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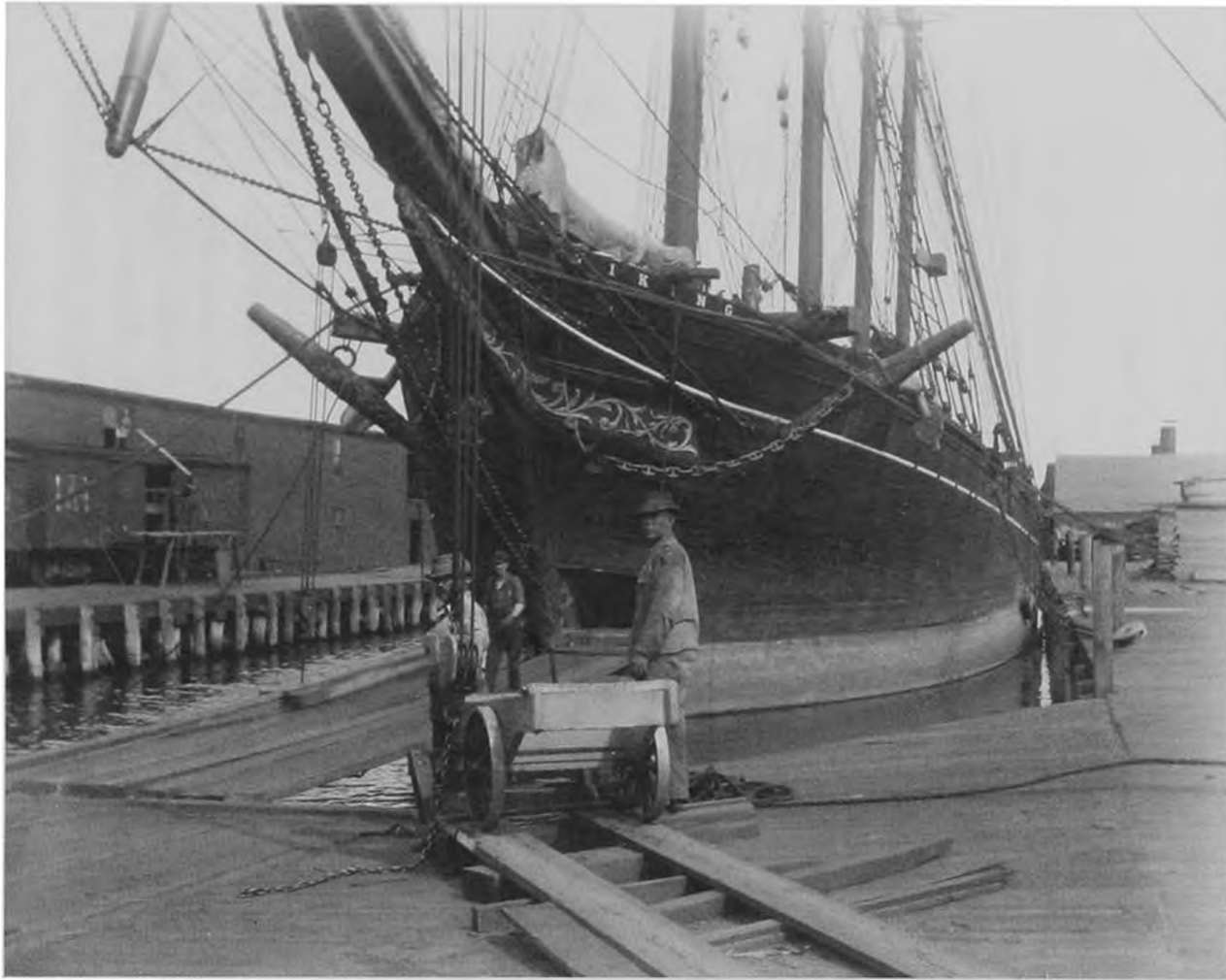
# TO 'MAKE THIS PORT UNION ALL OVER': LONGSHORE MILITANCY IN PORTLAND, 1911–1913

BY MICHAEL C. CONNOLLY

*In 1853 the Grand Trunk Railroad connected Portland to Montreal and to the grain trade of the Canadian interior. Some three decades later, the city's predominantly Irish longshoremen formed a Benevolent Society, and in an ongoing search for job security in this volatile trade they voted, just before World War I, to affiliate with the International Longshormen's Association, hoping "to make this port Union all over." Michael Connolly's article explores the decisions and actions that led up to this important event in Maine's labor history. Dr. Connolly is the grandson of a charter member of the Society. He is Associate Professor of History and Director of the Honors at Saint Joseph's College in Standish, Maine. His Ph.D. dissertation, from Boston College (1988), explored the history of the Portland Irish longshoremen, which is also the focus of his most recent publications.*

IN NOVEMBER 1913, on the eve of World War I in Europe, a small but determined group of Portland longshoremen, most of them Irish, fought an unsuccessful struggle for increased wages with agents of several major international steamship companies operating in this major Atlantic port. Just three months later, their union announced its affiliation with the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), an American Federation of Labor union. Several questions emerge out of the connection between the strike and the affiliation with the ILA. What caused the strike, and how did it reflect trends in labor militancy all along the Atlantic Coast? Why would a local benevolent society, after nearly thirty-five years of independence, choose to affiliate with the huge Atlantic coast longshoremen's union? And finally, did the strike, as the dock workers proposed, accomplish its goal of making Portland "Union all over?"

