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Book Reviews

William David Barry
Maine Historical Society

Sally Hermansen
University of British Columbia

Mazie Hough
University of Maine

David Raymond
Northern Maine Community College

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BOOK REVIEWS

Time-Line of Selected Highlights of Maine Labor History: 1636–2015. By Charles A. Scontras. (Orono, Maine: Bureau of Labor Education, University of Maine, 2016. Pp. 189. Paper. \$15.00)

For individuals interested in the history of the wage earner and how generations of men, women, and children struggled to live in and shape Maine, Dr. Charles A. Scontras, historian and research associate at the Bureau of Labor Education at the University of Maine, has forged a necessary and reliable tool. Running 189 pages, the booklet updates the author's 2006 volume of the same title, which numbered 66 pages. New research informs the early years with facts and context while taking the reader-historian further into the years of deindustrialisation, global free trade, political uncertainty, and widespread fear for the future of labor and the nation itself.

Since the launching of his pioneering study, *Organized Labor and Labor Politics in Maine, 1880–1890* (University of Maine Press, 1966), Scontras has led the effort to understand and document the role of workers in a state that has often been none too friendly to organized labor. In his own right, he has written some fifteen books on the subject and, in so doing, has constructed a unique framework that is sweeping, detailed, readable, and always accurate.

Of course, other authorities have made important contributions to labor history, including the following works: *Pain on Their Faces: Testimonies on the Paper Mill Strike, Jay, Maine, 1987–1988* by Peter Kellerman and the Jay–Livermore Falls Working Class History Project (Apex Press, 1998); *The Lobster Gangs of Maine* by James M. Acheson (UPNE, 1988); and *Seated by the Sea: The Maritime History of Portland and Its Irish Longshoremen* by Michael C. Connolly (University Press of Florida, 2011). These, however, are few and scattered. Important studies of our lumber, stone, textile, pulp and paper, shipbuilding, and educational and governmental sectors are, of course, present but tend to treat workers as elements of a larger story. Ofttimes, organized labor is delineated as more of an irritant than as the driving productive force that supports whole families and towns. The daily flesh-and-blood efforts and accomplishments of em-

ployees are often eclipsed by the careers and architectural wonders of the so-called self-made industrialists, the employers. National monuments in granite and marble still glimmer and shine in the places of power while quarry towns lie abandoned and unincorporated and mills and factories stand empty like medieval follies marking the last generation's dominant economy. The social cost is striking, but without such factories there would have been no Millinocket, virtually no Rumford, and no ethnic mix in the big woods.

Scontras provides a timeline rather than a polemic, but the discerning reader will see what muscle, brain, and ambition have done since the arrival of Europeans. His work is an honor roll and a butcher's bill of labor in Maine. It is raw, factual, and it freights many attitudes between the reports of flush times and hard times.

Scontras notes that the first strike over working conditions in what became the United States took place in Cape Elizabeth in 1636. Workers and fishermen protested against the proprietors' agents who withheld their wages for a year. As of 2015, the Governor of Maine was attempting to "lift child work restrictions," and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the Communication Workers of America strike against Fair-Point Communications proved successful. The cycle goes on, and the story is between the lines of this volume. The author, who is working on a sweeping history of Maine labor, has done scholars a major service once again.

WILLIAM DAVID BARRY
Maine Historical Society

Historical Atlas of Maine. Edited by Stephen J. Hornsby and Richard W. Judd; cartographic designer Michael J. Hermann. (Orono, Maine: The University of Maine Press, 2015. Pp. 203. Hardcover. \$75.00)

This beautiful atlas is not designed by academics for academics; it is designed by academics for "the people of Maine" (introduction), including general residents, educators, and students interested in Maine and its history. On each of the seventy-six plates, the information presented is easily understood by those who are not experts in the historical significance of particular themes. Yet, each plate is rich in detail, and includes image, map, and graph credits; further readings; and acknowledgements.

