



An All-American Town? Ethnicity and Memory in the Barre Granite Strike of 1922

The strike of 1922 represents not merely a reverberation of national phenomena in seemingly remote Vermont; it says something about labor conflict in small industrial centers across New England. Emphasis on French Canadians' experience through the clash in Barre highlights the impact of such labor practices on interethnic relations in places all too often overlooked by scholars.

BY PATRICK LACROIX

“**W**e have to work together, we might as well be friends.”¹ The social tissue of Barre scarred uneasily over memories of the strike of 1922. What hopes local granite workers may have had in the spring of that year, when walking away from the quarries, evaporated at the sight of French Canadian men brought in and paraded through town by the owners, to take their place as granite cutters and finishers. The involvement of local quarry and shop owners in a nationwide campaign against organized labor, aiming

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PATRICK LACROIX earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of New Hampshire in 2017. His research on the history of American immigration and religion has appeared in numerous peer-reviewed publications. A native of Cowansville, Québec, he currently teaches in Nova Scotia.

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to sap union strength and silence radicalism, contributed to new animosity between ethnic communities in Barre. Tensions remained even as the strike collapsed. In the 1940s, French Canadians' role in the struggle remained a sensitive, if not live, issue. Decades would pass before a sense of normalcy returned to Barre.²

At least, this is the story later writers would have us believe. Oral interviews collected under the auspices of the Federal Writers' Project [FWP] (1935-1943), at the turn of the 1940s, depicted the strike of 1922 as a traumatic event. Although residents had sought to move past petty resentments, interviewees still indicated that strikebreaking had poisoned organized labor's efforts as well as the good will between ethnic groups. Such first-hand testimony would be compelling, maybe incontrovertible, were it not at odds with surviving records from the year of the strike. There is in fact limited evidence indicating a complete corporate victory in the struggle to break the strike, and little identifying French Canadians as distinct actors in the clash of labor and capital. The challenge for historians, then, lies partly in establishing the events of 1922, but also in discerning how perceptions of the strike might have shifted in the decades that followed.

Until recently, FWP interviews constituted the main direct sources for the events of 1922. The promise of accessing the "ordinary person" experience of the strike through these interviews must be weighed against the limitations of all oral history, from faulty memory and the influence of hindsight to blind spots in interrogators' questions. As historian Joy Parr explains, even "a thick barrier of [methodological] safeguards," meant to protect the interviewee's knowledge and experience, can prove insufficient.³ FWP testimony poses its own particular problems. Leonard Rapport, who had taken part in this New Deal program in North Carolina, drew attention to the inaccuracies and inadequacies of the interviews in an article published forty years later. One of his contemporary reports indicated, for instance, that "some of the stories are not necessarily true but are typical of the region." Rapport argued that there was no longer any way of separating fact from fiction even when some stories had "the ring of truth," as many of the writers failed to follow instructions and took significant liberties with the information they gathered.⁴

Other scholars have countered that despite creative license, improper notetaking, or interviewees' faulty recollections, FWP interviews have been invaluable in capturing "the hopes, fears, and aspirations of people not normally heard from." Such scholars argue that the FWP must be approached with the same critical outlook that historians bring to their analysis of other documents. Instead of searching for a "ring of truth,"

they must connect the interviews to a larger patchwork of evidence.⁵ Miroslav Vaněk adds that “[o]ral history should not be seen as the opposite of written sources in archives but as two sides of the same coin,” each complementing the other and refining our understanding of a particular historical moment.⁶ This has yet to be done with the interviews conducted in Barre, where the strike of 1922 still loomed large at the time of the FWP. In this case, oral history may be a better guide to the hard feelings that followed, through the tumult of other events, than to the strike itself.

The value in connecting oral history and contemporary documentary evidence to reconstruct the labor conflict in Barre is clear.⁷ The granite strike matters substantially for what it reveals of the intersection of ethnicity and labor in Vermont and the United States in the 1920s. Barre became one of many microcosms of a national campaign for “open shops” that would sap the power of labor unions, with local conditions giving it a special inflection. In the Barre area, the sheer significance of the granite industry, the unique mix of immigrant groups, and Vermont’s political context all had a part in the escalation of tensions. The strike of 1922 thus represents not merely a reverberation of national phenomena in seemingly remote Vermont; it says something about labor conflict in small industrial centers across New England. Emphasis on French Canadians’ experience through the clash in Barre highlights the impact of such labor practices on interethnic relations in places all too often overlooked by scholars. In this sense, it answers historian André Sénécal’s injunction to flesh out Vermont’s complex but neglected ethnic history.⁸

French speakers from Lower Canada (later Québec) were an inescapable presence on Vermont soil at least from the 1840s, with some clusters of population dating to the 1830s. The first, highly mobile migrants provided unskilled labor on farms and in workshops to complement income earned in Canada. In time, communities and distinctive institutions formed. Burlington became the site of the first national French Canadian Catholic parish in New England in 1850. The commercial and industrial opportunities of Burlington and Winooski (then still part of Colchester) were especially attractive, but surviving evidence also attests to a growing French Canadian presence all across the state in the nineteenth century. Vermont’s share of *canadien* immigrants to the U.S. Northeast declined over time and, after 1900, the movement from Québec came to a near halt.⁹ Still, by 1920, when heavy immigration resumed, they constituted both the largest foreign-born group and the largest group of “foreign white stock” in the state.¹⁰

Remarkably, despite the alleged role of French Canadian strikebreak-

ers, few scholars of Franco-American studies have explored the strike of 1922. Research on French Canadian immigrants and their American descendants is increasingly multifaceted, but it remains focused on the cultural concerns and urban lives of those who worked in the large textile manufacturing centers of New England. Surveys of Franco-American history tend, in fact, to neglect Vermont altogether, as with northern New Hampshire and rural Maine. Fall River, Lowell, Manchester, and Lewiston have overshadowed smaller centers of industry or resource extraction. Although the five major surveys published since 1986 do justice to interethnic strife that erupted all across the Northeast, not one mentions the strike in Barre or the role of labor clashes in raising cultural tensions in the 1920s. In short, the strike provides an opportunity to bring local memory and the insights of local historians into a larger conversation about interethnic relations in the region.¹¹

Historians of American labor are, understandably, more attentive to the larger struggles of 1922—the great railway shopmen’s strike in particular—as classic studies by Philip Taft and David Montgomery make plain.¹² But even these events remain a blind spot in American history textbooks as well as in our common historical consciousness. In the eyes of non-experts and even many U.S. historians, from the ashes of the strikes of 1919 arose a decade of welfare capitalism, relative labor peace, and prosperity. In reality, workers who struck in Barre and across New England in 1922 were reacting to corporate efforts to roll back wages and to undermine power accrued by labor unions since the beginning of the Great War. Vermont was very much part of this larger story. That insightful works on the quarries and culture of Barre do not recognize, or elaborate on, the events of 1922 is thus all the more remarkable.¹³

FRENCH CANADIANS AND AMERICAN LABOR

The events in Barre were anticipated by a long association between French Canadian labor and strikebreaking in New England. Immigrants from Québec were in fact a disruptive economic force as early as 1868—not in the textile mills of Fall River, Lowell, Manchester, or Lewiston, but in the marble quarries of West Rutland, Vermont. When predominantly Irish marble workers struck for higher wages, managers reportedly “imported” French Canadians seeking easy wages and perhaps unaware of the situation they were entering. Local newspapers shared rumors of riots and physical altercations. Whether a large-scale melee occurred remains unclear, but the antagonism and threat of large-scale violence were real, prompting officials to ready the militia for possible

intervention. The hiring of scabs was apparently successful, as the strike collapsed in the subsequent month.¹⁴