The emergence of Portland as a major Atlantic seaport dates from the completion of a rail link to Montreal and, by extension, to the productive grain-producing regions of Canada's western provinces. The Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railway, completed in July 1853, situated Portland as a winter port for the Canadian grain trade, active particularly during those months when the St. Lawrence River was inaccessible due



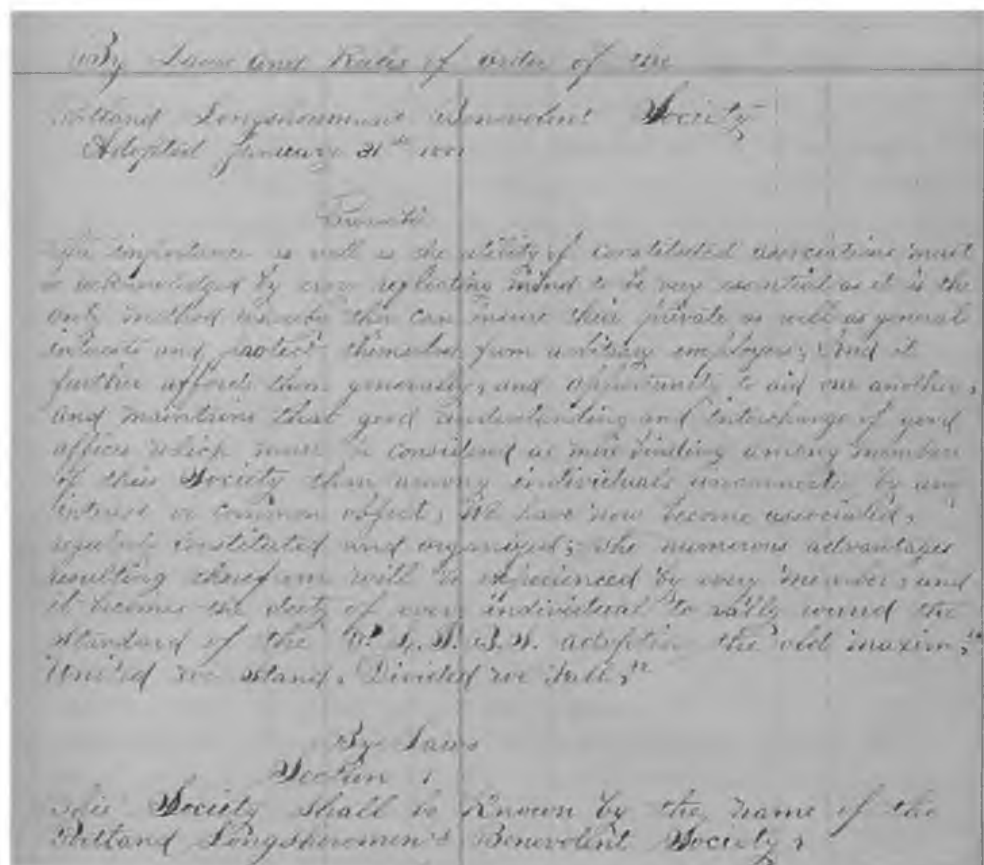
Stevedores unloading southern pine at Brown's Wharf in Portland. Pressed by difficult times and intransigent employers, dock workers banded together into a union to preserve their wage scales and their dignity. *All photographs in this article from the collections of the Maine Historical Society.*

to ice. John Alfred Poor, a Portland lawyer and entrepreneur, had envisioned this transportation strategy as a way of establishing Portland as a steamship and rail hub linking North America and the major cities of Europe. As Poor explained, it was “a vision, in which I saw the whole line pass before me like a grand panorama, . . . with every facility for ocean steamships from every country; and the coast of Maine lined with cities rivaling the cities on the coast of the Baltic.”<sup>1</sup> Situated between two highly competitive ports—Saint John and Boston—Portland eventually abandoned the pursuit of Poor’s vision, turning instead landward and concentrating on “providing goods and services for . . . [its own] environs.” But in the nearly seventy years between the arrival of the railway and the development of Saint John as Canada’s new “winter port” in the early 1920s, Portland’s economy enjoyed the benefits of a huge, export-driven trade with Europe based largely on handling Canadian grain.<sup>2</sup>

### Early Years

Before this Montreal connection, work along Portland’s waterfront had been unpredictable. The West Indies trade in molasses and rum provided work for a small group of Black dockworkers, but they had been largely displaced by the more numerous Irish, who arrived in the 1840s hungry for work at almost any wage. In 1880 this group of predominantly Irish longshoremen, seeking a level of occupational security in their newly chosen home, formed the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society (PLSBS). Membership varied widely in its first two decades, but in 1899 the organization reached an all-time high of 868. During the first decade of the new century, employment on the Portland docks saw a steep decline, driven down by a weakening port economy. In addition to a nationwide commercial slump, this reflected a sharp decrease in the volume of Canadian grain exported via Portland. By 1910 membership in the PLSBS had dropped to 425.<sup>3</sup>

Problems in Portland were part of a larger trend. In 1907 New York waterfront workers united in a remarkable, if unsuccessful, display of solidarity concerning the question of stagnant wages. The New York longshoremen were, by one account, “virtually unorganized and almost all without trade union experience. They were immigrants and the children of immigrants, facing united, powerful employers, above all the shipping trust.” The New York strike illustrated the difficulties of forming an industrial union among ethnically fragmented workers, particularly during depressed commercial conditions. “The success of industrial unionism by definition involved overcoming occupational separation,