Transforming the research products of thirty-three different contrib-

utors and their teams of graduate and undergraduate students into these seventy-six visual narrative plates, each measuring a mere eighteen inches across and thirteen inches high, is a daunting task for both the historical researcher and the cartographic designer. Months and often years of research has to be encoded into a visual narrative—told through a title, some minimal text, maps, photos, charts, and diagrams—that unfolds the information on the plate. For example, Plate 52, “Sardine Canneries,” presents a snapshot of the importance of herring and sardine processing around 1900. One paragraph describes the industry in a general fashion, situating Maine in the United States with an accompanying map of canned fish production in 1900. We see the importance of Maine and of the sardine resource in an instant. Pie charts denote the value of canned fish in the United States, and then in Maine, using an image of the sardine can label that many will remember. The plate goes on to depict three larger-scale maps of the regional distribution of canneries in Maine and includes a three-dimensional drawing of a cannery and accompanying floor plans, two photos of canneries, a line graph of seasonal employment, and two more short paragraphs of explanatory text. The visual information is extremely well presented, interesting, and varied and therefore easily decoded and understood by the reader. Another example, Plate 72, “Vacationland,” presents the research through six maps of Maine, depicting various categories of vacationland (camps, hotels, parks, ski resorts etc.), scanned images of historical hand-drawn maps, photos, and four time-series maps of the growth of vacation properties along a lake from 1900 to 1990. Each of these plates tells an engaging story of the relevance of sardines and vacationland to the historical development of Maine; each opens up ideas for further discussion and research.

The seventy-six plates are organized chronologically over four time periods: Part I, “From Ice Age to Borderland, 13,000 BP to 1790” (10 plates); Part II, “Shaping Maine, 1790–1850” (18 plates); Part III, “Industrial Maine, 1850–1910” (25 plates); and Part IV, “Maine in the Modern Era, 1910–2000” (14 plates). In the introduction to the atlas, the editors describe three overarching themes: Native peoples from pre-contact history to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980; Euro-American exploration and exploitation of natural resources from colonial contact to the present; and the rise of environmental awareness from the mid-nineteenth century. Although there are numerous approaches to organizing material in an atlas, a historical atlas suggests that chronological organization is the most obvious. While this certainly makes sense, it would have been interesting to see a few plates organized thematically—for example, population growth, changes over time to first peoples’ territory, and inter-

national and state borders. Some of this information is readily available in plates throughout the atlas (population density maps from 1790 to 2000 on plates 19, 26, 37, 62 and 76), and the maps could easily be extracted and grouped in a time series. Perhaps the next step in this magnificent portrayal of the history of Maine would be an online version, where readers could view each plate as a whole and then have maps arranged as well by themes such a population expansion. This online version would also greatly impact high schools and teachers, who could develop teaching materials from the atlas.

As noted in the introduction, the representation of materials in the atlas is modeled after the Historical Atlas of Canada series (University of Toronto Press, 1987–1993), the *New Zealand Historical Atlas* (David Bate-man, 1997), and the *Historical Atlas of the United States* (National Geographic Society, 1988). The design of the plates in the *Historical Atlas of Maine* follows most closely the Historical Atlas of Canada series. The cartographic representation of scholarship is clean, simple, and not overly visually complex, utilizing maps with pleasing muted colours, limited coastal line-work, all of which facilitate decoding the information during map reading. That said, given the leap in technology and advancement in geo-visualization from the Historical Atlas of Canada series in the 1980s to today, the cartographic representation and overall layout of the plates in the *Historical Atlas of Maine* seems cautious at times. Even the older historical atlases, such as the *New Zealand Historical Atlas* (see plates 26 and 42) and the *Historical Atlas of the United States* (see pages 74–75) utilize some creativity in visualizing information in oblique perspective views and infographics.

But any criticism of this beautiful work is a mere quibble. The *Historical Atlas of Maine* is highly recommended to the residents of Maine and others interested in the visual narrative of historical scholarship.

SALLY HERMANSEN
University of British Columbia

Voting Down the Rose: Florence Brooks Whitehouse and Maine's Fight for Woman Suffrage. By Anne B. Gass. (Rockland: Maine, Maine Authors Publishing, 2014. Pp. 294. Paper. \$16.95)

In 1919, Mainers, both men and women, went to the polls to vote on whether or not women should have the right to vote in presidential elec-

tions. This suggests that Maine was out of step with the nation, which had already (of course) ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. Anne B. Gass's carefully researched book on her great grandmother, Florence Brooks Whitehouse, however, convincingly argues that what happened in Maine was directly connected and at times pivotal to what was happening at the federal level and that Whitehouse was instrumental to the success of both. While the story of the federal movement has been told in detail, *Voting Down the Rose* shows how, far from being a backwater, Maine provides the perfect vantage point from which to understand the complex challenges that the suffrage activists faced in the last great push for the vote, from 1913 to 1919.