Incidents of French Canadian strikebreaking moved to other parts of New England in subsequent decades. Canadians in Fall River earned a reputation as “knobsticks.” They were responsible for strife, paradoxically, by refusing to take part in labor disturbances. Priests from Québec enjoined them to uphold law and order in their adoptive country. Differences concerning the cultural and linguistic practices and funding of Roman Catholic parishes likely also deterred Canadians from joining a labor movement led by Irishmen. Further, French Canadians often came from rural areas and had little experience in collective labor action and little knowledge of the urban environment in which they settled; many hoped to earn money quickly and could not afford to forego wages for the duration of a strike, or risk expulsion from company tenements. French Canadians were a conservative force in late nineteenth-century U.S. labor and business owners intended to use them to the fullest possible extent.¹⁵

Change was on the horizon, however. In the 1880s and 1890s, French Canadians slowly acculturated to American labor militancy, a key phase in the overall process of Americanization. As they became rooted to U.S. soil and competed with other groups, they accepted their Irish co-workers’ and coreligionists’ invitation to make common cause. This happened in Fall River; so too in Holyoke, Massachusetts. From “obstacles to better wages,” the *Canadiens* came to “dominate” key unions in the city, all in little more than a decade.¹⁶ In Vermont, reports of a strike at the Winooski mills in 1899 evinced no sign of ethnic divisions. Franco-Americans were likely part and parcel of the movement, in light of the village’s population and mills’ workforce. It seems improbable, in any event, that managers would have turned to Quebeckers to break a strike predominantly of French-speaking Catholics.¹⁷ On the other hand, there is evidence from such large textile centers as Lowell and Lawrence that French Canadians remained either cool or indifferent to organized labor even into the twentieth century, perhaps due to the involvement of new immigrants and radical groups (e.g. socialists, the Industrial Workers of the World) in labor disruptions.¹⁸

Evidently, local conditions dictated the pace of French Canadian mobilization in labor. Following the First World War, however, economic pressures and federal policy combined to inaugurate a new phase in labor struggles all across the United States. Few groups and few regions with industry escaped the influence of the National War Labor Board (NWLB), established in 1918 to halt strikes and other major disruptions

in war-related fields. The NLRB privileged conciliation, but not entirely at the expense of workers' rights: It outlawed the blacklisting of union men and could compel employers to recognize and negotiate with unions where previously workers had not organized. Symbolically at least, workers and employers could now deal with one another as equals.¹⁹ Unions grew and built on wartime advances to defend workers' wages and purchasing power in the face of high inflation. Major strikes developed from coast to coast, from a general strike in Seattle to the protests of New York waterfront workers and Boston policemen, in addition to stoppages in coal and steel. Yet labor's momentum proved short-lived. The Red Scare opened upon an overlooked but unyielding corporate counter-offensive.²⁰

The campaign to protect employer leverage in the early 1920s did not merely become apparent in retrospect. One observer recognized the increasing pressure on the labor movement:

never before has America seen an open shop drive on a scale so vast as that which characterizes the drive now sweeping the country. Never before has an open-shop drive been so heavily financed, so efficiently organized, so skillfully generated. The present drive flies all the flags of patriotic wartime propaganda. It advances in the name of democracy, freedom, human rights, Americanism.²¹

By 1922, union leaders were left with little choice but to resort to strike action to uphold their own legitimacy. Over the course of the year, 1.6 million American workers went out on strikes. But they hit the picket lines with little of the determination and energy that had characterized prior strikes. As David Montgomery explains, whereas “[i]n 1916 there had been great hopes, and the abundance of jobs had unleashed thousands of different strikes . . . 1922 was a year of grimly determined defensive warfare for strikers and was followed by an abrupt decline in strike activity.”²²

Numerous industries found their activities disrupted or wholly stopped. Strikes in the textile industry, in which thousands of French Canadians were still concentrated, paralyzed mills across New England.²³ In July, a walk-out involving 400,000 shopmen became the first national railway strike since 1894. In Vermont, such communities as St. Albans, Lyndonville, and St. Johnsbury were first-hand witnesses to that strike.²⁴ Further, according to some reports, by the spring of 1922, a pulp and paper strike in Bellows Falls had gone on for eleven months.²⁵ But it was the course of events in Barre that drew most Vermonters' attention that year and, ultimately, that would hold a place of prominence in their recollection of the tumultuous events of 1922.

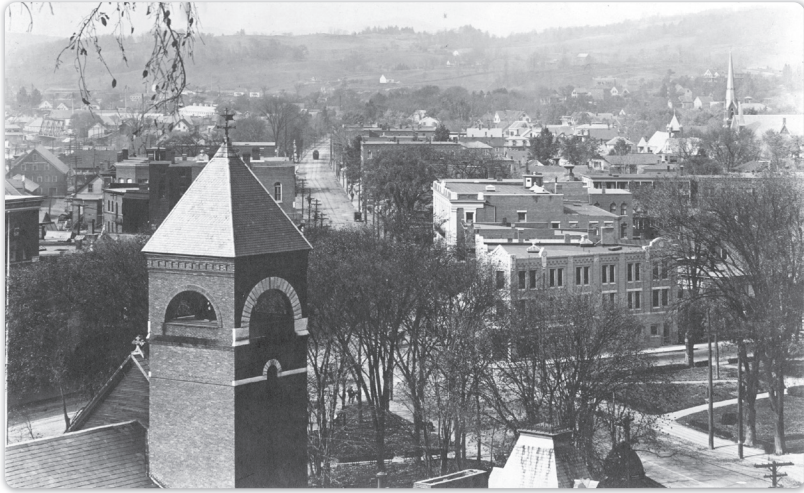
BREAKING BARRE

Unlike other struggles in Barre, many concerned with occupational health and silicosis, the strike of 1922 came as a reaction to systematic anti-labor campaigns.²⁶ Under the leadership of James Duncan and the Granite Cutters' International Association (GCIA), workers across New England rejected management's plans for a 20-percent wage reduction over two years. The Board of Control, an association of manufacturers, pointed to declining demand due to market prices that would cripple the industry over time. Though justifiable in a period of deflation, the pursuit of cost-cutting measures had the very explicit effect of protecting employer leverage in all future labor disputes. On April 1, 1922, as their existing contract expired, the men walked away from the quarries and "sheds" (where granite was finished). Journalists estimated that 5,000 stone workers—from Rhode Island to Rockland, Maine—were involved, with the figure in the Barre area amounting to 2,000.²⁷

As the strike began, owners responded that labor "forced the adoption of the American plan, which is now effective in practically all the granite centers."²⁸ Employers would make no distinction between union and non-union men when hiring, enabling them to gradually sap the power of organized labor. They wasted little time implementing the open-shop model. Whereas strikers largely held firm, some quarries resumed operations with non-union men willing to work at the rate stipulated by companies. By mid-April, there were such sites in Montpelier, Waterbury, and Barre.²⁹ On the other hand, the industry presented far from a united front. Several companies continued to operate, in good faith, with union men under the terms of the expired agreement until both parties could settle on a new contract. This was the first sign of differences that would ultimately undermine the open-shop crusade in Barre.³⁰

The first reports of strikebreaking set the stage for a public relations battle between capital and labor that would continue to the end of the year. An editorial first published in the *St. Albans Messenger* and circulated across the state suggested that the employers might have the Vermont public's favor. "The open shop is the natural reaction when an industry has been over-organized and unionized," the author declared. "It remains to be seen whether the employers . . . are deadly in earnest in their determination to manage their own business in such a way that it can pay a reasonable wage to both labor and capital."³¹ The granite unions had their own allies and resources, but little that might have brought them broader public support. During the summer of 1922, at its annual convention, the Vermont branch of the American Federation of

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Downtown Barre, 1921. “Heart of Barre” collection, Digital Vermont, a Project of the Vermont Historical Society, <http://www.digitalvermont.org/items/show/971?collection=18&page=5>.