In 1881, the year after its founding, the Portland Longshoremen's Benevolent Society crafted its by-laws. "We have now become associated, regularly constituted, and organized," the preamble declared. "It becomes the duty of every individual to rally round the standard of the PLSBS."

but it was also determined by the degree to which racial and ethnic divisions, potentially fatal to workers in struggle, could be overcome." Two years later Boston's longshoremen, again mainly immigrants, walked off the job asking for a pay increase. The steamship agents and stevedores refused to grant these "ill-timed" concessions, observing that they were "facing one of the worst periods of depression" they had experienced in years."<sup>4</sup>

Economic recovery after 1910 revived the spirit of militancy among dock workers across the country, and membership in Portland's PLSBS surged, setting the scene for two of the largest strikes ever to occur on the Portland waterfront. The first of these, in 1911, involved the size of the work gang on the waterfront, which in turn determined the quality and safety of the stevedore's job. Portland contracts were based on a gang of ten workers rather than the standard gang of sixteen, due to



Like many nineteenth-century artisans, the Portland stevedores were proud of their work and protective of their dignity as workers. Here they march behind their silk banner on Cumberland Avenue between Preble and Brown streets in an 1894 parade.

the fact that the Grand Trunk Railway—formerly the Atlantic and St. Lawrence—traditionally unloaded pulp ships using a ten-man gang. Early in 1911 the stevedoring firm of Trefethen and Dugan became embroiled in a dispute with the PLSBS over handling wood pulp. The Society briefly discussed a proposal to suspend any man working for the firm. It dropped the proposal but then voted on January 3 to use the standard gang. The Trefethen and Dugan coal shovelers also demanded a larger gang, asking the PLSBS Labor Committee to intervene on their behalf.<sup>5</sup> At this point, union recognition became the major source of contention for the Society.

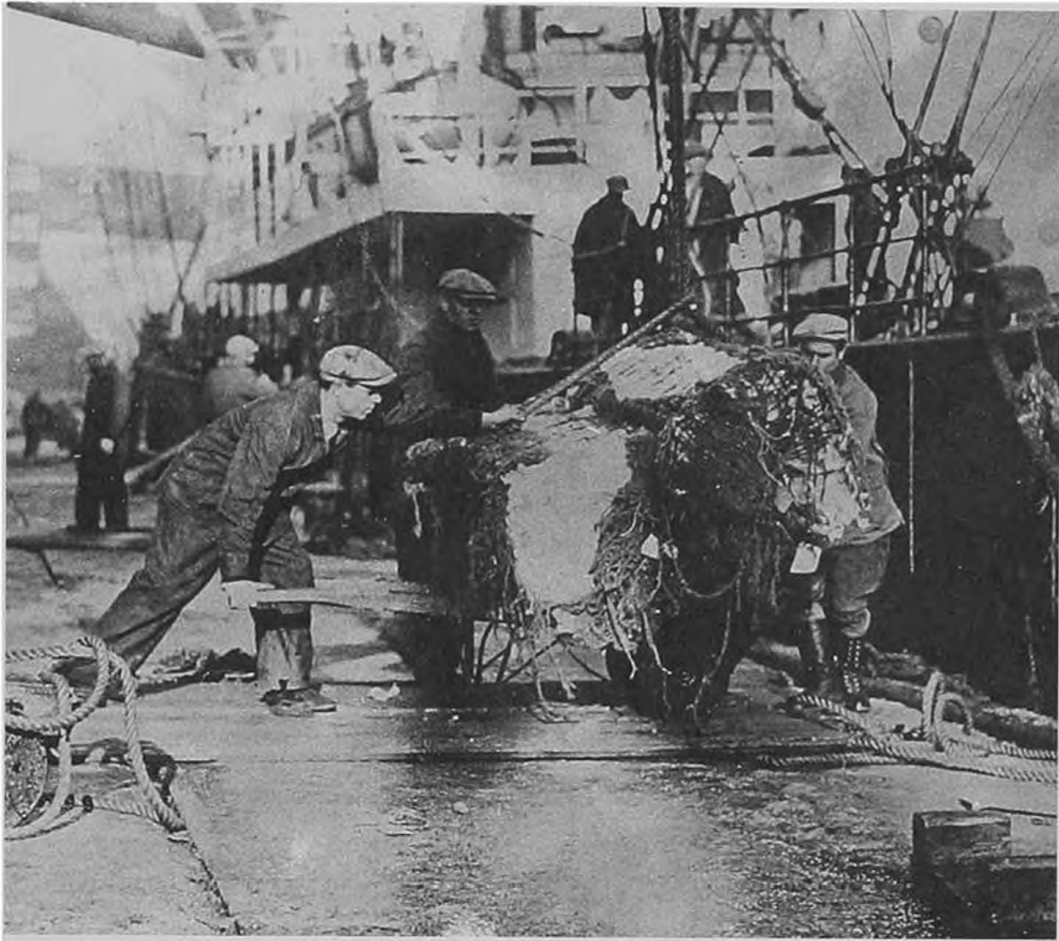
During the following week a committee invited Trefethen and Dugan to appear before a special meeting of the Society. Neither owner appeared, given the short notice, and Society President John L. Caselden requested Trefethen's appearance at the next regular union meeting. Still no representative of the firm attended, however, and the matter was laid

