Me., 1771-1971* (Rumford: Rumford Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 40-41.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 571-75.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 45-48.

²³Benjamin F. Lawrence, *History of Jay, Maine* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1912), pp. 18-19.

²⁴In the Rumford census no distinction was made between IP and Oxford Paper company employees. Only the type of mill – paper, pulp, chemical/sulfite, or bag/envelope – was distinguished. In the Livermore Falls community all mills were owned by IP, so this was not a problem. For statistical purposes, it will be assumed that the labor force in the paper mills of Rumford (Oxford and IP) was similar in composition.

²⁵Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth U.S. Census, Maine, 1910*.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Leane, *History of Rumford*, p. 188; Graham, *Paper Rebellion*, p. 5.

²⁸*Paper Trade Journal*, March 24, 1910; March 17, 1910.

²⁹*Ibid.*, March 24, 1910; May 26, 1910; *Lewiston Evening Journal*, May 23, 1910.

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³⁰*Rumford Falls Times*, March 19, 26, 1910.

³¹*Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 25, April 4, 1910; *Rumford Falls Times*, April 9, 1910.

³²*Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 24, 25, April 4, 5, 1910; *Rumford Falls Times*, April 9, May 7, 1910.

³³*Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 21, 22, 1910.

³⁴*Ibid.*, March 25, 26, 1910.

³⁵*Ibid.*, March 25, 29, 1910.

³⁴*Ibid.*, April 5, 1910.

³⁵*Ibid.*, March 26, 29, 1910.

³⁶*Ibid.*, March 5, 1910.

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