Labor endorsed the granite strikers and “pledg[ed] financial and moral support.” In fact, the branch elected members of the Quarry Workers’ International Union (QWIU) and GCIA as its president and first vice president, respectively.³² The QWIU continued to mobilize support through its monthly *Quarry Workers’ Journal*. Cautiously, at the local level, the *Barre Daily Times* printed both employers’ statements and union rebuttals but generally kept away from editorial comment.

What is perhaps most remarkable in contemporary accounts of the strike is the near-invisibility of an issue that eventually became central to residents’ historical memory: the clash of ethnic groups. Certainly, the cultural landscape of the Barre area was complicated. By the early 1920s, the city of Barre could rival Burlington in ethnic diversity. The quarries and sheds had attracted large numbers of Scottish and Italian workers at the end of the nineteenth century, but other groups were also drawn in. By 1920, the foreign-born in the city of Barre included 1,283 Italians, 818 Scots, 300 Canadians (not identified as French), 179 French Canadians, 173 Spanish, 112 Swedes, and smaller groups of English and Irish.³³ Each group had its church and clubs—Clan Gordon for the Scots, the *Società di Mutuo Soccorso* for the Italians, and the *Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste* for the French Canadians, for instance—and each clustered in a specific neighborhood.³⁴ This unusual mix of cultures—at least by the standards of Vermont—was complicated further by a vari-

ety of ideological outlooks. Whereas the *Canadiens* were reputedly conservative, Italian American workers had developed a rich radical political culture.³⁵ There was little to bring these disparate groups together. But there were unions, and it is a testament to their strength in Barre that union men overwhelmingly stood firm throughout the year despite their own differences and the presence of scabs.³⁶

Despite limited press coverage, ethnicity undoubtedly played into public perceptions of the strike. In the summer of 1922 a report from Bellows Falls, where railroad men were striking for higher wages, depicted “quiet and business-like relations” between workers and managers. The reason was plain: The strikers were “among the oldest and best citizens.”³⁷ The following month, a Plainfield, Vermont, coal dealer, L. F. Fortney, expressed a similar sentiment in a full-throated endorsement of the open shop:

[Labor] [o]rganizations would not be dangerous if composed wholly of reasonable law-abiding men, while they become a menacing power and productive of much evil when composed largely of the ignorant and vicious driftwood of Europe, as in some of the mining regions.³⁸

Although Fortney was discussing coal miners striking in other parts of the country, his letter also referred to the situation in Barre, and a Trow Hill resident understood it as a commentary on the situation in Vermont.³⁹ Fortney did recognize that Barre had not experienced the disorder seen in other parts of the country—evidence, we might think, that union leaders were intent on depriving conservative forces of further ammunition. It may matter, too, in terms of public perception, that Vermont granite locals’ elected leadership was predominantly Anglo-Saxon (Scottish, notably). A leading figure of the QWIU during the strike, its secretary-treasurer for over two decades, was Fred Sutor, who, though born in the Eastern Townships of Québec, was of Scottish descent and participated in the activities of Clan Gordon.⁴⁰

In the clash between white, native-born Americans and radical foreign agitators, French Canadians occupied an uncertain position. The former had little fondness for French-speaking Catholics as a group—by virtue of their culture, but also because the influx of people from Québec resumed at a time when the Volstead Act invited increased scrutiny of migrants. Union members and supporters, for their part, could not ignore a well-entrenched narrative identifying Canadians as willing accomplices of capitalists. Certainly, that view was present in the late 1930s. Residents interviewed as part of the Federal Writers’ Project related the events of 1922 to that narrative. According to one interviewee, owners obtained

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train loads of poverty-stricken French Canadian farmers as strike breakers. They marched the men up Main Street, with bands and American flags frantically asserting the utmost patriotism. Immense boarding houses were built at the quarry, and here the Canadians were housed . . . [they] finally broke union demands. This lockout of 1922 was the Barre chapter of a country-wide movement of Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Manufactures' Associations to install the open shop in every business enterprise in America.⁴¹

Another person explained that “[t]here was a bad strike in 1921 [sic]. That’s when they brought the French Canadians in to break it up. They marched 500 of them through this Main Street with bands, flags and placards.”⁴²

However, recollections about the arrival of French Canadians as the corporations’ *deus ex machina*, suddenly and collectively breaking the strike, are misleading. For one thing, these were not the strikebreakers of first resort. An estimated 76 to 90 men recruited either in Massachusetts or in New York City by the Manufacturers’ Association arrived on May 9. This was no doubt the event that interviewees mentioned more than a decade later. “When a part of the men left Hotel Barre and marched in column formation to the Central house on Pearl Street,” a



“76 Workmen for Quarries,” Barre Daily Times (10 May 1922), 1.

reporter explained at the time, “they passed through lines of people assembled on both sides of Main [S]treet. Some of the crowd on the sidewalks engaged in booing and hooting the new arrivals.”⁴³ Though union members and supporters quickly made them feel unwelcome, the strikebreakers were able to begin work immediately at four quarries. A small scuffle occurred a few days later, but all stakeholders aimed to preserve order.⁴⁴ None of the contemporary reports mentioned ethnicity.

When the new workers’ presence failed to match business needs, the quarry owners began to advertise positions in the press. In July, the Boston-based Allied Granite Industries announced openings for

cutters, carvers, polishers, engineers, foremen, and other positions. The group did not mention the specific location of those openings, but it was likely a front for Barre interests. A near-identical ad published in St. Johnsbury placed the work in Vermont's granite capital; this piece was signed by the Barre Quarriers and Manufacturers' Association.⁴⁵ Calls were also sent to New York State papers. To Plattsburgh readers, the Manufacturers' Association vaunted "[s]plendid opportunities" and did not fail to mention the "American Plan of Operation (Open Shop)."⁴⁶ In December, an ad submitted by a Massachusetts-based operation was very explicit about the situation: "WANTED—GRANITE CUTTER AND QUARRYMEN—To take the places of the men whose agreement with this Company expired March 31st, 1922, and who have refused to resume work on the AMERICAN PLAN." The advertised positions were located in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, but left little doubt as to local employers' intent.⁴⁷

Unquestionably, some strikebreakers did come directly from Québec. At the next federal census, the Town of Barre, the City of Barre, and South Barre Village included approximately twenty French Canadian households where one of the men had first come to the United States in 1922. Many more provided 1921 or 1923 as their year of arrival to the enumerator; some of them may have lied to escape the stigma clinging to anyone who had come in 1922.⁴⁸ A small sample of those who did come in 1922 indicates that many men came from Stanstead, in the Eastern Townships of Québec, and from the adjoining area. Stanstead was also a site of quarrying and may have had a small supply of unemployed stone workers to offer.⁴⁹ It may be that some French Canadian migrants' decision to remain in Barre—whereas many strikebreakers left the region following the clash—laid the basis for the hostility they would face in subsequent years.