over until January 31. The PLSBS, clearly out of patience, threatened that “if Trefethen and Dugan do not come to our Hall Tuesday night or before and settle the grievance . . . the Society will call the men out on strike again.” Tempers were high at the February 7 meeting, as noted in this excerpt from the Society minutes concerning one member’s free use of the English language: “In arguing the way Trefethen and Dugan did not come and explain how the last strike was settled to [the] Society, Patrick Gorham made a little blunder in swearing twice [for] which he was fined 50 cents for each offence totaling one dollar, though he was warned beforehand not to say so much.” When the union received no reply, the recording secretary requested a signed agreement from Trefethen. This, too, the company ignored, and the PLSBS voted on February 14 to strike “until our Society be recognized by the above named firm.” The strike vote, which suggested a rising level of frustration and militancy, was certainly the action needed to show Trefethen that the union meant business; he was personally in attendance at the next Society meeting on February 21. Realizing the union would not back down, Trefethen capitulated, and although the debate that followed “took considerable time,” the Society accepted Trefethen’s concessions by a standing vote of 28 to 6.<sup>6</sup>

Union recognition was an important victory, but peace along the waterfront was short-lived. The action occurred at the beginning of a period labor historian David Montgomery called the “strike decade,” with dramatic work stoppages all across the nation and particularly in New York, in Boston, Lowell, and Lawrence. For dock workers, whether Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf Coast or Great Lakes, the central issue was the sling load—how much weight or volume was to be allowed on each load taken from or placed into a ship. This was primarily a safety issue, accidents being common, given the long hours and steady work with bulky, fast-moving slings. But the size and weight of the sling load also regulated the pace and quality of the work to be performed. As the key index of safety and tolerable working conditions, control over the sling load remained the hallmark of a strong union well into the twentieth century, until slings were replaced by roll-on/roll-off cargo shipments and eventually containers.<sup>7</sup>

### The 1911 Strike

For the time, however, the Society remained focused on wages. The work season for Portland’s longshoremen commenced in November, with the expected freezing of the St. Lawrence River, and it ran until the



The “sling load”—the amount of cargo in each load taken from or placed into a ship—was a critical safety issue, but in its early struggles the PLSBS concentrated on wages.

following October. In September 1911, near the end of the work year, the Committee on Longshore Wages reported out a new wage scale calling for thirty-five cents per hour for day work—an increase of five cents per hour over the previous year’s wages—and comparable changes in wages for “night work.” The new scale was approved by a unanimous standing vote and set for implementation no later than November 1. In late October representatives from some of the larger steamship companies met with the officers of the Society at the Portland Board of Trade headquarters.<sup>8</sup> The meeting was disappointing, and the frustrated longshoremen were forced to take action. A standing vote reaffirmed the new wage proposals, and the Society elected to implement a selective strike by refusing to work the wood-pulp and china clay boats. Thus Portland entered the “strike decade” with a militant campaign for higher wages along the waterfront.





Tensions between Irish and Italian workers probably factored into the outcome of the 1911 and 1913 strikes.

A local newspaper predicted that the ranks of the strikers—around 300 men—would be “increased when the steamship season closes at Montreal.” Since the strike was selective, goods continued to flow into the port; the Maine Central Railroad, for instance, anticipated a cargo of 7,000 tons of coal from Baltimore. When these selective measures proved insufficient, the union announced plans for a full strike to begin on November 1. Steamship officials reacted forcefully, claiming that local longshoremen were already paid more than those at Montreal, Boston, or Saint John, and any increases would disadvantage the Maine port, adding 25 percent to the local payroll. The wage schedule had been static for several years, they admitted, but rather than submit to the increase they threatened to discontinue steamship service to Portland.<sup>9</sup>

The steamship companies, most of them European, represented a powerful force in labor relations in all major American ports. Because their huge vessels were engaged in intense competition with one another, owners were interested in getting them unloaded and loaded quickly. This incentive to discourage union activity combined with the

power of associated capital to give the shippers an enormous advantage over Portland's small independent union. In the earlier 1907 New York strike, Irish labor leader James Connolly, then in residence in the United States, referred to the "old, old story, empty stomachs<sup>o</sup> against concentrated capital." Historian Calvin Winslow adds that the shippers "were united and well organized, and they brought into the contest fantastic wealth and power."<sup>10</sup>

Now the lines were clearly drawn, with the PLSBS on strike as of November 7, 1911, when the new fiscal year commenced. At the same time, a new Portland Longshoremen's Union emerged and began organizing along the waterfront. The new group claimed 100 names on its roster and invited "any person familiar with stevedore work, regardless of place of residence" to join them. Without doubt, the new group was in fact created by the steamship companies, which had threatened a week earlier to "secure labor from other cities" unless the strike was settled soon. The scab union expected to recruit around 200 members, which officials felt would be sufficient to "handle with ease all the transatlantic steamers due to arrive here the coming winter," but its work force failed to materialize: steamship owners had used the specter of dual unionism simply as a scare tactic against the PLSBS.<sup>11</sup>