Whitehouse, wife of a prominent lawyer in Portland, novelist, playwright, and mother of three, attended a suffrage debate and decided to research the issue to make up her own mind. She never looked back. "The work I do for suffrage," she later explained, "is fifty times more valuable to the community than ten times the work on charities or any social work would be" (19).

Like other middle class women in Maine's larger cities, Whitehouse joined the Maine Woman's Suffrage Association. Unlike others, however, she also joined the more radical Congressional Union. She never disengaged from either, though both pressured her to make a choice between them, and for the next seven years she astutely balanced the strategies of both—even establishing her own Suffrage League committed to accepting "all styles of advocacy for woman suffrage" (123). This acceptance by someone empowered by privilege and recognized as "one of our best organizers" (23) enables us to see the grass-roots movement in full detail.

In 1913, the stakes were high. Suffragists had been active since 1848, and yet, still only nine states and one territory had granted women suffrage. That year, Alice Paul broke with the dominant National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to push for a federal amendment to the Constitution. She and her colleagues in the newly formed Congressional Union held political parties, rather than individuals, accountable. They did not ask for the vote; they demanded it and eventually picketed the White House, threatening to burn an effigy of President Woodrow Wilson himself. "Kaiser Wilson," they challenged, "have you forgotten your sympathy with the poor Germans because they were not self governing?" (114) The NAWSA chided its more confrontational sisters and, although it, too, eventually turned from organizing state-by-state to pushing for the federal amendment, it stressed the importance of maintaining acceptable womanly behavior.

In Maine, the two groups worked contentiously together to push for

a state referendum. When that failed, they pressured Senator Hale to provide one of the two votes needed in Congress to approve the federal amendment. He insisted he must abide by the vote of the men in his state. Finally, they worked for a presidential suffrage referendum and, as that campaign was underway, pushed for the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. They faced a groundswell of opposition among women, infighting within the movement, and a nation distracted by World War I. In addition, they had to balance their activism with family demands. In 1918, Whitehouse, who had two sons fighting in Europe and a third facing corrective surgery, wrote Paul, "This all sounds 'weak sistery' (sic) to you I am afraid, but unfortunately for suffrage, none of us can give our undivided time and attention to it" (174).

Whitehouse embraced the strategies of the NAWSA—publicizing suffrage rallies with girls handing out daffodils and editing a special suffrage edition of the *Daily Eastern Argus*. But she also engaged in direct political action, as when she attended the state Republican convention. Meeting privately with Senator Hale, who noted he did not approve of women picketing, Whitehouse retorted, "Of course you don't Senator. No man who does has a political position. You like the ineffective way the National (NAWSA) has of saying 'please,' but that is not what is bringing lawmakers over. We are playing politics" (142).

Sometimes the Congressional Union's more radical actions hindered Whitehouse's efforts. "There is not a shadow of a doubt," she wrote to Paul, "that you are hurting the Maine cause in picketing" (110). At other times, Paul provided crucial support. When the Maine Federation of Labor sent a letter to every Maine legislator opposing ratification, Paul persuaded the Women's Trade Union League to send letters in support.

Gass has done extensive research that provides context for understanding the strategies and challenges that Whitehouse faced. She also has drawn from a wealth of letters to make Whitehouse and those who worked with and against her come alive. From this rich detail we get a full view of this indefatigable activist and of the community that surrounded her. As one visiting Congressional Union member wrote: "Portland is great, but the people—Gosh—they resemble mahogany furniture. They are so damned dignified" (147).

The multiple footnotes for one sentence are distracting, but only in a minor way. This is a readable and thorough history of the suffrage movement from a unique perspective and one that women's historians and Maine historians would do well to consult and assign in class.