The legislative setting of the 1920s favored employers, but their dubious recruitment efforts were checked by increasing scrutiny of the border under tougher immigration laws and the Volstead Act. Aided by a Newport taxi driver, Joseph Landrie of Barre recruited scabs north of the border. Both men were arrested for smuggling aliens in early September 1922:

Landrie, a member of the firm of Herbert and Landrie [G]ranite Manufacture of Barre, had been making regular trips to Beebe [in present-day Stanstead], P.Q., where he had a brother-in-law conducting a pool room. On these trip[s] it is claimed that men were brought across to Beebe, Vt., and hired to go to Barre to take the place of men who were connected with the granite strike.⁵⁰

Two months later, immigration officials arrested one Charles Demers, who hired seventeen lumberjacks in Québec to work in Graniteville, Vermont. For trying to bring the men to Derby Line, Demers faced charges under immigration laws and the Alien Contract Labor Law. For the *Quarry Workers' Journal*, such incidents showed “how the ‘American’ planners secure some of their ‘new race’ of 100 per cent ‘Americans.’” The mix of nationalities within the QWIU suggests that the author of the report did not mean this in a strict ethnic sense. In fact, he went on to discuss scabs convicted of various petty crimes without reference to their ethnic background.⁵¹

Both sides of the strike had a vested interest in minimizing the role played by French Canadian strikebreakers—for unions, to maintain morale, and, for businesses, to evade the concerns of native-born Vermonters about law enforcement and immigration. Barre residents may have felt freer to discuss the course of the strike at the end of the Great Depression than they had in 1922, at least more than was reflected in newspapers of the time. Still, there is enough surviving evidence to show that scholars cannot take the oral interviews from the late 1930s and early 1940s at face value, but as pieces of a larger historical puzzle. Employers' efforts to secure strikebreakers were, especially after May 1922, hardly systematic or unimpeded, or even focused on French Canadian labor to the exclusion of other “races.” Interviewees may have conflated the “parade” with later attempts to recruit men in Canada and the fact that some scabs *were* Canadians. This more nuanced, more complex narrative is, in a sense, less satisfying than the vivid images offered by residents nearly two decades later. On the other hand, it reflects the documentary record and enables us to explain the course of subsequent events.

FIGHTING TO A DRAW?

On the surface, little changed in Barre through the summer of 1922. Unionized granite workers in Concord, New Hampshire, were receiving strike pay and it is likely that their peers in Vermont were as well, thus helping to preserve solidarity on the picket line.⁵² While some quarry and shed owners continued to seek strikebreakers, others adopted a more constructive approach. One manufacturer, C. H. Presbrey, who had seceded from the employers' association and signed a separate deal with labor, called on fellow owners to accept higher granite prices and compromise on wage cuts.⁵³ Some did, especially as the QWIU had empowered locals to sign whenever local conditions turned in their favor. While one report, in August, indicated that the strike was as far from resolution as it had been in April, the employers' united front (mani-

fested in the Board of Control) was beginning to crack. Across New England, they began to sign separate agreements with the QWIU. These contracts, which entailed a 10-percent rather than a 20-percent cut in wages, all the while preserving the unions' bargaining power, enabled both sides to save face.⁵⁴ The gradual end to the strike in Quincy, Massachusetts, and the prospect of losing orders with contractors may have put particular pressure on Barre employers. The first of the Quincy deals "gave the union the right to discipline men who returned to work while the strike was in progress." The *Barre Daily Times* noted the dissent among Massachusetts quarry owners. "Four firms, members of the [manufacturers'] association previously, met the demands of the workers, and the association voted to have them expelled from the association."⁵⁵ A similar situation prevailed in Barre. Although Barre manufacturers felt abandoned by their peers in other granite centers, at the end of the year, the fact remains that division among them had been as rife in Barre itself. In December, some of the largest firms signed contracts with locals, announcing the beginning to the slow end to the strike.⁵⁶ The push came not from new labor dynamics, but from New York City builder Otto Eidlitz, who had the leverage to bring firms and union delegations from all across New England to the bargaining table. A last pitch for the American Plan, made before Christmas by D. K. Lillie, the newly elected president of the Manufacturers' Association, achieved little.⁵⁷

The Barre granite strike did not end suddenly and dramatically with a massive influx of scab workers that crippled the unions. Later recollections suggested that the arrival of carloads of French Canadians marked a clear, decisive victory for the employers.⁵⁸ After the strike-breakers' march in May 1922, however, the strike wore on for seven months. By January 1923, the *Quarry Workers' Journal* could claim that labor organizations had checked the open-shop movement and secured workers' best interest. From Graniteville, Vermont, one union correspondent explained that "[t]he quarries that have signed say they never had so many orders . . . Business is coming their way and they are signing up all around here. The 'American plan' wave is pretty nearly past here. It seems good to see so many of the old quarry men returning to work on union jobs."⁵⁹ Another worker acknowledged companies' efforts to run with "imported" men, but noted that new business conditions invited cooperation, in stark contrast to the bitterness of the prior winter. A third writer indicated how the quality of the work had suffered with scab labor; he hoped that employers were now awakening from the nightmare of the "un-American plan."⁶⁰ Some of this was con-

venient window dressing—a public relations effort aiming to build morale among workers still on strike and to protect the unions’ legitimacy. After all, the reintegration of union men into quarries and sheds was a lengthy process that continued through the early months of 1923. But in light of the events of the previous year, a bully sense of satisfaction was partly justified.⁶¹

In March, the battle between employers and workers seems to have played out in the City of Barre mayoral election, though hardly with the energy and anxieties associated with the strike itself. Later that month, a few firms that had held out in Bethel and Hardwick signed contracts with the GCIA.⁶² In 1924, employers and the GCIA preempted potential conflict, and conveyed satisfaction with the existing agreement, set to expire in 1925, by renewing for three years.⁶³ This relative amity was not necessarily a sign of weakness on the unions’ part. In 1927, granite laborers launched a sympathy strike to protest the execution of Italian American socialists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Other strikes followed in the 1920s and 1930s, many aiming to control the scourge of silicosis. In 1929, at last, the city elected QWIU secretary-treasurer and socialist Fred Sutor to the mayoralty, further evidence that whatever conservative reaction there may have been following the strike, a center-left movement subsisted.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

As Federal Writers’ Project interviews suggest, the narrative surrounding the events of 1922 seems to have become simpler and more selective over time, with increasing blame falling at the feet of French Canadians. The FWP might have been timely: According to Jerrold Hirsch, “the editors of the project believed that they could build a national culture on diversity.” Whereas the 1920s had witnessed a resurgence of nativism, “[i]n the Federal Writers’ Project, ethnic minorities were celebrated for being turpentine workers or grape pickers or folk artists.”⁶⁵ Some of the interviewees and writers in Barre may have shared this outlook, but they could not help but convey some of the genuine anger and resentment still attached to the French Canadians in the community—against which the FWP could do little. If that hostility was palpable on the eve of the Second World War, and in less conspicuous ways for decades after, documentary evidence from 1922 suggests that it was due in part to factors other than the strike.

This is not to say that the interviewees were entirely misguided, or that their recollections are now without merit. On the contrary, though the details may have been skewed over time, the overall narrative was true for the interviewees. They spoke what they felt to be their experi-

ence, giving voice to the larger concerns of the interwar period. With the role of the Canadians as strikebreakers significantly exaggerated, the ill will captured in the 1930s and 1940s may have owed much to intervening events, especially illegal immigration and the nativist reaction, border enforcement in connection with labor laws and the Volstead Act, and the precarious leverage of labor unions after 1922. French Canadians were at the center of the discussion of each of these issues, in Vermont as elsewhere in New England.