Whether or not these company tactics involved Portland's newly arrived Italian immigrants is a matter of conjecture. In this period in America, Italians occupied a social niche between whites and Blacks. As early as 1887 Portland longshoremen had noted the inter-ethnic competition, expressing concerns that "the condition of longshoremen in Portland is not as good as it was fifteen years ago." Portland's Irish longshoremen complained that they were forced to "compete with Italians and other cheap imported help, who work for \$1.00 per day." In Portland, as in the rest of America, the labor force was largely composed of immigrants, and this composition was changing, due to a shift in the sources of immigration into the United States.<sup>12</sup>

While ethnicity could be a means of ensuring union solidarity, it also could drive a wedge into union organizing where more than one ethnic group was present. Thus the changing patterns of immigration in Portland were important to the largely Irish union. Portland's new Italians were willing to take jobs at the lowest rungs of the economic ladder, and many worked on the docks and the railroad freight yards. The potential for using Italians or Polish workers as strikebreakers must have been of great concern to the union as the strike continued. In a sense, the Irish longshoremen brought this situation upon themselves by maintaining

such an ethnically segregated union. When Italians arrived in Portland, they were not welcomed into the union; thus they had few alternatives to forming an independent union or scabbing, both of which they apparently did.<sup>13</sup> This was also the case in other American cities, particularly among Blacks, who were routinely excluded from the established unions.<sup>14</sup>

Under the threat of scab labor, Society President John T. Caselden met with John A. Torrance, the Portland-based agent of the White Star-Dominion Line, and with Charles F. Flagg, chairman of the Portland Board of Trade. The owners refused to budge, and one week later at the regular meeting of the Society, the president expressed his misgivings about the strike, "stating that there was no possibility of getting any more than the present scale as the steamship officials would not pay any more under any circumstances."<sup>15</sup> The PLSBS was defeated and knew it, and shortly after the longshoremen returned to work under the prevailing wages. At the January 9 meeting members voted to keep the strike committee in force for an additional six months, but the strike was over.

### The 1913 Strike

Two years later in the fall of 1913, as the transatlantic season was about to commence, the PLSBS again challenged the wage structure along Portland's piers. With the 1911 defeat fresh in their minds, members complained that it was "near time to raise wages per hour along the waterfront and especially on transatlantic steamers." The scale again passed unanimously and was voted effective as of November 1, 1913. To take their case to the public, members voted to advertise the new wage scale in the *Portland Press*, the *Eastern Argus*, and the *Portland Express*. Steamship officials would be notified, and a committee of seven would "wait on steamship officials in case of future trouble."<sup>16</sup> The owners again balked, and at the November 11 meeting union members voted to stand by their demands. The longshoremen were called out "from Fish Point to Rolling Mill," and the conflict was under way. The next day's news reported that "about 30 Polacks who had refused to work on Monday unless paid the new wage scale of 35 cents an hour having changed their mind and concluded to accept the old rate of 30 cents," but none were members of the union. Local steamship agents refused to pay rates higher than those received in Boston: 33 cents per daytime hour; 33 cents for coal; and 50 cents for Sundays and holidays. By a vote of 79 to 13 the Society lowered its demands to 35 cents per daytime hour, 40 cents for coal, and time-and-a-half on Sundays and holidays. As there

were over 600 members in the union, this vote, which represented less than 100 members, indicates a sense of discouragement and a recognition of its weak position. The White Star, Canadian, and Dominion lines and the china clay steamers again made a counter offer—"the same scale for steamer and coal work as now paid in Boston." The representatives hoped to maintain the "harmonious relations" that had existed between the companies and the men for years.<sup>17</sup>

In an attempt to gain public sentiment, the PLSBS again advertised their "fair deal" in the three daily newspapers, indicating how long they had worked without a raise. This resulted in a long and articulate defense of the PLSBS demands in the *Eastern Argus*—perhaps the most complete report on the union's position during the entire strike. The front-page article spoke about inflation pressures, the short work season, and the irregular work schedule: "Since the Society was organized in 1880 . . . to the present time we have received 30 [cents] per hour for day work for a period of 33 years. Our demand for an increase in wages is an honest one and we ought to have it in order to live, not [simply] exist." During the ensuing deadlock, PLSBS Financial Secretary John T. Caselden traveled to Boston to collect information on wage scales there. He discovered that in 1912 Boston's longshoremen had undertaken a bitter strike, lasting from January 5 to February 14, only to return to work "at the same wages and conditions as had existed prior to the strike."<sup>18</sup>

In 1912 Boston and other North Atlantic ports had affiliated with the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), but the larger union had failed to organize Portland that year. Now, a year later, at another time of deadlock and with a history of failure in dealing with the powerful steamship companies, the ILA saw the opportunity for another drive. The ILA had not been successful in raising wage scales in Boston, but neither had the PLSBS in Portland. Perhaps for the first time, the Portland longshoremen realized they were in trouble and needed additional outside support.