MAZIE HOUGH
University of Maine

Rally the Scattered Believers: Northern New England's Religious Geography. By Shelby M. Balik. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014. Pp. 295 Hardcover. \$60.00)

In the days of the early republic, a “religious revolution” shifted the religious allegiance in Maine away from the established Congregational Church toward a broad spectrum of dissenting sects, such as Baptists, Methodists, Universalists, and Shakers. In 1790, seventy percent of all churches in Maine were Congregationalist, but, by 1820, Congregationalists accounted for only twenty percent of churches. Stephen A. Marini has explained this decline as a cultural victory for the democratic theology and politics of the various dissenters over the more traditional theology and conservative Federalist politics of the Congregationalists. This new study by Shelby M. Balik challenges Marini’s cultural interpretation with a spatial explanation that claims that religious geography—not evangelicalism or politics—was responsible for the shift.

Balik’s book is not a traditional study of religion that focuses on theology or the fate of denominations. Rather, her focus is on the influence of physical location on religious institutions and the spiritual space occupied by clergy and laity. According to Balik, “northern New England’s religious culture came less from where people worshiped, or even how they did, than the communities that coalesced and converged as people moved through physical space” (9). Three crucial forces shaped northern New England during the 1780s to the 1830s: parish or town churches, itinerant ministers, and denominational churches. Town churches were the legacy of Puritanism that required towns to build a meeting house and pay a minister’s salary. Everyone in the parish was taxed to provide financial support whether they were a member of the church or not. In turn, the church was to provide the spiritual and moral glue to hold the community together.

The parish church system fell apart in the hinterlands where there was not insufficient population to form either a town or a church. Difficult terrain slowed community building, and diversity of the settlers, composed largely of dissenters from Congregationalism, slowed church formation. In this spatial and spiritual void, Baptists, Methodists, and Universalists were able to make inroads among the populace by virtue of an “itinerant enterprise” (44). Roving preachers traveled through the countryside preaching the gospel, winning converts and “rallying the scattered believers” into “headless churches” (207), i.e., ones that lacked a minister, before moving on to the next region. Denominations underwrote most of the costs of these wandering missionaries and provided local, regional, and

national support to the local churches, creating a community of believers that transcended town boundary lines.

So effective were the efforts of the itinerants and dissenters that the Congregationalists were forced to form itinerant missionary networks of their own to compete with the dissenters on the frontier. For Balik, this signaled the beginning of religious communities defined by denomination and not community. This unstable mix of denominational factions resisted the imposition of a Congregational Church on the town by the state, and hastened the demise of the religious establishment in Massachusetts. Certainly, geography played a role in undermining the advantages of the town church system, but ultimately theology mattered more. Despite her best efforts to steer away from the standard interpretation that evangelicalism was the crucial factor that reshaped American Protestantism in the early republic, Balik arrives at precisely the same point with her emphasis on the role of denominations. By her own admission, denominational churches demanded theological fidelity to their particular tenets of faith, and all of these dissenters, with the exception of the Universalists, can be categorized as evangelical. Still, her spatial analysis sheds light on the role that geography played in the demise of the parish church and the religious establishment that it represented.

For students of Maine religious history, there is much to be gleaned about the organization and practice of religion in Maine from this book. In it, one will find many well-known figures, such as Ephraim Abbot, Thomas Barnes, Jonathan Fisher, and Jotham Sewall, but their contribution to Maine's religious history are set in the broader context of life on the frontier. Balik's study also augments our understanding of the forces that led Maine to reject a religious establishment upon statehood by adding geography to the list of factors that shaped Maine's commitment to the free exercise of religion. Even though the focus is on the newly settled communities and frontier posts of the interior of Maine and not the established communities, Balik provides valuable insight into the religiosity of the average layperson. In a space where churches were often absent, ordinary folk, with or without the aid of a minister, practiced their faith and created a place for their spiritual life. The role played by lay exhortation, class meetings, bible studies, prayer meetings, conferences, private devotions, and readings is explained, giving insight into religious practice during this period. For these reasons, *Rally the Scattered Believers* is an important contribution to our understanding of faith in Maine during the years of the early republic.

DAVID RAYMOND

Northern Maine Community College