Indeed, after several decades of relatively low immigration from Québec, a renewed influx of French Canadians struck the Northeast after the First World War. Franco-Americans could then boast a rising rate of citizenship. They had, furthermore, participated with distinction in the First World War and increasingly expressed a desire to be American and to exercise their political rights. Yet, at the same time, the wartime pursuit of “one-hundred-percent Americanism” quickly folded into the Red Scare and unleashed a rabid nativism, which, as historian John Higham has articulated, consisted predominantly of anti-radicalism, anti-Catholicism, and Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy.⁶⁶ French Canadians’ experience of these forces varied widely from one place to the next, but the hostile spirit clearly did not end with the “normalcy” of 1920. They faced legislation aiming to restrict non-English instruction and to curb immigration. As Prohibition came into effect, the federal government closely scrutinized those crossing the border. Before long, the Ku Klux Klan began to target Catholics and ethnic minorities. The organization’s peak years of membership, in the middle years of the 1920s, may have altered impressions of French-speaking Catholics from Québec in a profound and lasting way, especially when joined to other contemporary preoccupations.⁶⁷

The French Canadians of Barre were ultimately caught between competing definitions of Americanism. On one side lay one-hundred-percent Americanism and the American Plan, which seemed mutually reinforcing.⁶⁸ On the other was an American identity unique to organized labor. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, unions had a vested interest in integrating disparate immigrant groups and inculcating a sense of working-class solidarity with native-born laborers.⁶⁹ As noted, historically, French Canadians in the Northeast had proven resistant to this working-class Americanism. Those who worked as scabs and who had no substantial roots in Barre seemed to fit the stereotype. Yet, rather than auguring further reliance on scabs, the strike of 1922 occurred as a window of Canadian strikebreaking was closing in New England. This was the result of growing regulation of cross-border travel and lower mobility among Franco-Americans. In addition, schol-

ars cannot underestimate the potency of worker solidarity in Barre. The French Canadians interviewed around 1940 expressed strong support for unions. Barre's labor melting pot prevailed even as it faced reversals in its struggle for better wages and working conditions.⁷⁰

In the end, the Federal Writers' Project also produced very empathetic views of French Canadians, especially under Mari Tomasi's pen. The daughter of Italian immigrants and a lifelong Montpelier resident, Tomasi did more to preserve the stories of Barre's granite men than anyone before and perhaps since.⁷¹ In interviews, she let the Canadians speak for themselves, expressing, circa 1940, their dedication to the labor movement and to working-class American ideals.⁷² One granite worker told Tomasi, "The funny part of it is that many of those same Frenchmen [who were said to have broken the strike] are still here in the sheds today, and they're as strong Union men as you would expect to find anywhere. I don't think they realized what they were doing in '22."⁷³ Another stated: "It's pretty hard to pass judgment on the French who came in the '20's. Yes, they were certainly strike-breakers, but there's two sides to the question. Most of them were men who had to have work, it was a job to them."⁷⁴ The widow of a French Canadian man offered as an example a childhood friend of her husband who left Chambly, Québec, in 1922 upon hearing about open positions in granite. "He came for work, for money to keep his family together," she explained. "You can't be too hard on him. I don't blame him. I haven't seen much of him since my husband died. But I know he's a Union man now, and a good one."⁷⁵ French Canadians were claiming their place in Barre and increasingly finding allies in their struggle to be accepted, to be "all-American." But that journey would take generations to complete.

The events of 1922 are a helpful reminder to pay special attention to local conditions in the making of interethnic relations. In Barre's granite industry, postwar economic disruptions, the employers' open-shop campaign, and a particular blend of nationalities together had distinct implications for French Canadians. This was a perfect storm that now enables scholars of U.S. and Vermont history to understand better the conditions that led to the marginalization of minority groups. In this, the events themselves matter, but so does the impressionistic creation of a narrative surrounding French Canadians based on the cultural climate of the time. Employers and unions together helped create a narrative by which French Canadians became convenient scapegoats, with lasting effects. The strike may have been fought to a draw, but the social scars left in its wake long remained visible.

NOTES

¹ Mary Tomasi and the Granite Worker, *Two Irish Granite Workers*, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, Federal Writers' Project [FWP], <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002701/> (accessed 2019-03-23).

² Although this narrative is present in various oral interviews, the most specific detail comes from F. C. Slayton and Horace Davis, *Vermont Quarrying*, Vermont, FWP, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002694/>; Roaldus Richmond and Mayor Duncan, *The Mayor*, Vermont, 1940, FWP, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002687/> (both accessed 2019-03-23). The term *French Canadian* is preferred here due to the challenge of separating those temporarily on U.S. soil from the American-born or naturalized Franco-Americans. Sources from the period seemed to make little distinction in this regard.

³ Joy Parr, "'Don't Speak For Me': Practicing Oral History amidst the Legacies of Conflict," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 21 (2010): 2-3.

⁴ Leonard Rapport, "'How Valid Are the Federal Writers' Project Life Stories: An Iconoclast among the True Believers,'" *Oral History Review* 7 (1979): 6-17. In addition, between people of different cultural backgrounds, where an unspoken power dynamic prevails, the interviewee may conceal or alter his or her experience, while the interviewer may be unable to capture the deeper meanings of the person's words. We should see interviews as "conversational-narratives," artifacts of collaboration between interviewer and interviewee. See William Schneider, "Interviewing in Cross-Cultural Settings," *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 51-64; Tom E. Terrill and Jerrold Hirsch, "Replies to Leonard Rapport's 'How Valid Are the Federal Writers' Project Life Stories: An Iconoclast among the True Believers,'" *Oral History Review* 8 (1980): 87.

⁵ Terrill and Hirsch, "Replies to Leonard Rapport," 81-89. Sara Rutkowski addresses the debate in "The Literary Legacy of the Federal Writers' Project" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2015), 8-9.

⁶ Miroslav Vaněk, "Those Who Prevailed and Those Who Were Replaced: Interviewing on Both Sides of a Conflict," *Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, 37.

⁷ This approach has in fact been utilized effectively in Franco-American studies by Tamara Hareven, who interviewed textile workers in southern New Hampshire. In his landmark book on oral history best practices, Paul Thompson concludes that the value of Hareven's work, in her second book, lies in "the juxtaposition of this [documentary] study of the factory world with the family lives of Manchester workers which is made possible through oral history." See Paul Thompson with Joanna Bornat, *The Voice of the Past*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 378-379. See also Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach, *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁸ Joseph-André Sénécal, "'Nos ancêtres les Gaulois': Ethnicity and History in Vermont," *Vermont History* 71 (Winter/Spring 2003): 62-70.

⁹ Among the most important studies of French Canadians in Vermont are David J. Blow, "The Establishment and Erosion of French-Canadian Culture in Winooski, Vermont, 1867-1900," *Vermont History* 43 (Winter 1975): 59-74; Peter Woolfson, "The Rural Franco-American in Vermont," *Vermont History* 50 (Summer 1982): 151-162; Woolfson and Sénécal, *The French in Vermont: Some Current Views* (Burlington: UVM Center for Research on Vermont, 1983); Betsy Beattie, "Opportunity Across the Border: The Burlington Area Economy and the French Canadian Worker in 1850," *Vermont History* 55 (Summer 1987): 133-152, "Community-Building in Uncertain Times: The French-Canadians of Burlington and Colchester, 1850-1860," *Vermont History* 57 (Spring 1989): 84-102, and "Migrants and Millworkers: The French Canadian Population of Burlington and Colchester, 1860-1870," *Vermont History* 60 (Spring 1992): 95-117; Kevin Thornton, "A Cultural Frontier: Ethnicity and the Marketplace in Charlotte, Vermont, 1845-1860," *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution in America, 1789-1860*, ed. Scott C. Martin (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 47-69. Ralph D. Vicero was also attentive to nineteenth-century French-Canadian settlement of Vermont in "Immigration of French Canadians to New England, 1840-1900: A Geographical Analysis. (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1968); for a survey of the overall French Canadian diaspora and its Vermont connections, see Leslie Choquette, "French Canadian Immigration to Vermont and New England (1840-1930)," *Vermont History* 86 (Winter/Spring 2018): 1-8.