As the impasse continued, the Portland's business leaders began expressing concern about the deadlock. "If [the steamship companies] cannot get their boats loaded here they will make other arrangements," they worried. City officials called on the Board of Trade to arbitrate.<sup>19</sup> A precursor to the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade had played an active role in labor relations and in the development of Portland's waterfront. Members were painfully aware of the city's dependence on a single foreign commodity—Canadian grain—and were worried that if



Coal and grain were two of the more significant commodities loaded from the Portland wharfs. In this photo of the Randall & McAllister sidewheeler *Tremont*, the coal sheds appear on the left and the grain elevators on the right.

the grain trade fell off, Portland would be thrown back on commerce from its own somewhat limited hinterland. Some warned that “powerful interests [were working to divert Portland’s trade] to other ports showing greater local interest.” Interestingly, the *Eastern Argus* reported that longshoremen in Saint John had asked for forty cents an hour in winter and forty-five cents in summer, and they had been granted five cents less in each category by the Minister of Labor’s Arbitration Board. A lengthy article titled “Portland’s Shipping Crisis” drove home the point that the Board of Trade would try to “avert disaster.” Other threats followed: “Unless the labor troubles here are settled very soon [the White Star-Dominion liner “Canada”] may be held at Halifax on arrival and make that her port of departure [instead of Portland].” Another correspondent argued that “unless the longshoremen at Portland . . . moderate their demands Portland will be withdrawn from the itinerary of the [Allan Line’s] Glasgow-Portland-Boston services.” The latter report came di-

rectly from steamship director Andrew A. Allan in Montreal. But if business leaders used the stick, could the carrot be far behind? The same edition of the paper reported that “exports of grain from here during the coming winter will be the heaviest on record unless labor matters interfere with the business.”<sup>20</sup>

### Defeat

After a series of intense negotiations, PLSBS members signaled a change in atmosphere, hinting at a possible settlement. The local press, impressed by the union’s candid remarks in their newspapers, characterized the dockworkers’ leaders as having “shown a willingness at all times to discuss the strike situation, believing that they are demanding wages that they are entitled to receive.” But the momentum was difficult to sustain. Union president Michael McDonough admitted to his members that “it was necessary that we should reconsider our trouble.” When the Portland Board of Trade offered its services for binding arbitration, the membership accepted. The Board suggested a six-person panel, with two longshoremen, two steamship representatives, and two members from the Board. The proposal favored the steamship officials who could anticipate full support from the Board’s two delegates.<sup>21</sup>

At the November 21 PLSBS meeting, Roy C. Burns, a representative of the Board of Trade, offered his solution to the deadlock. Before addressing the audience, Burns displayed his own union card—the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen—and addressed the assemblage as “Brothers.”

Mr. Burns spoke lengthily on labor though he being a representative of the Board of Trade. He explained that it was a hard thing for labor to fight capital. He also gave us to understand that the steamship officials were determined not to pay any more than the previous figures and further he said to be sure and send a committee of two of our best men at the arbitration to fight our cause and try and get all they could before they would give in. He gave us lots of logic and good advice accompanied with all the information that was needed. He was a thorough, good speaker and we paid strict attention to him with one exception, he being interrupted by John Brown, which cost Brown one dollar for disturbing our interested friend and also the meeting.<sup>22</sup>

The union records report that Burns “cheered the boys” and was cheered in return. Although a Board of Trade member, he had shown sympathy, at least outwardly, with the laborers. It seems quite likely that Burns was attempting to counsel the union as to the inevitability of its

second defeat in as many years, and to soften the blow of their return to the docks under conditions far less favorable than those which the union demanded.

With the preliminaries over, members chose John T. Caselden and Stephen Mulkerrin to arbitrate for the Society the next morning at the Board of Trade. The press spoke again of the pivotal role played by Burns and opined that “labor trouble on the steamer docks cannot fail of proving most disastrous to the business interests of the city.” Predictably, the arbitration brought less than the union had demanded. The settlement was 33 cents per daytime hour for general cargo and 35 cents per hour for coal, rather than the proposed 40 cents per hour. This was a compromise, but the Society gave up much more than the steamship companies. Burns’s warning about expecting success in a depressed economy had been accurate; it was indeed “a hard thing for labor to fight capital.” Workers returned to the docks, but as with any protracted dispute, there were lingering ill feelings.<sup>23</sup>

The 1913 strike had lasted two weeks, and undoubtedly its greatest legacy was not the few cents gained per hour but rather the organizational lessons learned. In taking on the combined power of the steamship companies, the small, independent benevolent society was at a disadvantage. Within two months of the strike, the PLSBS joined the ILA fold, from which all future wage claims would be negotiated.

Portland’s odyssey was typical. Boston longshoremen had reached a similar conclusion after their unsuccessful 1912 strike, having been “impressed by . . . the absence of cooperation with longshoremen in other ports.” Like the PLSBS, dockworkers elsewhere had been organized before the ILA consolidated these East-Coast union efforts. In New York City workers organized an Alongshoremen’s United Benefit Society in 1853, then the Longshoremen’s Union Protective Association in 1866. In the 1880s independent longshore societies in New York and elsewhere cooperated with the Knights of Labor, and later it was the ILA that connected these isolated and dispirited dockworker organizations. The ILA’s attempt to consolidate the port of New York was frustrated by rivalry with the Longshoremen’s Union Protective Association locals until 1914, when the latter were brought under the ILA banner. Two years later, the ILA secured its first port-wide collective agreement with New York employers, providing wage increases and employment preference for union members. A similar development in Boston transformed the longshore “mutual aid society” into an ILA-affiliated union in 1913.<sup>24</sup>

### **Affiliation with the ILA**

As early as May 1901 the PLSBS had received requests from the AFL to join the ILA. Initially, the Portland Society resisted these overtures, but in November 1913 the ILA resumed its organizing effort in the midst of the PLSBS's difficult and eventually unsuccessful strike. The first of the ILA communications was noted in the minutes of November 18, 1913. Although the union members voted to stand on their own, the shipping companies' unyielding attitude eroded this resolve. On December 16, 1913, only three weeks after losing their second strike, they reversed themselves: "Moved and seconded—We should belong to the ILA. Moved and seconded—We tender Mr. O'Connor an invitation to come and address our meeting, he being President of the ILA."<sup>25</sup>

Terrence V. O'Connor spoke to the Portland union on January 8, 1914. The proof that he made a convincing case came at the next regular meeting when the motion to affiliate passed its first reading. The formalities were conducted at the February 10 meeting. William F. Dempsey, originally from South Boston and now the ILA Atlantic Coast District secretary, "installed the officers of [the] PLSBS into the ILA and . . . pledged them to the faithful performance of their duty while in office." The membership was similarly installed and "enlightened . . . on the great combined organization" to which they now belonged.<sup>26</sup> Local newspapers reported the historic events of February 10 with a great deal of élan.

An enthusiastic meeting of the Portland Longshoremen's Benevolent Society was held last evening at their hall on Fore Street. This society after many years of independent existence recently voted to affiliate with the International Longshoremen's Association and William F. Dempsey of Buffalo, N.Y., the secretary-treasurer and organizer of that organization, was present last evening to install the officers of the local branch. . . . The international body of which the local organization has become a part numbers over 50,000 members and embraces both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts as well as the Great Lakes. Secretary Dempsey reports the past year as having been the most prosperous in the history of the association, both as regards membership and in its financial results.<sup>27</sup>

What were Portland's longshoremen looking for in their affiliation? In a word, security. The international scope of the ILA assured the workers that threats to divert ships to other ports were no longer credible. This sense of security was evident in the months immediately following, when the new affiliate passed a resolution "that all bosses along the wa-





The bitter two-week strike in 1913 won the PLSBS only a few cents advance in their wage scale. The lasting legacy was the organizational lesson: to battle international shippers, Portland workers would have to affiliate with an international union.

terfront give the preference of work to Union members before non-Union men.” The following month members added that if union bosses and walking bosses were not hired, “union men will be called out.” On July 7, the coal concerns were similarly directed “to give the first privilege to the Union men.” In the wake of a difficult strike, the PLSBS was feeling the need to reassert its prerogative. Having elected James E. McGrath as the local delegate to the upcoming ILA convention in Milwaukee, they instructed McGrath to use his influence with the powerful international union “to make this port Union all over.” Now within the protective fold of the ILA, the Portland longshoremen once again turned their attention to local work rules, especially the limited sling load, the litmus test of a progressive longshore union. With the war in Europe stimulating exports, concern for safety increased. Accidents, always a hazard of longshore work, took a higher toll during periods of speed-up. Just as the United States was to enter the war, for example, two Portland longshoremen were injured within a space of three days.<sup>28</sup>

The first years of the twentieth century had been tough ones for the PLSBS. It had weathered many storms, such as the decline in longshore jobs after the turn of the century and the loss of two major strikes, but while it had not always come out on top, it had survived. Following its affiliation with the ILA in 1914 the Portland longshoremen's union was about to enter its greatest decade of growth—brought on by the shipping boom during and shortly after World War I. By 1919 membership had grown to 1,366, the historic highpoint of this union's membership in Portland.<sup>29</sup> Although troubles would return in the postwar years, the best years for Portland's Irish longshoremen were still ahead of them.



Unloading lumber at Deering Wharf.

## NOTES

1. Laura E. Poor, ed., *The First International Railway and the Colonization of New England: Life and Writings of John Alfred Poor*, p. 26, cited in Charles E. Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 96. See Robert H. Babcock, "Economic Development in Portland (ME.) and Saint John (N.B.) During the Age of Iron and Steam, 1850-1914," *American Review of*

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2. See Michael C. Connolly, "The Irish Longshoremen of Portland, Maine, 1880-1923," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston College, 1988, p. 19; David B. Pillsbury, "The History of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad Company," Fogler Library, University of Maine; Michael J. Sheehy, "John Alfred Poor and International Railroads: The Early Years to 1860," M.A. thesis, University of Maine, 1974; Archibald W. Currie, *The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957); Babcock, "Economic Development in Portland," pp. 29-30.

3. Michael C. Connolly, "Black Fades to Green: Irish Labor Replaces African-American Labor Along a Major New England Waterfront, Portland, Maine, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Colby Quarterly* 37(December 2001): 357-73; Records of the PLSBS (ILA local 861), Maine Historical Society Manuscript Collections 359 (MS 85-15) and 360 (hereafter cited as "PLSBS Records"); Connolly, "Irish Longshoremen," appendices C and M.

4. Calvin Winslow, "'Men of the Lumber Camps Come to Town': New York Longshoremen in the Strike of 1907" in *Waterfront Workers: New Perspectives on Race and Class*, edited by Calvin Winslow (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p. 64; Federal Writers' Project, *Boston Looks Seaward: The Story of the Port, 1630-1940*, edited by William M. Fowler, Jr. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), pp. 187-88, 217-18. See Charles A. Scontras, *Organized Labor in Maine: Twentieth Century Origins* (Orono: Bureau of Labor Education, University of Maine, 1985); *The Socialist Alternative: Utopian Experiments and the Socialist Party of Maine, 1895-1914* (Orono: Bureau of Labor Education of the University, 1985); and *Collective Efforts Among Maine Workers: Beginnings and Foundations, 1820-1880* (Orono: Bureau of Labor Education, University of Maine, 1994).