¹⁰ The U.S. Census Bureau included among the "foreign white stock" three groups: "the foreign-born whites, the native whites of foreign parentage (both parents born abroad), and the native whites of mixed parentage (one parent native and the other foreign born)." Vermonters identified as French Canadian based on these definitions amounted to 39,419, approximately 11 percent of the state's population, in 1920. This number would not include Canadians who might not have declared



their French ancestry, nor third-generation Americans. The proportion may actually be closer to 15 percent. See Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States (1920), Vol. I, Chapter 2, Table 49, 134; Vol. II, Chapter 9, 891, and Table 5, 902-905; Vol. III, Chapter 8, Table 6, 1049.

¹¹ These surveys are: Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986); François Weil, *Les Franco-américains, 1860-1980* (Paris: Belin, 1989); Armand B. Chartier, *The Franco-Americans of New England: A History* (Manchester, NH: ACA Assurance; Worcester, MA: Institut français of Assumption College, 1999); Yves Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England: Dreams and Realities* (Québec: Septentrion, 2004); David Vermette, *A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans* (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2018).

¹² Philip Taft, *Organized Labor in American History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 366-382; David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 407-408.

¹³ Barre as such has nevertheless attracted extensive study, especially from the perspective of occupational health and radical politics. See Marion McDonald, "The Granite Years: Barre, Vermont, 1880-1900: A Socio-Economic History Using Quantitative Methods" (M.A. thesis, University of Vermont, 1978); Rod Clarke, *Carved in Stone: A History of the Barre Granite Industry* (Barre: Rock of Ages Corporation, 1989); Charles A. McNeil, "Carved from Stone? Community Life and Work in Barre, Vermont, 1900-1922" (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1989); Albert Desbiens and Stephen J. Randall, "Granitiers et collectivité: Barre (VT), 1870-1910, une première approche," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 23 (May 1990): 133-152; Stephen J. Randall, "Life, Labour and Death in an Industrial City: The Occupational Health of Barre, Vermont, Granite Workers, 1870-1940," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 22 (September 1991): 195-210; Wendy Richardson, "'The Curse of Our Trade': Occupational Disease in a Vermont Granite Town," *Vermont History* 60 (Winter 1992): 5-28; David R. Seager, "Barre, Vermont Granite Workers and the Struggle against Silicosis, 1890-1960," *Labor History* 42 (February 2001): 61-79; Susan L. Richards, "Making Home Pay: Italian and Scottish Boardinghouse Keepers in Barre, 1880-1910," *Vermont History* 74 (Winter/Spring 2006): 48-66; Paul Heller, "Preaching the Gospel to Anarchists and Socialists: Baptist Missionaries in Barre, 1899-1916," *Vermont History* 78 (Summer/Fall 2010): 196-207; Eric Douville, "Pauvreté et Assistance Publique à Barre, Vermont, 1910-1920," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 27 (Spring 1997): 143-182; Robert E. Weir, "Solid Men in the Granite City: Municipal Socialism in Barre, Vermont, 1916-1931," *Vermont History* 83 (Winter/Spring 2015): 43-81. For a contemporary overview of granite extraction in Vermont, see T. Nelson Dale, *The Commercial Granites of New England*, U.S. Geological Survey, Bulletin 738 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923): 104-164, 451-454; on the contemporary marketing of granite products, Bruce S. Elliott, "Proclaiming Modernity in the Monument Trade: Barre Granite, Vermont Marble, and National Advertising, 1910-1932," *Death in a Consumer Culture*, ed. Susan Dobscha (New York: Routledge, 2016), 13-29.

¹⁴ This ethnic division in labor carried into religion, with French Canadians preparing to build a separate church at the end of that year. See "Rutland County," *Green-Mountain Freeman* (22 April 1868), 3; "The Quarries," *Rutland Daily Herald* (20 May 1868), 3; "West Rutland," *Rutland Independent* (23 May 1868), 1; "Quarrymen's Strike," *Burlington Free Press* (26 May 1868), 4; "Editorial Correspondence," *Rutland Weekly Herald and Globe* (29 May 1868), 2; "West Rutland," *Rutland Independent* (30 May 1868), 1; "Miscellaneous Items," *Troy (NY) Weekly Times* (28 November 1868), 2.

¹⁵ Philip T. Silvia Jr., "The Spindle City: Labor, Politics, and Religion in Fall River, Massachusetts, 1870-1905" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1973); Patrick Lacroix, "A Church of Two Steeples: Catholicism, Labor, and Ethnicity in Industrial New England, 1869-90," *Catholic Historical Review* 102 (Autumn 2016): 751-760.

¹⁶ Peter Haebler, "Habitants in Holyoke: The Development of the French-Canadian Community in a Massachusetts City, 1865-1910" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Hampshire, 1976), esp. 193-196, 201-203, 206-208, 310-311. This is not to say that interethnic antagonism quickly dissipated across the region, as corporate practices often continued to exacerbate tensions. See, for instance, "Railroad Laborers Fight," *Boston Daily Globe* (12 January 1894), 2.

¹⁷ In fact, labor agitation in Winooski had only begun in earnest the year prior, possibly reflecting rising interest in collective action among Franco-Americans in the 1890s. For an overview, see "Winooski," *Burlington Free Press* (11 March 1899), 6; "The Strike in Winooski," *Burlington Free Press* (1 April 1899), 5; "Weekly Payments at Mills," *Burlington Clipper* (1 April 1899), 10; "Strike Nearly Over," *Burlington Clipper* (29 April 1899), 7; "State," *Swanton Courier* (11 May 1899), 8; "Strike Over at Winooski," *Burlington Clipper* (13 May 1899), 10.

¹⁸ Research on Canadians' part in the most important textile walk-out of the early twentieth century, the Lawrence strike of 1912, does suggest that they received the strike coolly. See Donald B. Cole, *Immigrant City: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1845-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 185-186; Bruce Watson, *Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the*

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American Dream (New York: Viking, 2005), 125, 140, 148; James J. Kenneally, "Catholic Clerical Quandary: The Lawrence Strike of 1912," *American Catholic Studies* 117 (Winter 2006): 40. Nevertheless, greater study is needed, as suggested by their near-invisibility in *The Great Lawrence Textile Strike of 1912: New Scholarship on the Bread and Roses Strike*, ed. Robert Forrant and Jurg Siegenthaler (New York: Routledge, 2017). On Canadians' neutrality in Lowell, see Fidelia O. Brown, "Decline and Fall: The End of a Dream," *Cotton Was King: A History of Lowell, Massachusetts*, ed. Arthur L. Eno (Lowell, MA: Lowell Historical Society, 1976), 148-149, 151.

¹⁹ For a contemporary account, see Richard B. Gregg, "The National War Labor Board," *Harvard Law Review* 33 (November 1919): 39-63.

²⁰ Taft, *Organized Labor in American History*, 341-360.

²¹ Savel Zimand quoted by Taft, *ibid.*, 364.

²² Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 407.

²³ For a detailed account of the textile stoppages of 1922, see Leonard E. Tilden, "New England Textile Strike," *Monthly Labor Review* 16 (May 1923): 13-36. Gary Gerstle offers a case study of Franco-American labor practices in the interwar period in *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

²⁴ Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 408; "300 Leave Work at Lyndonville," *Caledonian Record* (1 July 1922), 1, 5; "Strikers Keep Quiet Attitude," *Caledonian Record* (21 July 1922), 8.

²⁵ "Graniteville," *Barre Daily Times* (29 March 1922), 5. Regarding Winooski, by 1922, on the eve of the city's incorporation, the *Burlington Daily News* could claim that as "[a]n industrial town it is without strikes or wage controversies of any kind." However, this claim must be weighed against recent strikes and the American Woolen Company's important place as an advertiser for the paper. The company was then Winooski's leading employer. See "Social Life Is of the Highest" and "Winooski's Workers Prosperous, Satisfied," *Burlington Daily News* (17 February 1922), 13-14. A larger picture of economic conditions and unemployment in New England appeared in "Industry Shows Some Improvement," *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* (29 April 1922), 3.

²⁶ Dust inhaled from stone cutting and finishing was a leading cause of pulmonary disease and early death in Barre. The issue was alive during the strike, though it was not the primary cause of the walk-out. See "Barre Dust Under the Microscope," *Barre Daily Times* (2 August 1922), 2; Slayton and Davis, *Vermont Quarrying*. See, for historical treatments, Randall, "Life, Labour and Death in an Industrial City"; Richardson, "Occupational Disease in a Vermont Granite Town"; Seager, "Barre, Vermont Granite Workers."

²⁷ In January, after the wage cut announcement, 400 Graniteville men voted to stay at work as long as companies honored the existing contract; some locals went on strike before April 1 as a result. See "Will Meet Own Employes [sic]," *Barre Daily Times* (3 January 1922), 1; "Other Quarry Co's. Approve," *Barre Daily Times* (4 January 1922), 1; "Rejection Vote Is Unanimous Says Duncan," *Barre Daily Times* (1 April 1922), 1; "Announce Open Shop in Quarries," *Boston Daily Globe* (2 April 1922), 1, 14; "Granite Industry Comes to a Practical Standstill," *Burlington Free Press* (3 April 1922), 2; "Granite Quarries Are Idle in All Parts of New England," *Burlington Free Press* (4 April 1922), 1.

²⁸ "Announce Open Shop in Quarries," *Boston Daily Globe*.

²⁹ "Vermont News," *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* (18 April 1922), 3. In South Ryegate, some union men did go back to work, effectively as scabs, under the open-shop plan. See "Barre Situation Virtually Unchanged," *Barre Daily Times* (17 April 1922), 1. By May, companies claimed that they had managed to fill 1,400 positions across New England. See "Report 1400 Men at Work," *Barre Daily Times* (4 May 1922), 1.

³⁰ "The Presbrey-Leland Co., Inc." and "Presbrey-Leland Statement," *Quarry Workers' Journal* (April 1922), 1; "Barre, Vt.," *ibid.*, 2; "Another Quarry Signs Up," *Barre Daily Times* (10 April 1922), 1.

³¹ "The Granite Strike," *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* (10 April 1922), 2; "Granite Strike," *News and Citizen* [Morrisville] (19 April 1922), 7.

³² "Quarry Strike Was Endorsed," *Barre Daily Times* (11 August 1922), 1.

³³ Fourteenth Census of the United States (1920), Vol. 3, Chapter 8, Table 12, 1053; Slayton and Davis, *Vermont Quarrying*. See also, for a portrait of immigration across Vermont, "Slight Increase in Native Population," *Orleans County Monitor* (11 October 1922), 6.

³⁴ Desbiens and Randall, "Granitiers et collectivité," 141. See, on the Spanish heritage of Barre and perspective on the overall immigrant experience, the short memoir by Elisabeth Ramon Bacon, *Santander to Barre: Life in a Spanish Family in Vermont* (Randolph, VT: Greenhills Books, 1988).

³⁵ Weir discusses Italian radicalism in "Solid Men in the Granite City," 48, 50. On Italians' estrangement from the Catholic Church, which may have raised tensions with Canadians, see Heller, "Preaching the Gospel to Anarchists and Socialists."

³⁶ "The unions are the strongest agency uniting in a common interest the many nationalities of Barre," declared a later Federal Writers' Project interviewee—and in fact the labor movement may have been the only uniting factor. See Slayton and Davis, *Vermont Quarrying*.

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³⁷ “Strikers Keep Quiet Attitude,” *Caledonian Record*.

³⁸ L. F. Fortney, “More on Coal Situation,” *Barre Daily Times* (30 August 1922), 4.

³⁹ John McAndrew, “The Open Shop Policy,” *Barre Daily Times* (7 September 1922), 4.

⁴⁰ “Branches and Secretaries,” *Quarry Workers’ Journal* (September 1922), 8; Weir, “Solid Men in the Granite City,” 58.

⁴¹ Slayton and Davis, *Vermont Quarrying*. Interviews with French Canadians, now available online through the Library of Congress, also appeared in C. Stewart Doty, *The First Franco-Americans: New England Life Histories from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1938-1939* (Orono: University of Maine at Orono Press, 1985).

⁴² Richmond and Duncan, *The Mayor*.

⁴³ The secretary of the Association, Athol Bell, claimed that the men were from Quincy, Massachusetts, but union men in Barre were quite insistent that the strikebreakers were from New York. See “76 Workmen for Quarries,” *Barre Daily Times* (10 May 1922), 1; “90 Strike Breakers Reach Granite Belt,” *Burlington Free Press* (10 May 1922), 1; “Strike Breakers Coldly Received,” *Burlington Free Press* (11 May 1922), 1.

⁴⁴ “Barre Granite Belt Again in Quiet State,” *Burlington Free Press* (15 May 1922), 1; “Barre Gets More Strike Breakers,” *Burlington Free Press* (16 May 1922), 2. See also “Barre Granite Situation Quiet,” *Burlington Daily News* (13 May 1922), 1, 2. The state disbursed \$1,000 per month to support extra deputy sheriffs in the strike zone. See “Cost of Granite Strike,” *Bennington Evening Banner* (25 November 1922), 1.

⁴⁵ “Wanted,” *Barre Daily Times* (13 July 1922), 7; “Wanted,” *Caledonian Record* (July 13, 1922), 5; “Wanted,” *Middlebury Register* (14 July 1922), 6.

⁴⁶ A similar notice appeared in September, a sign, perhaps, that the strikers were able to impede business and deter likely scabs for months. See “Wanted,” *Plattsburgh (NY) Daily Press* (13 July 1922), 2; “300 Men Wanted,” *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* (7 September 1922), 3. This second ad also appeared in the *Middlebury Register* (8 September 1922), 3, and the *Ogdensburg (NY) Advance and St. Lawrence Weekly Democrat* (14 September 1922), 2.

⁴⁷ “Wanted,” *Barre Daily Times* (1 December 1922), 7. The ad ran nearly the entire month of December.

⁴⁸ Fifteenth Census of the United States (1930), Vermont, Barre, Districts 1 to 10, National Archives and Records Administration, T626, accessed on Ancestry.com (2019-18-05). In 1940, one man was insistent that he had not come in 1922. See Roaldus Richmond, *Jack of Trades*, Vermont, 1940, FWP, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002674/> (accessed 2019-18-05).

⁴⁹ In fact, the QWIU had a local in Graniteville, an extraction site in Stanstead. See “Branches and Secretaries,” *Quarry Workers’ Journal*. These deductions are the result of genealogical research through Ancestry.com databases. Further research will be necessary to better ascertain the connection between the Eastern Townships of Québec and the Barre area. One oral interview establishes a personal connection between a Barre worker and the town of Asbestos, in Québec; another states that a man came from Chambly, where he heard about this opportunity in Vermont. See Roaldus Richmond et al., *Up on the Hill*, Vermont, 1941, FWP, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002692/>; Mari Tomasi, *Boarding House Keeper—French*, Vermont, FWP, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002714/> (both accessed 2019-05-18).

⁵⁰ The incident spurred rumors, which, perhaps to preserve morale, the QWIU condemned. The union nevertheless declared the manufacturers’ conduct irresponsible in light of the Volstead Act. See “For Smuggling Operations,” *Orleans County Monitor* (13 September 1922), 4; “Barre, Vt.,” *Quarry Workers’ Journal* (October 1922), 2.