5. See Francis M. McLaughlin, "Industrial Relations in the Boston Longshore Industry," Ph.D. Dissertation, M.I.T., 1964, pp. 43-55; William W. Pilcher, *The Portland Longshoremen: A Dispersed Urban Community* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); Winslow, "New York Longshoremen in the Strike of 1907," pp. 70, 74.

6. PLSBS Records, vol. 5, January 31, 1911, p. 352; February 7, 1911, p. 353; February 14, 1911, p. 354; February 21, 1911, p. 355.

7. David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. See Charles Larrowe, *Shape-Up and Hiring Hall: A Comparison of Hiring Methods and Labor Relations on the New York and Seattle Waterfronts* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 27.

8. PLSBS Records, vol. 5, September 12, 1911, p. 386; *Portland Evening Express*, November 1, 1911. See PLSBS Records, volume 4, July 29, 1902, p. 165; vol. 5, October 24, 1911, p. 393.

9. *Portland Evening Express*, November 1, November 2, 1911; PLSBS Records, vol. 5, October 31, 1911, p. 394.

10. Montgomery, *Fall of the House of Labor*, p. 103. Winslow, "New York Longshoremen in the Strike of 1907," pp. 85-86.

11. *Eastern Argus*, November 7, 1911; McLaughlin, "Industrial Relations," p. 47; *Portland Evening Express*, November 1, 1911; *Eastern Argus*, November 8, 1911.

12. See Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 56-62; James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "'Inbetween Peoples': Race, Nationality and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (Spring 1997): 3-44; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1887* (Augusta: Kennebec Journal Print, 1887), p. 106 (I am indebted to Charles A. Scontras of the Bureau of Labor Education at the University of Maine for this reference); David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the Twentieth Century Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 15.

13. On wages, see Montgomery, *Fall of the House of Labor*, p. 103. See PLSBS Records, vol. 6, September 13, 1914, p. 223; September 15, 1914, p. 218; Winslow, "New York Longshoremen in the Strike of 1907," p. 74.

14. See Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 152-53; David Montgomery, *Fall of the House of Labor*, pp. 96-109; Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics 1863-1923* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Pilcher, *Portland Longshoremen*, pp. 67-76; Bruce Nelson, *Divided We Stand: American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially chapters 1-3; Connolly, "Irish Longshoremen," pp. 25-41; Connolly, "Black Fades to Green."

15. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, November 14, 1911, p. 4.

16. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, September 16, 1913, p. 130; October 28, 1913, p. 138; *Eastern Argus*, October 29, 1913.

17. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, November 11, 1913, p. 142; *Eastern Argus*, November 12, 13, 1913.

18. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, November 13, 1913, p. 143; *Eastern Argus*, November 14, 1913. See McLaughlin, "Industrial Relations," pp. 43-45, 53.

19. *Eastern Argus*, November 15, 1913.

20. *Board of Trade Journal* 10 (December 1897): 230, cited in Babcock, "Rise and Fall of Portland's Waterfront," p. 77; *Eastern Argus*, November 17, 20, 21.

21. *Portland Evening Express*, November 21, 1913; PLSBS Records, vol. 6, November 21, 1913, p. 146. See *Eastern Argus*, November 21, 1913; *Portland Evening Express*, November 21, 1913.

22. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, November 21, 1913, p. 146. See *Eastern Argus*, November 21, 1913.

23. *Eastern Argus*, November 22, 25, 1913; PLSBS Records, vol. 6, November 25, 1913, pp.148-50; December 30, 1913, p.156.

24. McLaughlin, "Industrial Relations," pp. 40, 54; Larowe, *Shape-Up and Hiring Hall*, pp.7-9. See also Winslow, *Waterfront Workers*; Montgomery, *Fall of the House of Labor*, p. 104. The minutes of the next meeting, February 17, 1914, began with the heading "ILA Local No.861."

25. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, December 16, 1913, p.153.

26. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, January 6, 1914, p. 159; February 10, 1914, p. 166. On O'Connor, see Winslow, ed., *Waterfront Workers*, especially Eric Arnesen, "Biracial Waterfront Unionism in the Age of Segregation," and Howard Kimeldorf, "Radical Possibilities: The Rise and Fall of Wobbly Unionism on the Philadelphia Docks."

27. *Eastern Argus*, February 11, 1914.

28. PLSBS Records, vol. 6, April 14, 1914, p. 180. On job security issues in New York, see Montgomery, *Fall of the House of Labor*, p. 104. See also "The Wharves of Portland, Maine," *Portland Board of Trade Journal* 179 (1912-1913): 181-82; PLSBS Records, vol. 6, October 6, 1914, p. 229; interview with Lawrence F. Welch, Yarmouth, Maine, January 6, 1982 (audiotape in the possession of the author). Welch maintained that local 861 defended the limited sling load long after it was given up at other East-Coast ports. On accidents, see *Eastern Argus*, April 3, 6, 1917.

29. See Connolly, "Irish Longshoremen," appendices C &E. Both of Robert H. Babcock's articles contend that Portland was squandering its potential as a major Atlantic port, thus enabling not only much larger cities, such as Boston or Halifax, but also similarly situated cities, such as Saint John, New Brunswick, to emerge after the early 1920s with the lion's share of maritime-related trade.