⁵¹ “Lumberjacks Halted,” *Quarry Workers’ Journal* (December 1922), 4. At the same time, reports indicated that striking or unemployed Vermonters were traveling to Graniteville, Québec, and undermining union solidarity there. See “Graniteville, P. Q.,” *Quarry Workers’ Journal* (November 1922), 2.

⁵² That did not prevent some workers from leaving Barre for opportunities in other parts of the Northeast; they returned at the end of the year as unions signed with some of the largest employers. See “Concord Cutters Get Strike Pay,” *Barre Daily Times* (11 May 1922), 1; “Talk of the Town,” *Barre Daily Times* (26 December 1922), 5.

⁵³ “The Future of the Granite Industry,” *Barre Daily Times* (3 July 1922), 5.

⁵⁴ The persistent search for strikebreakers may in fact indicate a position of weakness on the employers’ part. See “Capital Hill Signs Bill,” *Barre Daily Times* (28 June 1922), 1, 5; “Vermont State News,” *News and Citizen [Morrisville]* (16 August 1922), 2; “Two Westerly Quarries Sign,” *Barre Daily Times* (9 August 1922), 1; “Little John and Milne Co. Sign with Union,” *Barre Daily Times* (11 August 1922), 1; “Worcester Firm Signs,” *Barre Daily Times* (12 August 1922), 1; “Rejects Plan of Conference,” *Barre Daily Times* (18 October 1922), 1; “‘No Conference’ Note Approved,” *Barre*



Daily Times (26 October 1922), 1; James Duncan, "Making Headway," *Quarry Workers' Journal* (January 1923), 2.

⁵⁵ "Part of Quincy Granite Firms Signed Bill," *Barre Daily Times* (19 October 1922), 1; "Quincy Granite Men Back at Work," *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* (20 October 1922), 5; "Quincy Granite Strike at an End," *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* (13 December 1922), 3; "Quincy Assn. Signed Bill With Unions," *Barre Daily Times* (13 December 1922), 1.

⁵⁶ "Six Granite Firms Sign With Unions; Four Quarries Sign," *Barre Daily Times* (19 December 1922), 1; "Hardwick and Bethel Settle," *Barre Daily Times* (22 December 1922), 1; "Two More Sign," *Barre Daily News* (26 December 1922), 1; "Vermont News," *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* (28 December 1922), 5; "Barre Granite Men Take No Action," *Barre Daily Times* (14 December 1922), 1.

⁵⁷ Earlier that year, Lillie had been elected mayor of Montpelier after a career in marble. See "Quiet Election in Montpelier," *Barre Daily Times* (7 March 1922), 1; "Barre Granite Men Take No Action," *Barre Daily Times* (14 December 1922), 1. On Lillie's pitch for welfare capitalism, see Lillie, letter, *Barre Daily Times* (20 December 1922), 3; Duncan, "Making Headway."

⁵⁸ Slayton and Davis, *Vermont Quarrying*.

⁵⁹ "Graniteville, Vt.," *Quarry Workers' Journal* (January 1923), 2.

⁶⁰ "Barre, Vt." and "Barre Polishers, Barre, Vt.," *Quarry Workers' Journal* (January 1923), 2.

⁶¹ One challenge in early 1923 was the influx of scabs who had lost their jobs in other quarrying centers as strikes ended there. See "Graniteville, Vt.," "New York, N.Y.," "Barre, Vt., Polishers," and "Barre, Vt.," *Quarry Workers' Journal* (February 1923), 2; "Graniteville, Vt." and "Barre Pols., Barre, Vt.," *Quarry Workers' Journal* (March 1923), 2.

⁶² "Employer Beats Worker for Mayor," *New York Times* (7 March 1923), 19; "Work at Two Vermont Quarries to be Resumed," *Boston Daily Globe* (23 March 1923), 13; "Barre Granite Firms Sign Up With Union," *Boston Daily Globe* (31 March 1923), 6.

⁶³ "Barre Granite Men Extend Agreement," *Boston Daily Globe* (15 June 1924), 14.

⁶⁴ "Granite Cutters in Barre and Montpelier Strike," *Boston Daily Globe* (23 August 1927), 8; Weir, "Solid Men in the Granite City," 60. Seager highlights the bitter strike of 1933, for instance, in "Barre, Vermont Granite Workers," 74-75. A process of business consolidation was at work and became obvious in the 1930s, at which point few quarry owners resided in Barre. The strike of 1922 may have accelerated that process. See Slayton and Davis, *Vermont Quarrying*.

⁶⁵ Douglas Brinkley, "Unmasking Writers Of the W.P.A.," *New York Times* (2 August 2003), <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/02/books/unmasking-writers-of-the-wpa.html> (accessed 2019-08-18).

⁶⁶ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

⁶⁷ Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England*, 224-241, 269-276; Mark P. Richard, *Not a Catholic Nation: The Ku Klux Klan Confronts New England in the 1920s* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), esp. 70-89; Vermette, *A Distinct Alien Race*, esp. 244-285; on the KKK in Vermont specifically, see Maudean Neill, *Fiery Crosses in the Green Mountains: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan in Vermont* (Randolph, VT: Greenhills Books, 1989), whose documentary and oral sources highlight the mainstream, even mundane presence of the hate group in parts of New England. Some Vermont outlets were nevertheless receptive to French Canadian immigrants, perhaps seeing them as enterprising and essentially conservative. See "Increased Canadian Immigration," *Orleans County Monitor* (13 August 1919), 2; Untitled, *Barre Daily Times* (6 March 1922), 4; "Passing to and from by French Canadians," *Barre Daily Times* (2 November 1922), 4.

⁶⁸ The connection between these two movements was evident in the language of the American Legion, but also of more radical groups. As one union member poetized, the KKK served business interests by undermining worker solidarity: "We can fool them no more, / As in good days of yore / With our pretty American Plan; / But we'll rend them apart / And tear out the heart / Of [workers'] movement by means of the Klan." See J. P. N., "Klanotopsis: The Reverie of the Employers," *Quarry Workers' Journal* (April 1923), 2.

⁶⁹ James R. Barrett, "Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930," *Journal of American History* 79 (December 1992): 996-1020.

⁷⁰ Richmond et al., *Up on the Hill; Tomasi, Boarding House Keeper—French*.

⁷¹ For overviews of Tomasi's life, career, and efforts through the FWP, see Alfred F. Rosa, "The Novels of Mari Tomasi," *Italian Americana* 2 (Autumn 1975): 66-78; Paul Heller, "Telling Vermont's Italian Story," *Times Argus* [Barre-Montpelier] (13 March 2019), https://www.timesargus.com/news/telling-vermont-s-italian-story/article_bf8f01de-a5d7-5ab0-b907-b3547b4592bf.html (accessed 2019-05-25). Like many other FWP participants, Tomasi later fashioned her interviews into a novel. We may be wary of potential creative license in the transcription of her conversations; on the other hand, her work remains valuable for the French Canadian voices she captured in Barre, an exceptional fact in this period.

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⁷² There was then evidence that hostility between ethnic groups was declining, but decades passed before it dissipated entirely. See *Memorandum to Dr. Botkin*, Vermont, 1940, FWP, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002707/> (accessed 2019-05-25); Richmond, *Jack of Trades*; Richmond et al., *Up on the Hill*; Richmond and Duncan, *The Mayor*. See also Pace Nicolino, interviewed by Mary Kasamatsu, 23 June 1987, Vermont Historical Society, <https://vermonthistory.org/documents/GrnMtnChronTranscripts/200-12NicolinoPace.pdf> (accessed 2019-05-25).

⁷³ Tomasi and the Granite Worker, *Two Irish Granite Workers*.

⁷⁴ Tomasi, *French Stonecutters—Father and Son*, Vermont, FWP, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002716/> (accessed 2019-05-25).

⁷⁵ Tomasi, *Boarding House Keeper—French*.